



## **Safe Schools and Learning Environment**

How to Prevent and Respond to Violence in Refugee Schools

## **A Guide**

**Technical Support Section  
Division of Operational Services  
UNHCR Geneva**

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## **Technical Support Section**

The Education Unit, which is part of the Technical Support Section (TSS) of UNHCR, guides and assists the field in matters related to education. The unit develops guidelines and tools, provides training, mobilizes resources and strengthens global partnerships. The ultimate aim of all these activities is to bolster the protection of children of concern to UNHCR by safeguarding their right to safe and high-quality education. Indeed, the Education Unit has defined access to safe learning environments as a priority in its strategy for 2007-2009. The goal is to increase school enrolment and attendance rates by 10%/year. To achieve this aim, it is critical that education is available through all phases of UNHCR operations and partners are mobilized to provide post-primary schooling to adolescents.

## **Acknowledgments**

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Technical Support Section (TSS)  
UNHCR Geneva

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## Introduction and Overview

### *1- What is safe education?*

School is not always a safe place for a refugee child; quite often, it is at school that he or she is abused or exploited. The nature of violence inflicted on children in learning environments can be emotional, physical and psychological, and range from the subtle to the very explicit. All too frequently it is sexual and gender-based.<sup>1</sup>

Without adequate monitoring, reporting and referral mechanisms, children in schools often face severe corporal punishment, peer-to-peer violence and sexual harassment or exploitation. The perpetrators could include teachers, other authority figures and the staff of international organizations and non-government organizations. The risk of exploitation and abuse is higher at the upper-primary and secondary levels, when children reach adolescence. Girls are especially vulnerable at this stage, and may be forced to engage in so-called survival sex<sup>2</sup> to cover school costs and stay on good terms with their teachers.

Schools and teachers are highly influential in a child's life, and have a lasting impact on attitudes and behaviour. As such, unsafe learning environments contribute to the perpetuation of violence within communities.

To be effective, a strategy for the protection of children must guarantee that their learning environments are safe and secure. Within its protection mandate, UNHCR plays a key role in keeping learning environments free of violence.

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<sup>1</sup> Sexual and gender-based violence is directed against a person on the basis of gender or sex. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, and is largely rooted in unequal power relations.

<sup>2</sup> Although the definition of sex survival is still under discussion, it is understood to refer to a situation whereby a person of concern to UNHCR engages in sex in order to obtain money or material assistance, including for education, to meet her/his basic needs and/or those of other family members.

## *2- Why the need of safe education?*

- To save lives and ensure the effective protection of girls and boys of concern to UNHCR in learning environments.
- To ensure that learning environments provide quality education.
- To empower girls by ending gender discrimination in school environments.
- To increase school attendance, especially at the secondary level.
- To help the search for durable solutions by promoting a culture of peace and dialogue.
- To provide children with the skills to achieve self-reliance.
- To prevent all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, guard children against sexually transmitted diseases - including HIV and AIDS - and reduce teenage pregnancies and their associated risks.

## *3- The purpose and structure of the guidelines*

There is mounting evidence that students of concern to UNHCR are exposed to sexual harassment and exploitation in school settings. Participatory assessments reveal that children are abused - sometimes by their own teachers - in many areas where UNHCR operates, .

The purpose of these guidelines is to support UNHCR staff, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other partners in education take practical steps to prevent and respond to violence in schools. By recognizing the existence of violence in refugee schools and exploring its root causes, UNHCR hopes to draw attention to the urgent need to ensure safe education is available to all children of concern.

The guidelines are organized in four main “steps”, or chapters, which provide UNHCR staff and other partners with a framework for developing effective prevention and response strategies. These steps are the following:

(1) **Situational Analysis**, to identify the causes of violence in schools and assess existing support services, resources and capacities.

(2) **Preventive Measures**, to create a safe and supportive learning environment.

(3) **Response Mechanisms**, to provide victims/survivors with the appropriate services.

(4) **Monitoring and Evaluation**, to ensure that measures to provide a safe education are effective.

In each chapter, the guidelines suggest practical activities to address violence in schools. However, they do not offer an exhaustive set of activities to fit every possible situation. Rather, the guidelines are meant to be flexible enough to be adapted to different contexts and settings involving refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons. They are intended to complement, rather than replace, other materials, tools and initiatives which have been developed to promote rights-based and child-friendly schooling. The latter include the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, the IRC's Healing Classrooms Initiative, UNICEF's Child-Friendly Space concept, the Keeping Children Safe Coalition tool-kit and the ICVA Building Safer Organizations Initiative, besides national schemes led by NGOs (see Annex 1 Key Reference Materials for complete references). The guidelines also build on UNHCR's standard operating procedures on sexual and gender-based violence by recommending that these cover educational settings.

Preventing and responding to violence in schools requires more than flexibility; it also demands a holistic, multi-sectoral approach. Accordingly, the guidelines call for strong partnerships with a wide range of actors. These include educational and legal authorities, sister UN agencies, implementing partners and the community - including parents, teachers and students - to define, plan and monitor prevention and response mechanisms.

Furthermore, strategic alliances must be established with partners working in sectors such as protection, health, water, sanitation and shelter, all of which contribute to the overall well-being of children and the safety of their learning environments. As such, the guidelines are meant to be used not only by UNHCR but also by NGOs, other UN

agencies, national and local authorities and school staff. The guidelines should also prove useful in community-based efforts to address the problem.

