




WORKING ACROSS SECTORS
FOR CHILDREN'S PROTECTION



EDUCATION AND CHILD PROTECTION
A Review of Good Practice
on Inter-Sectoral Collaboration
in Humanitarian Settings

Child Protection Minimum Standards Working Group

Impressum

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The principle of “centrality of protection” in humanitarian action emphasizes the achievement of meaningful protection outcomes as part of a shared mandate for humanitarian actors, even while they are delivering sector-specific activities. For children, protection and well-being lie at the heart of a holistic response. There is already an established rationale for coordination between Child Protection (CP) and Education in Emergencies (EiE), to achieve **joint outcomes for children’s learning and well-being**. These outcomes can be achieved through mainstreaming child protection within education programming or collaborating across sectors through joint and integrated programming.

Several efforts are underway to determine and document the processes through which collaboration between Education in Emergencies and Child Protection actors can take place. This evidence review aims to add value to ongoing global efforts and inform the current discourse by **extracting lessons from country- and local-level practice** across diverse contexts. The objectives were to collate outcomes of education programs that did – or did not – intentionally incorporate child protection concerns in their design and implementation. Where possible, the focus is on what works at the level of the school or learning space.

While considering how education can reinforce both physical and psychosocial well-being outcomes, two main streams emerged from the literature that helped frame the evidence review: **schools** (including both formal and informal learning environments) as **“spaces of safety”** and as **“spaces of healing.”** The section on schools as “spaces of safety” explores the importance of **proactively preserving the sanctity of the school space**, by preventing

violence against schools and taking measures to address **violence within schools**. The section on “spaces of healing” explores the potential of learning environments to aid **recovery from the trauma of displacement, loss, or violence, while also building the resilience to cope with ongoing or chronic stressors**. Here, several promising practices are showcased that illustrate how well-being outcomes can be achieved and what successful joint and integrated programming can look like. This includes examples of referral mechanisms for children to access both education and protection services; an exploration of how mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), socioemotional learning (SEL) and playful practices can be effectively embedded in education; and how programs can be designed to address specific vulnerabilities. Some common threads running through these examples are the importance of community and children’s participation.

The **challenges** section touches upon the gaps articulated by practitioners. There is still a need to define the scope of a “child protection-sensitive response” in education, and to determine how to effectively articulate impact in terms of well-being outcomes. There are still challenges when translating concepts like SEL and MHPSS across cultures, and a need to listen to and incorporate local priorities in humanitarian response. While global guidance now emphasizes integration, practitioners need concrete examples for contextualizing and operationalizing this on the ground. The **recommendations** section therefore sets out some of the work that still needs to be done at the programming, cluster, and global levels, in order to ensure better outcomes for children.

DEFINITIONS¹

Child protection is the prevention of and response to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence against children. During humanitarian crises, timely interventions support the physical and emotional health, dignity and well-being of children, families and communities and can include the efforts of both child protection actors and other humanitarian actors.

Education in Emergencies (EiE) refers to quality learning opportunities for all ages in situations of crisis, including early childhood development, primary, secondary, non-formal, technical, vocational, higher, and adult education. Education in emergencies provides the physical, psychosocial,

and cognitive protection that can sustain and save lives.

Different ways in which the sectors can collaborate to promote children’s protection have been laid out in the Child Protection Minimum Standard (CPMS) Pillar 4:

For the purposes of this evidence review, the term “child protection-sensitive” is used as per the inception report, as an umbrella term to refer to education programs that included a consideration of child protection risks in their design and implementation.

| Ways of working | Sector Implications | Aim |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Child protection mainstreaming | Sector-specific actions taken within a specific sector | To promote a safe, dignified, and protective environment and to improve the impact of all humanitarian actors by applying the do no harm principle and proactively reducing risks and harm. |
| Joint programming | Sectors maintain their own sector’s objectives while jointly planning and implementing certain aspects of their activities. | To achieve a protection outcome alongside outcomes for other sectors while optimizing resources, access, operational capacity, etc. |
| Integration (integrated programming) | Favoring collective over sector-specific planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. A holistic understanding of child well-being is the starting point for action, with sectoral specialties being used to meet that goal. | To achieve collective outcomes for children through deliberate, joint assessment, goal setting, planning, implementation, and monitoring across sectors. |

¹ Definitions taken from the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) and the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action position paper *Collaboration Across Child Protection in Humanitarian Action and Education in Emergencies* (2020).

INTRODUCTION

In 2013, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) made a statement on the “Centrality of Protection,”² placing protection at the core of humanitarian action. The statement recognizes that all preparedness and humanitarian response actions need to incorporate a consideration of protection risks to be effective and to uphold the rights of communities affected by crises. Building upon this commitment, the IASC *Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action 2016* further highlights the significance of protection as a system-wide, collective responsibility of all humanitarian actors, rather than a siloed concern of the protection sector. Secondly, it emphasizes the achievement of meaningful protection outcomes as part of a shared cross-sectoral mandate, even while delivering sector-specific activities.

The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (the Alliance) has laid out its strategy for 2021-25 in the *A Clarion Call, the Centrality of Children and their Protection within Humanitarian Action*, which reaffirms the centrality of protection and well-being as part of a holistic response for children. This includes a strategic objective to prioritize cross-sector collaboration, within multi-sectoral and integrated programs and across all humanitarian action.

This evidence review is the result of ongoing efforts by the Alliance and global humanitarian actors to articulate effective ways of collaborating across sectors. The global Child Protection Minimum Standards (CPMS) Working Group, under which this review was commissioned, is looking at how the Child Protection sector can best collaborate and strengthen its partnerships with others, specifically: education, health, camp coordination and camp management, and food security. The review has also received technical support from the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), and the joint INEE-Alliance CPHA-EiE Advisory Group.

This evidence review was commissioned as a rapid exercise with two overarching objectives, as per the initial inception report:

- To collate and document child protection and well-being outcomes of child protection-sensitive education programs.
- To collate and document outcomes and implications of education programs that did not include or consider child protection.

² IASC, *The Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action - Statement by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Principals* (2013).

LINKS BETWEEN EDUCATION AND CHILD PROTECTION

Child Protection Minimum Standard for Education (Standard 23): All children have access to quality education that is **protective** and **inclusive** and that **promotes dignity and participation** throughout all essential activities.

This evidence review is situated within an emerging joint policy framework between the EiE and CP sectors. There is already an established rationale for coordination and for including child protection concerns within education in emergencies programming which has been formally explored by the Alliance as well as INEE³. There are also both established and emerging examples of joint and integrated programming across EiE and CP, aimed at improving outcomes for each sector.

According to the Alliance, “**Integrating child protection and education creates a mutually reinforcing cycle that can reduce children’s vulnerability in emergencies.** A quality education increases children and families’ resilience in adversity, empowers children and promotes a protective environment. An environment free from unchecked child abuse, neglect, violence, or exploitation fosters quality education. Integrating child protection and education programs, policies and minimum standards maximizes available resources to better address the multifaceted challenges and risks children face in humanitarian settings.”⁴

Some of the key findings from the joint INEE-Alliance position paper on *Collaboration Across Child Protection and Education in Emergencies* are the following:

- There is evidence that integrating child protection programming into education programs can not only help mitigate protection risks, but also improve overall child

well-being and lead to better educational outcomes (including enrolment, retention, and academic performance).

