INEE Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
Réseau Inter-Agences pour l'Éducation en Situations d'Urgence
La Red Interagencial para la Educación en Situaciones de Emergencia
Rede Inter-Institucional para a Educação em Situação de Emergência
الشبكة المشتركة لوكالات التعليم في حالات الطوارئ

INEE Thematic Issue Brief: Child Protection

Definition

Child Protection is defined as freedom from all forms of abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence including but not limited to: bullying, sexual exploitation, violence from peers or teachers or other educational authorities, natural hazards, arms, ammunition, landmines, unexploded ordnance, armed personnel, crossfire locations, political and military threats, and recruitment into armed forces or armed groups.

Child Protection as a Thematic Issue

Emergencies present a multitude of significant threats to children's protection, including disruption or weakening of the support systems that enable children's healthy development and well-being. To enable educational access and quality in emergency and early recovery contexts, addressing issues of child protection is essential. In crisis situations, educational environments (e.g. schools, learning sites, etc) may be unsafe and may present significant child protection risks including harsh corporal punishment, sexual violence, recruitment, discrimination, and bullying. Access to education may be denied to children who are highly vulnerable due to poverty, orphaning or other loss of parental care, disability or discrimination. Without attention to these issues, schools and other educational environments may become dangerous, highly stressful environments that encourage dropout and poor attendance, undermine the quality of education and dim the prospects for effective learning.

Creating a protective environment is essential to addressing issues of child protection. A protective environment can be created by:

- **Enhancing government commitment and capacity**, including increased budgetary provisions and appropriate administrative action for child protection and assistance.
- **Developing adequate legislation and enforcement** for prosecution of violations, procedures that include mechanisms for redress, and accessible, confidential and child-friendly legal aid.
- **Implementing monitoring, reporting and oversight activities**, including systematic collection and transparent reporting of data, review by policy makers, and facilitating access by independent observers to children in traditionally marginalised groups.
- **Providing essential services** such as free education and health care for all children within each nation's borders, and maintaining a functioning and adequately staffed system that provides social welfare assistance and child protection services.
- **Enabling social change** regarding harmful customs and traditional practices, thereby helping to build an environment where women and girls do not face discrimination, sexual exploitation of children is socially unacceptable, and children with disabilities or affected by AIDS are not stigmatised.
- **Facilitating open discussion** so that protection failures are acknowledged, and civil society and the media are engaged to recognise and report harmful treatment of children.
- **Building the capacity of families and communities** to observe protective child-rearing practices and supporting families in meeting their childcare needs.

- **Supporting the development of life skills, knowledge and participation** in order to build an environment in which children know that they have rights, are encouraged to express their views, are taught problem-solving.
- **Engaging community members** to participate in promoting access and security for vulnerable and marginalized children in safe child friendly spaces.

While many of the actions above require attention from a broad selection of actors, actions by communities, teachers and other education personnel within the learning environment will go a long way in supporting child protection measures.

Addressing Child Protection in the INEE Minimum Standards

Examples of how child protection is mainstreamed throughout the INEE Minimum Standards Handbook include the following:

- **Foundational Standards** emphasise that children and youth must participate in training that helps protect themselves and community members from existent threats.

- **Access and Learning Environment Domain** stresses the importance of child protection, stating that protection consists of freedom from all forms of abuse, exploitation, and violence. The category also references specific safety hazards and safety measures to ensure the protection of children, teachers and other education personnel within and while going to and from learning environments.

- **Teaching and Learning Domain** helps guide actors in choosing quality, relevant, and equitable curricula to address the protection needs of learners.

- **Teachers and Other Education Personnel Domain** identifies topics for teacher training to help teachers addresses the myriad of protection and psychosocial issues in the classroom.

- **Education Policy Domain** underscores that laws, regulations and policies must protect against abuse in education.

Additional Guidance

The INEE Minimum Standards can be used to support the incorporation of child protection into emergency programmes through various means, including:

- **Encouraging a protective, supportive environment.** Within the school or learning environment, the INEE Minimum Standards provide guidance for supporting children, teachers and other education personnel affected by conflict, disaster or other adversity.

- **Encouraging the creation of educational policies and practices.** The INEE Minimum Standards are a key advocacy tool to support child protection policies and practices within schools and the community.

Overall, these standards serve as a common language and a collective vision for actors within the education sector to communicate with, refer to, cross-fertilise and enhance linkages with child protection actors, thereby enhancing the quality of education overall. Using these standards work to uphold a child's right to protection, regardless of the circumstance.