#### ***4- Guiding principles: Responding to violence in educational settings***

- **A Rights-Based Approach:** Action should be guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the best interests of the child, as well as by other legal instruments and international commitments on children's rights.
- **Continuity:** Safe education should be made available at all stages of a UNHCR operation, starting at the emergency phase and continuing up to and during the implementation of durable solutions. Furthermore, this requirement should apply to both formal and informal educational activities. As children usually face higher protection risks when they reach adolescence, special attention should be given to higher-primary and secondary institutions as well as vocational-training centers.
- **Community Participation:** Actions to prevent and respond to violence in schools should be defined, monitored and evaluated with the cooperation of school administrators, education authorities, parent-teacher associations and students of both sexes. This is essential to devise educational-safety mechanisms that build on existing capacities and resources, and to instill ownership among all participants.
- **A Holistic Approach:** Mechanisms to deal with violence in schools should aim for systemic change, targeting cultural and social attitudes that condone or aggravate violence, rather than focus on individuals. This would also help avoid the targeting or stigmatizing of the victims or perpetrators of violence. Interventions should be managed with transparency and accountability to the community - which itself is sometimes responsible for conflict and discrimination.
- **Partnerships:** In addition to partnerships with the community, alliances with ministries of education, UNICEF, UNESCO and NGOs specializing in education and child protection should be encouraged to coordinate efforts to make learning environments

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secure. Roles and responsibilities will vary according to the operational context.

- **Confidentiality:** Response mechanisms dealing with abuse and exploitation should guarantee confidentiality and the physical safety of the victim/survivor.

***Key instruments and International Standards:***

Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and its Protocol (1967).

UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1994).

Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998).

Millennium Development Goals.

Education for All Goals.

INEE Minimum Standards on Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction.

General Comment No. 8 (2006) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment (art. 19, art. 28 para. 2 and art. 37).

UN Security Council Resolution 1612 on Children in Armed Conflict, 2005.



## **Step1. Situational Analysis:<sup>3</sup> Understanding violence in educational settings and assessing the quality of support services.**

The first step in addressing violence is to assess, through focus-group discussions, observation and semi-structured interviews, (1) the various forms of violence that occur in learning environments, (2) their underlying causes, (3) the quality of existing support services, and (4) local capacities that may help prevention and response activities.

### ***1- Types of violence in learning environments***

The following are some examples of the types of violence in educational institutions that can be identified through situational analysis.

- Violence related to school access

Many refugee children have to work to pay the various costs of schooling. This can expose them to child labour and exploitation. Girls, for their part, may engage in survival sex, or agree to or be forced into early marriages, in order to continue their studies.

Children may also be abused and exploited on their way to and from school, either because they are far from the relative safety of the school environment (especially in rural areas) or because of general insecurity in their vicinity. In the latter case, they may fall prey to gang violence, attacks by armed groups or sexual harassment.

In camp-based situations, schools can come under armed attack, be the target of demonstrations, and be used as recruiting centres by militant groups. Groups with specific needs such as teenage mothers or children with disabilities may face discrimination when seeking an education.

- Violence perpetrated by education staff (teachers, school directors, and humanitarian workers)

As stated previously, in many instances, the very people who are responsible for the well-being of students are the perpetrators of violence. In emergency settings those hired to provide educational services do not

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<sup>3</sup> A situational analysis relies on a combination of research methods that include a review of existing data, focus-group discussions with key stakeholders, semi-structured interviews and observations.

always have the requisite professional training or an understanding of children's rights, positive discipline and participatory methods.

Furthermore, it is usually easier to recruit men rather than women for teaching posts, leading to male-dominated educational environments. Codes of conduct may not be in place - or may not be understood by the population - and mechanisms for reporting professional misconduct may not exist. These factors are exacerbated by the unequal relations between teachers and their wards, poor working conditions for teaching staff, and the personal stresses that crisis-affected refugee educator's face.

Teachers, school directors, classroom assistants and humanitarian staff monitoring educational activities may:

- Use severe corporal, humiliating or gender-based punishment and language.
- Convey political messages which promote violence, discrimination or revenge and lead to aggressive or brutal behaviour.
- Exploit children by using them for personal labour: ordering them to collect wood, carry water, work their land or help in their businesses.
- Provide good grades or other benefits to adolescent girls in exchange for sex.<sup>4</sup>
- Ignore - or appear to ignore - sexual harassment and violence by other male teachers and students against female teachers and students.
- Discriminate against refugee children on the basis of their status or background.

- Peer-to-peer violence

Peer-to-peer violence is common in school settings and is usually the result of unequal power relations between girls and boys, older and younger students or students from different social, national or ethnic backgrounds. In refugee contexts, the problem can be aggravated by the concentration in the same school of children who are over-aged, traumatized and former members of armed groups. Teachers, who are rarely prepared to cope with the challenges arising from such a student mix, have difficulty maintaining class discipline and cannot provide protection to all learners. In urban contexts, children may face gang violence.

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<sup>4</sup> See reports from Botswana, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, Togo, Benin, DRC, South Africa.

- Sexual and gender-based violence

Sexual and gender-based violence can occur in all the contexts mentioned above. It can be perpetrated by teachers, humanitarian staff and students. Female students may harass their peers, usually younger girls. This behaviour is often the result of bullying and other traumatic events that the perpetrators themselves have experienced. Sexual and gender-based violence is not always visible, especially when girls are forced into survival sex to cover their school-related costs.

Furthermore, models of masculine behaviour which excuse sexual harassment by males may be reinforced by the attitudes of male teachers towards female students.<sup>5</sup> Such attitudes could also be perpetuated through the curriculum, which might portray girls in low-status roles, thus reinforcing gender stereotypes and discrimination. Female teachers may be exposed to sexual and gender-based violence by male teachers or students.

## *2- Identifying the root causes of violence*

When conducting a situational analysis, the root causes of violence in learning environments should be considered first and provide the basis for policy and programmes.

Below are some examples of the factors contributing to violence in school settings which can be highlighted by situational analysis:

- Weak Educational Systems

In a local-integration or reintegration context, the failure of national education authorities to define clear and appropriate school policies, recruit qualified professionals and provide them with acceptable working conditions can lead to abuse of children by teachers. Underpaid teachers may consider the exploitation of students an acceptable form of compensation. This is especially true in remote areas, where systems to supervise teachers and prosecute offenders are weak.