- Joint and integrated programming can be cost-effective in some contexts, particularly if it prevents duplication of efforts.
- Evidence of the added value of joint or integrated programming in crisis contexts exists but is currently limited.
- Schools and other learning centers (formal and informal) may not always be protective, and in fact may exacerbate child protection risks.⁵

While integrated programming has merits, it is important to recognize that it is not always appropriate if not adequately resourced, designed and monitored to mitigate potential risks. A role also remains for each sector to offer specialized expertise in supporting different aspects of children’s well-being and addressing their needs in accordance with their evolving capacities.

When thinking about how a **child protection-sensitive lens** can be applied to EiE, it is not necessarily about education actors implementing protection-specific activities, “but thinking about how every activity has a positive impact on protection for children.”⁶ Applying the lens of well-being for children – physical and psychosocial – the task for both sectors is to determine “how to work together systematically, based on complementarity and to achieve collective outcomes for children.”⁷

In terms of existing tools at the global level,

- The **CPMS** provide comprehensive guidelines for including the lens of child protection in an education response. They draw upon and add to the practical guidelines in the **INEE Minimum Standards for Education**,

³ The Alliance & INEE, *Position Paper on Collaboration Across Child Protection and Education in Emergencies* (2020); Global Education Cluster, *Thematic Paper on Violence Against Children*.

⁴ The Alliance, *Advocacy Brief: Integrating Child Protection and Education in Humanitarian Action* (2018).

⁵ INEE and the Alliance, *Position Paper: Collaboration Across Child Protection in Humanitarian Action and Education in Emergencies* (2020), 27.

⁶ Global KII

⁷ The Alliance, *Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action* (2019), 248.

particularly under Domain 2, “Access and Learning Environments.”

- The Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CPAoR) and Global Education Cluster (GEC) have set out a **Framework for CP-EiE Collaboration**, which includes detailed guidance regarding the process of coordination at different levels in order to utilize resources efficiently: needs assessment and analysis; strategic response planning; resource mobilization; and joint implementation, monitoring and evaluation.⁸ Successful coordination at these stages can help avoid duplication and complement efforts to contribute to joint outcomes. Promising practices are currently being documented for a CPHA-EiE Framework Package.⁹

- For children in conflict-affected and fragile states in particular, a **Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism** (MRM) exists to report on grave violations against children, and enhance accountability of both state and non-state actors in protecting children.¹⁰ It includes attacks on schools and hospitals as one of six grave violations.

One gap that has been identified in global documents is that they often lack robust and diverse case studies or illustrative examples capturing country-based analysis and learning.¹¹ **This evidence review is one step towards filling this gap.** It seeks to inform the current discourse at the global level by taking a closer look at country-level programming and extracting lessons from practice across diverse contexts.

⁸ Global Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CPAoR), *CP-EiE Collaboration Framework* (2019). <https://www.cpaor.net/initiatives/child-protection-and-education-emergencies-cp-eie>

⁹ GEC and GPC documents regarding *Promising Practices and Resources from Country Cluster*, Steps 1-4

¹⁰ *Monitoring and Reporting on Grave Violations*. <https://www.mrmtools.org/index.html>

¹¹ From: *Inception Report for EiE-CPHA Evidence Review*

METHODOLOGY

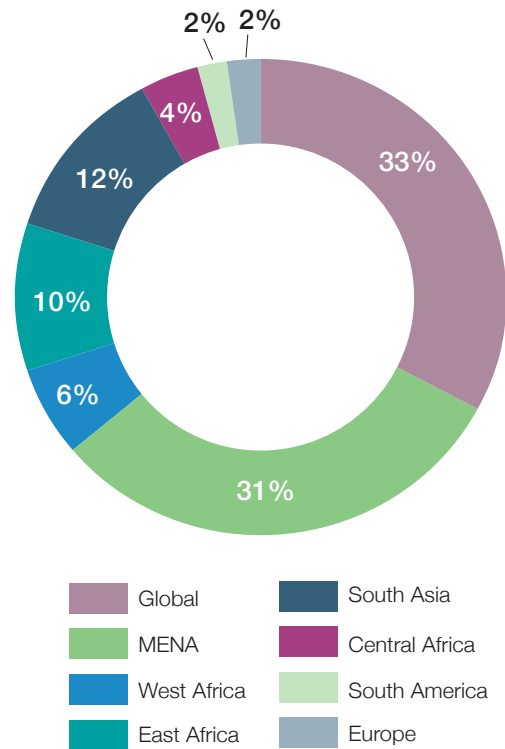
The search for evidence was informed by the tables in Appendix 1, adapted from the inception report for the review and with a particular emphasis on grey literature. In order to add value to the ongoing work at the global level, the evidence review has a distinct focus on extracting lessons from **country-level education responses** and – where possible – the level of the **school or learning space**. Resources were identified through:

- **Review of materials from professional networks** such as INEE; the Alliance; Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA); Moving Minds Alliance; ALNAP; Global Education Cluster.
- **Review of relevant online platforms and blogs** such as the Harvard REACH Initiative, UKFIET, ReliefWeb.
- **Review of organizational resource banks** such as Save the Children, International Rescue Committee, Plan International, Norwegian Refugee Council.
- **Prioritizing (and combining) search terms:** education in emergencies, child protection, child well-being, resilience, trauma, psychosocial support, MHPSS, SEL, integrated response, teacher well-being, refugee, IDP.
- **Covering a range of contexts:** acute emergencies, protracted crises, natural disasters, complex emergencies, urban and rural.
- **Targeted outreach** for example to academics working on student or teacher well-being, or to those piloting innovative solutions such as in the realm of playful learning.

The chart gives an idea of the regions covered by the 48 sources, with the “global” category of documents including global-level program reports, frameworks and widely applicable tools.

Key Informants (KIs) were identified with a view to obtaining a range of perspectives from diverse geographies, and in particular incorporating feedback

from country program staff or local organizations. They were identified with the support of colleagues at the INEE and the CPHA-EiE Advisory Group.



| Level | Countries | No. of interviewees |
|-----------------|--|---------------------|
| Global | | 2 |
| Country (INGO) | Tanzania, Somalia, Turkey, South Sudan | 7 |
| Country (Local) | Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Syria, Afghanistan | 3 |

Some of the limitations of this review are the following:

- Although one of the review’s objectives was to examine outcomes of education programs that did not include child protection, it was challenging to determine these from the literature alone. EiE documents framed without a child protection-sensitive lens would focus exclusively on academic outcomes without providing a complete picture of protection

concerns. However, KIs were sometimes able to share their experience of how education programs could impact children's well-being.

- Evaluation in humanitarian programming is complex, often due to the rapidly changing nature of crises. It was easier to come across planning and process documentation, like country strategies, than evaluations. In addition, most available programmatic documents or reports were framed in terms of outputs, e.g., the number of training activities delivered, rather than well-being outcomes or data at the impact level.
- While the grey literature review covered a range of geographies, it was decided at the outset to focus the review on regions where challenges could be compounded by resource constraints, fragility, and the experience of protracted crises. However, it was noted that there is a shortage of data regarding education and well-being outcomes for newly arrived children in Europe – an area that merits further exploration. There is some research on experiences of longer-term refugee integration in North American schools, but it has not been examined closely as part of this review.
- Due to time and language constraints, we could not interview KIs from the Americas.