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<sup>5</sup> Broken Bodies, Broken Dreams: violence against women exposed”, OCHA/IRIN. 2005. pp 74

Refugee schools in camp settings may face similar challenges in defining clear school policies, recruiting qualified teachers and enforcing codes of conduct. Although teachers receive incentives and support from UNHCR and/or NGOs, they may not have sufficient training, work under difficult conditions and lack supervision by humanitarian staff or local authorities.

- Asymmetrical Power Relations

Violence in schools also results from unequal power relations. These could exist between teachers and students, girls and boys, elders and youth and students and humanitarian staff. Teachers, who can be community leaders as well, sometimes abuse their power over poorer refugee families. Likewise, older students could intimidate younger ones. This problem is particularly acute in refugee schools with many over-aged children whose studies have been disrupted by war and displacement. For its part, gender-based violence is often the result of unequal relations between boys and girls. It also arises because of the patterns of masculine behaviour that prevail in conflict situations, where aggressiveness, violence and disregard for human life are seen as positive values.

- The Child's Social Environment

Understanding violent behaviour among children requires looking at the broader context, such as the child's family, economic and socio-cultural environment. Dispersed families, domestic abuse, experiences of widespread violence and killings, gender discrimination and poverty can all foster violent behaviour in schools. The cultural attitudes of communities towards child abuse should also be considered, as they may differ from international standards and lead to a lack of commitment to child protection.<sup>6</sup>

- Lack of Support for Post-Primary Education

Post-primary education often lacks support from national governments and the international community, though it is actually at this stage that children may be most vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. The number of secondary schools available to children of concern is usually not sufficient, especially when the children need to be integrated into national

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<sup>6</sup> CRINMAIL 809- Tanzania. Culture plays a key role in perpetuating sexual abuse – Mkombozi Centre for Street Children.

schools. Furthermore, the schools may lack qualified staff, appropriate teaching materials and adequate supervision.

Even where secondary education is available, most adolescents of concern face difficulties in paying fees. Where money is available, schools may be too far from the students' homes. Refugees who create community-based secondary schools to overcome these challenges often lack the capacity and resources to protect adolescents, especially girls, from abuse and exploitation.

### ***3- Assessing existing support services, local resources and capacities***

A situational analysis should also assess the quality of existing support services in the areas of:

- health and reproductive health
- psycho-social support
- the law and justice system
- the police

An updated list of organizations and individuals that can provide assistance in these different sectors should be disseminated in child-friendly spaces, community centres and classrooms.

## **Step 2. Preventive Measures: Creating safe and supportive learning environments.**

Preventive measures should be taken at the national, provincial and district levels as well as within schools. They should focus on (1) learning environments, (2) teachers and educational personnel, (3) teaching and recreational activities, (4) students, and (5) parents and the community.

### ***1- Advocating for national policies***

In close collaboration with other UN Agencies and national education committees, UNHCR should:

- Advocate for governments to ratify key covenants and treaties on children's and women's rights and uphold international declarations on access to free primary education of quality.
- Lobby for national policies to include clear regulations and procedures that prohibit and explicitly penalise all types of violence, including the sexual and gender-based violence, in schools.
- Provide technical support at the national, provincial and district levels to develop such regulations.
- Build the capacity of civil servants, inspectors, educators, and supervisors to manage schools and prevent violence in them.

### **For camp-based refugee schools:**

- Advocate for refugee schools to be recognized as official schools, so that national and local authorities play a role in keeping them safe.
- Develop - in cooperation with the authorities, school-management teams and community structures such as education committees and parent-teacher associations - clear policies and programmes to prevent and respond to violence. These should be in line with international agreements and national laws on children's rights - unless the latter violate international norms.

- Support implementing partners to develop and apply such policies in refugee schools.

In all cases, it is essential for both government commitments and school policies to be publicized among students, teachers, parents and the community.

## *2- Establishing safe and supportive learning environments*

Every effort should be made to ensure that schools, educational facilities and their surroundings are child-friendly, physically safe and protected from outside influences - such as attempts by armed groups to recruit children or abduct them.

- Ensure school buildings and surroundings are safe

In camp settings, schools and recreational activities should be designed with due consideration for security. All persons of concern, including young children and adolescents, should be consulted in the process. In any case, such activities should maintain the minimum requirements set by UNHCR's field guidelines on education, the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction (INEE) and the SPHERE project on minimum standards in disaster response. These require that:

- School areas are cleared of landmines, glass and sharp objects.
- Schools are within walking distance of students' homes, with the acceptable distance to be determined by the age of the child.
- In order to avoid large schools becoming targets for the recruitment of children by political or militant groups, and to reduce the home-to-school distance, several small schools are set up in big camps and in remote areas.
- Buildings have secure roofs and doors to avoid theft.
- Secured, separated, locked and fully operational latrines for girls and boys students and females and males teachers are built within school compounds to reduce the chances of sexual harassment. Such facilities are designed to allow the very young and children with disabilities to use them easily.

- Clean water with an adequate number of tap stands is provided within easy reach of all students to guard against health hazards and the exploitation of students to fetch water from great distances.
- Schools have fences to avoid accidents and prevent the entry of unauthorized persons.
- First-aid kits are available for immediate use in case of accidents.
- Appropriate lighting is installed, especially in boarding schools where students reside after dark.

In local-integration and reintegration contexts, UNHCR should work closely with local authorities and UN sister agencies. These partners should be encouraged to focus their attention on integration and returnee areas. UNHCR should share information with these partners, particularly on the number of returnee students and teachers, and lobby for returnee areas to be included in national education plans as well as in plans by other organizations. Furthermore, UNHCR should ensure that returnee students are not discriminated against in access to education. Finally, it must make sure that returnee teachers are reintegrated into local school systems so that they gain the additional capacity needed to absorb refugee or returnee children.