EDUCATION AND CHILD PROTECTION – REINFORCING WELL-BEING OUTCOMES

According to the Child Protection Minimum Standards, integrated programming and applying a child protection-sensitive lens to programs could result in the following desired well-being outcomes:¹²

- Increased resilience
- Psychological, cognitive, and physical development supported
- Protection risks mitigated
- Positive peer relationships and social cohesion supported
- Essential socio-emotional skills, children’s capacities and confidence supported

Additional education outcomes with CP links are:

- Improved learning outcomes and progress in education
- Improved retention and transition in school from year to year

Defining “protection risks” that can be mitigated by the school space and environment can be a challenging process due to the range of vulnerabilities that emerge for children in crises.¹³

All EiE programs in essence have a protective dimension and contribute to children’s well-

being, by providing a link with educational experiences in the past, a space for positive interaction with peers, and hope for a better future. CP and EiE outcomes are also intertwined in multiple ways – child labor and early marriage, for instance, are CP risks that also pose challenges for retention in education; but once children are in education, the school space has the potential to mitigate risks and impact the trajectory taken by the child.

To address complexity and draw boundaries around its scope, this evidence review looks at a selection of the main protection risks addressed by an education response, as identified within the literature as well as by Key Informants (KIs). There was a particular effort to identify programs that incorporate Socioemotional Learning (SEL) or Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) components to reinforce well-being outcomes. These were considered areas of global inquiry and interest and were specifically requested by the evidence review technical support team.

The following table lays out some of the main protection risks that emerged in the evidence, and maps them against the guidance provided in the CPMS and INEE Minimum Standards, which can either arise in — or be addressed within — formal and informal spaces of learning:

| Main Protection Risks Identified in Evidence | Crisis context | Response as per CPMS and INEE Minimum Standards | Cross-cutting considerations |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Physical safety – schools and school routes under attack including other grave violations | Active conflict, protracted conflict | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish schools and learning spaces in safe locations, close to the populations they serve. • Monitor violence and risks of assault along access routes. • Ensure learning environments are free from military occupation and attack. • Advocate with national governments to endorse and implement the Safe Schools Declaration. • Use the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict. | Community consultation and active participation |

¹² Drawn from Standard 23: Education and Child Protection, CPMS (2019), page 247.

¹³ From global-level KIs.

| Main Protection Risks Identified in Evidence | Crisis context | Response as per CPMS and INEE Minimum Standards | Cross-cutting considerations |
|---|--|---|------------------------------|
| Recruitment into armed groups and armed forces | Active conflict, protracted conflict | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish schools and learning spaces in safe locations. Implement multisectoral services for response in terms of release and reintegration, and support community level prevention strategies. | |
| Sexual and gender-based violence | All phases of conflict, aftermath of natural disaster | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop multisectoral referral pathways and train education workers on how to identify and safely refer children. Support safe and confidential reporting and response mechanisms. Establish data protection and information sharing protocols and train all frontline workers. Establish codes of conduct for teachers and other personnel. Increase the number of adult women in the learning environment to reassure female learners. Monitor and mitigate risks of harassment and physical or sexual assault on the way to and from school with the support of education and child protection actors, children, caregivers, and communities. | |
| Negative coping mechanisms linked to economic vulnerability: early marriage and child labor | Protracted conflict, natural disaster | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop multisectoral referral pathways and train education and protection workers on how to safely refer children with protection needs. Implement school-based health and nutrition services | |
| Trauma and mental health conditions | All phases of conflict, protracted crises, aftermath of natural disaster | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop multisectoral referral pathways and train education workers on how to safely refer children with physical or mental health or other protection needs. Train staff and teachers in psychological first aid; social and emotional learning; gender- and disability-sensitive approaches; positive discipline; and participatory methods. | |

| Main Protection Risks Identified in Evidence | Crisis context | Response as per CPMS and INEE Minimum Standards | Cross-cutting considerations |
|--|--|--|------------------------------|
| Peer violence and bullying | All phases of conflict, protracted crises, aftermath of natural disaster | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement risk assessments. Distribute information about codes of conduct, school policies and child-friendly feedback and reporting mechanisms to children, caregivers, and the community. Put in place safe, user-friendly reporting and referral pathways. Respond in a safe, timely and ethical way to reports of maltreatment committed by education workers, students, or others. | |

The next section takes a closer look at how these standards are applied in practice, and what has worked to mitigate urgent protection concerns.

When considering how the inclusion of a child protection-sensitive lens in education can impact well-being outcomes, two main streams emerged to frame the lessons from practice:

- **Schools¹⁴ as Spaces of Safety** – mitigating protection concerns regarding physical harm to children, which in turn impact mental health and well-being.
- **Schools as Spaces of Healing** – exploring the potential of learning environments to support children to recover from the trauma of displacement, loss, or violence; or to address chronic stressors including poverty in the aftermath of a crisis.

While the following sections of this report focus on programming within educational spaces, it is important to acknowledge that these spaces do not exist in isolation. A holistic socio-ecological approach¹⁵ situates the individual child within the wider contexts of family, community, society, and socio-cultural norms. Within this model there is a role for the school or informal learning space to act as a point of connection with families and communities. Working with parents and caregivers to ensure a continuum of protection, including safety from violence at home, is a crucial part of addressing risks to learning, development, and physical and psychosocial well-being across different contexts.

¹⁴ In these two streams, “school” means all learning environments in emergencies (including formal schools but also non-formal schools and temporary learning spaces)

¹⁵ CPMS Pillar 3, Standard 14: Applying a socio-ecological approach to child protection programming.

EDUCATION AND CHILD PROTECTION IN CRISES – LESSONS FROM PRACTICE

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Schools as spaces of safety

Spaces of learning serve a protective function, but proactively working towards — and ensuring the sanctity of — these spaces is paramount. Physical safety in crises came up repeatedly as a top priority for practitioners.

To address violence within schools, it is not enough to put in place standards and codes of conduct for teachers and children — behavioural change requires constant follow-up.

Schools as spaces of healing

Formal and non-formal learning environments have a role in promoting recovery from past trauma as well as the resilience to cope with ongoing stress.

Teachers or trained volunteers can play a frontline role in identifying child protection concerns, providing some level of psychosocial support and acting as crucial points of referral for specialized protection and mental health support.

Playful learning, particularly when it draws upon traditional games, songs or dances can help provide children with relief, reinforce belonging and boost motivation.

Integrated programming examples include

- Reimagining child-friendly spaces to serve as a bridge between education and protection, especially for out-of-school children.

- Offering tailored solutions for context-specific vulnerabilities within education spaces, including SGBV.

SCHOOLS AS SPACES OF SAFETY

“The school protects us; we protect the school.”

*Printed Instruction from Iraq Operational Guidance
Note: The use of schools, educational facilities, and temporary learning centers as shelter*

The physical protection offered by schools needs to be acknowledged and intentionally reinforced by stakeholders across the spectrum. Physical protection risks came up as the primary concern for contexts involving active or prolonged conflict, in the literature as well as the KI interviews at the country level.