- Ensure children’s safety on their way to and from school
  - Mobilize the community to escort students to school.
  - Organize information campaigns for the community, including the host community, on forced recruitment into armed forces, human trafficking, sexual and gender-based violence, etc.
  - When schools are close to roads, organize crossing supervision by students or teachers; add speed bumps or crossing signs.
  
- Create child-friendly spaces
  - During an emergency response, child-friendly spaces or safe areas should be created for children and adolescents to help them regain a sense of normality and to allow play and socialization.
  - In a care-and-maintenance context, such spaces should provide children information and psycho-social support and



allow them to engage in activities such as games, drama and arts programmes, sports and life-skills education. These spaces can be located inside schools or within community centres.

- UNHCR should help provide the materials required to create such child-friendly spaces.

Reference Material: Guidelines on Mental Health and Psycho-social support, Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

### ***3- Strengthening the supervision of education staff and reinforcing their capacities in camp settings***

Teachers' abilities to address violence in schools should be strengthened. On the other hand, the supervision of teachers must be improved by enforcing codes for their conduct. To fulfil these aims, UNHCR must take the following measures:

- Ensure refugee teachers' working conditions are equitable and acceptable
  - Provide refugee teachers with appropriate working conditions, including adequate office space and housing, and sufficient allowances.
  - Ensure UNHCR's standard for the teacher-student ratio (1:40) is respected to reduce disciplinary challenges. Where there are too many students, explore the possibility of organizing multiple classroom shifts and recruitment and training of more teachers.
- Train refugee education staff on children's rights and positive classroom management

Teachers, school directors and humanitarian personnel working with education programmes should be provided with training and development opportunities on a regular basis. Training on preventing and responding to violence in educational settings would provide staff with the capacity to:

(i) *Discuss the issue of child abuse and exploitation in school*

- The first step is to ensure that all educational staff recognize that child abuse is a serious matter that could have long-term consequences for the development of the child and society as a whole.
- Educational staff should be trained to identify the root causes of violence within learning environments and discuss ways to address the problem with parents and students.

(ii) *Develop positive discipline strategies*

- In keeping with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, corporal punishment should be banned. Teachers should be trained in the skills and techniques of classroom management and the reinforcement of positive disciplines. They also need to be trained in participatory methods and child and adolescent development to fulfil the aims of education, as defined in Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Teachers must be given professional support to help them apply these principles in their teaching methods.

(iii) *Promote children's and women's rights*

- Education staff should serve as models and advocates for the equitable treatment of girls and women in school. They should inform children of their right to express themselves and ask for support. Teachers, in particular, should be available for children to share their concerns in confidence.
- Male teachers should ensure that they respect the skills and knowledge of their female counterparts and share power and resources with them equally.

(iv) *Provide children with support*

- Training should include a psycho-social module to help teachers and other education staff identify children who have been abused or exploited and refer them to the appropriate services.

- Teachers should have the understanding, information and skills to refer all children in need to appropriate social services and support systems.

Reference Material: Teacher training module. Healing Classrooms Initiative. International Rescue Committee

- Ensure codes of conducts are developed, disseminated and enforced
  - In refugee schools establish codes of conduct with the participation of the Ministry of Education, local authorities, children, parents, teachers and other partners in education.

**Though they are not legally binding, codes of conduct in refugee schools should always:**

- Refer to and be in line with national school-staffing regulations, national laws and international legal instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Set clear standards of behavior for educational personnel and students, and specify the mandatory consequences for persons who do not comply with these standards, such as referral to the justice system.
- Promote a positive learning environment and the well being of the students and explicitly condemn abuse and exploitation, including sexual and gender-based violence, peer-to-peer intimidation and corporal punishment.
- Include mandatory reporting of abuse and exploitation.

- In local schools with a high number of refugees or returnees, mobilize the Ministry of Education and other UN agencies to ensure that school staffing and conditions of employment are in line with international standards. Take disciplinary action against teachers and students who are violent.
- Ensure codes of conduct and/or staff regulations are disseminated and publicized within each class through simple messages or drawings to which children can contribute. They should also be disseminated in the community; e.g. through parent-teacher associations.

- Training on codes of conduct and staff regulations should be provided to all educational personnel, including humanitarian staff, as well as to community members who are involved in supporting education.

Reference: Keeping Children Safe: Standards for Child Protection, The Keeping Children Safe Coalition, 2006.

- Promote the recruitment of qualified female teachers and assistants
  - Encourage the recruitment of female teachers and non-teaching staff.
  - Provide female teachers with adequate training and encourage them to hold strategic positions, such as heads of teacher committees and supervisors.
  - Sensitize female teachers and assistants to sexual and gender-based violence directed against them in or outside school environment, work with them to establish robust and realistic reporting mechanisms and encourage them to report their own situation to focal persons.

Reference Material: The Impact of Women Teachers on Girls' Education. UNESCO Bangkok Advocacy Brief. May 2006.

It must be noted that training the entire school staff and parents' committees has proven to be more efficient than training only one or two teachers or supervisors from each school and expecting them to transfer their knowledge to their colleagues.

#### **Good Practice: Female classroom assistants**

In West Africa, IRC programmes train female classroom assistants for upper-primary classes. Working alongside male teachers, they serve as role models, and monitor and guard against exploitation of students by teachers and document cases of abuse. Boys and girls in these refugee schools said that their classrooms were more calm, organized and conducive to learning as a result of the initiative. Relations between teachers and students were more respectful. Instead of the students, the classroom assistants collected examination results directly from teachers, there were fewer opportunities for exploitation related to grades.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> "Broken Bodies-Broken dreams: violence against women exposed" OCHA/IRIN Publication, 2005, pp 81.

#### *4- Teaching and learning: promoting a culture of peace and dialogue*

One of the most effective and successful ways of preventing violence is to talk about peace and create hope through games and peace education.