Schools may serve a protective function – in a Save the Children report documenting the voices of refugee and displaced children in Ethiopia and DRC, school was perceived as “the safest place a child could be.” In Masisi (DRC), more than 90% of the boys consulted said being in school made it less likely to be recruited by an armed group. According to one boy, “the militia don’t come here – they can’t make you carry bags for them while you are in school.”¹⁶

Schools can also serve as protective spaces for children when households are under stress. This was observed globally during the extraordinary time of the COVID-19 pandemic, when sudden school closures led to a rise in protection risks including domestic abuse, neglect, sexual and gender-based violence,

¹⁶ Save the Children & Norwegian Refugee Council, *Hear It From The Children – Why Education In Emergencies Is Critical* (2014), 10.

and vulnerability to hazardous and exploitative labor due to strained economic circumstances.¹⁷ Beyond the consideration of learning losses, when making policy decisions, education authorities had to weigh the protection and well-being-related risks of keeping schools physically closed against those of infectious disease transmission.¹⁸

Addressing Violence Against Schools

At the same time, proactively **ensuring the sanctity of the school space is paramount**. The literature on Education Under Attack shows how the targeting of schools by armed groups can cause lasting harm

to children, with the school becoming the center of traumatic experiences. The following testimony from a child in DRC illustrates how the school space can be targeted and violated in armed conflict, in the absence of protective measures:

“The militia came to my school. They did not want the schools to be open. They wanted to recruit students for their militia. Some of the students were forced to join them. Others went willingly. The first day they came, they took nine girls away and six boys. Of the nine girls, some were killed, others raped... None of the [girls] came back to school.”¹⁹

What happens in the absence of a child protection-sensitive response?

Schools fail to address recruitment by armed groups, or to disrupt the impact of violent or extreme ideologies. One KI from an active-conflict context shared that the reality of education in rural areas was that children would be recruited by militant groups and bring guns to school with impunity due to the local power exercised by these groups. The same students who “graduated from university as engineers” were, in parallel, members of armed militias.

School teachers and students are wholly unprepared for attacks on schools. School staff and students described the lack of any warning before attacks on schools, lack of training around risks or guidance around protocols and response (GCPEA, 2019).

Children drop out of education, if parents are concerned about safety in or on the way to school. This is particularly true for girls. In a GCPEA study on the impact of attacks on education in Kasai Central Province, DRC, girls were used as human shields by militias and were targeted for sexual violence. The fear of assault at or on the way to school was a deterrent for parents to continue education for daughters (GCPEA, 2019).

Schools and learning spaces add violence and abuse to children’s lives. Learning environments can exacerbate risks for children. In the absence of protective measures, teachers can become a source of risks through practices like corporal punishment, discrimination and abuse. Similarly, refugee or displaced children’s experiences of violent conflict resolution or exclusion with peers can undermine the role of the learning space in mitigating mental health concerns (KI, Somalia).

¹⁷ The Alliance & INEE, *No Education, No Protection: What school closures under COVID-19 mean for children and young people in crisis-affected contexts* (2021).

¹⁸ See: *No Education, No Protection* and *Frameworks for Safe Reopening of Schools*, e.g., from Iraq Education Cluster, (2020).

¹⁹ Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), *A Decade of Safeguarding Education in Armed Conflict*, (2020).

To bring in a sensitivity to such CP concerns, existing minimum standards guidance from the Alliance and INEE emphasize:

- The safety of school locations and access routes, and consultation with the community to monitor risks.
- The Safe Schools Declaration and associated guidelines as one way of ensuring that governments take responsibility for protecting schools from attack and military use. The evidence shows that this can lead to action – for instance, when the Ministry of Education of Afghanistan called on security forces to evacuate schools, this led to a significant decline in military use of schools between 2016 and 2020.²⁰

In the presence of greater structural forces and hazards including natural disaster and armed conflict, additional steps are needed at different levels of policy and programming. One useful example of addressing violence related to schools in a structured, integrated way is Save the Children's Safe Schools Common Approach. This weaves together Comprehensive School Safety (a multi-agency approach to reducing risks to the education sector), Schools as Zones of Peace (programs to protect children facing disruption due to attacks on education), and Violence Free Schools (programs to prevent and respond to violence against children in and around schools).²¹

Some measures for ensuring schools are spaces of safety emphasized by KIs were:

- **The need for school safety plans** and better communication around them, so that teachers and school administrators would know how to respond in an emergency. This includes response to attack, but also disaster

risk reduction plans. As the KI from DRC shared, "I was asking myself: how is it possible to conduct an education program in an area where armed groups are active, but there is no risk reduction plan?" In the same context there are risks posed by an active volcano, repeated flooding, and infectious diseases like Ebola.

- **Coordination with multiple actors to reinforce protection** – the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), for instance, is not a traditional provider of EIE or a formal part of the Education Cluster. However, one role it plays as a neutral, impartial, and independent actor in the ecosystem is that of enabling safe access, through dialogue with government as well as negotiations with non-state armed groups.
- **The need for education actors to engage with stakeholders able to address recruitment by children.** Engaging, as an example, local religious scholars whose opinion would be held as valid and not externally imposed by INGOs can help redefine how the school space is perceived, its sanctity upheld, and how education can impact the trajectory of children at risk of recruitment by armed groups based on ideology.²²

Addressing Violence in Schools

Preserving the idea of school as safe from violence also means ensuring that children are protected from violence and abuse by those within it, including education personnel and other children. The environment of the learning space can impact children's relationship with education either positively or negatively. This is particularly relevant for children facing violence, discrimination, or challenges due to their identity, or refugee or IDP status.

²⁰ Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), *A Decade of Safeguarding Education in Armed Conflict* (2020).

²¹ Save the Children, *Safe Schools Common Approach Proposal* (2020), 6.

²² KI (anonymous)

What happens in the absence of a child protection-sensitive response?

Corporal punishment or harsh treatment, including discrimination or shaming from teachers can compound the challenges faced by children and become a cause of dropout.

According to a KI from Somalia, “IDP children often don’t have uniforms. Some teachers might call them IDPs in class.” As role models and figures of authority, teachers can have an impact on children’s perceptions of themselves and of other children around them.

The way children are treated by peers can impact attendance and retention in school.

When highlighting significant issues for children, 62% of teachers in Lebanon reported bullying and discrimination in both the classroom and on the way to school as a cause for some parents to take their children out of school. Bullying and discrimination were also among the most reported problems facing refugee students in Jordan, and key barriers to education in other countries with high urban refugee populations (Hear it From the Teachers, 27).

Physical violence, abuse or discrimination in schools can impact mental health as well as academic motivation and performance. Bullying or discrimination can exacerbate risks of anxiety, depression, aggression, and lower motivation to attend or do well in school (Hear it From the Teachers, 27).

Some school-level strategies to address these issues, identified in the CPMS and INEE Minimum Standards, reinforced by practitioners were:

- The introduction of standards and codes of conduct within schools, including measures like bans on corporal punishment.
- Safe and user-friendly mechanisms for reporting and redress, e.g., anonymous suggestion boxes at the school level opened only by the head teacher and parents committee representatives on a weekly basis.²³

While the introduction of safeguarding standards and codes of conduct in schools came up as a widely adopted practice, there was a lack of evidence around impact. However, it was clear that policies and standards cannot be stand-alone if norms of violence are to be subverted. In addition, one-off trainings are not enough, and even with additional capacity building the “number of training activities delivered”, as reported in program documents, is not a sufficient indicator of impact: actual behavioral change takes time and sustained support.

- For teachers who see corporal punishment as the “only language a child understands,”²⁴ providing training in a practical set of alternative responses or positive discipline strategies is key. Some of the most effective strategies applied by teachers could be classified as “**proactive classroom management strategies**,”²⁵ that is, techniques used to engage students and limit disruptive behavior in the classroom, thereby pre-empting some of the circumstances that could lead to physical punishment. The provision of training and support in using such pedagogical tools and positive discipline response strategies is an important accompaniment to the enforcement of teacher codes of conduct.
- **Child rights clubs and peer support mechanisms** were mentioned as effective solutions that engage children to participate in and strengthen protective measures. In the Somalia example, the KI shared that children can be trained to identify protection risks faced by friends, and even empowered to report on teachers’ discriminatory behavior.

²³ KI, Somalia

²⁴ Mendenhall, M., et al., “Teachers as agents of change: positive discipline for inclusive classrooms in Kakuma refugee camp” in *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 25(2), (2021), 150.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 158.

However, one of the key learnings as shared by the KI from Turkey was that both children and adults need support to set up and sustain these processes. “The children were great,” from experience, but follow-up is required by teams to make sure that the mechanisms for addressing complaints are functioning well – whether those involve referring challenges to teachers, parent committees or school management.²⁶

The role of teacher training in reinforcing protection and well-being outcomes is further explored in the next section.

SCHOOLS AS SPACES OF HEALING

“We have seen cases of children with concentration or comprehension problems. We have a girl who even when she is listening carefully is not able to grasp the information properly. Some students are aggressive towards others. We try to dedicate extra time and effort to them. For the girl, for example, we try to repeat the point and try to engage her in the exercises. You have to say her name every two or five minutes to make sure she is still mentally present.”
*Ragheb, Palestinian Homework Support Group teacher in Lebanon*²⁷

Research in neuroscience has shown that the ‘toxic stress’ response that can be generated by adversity for children in crisis settings can inhibit their brain development, impacting their physical and mental health, cognition, behavior, and relationships with others.²⁸ There is a strong case for the role of formal and non-formal learning spaces as one of healing from the trauma of disruption, displacement, loss, or of witnessing or experiencing violence. In a study, 75% of Save the Children teachers identified refugee students’ psychosocial well-being as a significant concern in their classrooms, manifested in behaviors ranging from withdrawn to hostile, distracted from learning and unable to concentrate or remember, with intrusive memories of traumatic events.²⁹ The realities of re-entering education or learning after

disruption can also present challenges. For instance, Syrian refugee children in Lebanese schools who were older than expected for their grade level had poorer working memory and self-control than those who were closer to the typical age for their grade.³⁰

The joint well-being outcomes articulated in the CPMS draw on the potential for learning environments to be built as healing and restorative spaces. Both MHPSS and SEL interventions have a role in supporting children to **recover** from past trauma while also building the **resilience** to cope with ongoing stress and uncertainty; build positive peer relationships, and boost children’s ‘capacities and confidence.’ They also have a role in preventing both education and protection concerns, by mitigating risks like drop-out for children. However, some challenges arise when demonstrating the impact of such interventions, with much of the data in the literature as well as the KIs being anecdotal.

Some key strategies through which spaces of learning can become spaces of healing are:

1. **Teacher training and support.** Some areas of teacher training identified by the Alliance in the CPMS are **Psychological first aid; Social and emotional learning (SEL); Gender- and disability-sensitive approaches; positive discipline;** and **participatory methods.** These were reiterated in most of the literature as well as KIs interviews, in particular training teachers and other education personnel to offer basic psychosocial support to children and to identify cases requiring referrals to specialized support.

An additional area of consideration for teacher support, to enhance the learning experience for children, would be the intentional inclusion of **empathetic pedagogical practices** in classrooms, taking the reality of learners into account – what have been termed “pedagogies of predictability, pedagogies of explaining, pedagogies of fairness (supporting them to navigate the inequities experienced in their education and opportunities) and pedagogies of care (including listening, kindness and

²⁶ KI, Turkey

²⁷ Hear it from the Teachers, 5.

²⁸ IRC, *IRC’s Healing Classrooms Helping Children Learn and Thrive in Times of Crisis* (2018); Kim, H. Y., Brown, L., Tubbs Dolan, C., Sheridan, M., & Aber, J. L., “Post-migration risks, developmental processes, and learning among Syrian refugee children in Lebanon” in *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* (2020).

²⁹ Hear it from the Teachers, 13.

³⁰ Kim, H. Y., Brown, L., NYU-TIES, “Disruptions to schooling: Lessons from refugees experience in Lebanon”, *INEE Blog*.

Promising Practices: Evidence-based programming for MHPSS-SEL

One model that stands out is IRC's "**Healing Classroom**", developed and refined over three decades to create nurturing spaces and build children's socioemotional skills in conjunction with literacy and numeracy skills. This has shown a demonstrable positive impact on children's academic skills as well as their interaction with peers, although not always on mental health. A recent research partnership with NYU-TIES has systematically explored the impact of adding specific components including mindfulness and "brain games" to the Healing Classroom model across different contexts (IRC, 3EA-EiE Global Brief, 2021).

Another example is NRC's "**Better Learning**" program, developed to address acute psycho-educational needs of children affected by conflict-induced trauma in the Gaza Strip and with potential application across sudden-onset emergencies and protracted crises. While the link with academic outcomes is less clear, this model increased concentration and academic motivation and improved self-regulation. One mother described how, "*now when my daughter wakes up with a nightmare, she knows how to deal with it through the relaxation exercises, and she is able to support herself better.*" The stories of most significant change analyzed in the Better Learning program evaluation (2017) present a rare example of clearly articulated impact on well-being, for an MHPSS intervention.

welcome)."³¹ Another lens that may be useful to investigate and apply is that of **trauma-informed care** – "investing material and relational resources into helping each learner feel safe, seen, and heard."³²

Teachers support should also enable them to access strategies for their own well-being, so they can better respond to the needs of children.³³ Teachers who may come from refugee or displaced backgrounds themselves may be facing similar challenges as the children, while dealing with the occupational stress of overcrowded classrooms with diverse and sometimes overage students and adapting to new curricula and standards. To provide psychosocial support or counselling to children in addition to their academic duties, teachers must also have avenues for support.

2. **Schools as sites for referrals and access to specialized support.** Having multisectoral referral pathways, as recommended in both sets of Minimum Standards, entails direct links with child protection actors and systems, with teachers (both formal and volunteers) being frontline workers equipped with the knowledge and tools to make appropriate referrals. This came up repeatedly as an effective practice in the literature, with referrals being accompanied

by case management where resources and infrastructure allowed.

3. **Offering space to play. Play can be a powerful tool for both education and CP practitioners.** Drawing upon age-appropriate traditional games, dances, songs, or stories in playful learning initiatives can help teach new skills and content while reinforcing a sense of **belonging**, raising motivation and providing respite from stressors – thereby reinforcing both mental health and academic objectives. At the early learning level, play provides important stimuli for brain development and can aid the development of early literacy, numeracy, motor and socioemotional skills. Employing playful methods for older children can also be a way of creating camaraderie and cohesion between different ethnic groups, or refugee and host communities in mixed settings. As shared by the KI from DRC, "We see that when we bring games to schools, children are very happy, especially girls. When we bring game materials to schools, children stay in school because they don't have those opportunities at home... sometimes from school they have to go help their father with agricultural activities, sometimes they have challenges like that. They have the opportunity to discuss, to play and to create new relationships when they are playing."

³¹ Dryden-Peterson, Chopra, V., Talhouk, J., & Geha, C., *We See You: What Syrian Refugee Students Wish Their Teachers Knew* (2021). Refugee REACH Initiative, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

³² Kurian, Nomisha, "My Teachers Didn't Notice: Nurturing The Well-Being Of Internally Displaced Children Through Trauma-Informed Education", *UKFIET Blog* (2022).

³³ Mendenhall, M., "Teachers as agents of change" (2021).