The following are some measures to help avoid peer-to-peer violence:

- Organization of school-community events (games, parties, theatre troupes, etc.) through which positive messages are conveyed on respecting and appreciating differences.
- Enrichment of the curriculum with modules on children rights, women's rights, peace education, tolerance, sexual and gender-based violence, HIV and AIDS and reproductive health (Art. 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child).
- Dissemination of textbooks and other learning materials such as posters, charts, etc., showing women as well as men in high-status roles and emphasizing the value of human diversity.
- Organize regular discussion groups with boys and girls (separately and together) as well as between different generations to help them understand the causes of, and solutions to, sexual and gender-based violence. Raise the profile of girls in the school setting.
- Educate youth on respecting one another.
- Ensure that recreational activities are age and gender-sensitive to avoid older children intimidating younger ones and boys harassing girls.
- Establish peace education programmes if necessary.
- When refugees are mixed with local children, avoid individualized approaches in education programmes.

Reference Material: Inter-Agency Peace Education Programme: Skills for Constructive Living. UNESCO, UNHCR, INEE, 2005.

## *5- Empowering students*

It is crucial to help children, including adolescents, have a greater say in matters that concern them, especially education, and ensure that both girls and boys have access to information, representation and support. Specific measures should be taken to empower them and reduce asymmetrical relations with older persons:

Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes the right of children to be heard and to access complaints procedures.

- Inform children on their rights to express themselves and to seek support through child-friendly messages (Art. 17 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child)
  - Ensure that social services and support systems are efficient, child-friendly and have protection policies in place.
  - Make children aware that they can seek support or report on a range of issues besides abuse, such as bullying and relationship problems with teachers, parents and other pupils.
  - Provide students with up-dated lists of support services in the health, safety/security, legal/justice and psycho-social areas.
  - Ensure that the information is child-friendly; for instance, by incorporating children's drawings in pamphlets and posting information in classrooms and community centres.
  
- Encourage children's participation in all prevention and response mechanisms
  - Ensure boys and girls are represented and actively participate in school committees e.g. education committees and parent-teacher associations.
  - Involve students of both sexes in devising and disseminating codes of conduct.
  - Seek the opinion of children on the quality of support services using appropriate strategies e.g focus-group discussions.

- Promote peer-to-peer support and solidarity within the school-environment. Children and young people should be helped to organize themselves and find ways to help each other both within learning environments and in the wider community.
- Support children's well-being
  - Provide girls with adequate sanitary materials and, if necessary, with clothing to ensure that they are able to participate fully in all activities.
  - Support livelihood strategies for adolescents; for instance, by promoting income-generating activities and/or vocational training, especially for girls. This would help them to pay school fees and other educational costs.
  - Mobilize partners within the UN system and other organizations to ensure children have access to food, health and social services.

#### ***6- Empowering the community/parents to keep children safe***

For children to be safe in school settings, it is essential to work with the community and to ensure that they have the means to safeguard children's security.

- Mobilize the community and the parents to address the issue of child abuse and exploitation
  - Sensitize parents on children's rights. Organize focus-group discussions with different groups within the community to identify local perceptions of violence and to compare and contrast these with international child-protection standards. Involve all community members, including elders and women, teachers, women's committees and youth leaders, to define local ways to promote the right of children to express themselves, be represented in committees and seek help on a wide range of issues.
  - Community-based discussions should also be held on how to address the gender stereotyping of boys that encourages them to be dominating, violent and sexually abusive.

- Train suitable community members, such as youth leaders, parents and members of women's committees, to provide psycho-social support to children and youth of both sexes.
- Sensitize local communities to the plight of refugees and recognize refugees' rights.
- Empower parents to address domestic violence and poverty
  - Liaise with partners to support the livelihoods of parents through income-generating activities. This would be one way to reduce unequal power relations between parents and teachers.
  - Collaborate with partners such as UNICEF to address domestic violence and its impact on children. Use different strategies, including awareness-raising campaigns, the integration into the school curriculum of anti-domestic violence information, radio programmes, etc.
  - Ensure parents participate in school committees and in monitoring the safety of their children's school environment.



### **Step 3. Response Mechanisms: Ensuring children have access to support services.**

In many instances, children who are survivors or victims of abuse stay silent because of shame and fear of reprisal or because they do not know where to turn for help. The only persons they trust may be their friends or close relatives, who themselves might not have access to, or faith in, support services such as health centres, the police and the judiciary. In certain situations, parents and family members can also be the perpetrators of violence.

Education staff and other individuals involved in community-based structures have a duty to report any abuse of children which comes to their attention. To remove ambiguity about their roles and responsibilities, it is essential to establish clear reporting and referral procedures. This should be done in close collaboration with the authorities, the NGO community and other UN agencies. In any case, school-based reporting and referral mechanisms should:

- Build on UNHCR 's standard operating procedures

UNHCR has developed standard operating procedures for preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence which include educational settings in their ambit (see annex 2).

School-based reporting and referral mechanisms should build on these standard operating procedures by widening the scope of reporting to areas beyond sexual and gender-based violence, such as:

- Severe corporal punishment
- Discriminatory language
- Labour exploitation
- Peer-to peer intimidation
- The use of schools for recruitment to armed groups

- Define Roles and Responsibilities

It is essential to clearly define roles and responsibilities in responding and preventing violence in school. The following stakeholders should be aware of the mechanisms in place and be able to make appropriate referrals so that no further harm is done to children of concern:

- Local authorities, such as the police/security services, legal and judicial authorities, camp administrators
- Health services
- UNHCR/NGO personnel
- School directors
- Teachers
- Parents
- Community organizations such as women's groups, elders, youth clubs
- Peers

The definition of roles and responsibilities will vary according to the operational context - and on whether or not refugee children are integrated into local schools. A sample table to define roles and responsibilities can be found in annex 2 as well.

- Ensure accessibility, confidentiality and adapted services for children
  - Ensure a balance between making reporting mechanisms known and easily accessible to children and respecting confidentiality in the reporting process to avoid putting child victims as well as alleged perpetrators of violence at risk.
  - Establish a secure and confidential office system for filing, recording and reporting cases of violence in school settings. The report incident form provided under the standard operating procedures can be used as a model, but should be extended to cover other types of violence.
  - Give priority to urgent cases, where victims may need immediate health care, safe havens and psycho-social or legal support.

#### **Step 4. Monitoring and evaluation: Ensuring safe education.**

Monitoring and evaluation will enable multifunctional teams to assess, on a regular basis, the quality of the services and programmes offered. They will also determine the need for additional interventions, such as training. On the basis of feedback from different stakeholders, including children and adolescents, it will be possible to redefine prevention and response measures as needed.

Several actors should be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of activities, but their roles will vary according to the operational context. The role of local authorities will be particularly crucial in integration and reintegration contexts. In a camp context, the roles of UNHCR, its implementing partners and community structures would become even more crucial.

- National and local authorities

In collaboration with other agencies, the capacity of local education and legal authorities should be strengthened to enable them to:

- Effectively supervise teachers.
- Enforce codes of conduct and school-staff regulations, including disciplinary action.
- Enrich the school curriculum with modules and topics on children and violence, including school-based violence.
- Be accessible to parents and children.
- Recognize refugee schools as official schools.

- Education/school committees and other community structures

The monitoring of safety in school should be part of the terms of reference of local education/school committees. School committees, including classroom assistants, should play an active role in:

- Organizing school events which highlight the value of social and cultural diversity.
- Ensuring that the school environments - and routes to and from school - are safe for children. For example, where the safety of students on the way to school is of concern, chaperones may be organized to accompany the children.

- Evaluating teacher's attitudes in class, especially towards girls, discriminatory language, intimidation and corporal punishment.
- Evaluating the quality and relevance of the school curriculum.
- Reporting cases of abuse and exploitation by teachers as well as students.
- Effectively supervising teachers and enforcing codes of conduct.
- Ensuring that humanitarian staff in contact with children sign a code of conduct.

Other community structures, such as women's committees or youth clubs, may also be mobilized to support awareness-raising and the monitoring of safety in learning environments.

- UNHCR and Implementing Partners

UNHCR and its implementing partners should play an active role in:

- Mobilizing the support of the community to secure learning environments.
- Assessing the capacity of organizations to provide health, safety/security, legal/justice and psycho-social services.
- Identifying the training needs of the community and school staff.
- Reporting on the safety of school environments by using both quantitative and qualitative indicators as well as incident-report forms.
- Supervising refugee teachers effectively and enforcing codes of conduct.

Staff of implementing partners who are involved in school-support activities should be provided with appropriate training on child protection.

They should also be trained in participatory methods in order to collect feedback directly from children, including adolescents, and not only from parents or teachers. Child protection and sanctions against child abuse and exploitation should be included in their codes of conduct and/or staff regulations.

## Reference Materials:

- Keeping Children Safe: Standards for Child Protection, The Keeping Children Safe Coalition, 2006.
- Building Safer Organisations Project, International Council of Voluntary Agencies.

### **Measuring safety in school:**

#### *Examples of Quantitative Indicators:*

Teacher-student ratios

The number of female teachers

The number of reported incidents of violence against children

#### *Examples of Qualitative Indicators:*

- Is there a national, local or school-level policy on violence in schools?
- Are school facilities safe? Answer yes or no for the following categories: Separated and secured latrines. Roofs. Doors. Fence. School first aid kit.
- Is there a code of conduct for teachers and other education personnel? If yes, is it known to parents and children?
- Have teachers received training in dealing with: Sexual and gender-based violence? Children rights? Psycho-social support? Sexual and reproductive health? HIV and Aids. (Answer yes or no for each category.)
- Are children - including girls and different minority groups participating in school committees?

- Students / Peers

Students should be actively involved in monitoring and evaluating the safety of their learning environment so as to create a sense of ownership. They should be consulted when assessing the behaviour of teachers and the quality of support services, and take an active role in school and education committees to promote a culture of peace and tolerance. Students/peers should also be involved in defining child-friendly reporting mechanisms.

## Key Reference Materials

- Education Strategy 2007-2009, UNHCR, Geneva, June 2007.
- Education Field Guidelines, UNHCR, Geneva, 2003.
- Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Inter-Agency-Network for Education in Emergency, Chronic Crisis and Early Reconstruction (INEE), 2005.
- Guidelines for Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, UNHCR, Geneva, 2003.
- Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls, UNHCR, Geneva, 2007.
- World Programme for Human rights Education (WPHRE), UN Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee (UNIACC) on human rights education in the school system.  
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/UN-inter-agency.htm>
- Keeping Children Safe: Standards for Child Protection, The Keeping Children Safe Coalition, 2006.
- Creating Safer Schools: Lessons learned; strategies for action. Raising Voices and the Ford Foundation, Kampala, October 2006.  
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[http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index\\_7260.html](http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7260.html)
- Action for the Rights of Children, UNHCR, Save the Children Alliance, UNICEF and OHCHR, October 2002.
- Refugee and Returnee Children in Southern Africa: Perceptions and Experiences of Violence, UNHCR, June 2005.
- Creating new choices: a violence prevention project for schools in Australia, UNESCO, 2001.
- Good Practices: Safety and Security Measures / Child-Friendly Spaces, Inter-Agency-Network for Education in Emergency, Chronic Crisis and Early Reconstruction (INEE).  
<http://ineesite.org/page.asp?pid=1324>  
<http://ineesite.org/page.asp?pid=1323>
- Guidelines on Gender-based Violence in Humanitarian Settings (education chapter), Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)

<http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/content/documents/default.asp?docID=1750&publish=7>