Emerging Practice - Reimagining the “Child-Friendly Space”

In examples of joint and integrated programming, a concept that came up repeatedly was that of the Child Friendly Space (CFS), reimagined. This originally emerged as a stop-gap child protection measure to provide a safe space for recreation and relief in the urgent aftermath of an emergency. The CFS in this form serves an immediate but limited purpose, which may need to be revisited at

various phases of the response regarding its continued contribution to learning and well-being outcomes for children. In the INEE Position Paper, for instance, “the overriding concern (for KIs) is that in many cases the establishment of CFS becomes an end in itself.”

However, in the emerging examples of joint and integrated programming, the CFS can serve as an important bridge between education and protection. For instance, incorporating **early childhood** or **alternative learning** activities for older children within the CFS can allow it to play the crucial role of **reaching out to out-of-school children**, and serving as a point of connection with and referral to formal learning. In a cross-country analysis from the Moving Minds Alliance that looked at case studies from Jordan, Bangladesh, and Uganda, incorporating early childhood development programs in CFS was highlighted as a promising practice, also representing an opportunity for engaging parents to promote positive caregiving and nurturing care. Conversely, there were examples of CFS being established within schools to provide a space to play, structured psychosocial support, and referrals for specialized child protection support, addressing risks from child labor to mental health concerns.

One powerful example of integrated programming was the “**Makani**” space established by UNICEF Jordan and partners. This emerged after an evaluation revealed that while psychosocial support in CFSs had a positive impact for underserved refugee children, their long-term impact was limited by the children’s inability to attend school. Makani centers offered a combination of child protection, psychosocial support, life skills as well as education through learning support services. It evolved as an example of an inter-agency, multisectoral response offering additional access to WASH and hygiene facilities; referrals to specialized services to respond to child protection and gender-based violence cases; and opportunities for both host and refugee community engagement around key education and protection concerns for children.

Some concerns around Makani emerged when it began to be seen as an alternative to formal education rather than a child protection response, eliciting concern from education authorities. Again, the response was to pivot, take the opportunity to advocate for enrolment of out-of-school refugee children, and work more closely with the formal education system in Jordan. In the next stage of the Makani program, UNICEF and partners are piloting the hosting of activities on school premises, to provide additional support for children and families after school hours.

*Sources: RTI for Moving Minds Alliance, “Case Studies on Addressing Early Childhood in Three Host Country Contexts - Cross-Country Analysis” (2020). For information on Makani, see The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, *Child Protection and Education - “Makani (“My Space”) Approach in Jordan: Integrating child protection, education, youth empowerment and psychosocial support for Syrian Children* (CPMS Mainstreaming Case Studies Series).*

Emerging Practice – Playful Learning and Well-Being

“Art is very important to the Rohingya community. Given a piece of paper and some crayons, children as young as two or three years old will sit down and patiently draw patterns that are often complex. Community members report that creating these floral patterns and motifs that are so specific to their culture gives these displaced children the feeling that home is never far away.”

The “**Humanitarian Play Lab**” (HPL) in Cox’s Bazaar draws upon BRAC’s experience of implementing playful learning programs in government schools as well as community spaces in Bangladesh, Tanzania, and Uganda. This integrates early childhood programming with child protection, psychosocial support, and links to critical services while engaging with communities to include relevant rhymes, games, and cultural traditions. There is a tiered system for mental health support, beginning with locally recruited volunteer para-counsellors working together with “play leaders”, and more complex cases being referred to mental health professionals. The HPL operates within Child Friendly Spaces, with the 4-6 cohort being supported to achieve traditional academic outcomes. At the same time, traditional games and physical activities support healing from trauma, build resilience and “bring out the children’s spontaneity and joyfulness.”

In process documentation, there was emphasis on capacity building, support, and handholding for para-counsellors – female volunteers between the ages of 19-25, recruited to provide frontline support. There was also a concerted effort to include mothers and engage them in parenting sessions, to better understand and address the socioemotional and developmental needs of their children.

Sources: Mariam, E., Ahmad, J., & Sarwar, S. S., *BRAC Humanitarian Play Lab Model: Promoting Healing, Learning, and Development for Rohingya Children*. *Journal on Education in Emergencies*, 7(1) (2021), 96. <https://doi.org/10.33682/u72g-v5me>. Rahman, A., Khaled, N., & Afsana, K., *Documenting Integration of Mental Health with Early Childhood Development Intervention (Draft)* (2021).

4. **Offering tailored solutions for particular vulnerabilities.** Every aspect of a child’s identity – gender, age, ethnicity; refugee, IDP or stateless status; and experience of conflict, disaster or displacement in an urban or rural context – can create specific vulnerabilities and protection risks.³⁴ For both education and CP practitioners, mapping out and prioritizing the risks that can be addressed through an educational space for vulnerable groups in a particular context is a vital part of ensuring that both learning and well-being outcomes are achieved.³⁵ One way of

going about this could be by having “children’s protection checklists”³⁶ for schools, with CP and EiE practitioners actively working together.

For instance, there are repeated accounts of dropout of adolescent girls when their vulnerabilities were not addressed. In the context of armed conflict and sexual and gender-based violence, virtually everyone interviewed by GCPEA in 2019 reported that victims of rape would rarely return to school because of the shame they felt – while those who tried to return faced terrible bullying and social exclusion.³⁷

³⁴ For examples of challenges faced by unregistered refugees in informal urban settlements, see: Ansari, M., *Cities for Children - Refugees in Towns Project Islamabad Case Study* (2019). <https://www.refugeesintowns.org/all-reports/islamabad>

³⁵ See the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action’s Primary Prevention initiative, in particular the *Primary Prevention Framework for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action*.

³⁶ Zimbabwe education cluster; KI in Turkey.

³⁷ Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), “*ALL THAT I HAVE LOST*” *Impact of Attacks on Education for Women and Girls in Kasai Central Province Democratic Republic of Congo* (2019).

Emerging Practice: Integrated Programming for Vulnerable Girls

Plan International with funding from ECHO is implementing Integrated Child Protection and Emergency Education Response for vulnerable children in Yei, South Sudan (2019). The aim of the EiE program is to provide certified education opportunities for out-of-school youth aged 12-18 who have never been enrolled in school or have missed more than one year of formal primary schooling.

Activities focus on adolescent girls and young women, including those who were forced into marriage as well as children/youth associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAFAAG). The CP component is ensuring that overall psychosocial well-being is improved through access to age-

appropriate, gender-sensitive child protection services and enhanced access to education. Some key features are:

Childcare facilities established within schools, so young mothers could attend lessons.

Protection helpdesks in supported schools, especially for girls and young women who experienced SGBV. For these, designated focal persons are trained on confidentiality, PSS and the referral pathway. The locations of the helpdesks are decided by the children or teachers to ensure confidentiality, and data protection protocols are in place. In addition, “teachers know their limitations” (KI) – their role is to provide basic PSS and link with case workers who are well trained to deal with more specialized cases, e.g., child survivors of violence, or child labor.

Child rights clubs for children to sensitize peers about their rights; provide a level of emotional support to friends and to identify or refer children with issues to teachers – “so that if they see a friend being abused, they know what to do.”

Menstruation hygiene management (MHM) sessions with adolescent girls and young women in schools. This included providing the skills to hand-make re-usable sanitary pads. School retention levels have increased since these were introduced.

As a measure of success of the integrated programming, **retention in education has nearly doubled its goal**, with the two-year project reaching about 9,000 children.

NB: With any such intervention, applying the principle of Do No Harm is paramount for both EiE and CPHA practitioners, to ensure that risks for vulnerable children are not exacerbated.

Sources: *Plan South Sudan project presentation on Integrated CPIE and Education Response Project in South Sudan. KI interviews, South Sudan.*

PERSISTING CHALLENGES

KEY TAKEAWAYS

There is a need for shared understanding around the scope of a “child protection-sensitive response” in education.

Measuring impact is a challenge in crisis contexts, often due to insecurity and mobility. There is also limited articulation of impact in terms of well-being outcomes, partly due to the lack of a shared understanding of how to define them and partly due to lack of human and material resources in many settings.

There is a need for culture-specific translation of international priorities like SEL and MHPSS.

While global guidance now emphasizes integration, practitioners have challenges in contextualizing and operationalizing this on the ground.

Teacher capacity and poor or missing incentives can be a barrier to the success of efforts like training or implementation of standards. Investing in teacher support, well-being and ongoing professional development is important to ensure longer term impact.

Some of the main challenges impeding smooth collaboration between EiE and CPHA were:

- **Lack of shared understanding of a “child protection-sensitive” approach.**
The complexity of the interaction between education and protection means that country-level KIs did not articulate a shared understanding of the scope of protection concerns that can be addressed within the school space. As shared by a global KI, “there will always be CP risks and responses that do not neatly fit within education processes. That means (the) need to create a framework to capture the area of inquiry.”³⁸
- **Articulating well-being outcomes.**
Across resources and KI interviews, **it was a challenge for practitioners to articulate impact in terms of well-being outcomes.** For MHPSS programming, impact was often measured in terms of number of training activities delivered to teachers and other personnel or, where available, number of cases referred to child protection actors, or even number of materials distributed. It was

more difficult to gauge the real impact of training within the learning environments, to determine if they led to behavioral change for teachers or positive outcomes for children.

Measuring impact in domains of well-being like resilience, socioemotional skills or mental health requires a level of human and material resource that is rarely available in crisis contexts.

“Evidence is a gap – there is not enough investment in it, in people who can gather it.”

KI, DRC

The path-breaking research partnership of the IRC with NYU-TIES has yielded some evidence regarding **SEL programming**³⁹, and there is a study underway to look at **how play impacts developmental outcomes**.⁴⁰ For **mental health** there are some instances of analysis of stories of “Most Significant Change.”⁴¹ There may also be lessons to draw from a recent research partnership of

³⁸ Global KI

³⁹ IRC, *Global Brief - 3EA - “The Impacts of Tutoring Informed by Social-Emotional Learning: An Analysis Across Crisis Contexts* (2021).

⁴⁰ Rahman, A., Khaled, N., & Afsana, K., *Documenting Integration of Mental Health with Early Childhood Development Intervention (Draft)* (2021).

⁴¹ Shah, R., *Improving Children’s Well-being: An Evaluation Of NRC’s Better Learning Programme In Palestine* (2017).

WorldVision with AfriChild and Columbia University, looking at the **impact of CFS on specific mental health outcomes** for boys and girls of different ages.⁴² However, for the most part, when asked about impact on well-being there are individual records of distance travelled, and anecdotal evidence regarding visible improvement of children. This is partly because cases are so individualized, and there is no single standard that is applicable. It is also partly because it may be inappropriate to bring in rigid methods of measuring impact.

At the same time, it would help practitioners to have access to frameworks to organize their data, with a shared understanding of resilience and SEL. According to a global KI, “We need to know what we’re doing works and what we’re doing isn’t harming children.” This should include a strong consideration of research ethics, particularly in contexts “where we don’t have the resources to deal with what might come up.”⁴³

- **Teacher and staff capacity and incentive issues** were recurring themes across contexts. Along with the occupational stress of teaching in high-pressure, low-resource contexts, “a lot of the time, teachers are volunteering, not paid.”⁴⁴ Others “can go for six months without being paid (and even that is 50 dollars a month).”⁴⁵ Others reported that “teachers had received many trainings and were tired of not finding solutions,” felt “burnt out” and “not being paid enough.”⁴⁶ This would impact their motivation to offer services like psychosocial support or implement the content of extra trainings, e.g., in CP.
- **Greater structural forces.** In contexts of active conflict, natural disaster, and ongoing displacement and mobility, there are strong risks of gains from education and child-protection sensitive programming being

reversed. As a local-level KI from DRC explained, “sometimes teachers receive training (on PSS)... but it’s a cycle of crisis. If children are accessing school for six months and conflict means that schools are occupied by armed groups and children have to leave, it’s hard to measure impact.”

Additional risks may be posed by ongoing risks to human security in protracted crises, including poverty. Addressing such structural issues within education systems requires coordination across sectors. Strategies like school feeding, for instance, came up as a recommendation for alternative learning programs for out-of-school children, to address school attendance and protection risks like child labor.⁴⁷

- **Dissonance between priorities.** There were several instances where priorities of local or national actors were not in keeping with international actors. For instance, in an Iraq Education Sector case study, the KRG government believed that there was not a continued need for PSS in education in the more stable time following active conflict.⁴⁸ Whether this was a capacity issue, a buy-in issue or a valid concern about priorities for investing resources, such concerns merit further exploration in order to be addressed. Local-level KIs responded to questions around the most pressing protection concerns in their contexts by quoting severe resource constraints, for instance lack of infrastructure or safe and separate toilets for girls.⁴⁹ For others, the biggest protection risks were due to poverty and disease like Ebola and cholera, meaning children “cannot have access to schools, are missing uniforms and school fees, and don’t have food.”⁵⁰ Listening to these priorities and the lived experience of local staff and stakeholders should be part of the process of formulating a child protection-sensitive programming response.

⁴² WorldVision, AfriChild, & Columbia University, *Advancing Child Mental Health and Protection in Humanitarian Settings: Evidence of Effectiveness of the Child Friendly Spaces Toolkit* (2022).

⁴³ Global KI

⁴⁴ KI, Syria.

⁴⁵ KI, South Sudan.

⁴⁶ KI, Turkey.

⁴⁷ IRC, *Meeting the Academic and Social-Emotional Needs of Nigeria’s Out-of-School Children* (2019), and Save the Children, & Norwegian Refugee Council, *Hear It from The Children – Why Education In Emergencies Is Critical* (2014).

⁴⁸ Khan, A., Nicolai, S., & Mansour-Ille, D., *Strengthening coordinated education planning and response in crises: Iraq case study* (2020).

⁴⁹ KI, South Sudan.

⁵⁰ KI, DRC.

- Lack of cultural context in training and program materials.** Concepts like SEL don't always easily translate across cultures, nor do ideas around positive discipline. This came out specifically in evaluations of SEL programs in various contexts from Lebanon to Sierra Leone.⁵¹ In an alternative learning program for out-of-school children in Nigeria, students, learning facilitators and coaches "consistently reported that SEL was the most difficult subject to teach and to learn because it is a new concept in the region."⁵² The need for adapting MHPSS and SEL content in ways that is culturally relevant and resonates with local staff and teachers came up repeatedly as a challenge that may inhibit program effectiveness.
- Measuring impact of synergies and integrated programming.** Where integration or collaboration is happening, reporting frameworks have been built according to silos and do not adequately capture impact. According to one country-level KI, "Normally when doing M&E we use log frames and traditional frameworks. But they are not well equipped to capture integrated programs. Instead, we should have a comprehensive system for reporting that captures the added value of the synergies between the two sectors. We also don't have operational research that focuses on integrated programs. Mid-term and end-line reports leave out how integration is working, what is working and what isn't."⁵³

⁵¹ IRC, *Global Brief - 3EA - The Impacts of Tutoring Informed by Social-Emotional Learning: An Analysis Across Crisis Contexts* (2021).