- Guidance on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency settings (forthcoming), Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).  
[http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/content/subsidi/tf\\_mhps/default.asp?bodyID=5&publish=7](http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/content/subsidi/tf_mhps/default.asp?bodyID=5&publish=7)
- The Impact of Women Teachers on Girls' Education, UNESCO Bangkok Advocacy Brief, May 2006. (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001459/145990e.pdf>)
- Gender Strategies for Education in Emergencies: Women Teachers from the INEE, Inter-Agency-Network for Education in Emergency, Chronic Crisis and early reconstruction (INEE).
- Ensuring a Gender Perspective in Education in Emergencies, Women's Commission and IRC, Inter-Agency-Network for Education in Emergency, Chronic Crisis and Early Reconstruction (INEE).  
<http://www.womenscommission.org/pdf/EdGenderTool.pdf>
- Healing Classrooms Initiative Teacher Training Module, International Rescue Committee (IRC).  
<http://www.theirc.org/resources/healing-classrooms-help.html?p=2>
- Eliminating the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Girls in Refugee Schools in West Africa: Introducing Female Classroom Assistants, In Combating Gender Violence in and around Schools. Co-editors: F. Leach and C. Mitchell. Trentham Books. Kirk, J. & Winthrop, R., 2006.
- Inter-Agency Peace Education Programme: Skills for Constructive Living, UNESCO, UNHCR, INEE, 2005.

## Annex 1: Codes of Conduct for Refugee Schools

- *Codes of conduct should be designed in a participatory manner, make reference to existing rules and policies and always include issues related to:*<sup>8</sup>

### **(a) Teachers' attitudes towards students**

- Discipline (corporal punishment or other forms of severe disciplinary measures)
- Language and gestures towards students, especially girls
- Sexual harassment or sexual relationships with students
- Any form of abuse or exploitation, including child labour
- Respect for confidentiality

### **(b) Teachers' professional commitment**

- Promotion of a positive and safe learning environment
- Punctuality and attendance
- Lessons preparation and fair examination
- Student support and follow-up
- Knowledge of his/her subject
- Willingness to learn new teaching methods

### **(c) Teachers' attitudes towards the community**

- Mobilization of parents to participate in their children's learning
- Abuse of power towards parents/family
- Promotion of a positive image of the school and the profession

### **(d) Students' attitudes in school and the school environment**

- Peer-to peer intimidation
- Bullying
- Sexual harassment

### **(e) Penalties for violating the code**

- For teachers: Suspension or termination of employment
- For students: Suspension from class or expulsion

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<sup>8</sup> For more details, please refer to INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction, p 70.



- *Example of a teacher's code of conduct for a refugee school*<sup>9</sup>

Education is critical to the future of refugees. As teachers and staff, you will play a primary role in helping to shape the future of refugee students. Professionals are held in high regard because of their positions. Your position is one of influence and also one of great responsibility. Teachers and staff in refugee schools will:

- Adhere to the requirements for behaviour and work as spelled out by the Ministry of Education of country X.
- Fulfil obligations on attendance, punctuality and lesson preparation. If absent or late for a grave reason, you will immediately notify the principal or other designated person.
- Conscientiously prepare lessons, assess students' work fairly and promptly and cooperate with the principal and department heads or coordinators.
- Interact with students, colleagues, parents and community members in an appropriate manner.
- Rigorously avoid actions or gestures that violate human rights and could harm students, such as:
  - Sexual harassment and sexual violence, including suggestive words, gestures or comments as well as physical and psychological abuse.
  - Excessive and inappropriate disciplinary action, including the use or threat of corporal punishment and demeaning and abusive words or actions.

Failure to adhere to the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action including suspension or termination of employment.

Name: -----

Signature: -----

Date: -----

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<sup>9</sup> This example is based on the code of conduct used by (??full name)JRS in Namibia for refugee primary and secondary schools.

## **Annex 2: Applying Standard Operating Procedures on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in School Settings**

### **1. What are the standard operating procedures on sexual and gender-based violence?**

Standard operating procedures for sexual and gender-based violence are developed by UNHCR, government and non-government partners and members of the displaced community. The procedures clearly delineate roles and responsibilities in dealing with sexual and gender-based violence. They include a referral system and mechanisms to exchange information about incidents and report them. They also provide a consent form for the survivor to agree to accept protection and permit the release of information. Furthermore, the procedures reiterate the guiding principles on confidentiality, respecting the wishes of the survivor and acting in the best interests of a child. Representatives of all agencies and refugee groups mentioned in the document sign it to show they are committed to its aims. They also agree to revise the document based on an evaluation of outcomes.

### **2. What role do educational institutions play in the standard operating procedures on sexual and gender-based violence?**

The procedures detail the basic prevention and response measures and indicate which agencies will be responsible for the four main sectors - health, psycho-social, legal/justice and security. They also look at what support is available from the education sector and the community. Below is an abstract of the section dealing with the role of educational institutions in preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence and a sample table to be filled at the field level to clearly define roles and responsibilities.

Educational institutions can provide protection, but they can also be the places where abuses occur. Their roles and responsibilities should therefore be clearly outlined. It is also important to have a school code of conduct that clearly forbids sexual exploitation and abuse. Teachers and school authorities should be trained to recognize sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual and gender-based violence. But any solution to help child victims of abuse should not hinder their access to schooling. Furthermore, the integration or reintegration of abused children into schools must be monitored.

## EDUCATION PARTNERS / INSTITUTIONS



Prevention	Response
<p><b>Education Authorities:</b> <i>Responsibilities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> </ul> <p><b>School committees</b> <i>Responsibilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> </ul> <p><b>Implementing partners</b> <i>Responsibilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> </ul> <p><b>Students/Peers</b> <i>Responsibilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Education Authorities:</b> <i>Responsibilities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> </ul> <p><b>School Committees</b> <i>Responsibilities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> </ul> <p><b>Implementing partners</b> <i>Responsibilities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> </ul> <p><b>Students / Peers</b> <i>Responsibilities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> </ul>

## **1-Key Steps and Actions to Remember (for multi-functional teams)**

### *(1) Situational Analysis*

- Identify the root causes of violence in learning environments through situational analyses.
- Assess the quality of support services and the capacities, resources and perceptions of the community with regard to child abuse and exploitation in learning environments.
- Cooperate with the community, local authorities and partners to establish a strategy to prevent and respond to violence in learning environments.