⁵² IRC, *Research Brief: Meeting the Academic and Social-Emotional Needs of Nigeria's Out-of-School Children* (2019).

⁵³ KI, Somalia.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The lens of “child well-being” allows for a holistic approach to humanitarian programming, encouraging education and protection actors to step out of their silos and consider how they can truly support better outcomes for children. The creation of learning environments that are safe, healing, nurturing and happy is indeed a goal to aspire to – not just because of their impact on academic retention and performance, but because of how they can influence the entire worldview and trajectory of a child in a crisis setting.

Based on the evidence reviewed, the following recommendations were generated for practitioners to begin to address persisting challenges, and to work together more effectively.

At the programming level, there is a need to:

- **Set parameters for a child protection-sensitive response.** For practitioners, there is still a need to identify some parameters for “child protection-sensitive programming” in education. One way of going about it might be via checklists for schools on children’s protection – which will need to be adapted to map and address local and contextual challenges.
- **Map and respond to vulnerabilities.** In the evidence reviewed, the importance of needs assessment / risk assessment / context analysis at the design stage was considered crucial for determining the nature of collaboration and response. For both EiE and CP practitioners, coordinating to map specific vulnerabilities and protection risks that can be addressed in a learning environment would help identify the appropriate, tailored response from the creation of school safety plans, to planning an integrated, safe, response to survivors of SGBV.
- **Focus on outcomes to define the process.** One important element is to keep the focus on outcomes for learning and well-being, and to define processes accordingly. This would then lead to the kind of agility

necessary to redefine the purpose of, for instance, child friendly spaces and their relation to learning environments, in order to respond to the evolving needs of children at different phases of a crisis.

- **Share examples of coordination.** The existing guidance at the global level sets out a number of broad strategies to make schools are spaces of safety as well as healing. There is a need for more sharing of specific examples globally, to illustrate how to operationalize coordination or, where appropriate, integration.⁵⁴
- **Consider culture, context, and local assets.** Traditional games, songs and stories can be powerful ways of getting through to both teachers and children.⁵⁵ For education personnel, there is also a need to contextualize concepts like PSS, SEL and positive discipline, to ensure that they translate well in specific contexts before they are applied. There needs to be rigorous testing of coaching, teaching, and learning materials to ensure that content is both easily understood and culturally relevant. Using the strengths of children and communities to support school-based protection and PSS mechanisms will also strengthen and sustain programming.

For the Education and Protection Clusters and CP AoR, there is scope for:

- **Leveraging joint funding and communicating across sectors.** As already set out in joint CPHA-EiE materials, each sector should participate in other sector’s meetings to have a systematic approach to preventing and addressing violence against children. Working together for joint advocacy and joint program design can result in greater efficiency and effective use of funding.
- **Disseminating the guidance for integrated programming.** This would

⁵⁴ In Jordan, for instance, “The concrete nature of Makani helped to explain what child protection mainstreaming or integration looks like and once this was grasped, it was easy for other sectors to see how they could be involved.” CPMS Case study

⁵⁵ See BRAC’s HPL example

include the promising practices that are currently being documented by the Global Education and Protection Clusters, for a CPHA-EiE Framework Package. Country-level colleagues can benefit from examples of joint needs analyses, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

- **Acknowledging and addressing local priorities.** There is a need for international actors to take the priorities of local stakeholders into account, and then take appropriate actions to achieve defined learning and well-being outcomes. This might require addressing physical protection risks and engaging with multiple actors - including governments and non-state armed groups - to ensure school safety. It may also mean collaborating across sectors to address structural concerns like poverty and malnutrition, which affect both protection and education by putting children at risk of drop-out. This could mean coordinating with other sectors or allocating resources as part of child protection mainstreaming in EiE.

At the global level, there is a need to:

- **Unpack shared “well-being outcomes.”** Practitioners could benefit from simple, adaptable global guidance on identifying the types of protection risks that can be addressed in a school space, as well as the kinds of outcomes that can be achieved through joint and integrated programming. There are already efforts underway to unpack mental health and SEL outcomes in humanitarian settings.⁵⁶ A next step would be to take the lessons from high-investment research partnerships and make them more widely accessible.
- **Support evidence gathering.** Country-level KIs pointed out a scarcity of human and material resources that would be needed to rigorously investigate the impacts of programs and build a case for their work.

- **Share operational guidance for integrated programming.** KIs have shared the need for operational guidelines to achieve well-being outcomes, and more focused operational research that will allow reflection on the learning and challenges of joint and integrated programming. They have also mentioned guidelines on monitoring integration as an area where the Alliance can take leadership.
- **Coordinate for well-being outcomes.** As humanitarian actors move towards more integrated and multisectoral ways of working, there is scope for joint advocacy and fundraising at the global scale, prioritizing investment in both education and protection.
- **Structure funding to allow for collaboration across sectors.** Traditionally, donor investments have been sector-specific and have been tracked accordingly, meaning the evidence generated has also been sector-specific. However, children do not live in these silos, and their improved well-being requires a shift in practice by the humanitarian community .

There is already precedent for successful collaboration, even joint and integrated programming by EiE and CPHA actors, globally as well as on a country and local level. While there is no single blueprint that can apply across contexts, there is enough evidence for the generation of simple, adaptable guidance – rooted in practice – for learning environments to be made spaces of safety and healing, tailored to address vulnerabilities for children in humanitarian settings.

⁵⁶ WorldVision (2021); IRC and NYU-TIES (2017). See also Lasater, M. E., Flemming, J., Bourey, C., Nemiro, A., & Meyer, S. R., “School-based MHPSS interventions in humanitarian contexts: a realist review” in *BMJ Open*, 12(4) (2022).

APPENDIX 1:

PARAMETERS FOR SCREENING EVIDENCE

| Screening for Evidence | Inclusion | Exclusion |
|--|---|--|
| Sectors / program areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Protection; AND Education | Other sectors / program areas |
| Program Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal Education Non-Formal Education Teacher Training, Teacher Professional Development, Teacher Well-being Systems Strengthening and/or Policy Development Identify several key child protection interventions that are the outcome of lack of education or look to education as mitigating intervention (Child Marriage, CAAFAG, Child Labor) | |
| Population | Children between the ages of 3-17, including education personnel, teachers, and paraprofessionals | Individuals outside age range or profession |
| Types of literature and documents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Non-peer-reviewed / Gray literature:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research studies Case studies Assessments Literature / desk / systematic reviews Program descriptions Program evaluations Toolkits Best practice <i>Peer-reviewed: Academic publications / journals</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research studies Literature / systematic reviews | Websites Annual Reports Policy recommendations Humanitarian response plans Books, chapters |
| Geographic | Global | (None) |
| Context | All crisis contexts, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refugee camps, formal and informal IDP camps, formal and informal Urban refugees & displaced populations Environmental disasters Climate crisis | Development contexts |
| Publication | 1 January 2012 – 31 April 2022 | Prior to 1 January 2012 |
| Language | English, or other language of researcher | Publication in languages other than English |

APPENDIX 2:

RESOURCES REVIEWED

1. Ansari, Madeeha. *Cities for Children - Refugees in Towns Project Islamabad Case Study*. 2019, <https://www.refugeesintowns.org/all-reports/islamabad>.
2. Dryden-Peterson, et al. "We See You: What Syrian Refugee Students Wish Their Teachers Knew." *Refugee REACH Initiative, Harvard Graduate School of Education*, 2021.
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