### *(2) Prevention & Response*

- Focus on preventive measures by creating safe and supportive learning environments and taking action at the national, community and school levels.
- Ensure children are aware of their right to express themselves, be represented and seek support. Empower them and help them to organize themselves.
- Create child-friendly spaces, within and outside school, where children can seek information and support and enrol in learning and recreational activities which encourage peace and dialogue.
- Establish codes of conduct in collaboration with the authorities, instruct teachers on the codes and disseminate them through child-friendly messages.
- Inform teachers about children's rights and train them in positive-discipline methods; recruit and train female teachers and classroom assistants.

- Establish response mechanisms that build on the standard operating procedures for preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence, but widen their scope to other types of violence in the school or learning environment.

### *(3) Monitoring & Evaluation*

- Ensure community-based monitoring and evaluation and that children and parents play an active part in them.
- Ensure that implementing partners have child-protection policies and are trained to work with children and use participatory approaches.

## 2-Suggested activities and indicators (for programme officers)

Ensure the following objectives and activities are included in the sub-agreements with implementing partners:

Objective	Expected Outputs	Performance Targets
<p>1. ACCESS</p> <p><b>Advocate for national policies to prevent violence in schools and penalize perpetrators</b></p>	<p>i. Clear national regulations and procedures, which prevent violence in schools and penalise its perpetrators</p>	<p>i. Number of meetings with relevant authorities and partners</p> <p>ii. Number of advocacy materials disseminated</p>
<p>2. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</p> <p><b>2.1 Reduce protection risks and accidents due to unsafe learning environments</b></p> <p><b>2.2 Establish reporting mechanisms and track cases of abuse</b></p>	<p>i. School buildings and surroundings are safe and supportive</p> <p>ii. Children are safe on their way to and from school</p>	<p>i. (a) De-mining and cleaning of school surroundings</p> <p>(b) Number of schools where roofs and doors have been installed</p> <p>(c) Number of separate latrines for girls and boys in each school</p> <p>(d) Number of schools with fences and appropriate lighting</p> <p>(e) Number of schools with clean water</p> <p>ii. (a) The community has been mobilized to escort children to school.</p> <p>(b) Information campaigns on forced recruitment, human trafficking and sexual and</p>

	<p>iii. Roles and responsibilities on reporting abuse and referring victims/survivors to support services are clearly identified</p>	<p>gender-based violence have been organized</p> <p>iii. (a) School-based reporting mechanisms, which are based on Standard operating procedures, are established (b) Number of cases of abuse reported increase</p>
<p>3. EDUCATION STAFF</p> <p><b>Build the capacity of teachers to address violence in schools and reinforce the supervision of teachers to prevent them from abusing students</b></p>	<p>i. Refugee teachers have equitable and acceptable working conditions</p> <p>ii. Teachers receive appropriate training and support</p> <p>iii. Female teachers and classroom assistants are recruited</p> <p>iv. Codes of conduct are established,</p>	<p>i. (a) Teachers in refugee schools are paid on a regular basis (b) Additional classrooms are built in semi-durable materials to ensure the teacher-student ratio is not higher than 1:40</p> <p>ii. Number of teachers trained in: (a) Positive discipline (b) Children's and women's rights (c) Psycho-social support (d) Codes of conduct</p> <p>iii. (a) The number of female teachers recruited and trained (b) The number of female classroom assistants recruited and trained</p> <p>iv. (a) Codes of conduct are publicized in each</p>

	disseminated and enforced	classroom (b) Disciplinary action is taken against teachers and students violating the code (c) The number of cases of teachers abusing students is reduced
4. TEACHING AND LEARNING  <b>Promote a culture of peace and dialogue through education</b>	i. Children are taught to respect and tolerate social and cultural diversity	i. School community events/parties are organized to convey positive messages on diversity ii. The curriculum is enriched with modules on children's and women's rights, sexual and gender-based violence, and HIV and AIDS iii. Group discussions with students of both sexes are organized regularly to discuss gender-based violence
5. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION  <b>Empower students and the community to deal with unequal power relations</b>	i. Children are informed of their rights and the availability of support services  ii. Children's participation is strengthened	i. (a) A child-friendly sensitization campaign is organized to inform children of their rights (b) Child-friendly lists of support services in the areas of health, safety and legal aid are disseminated and regularly updated  ii. (a) Number of children and adolescents included in school committees and/or equivalent associations (e.g. parent-teacher



	<p>iii. Parents and the community are mobilized to keep children in schools safe</p>	<p>associations)  (b) Quantity of sanitary materials distributed  (c) Number of children with specific needs receiving support</p> <p>iii. (a) Number of community-based discussions organized on the issues of child abuse and sexual and gender-based violence  (b) Number of community members trained in psycho-social support  (c) Partners are mobilized to address domestic violence and support parents' livelihood strategies</p>
<p>6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION</p> <p><b>Assess the quality of the programme on a regular basis</b></p>	<p>i. Community-based monitoring mechanisms evaluate the safety of school environments on a regular basis.</p>	<p>i. Roles and responsibilities in monitoring and evaluation are clearly defined  ii. The quality of support services and teacher training is regularly assessed, based on feedback provided by children  iii. Standards and indicators related to safety in schools are enhanced</p>

### **3- Ten standards for a right-based and child-friendly school<sup>10</sup>**

**1. It reflects and realizes the rights of every child:** The school cooperates with other partners to promote and monitor the well-being and rights of all children. It defends and protects all children from abuse and harm, *both inside and outside its premises.*

**2. It sees and understands the whole child in a broad context:** The school is concerned with what happens to children before they enter the system (to assess their readiness for school in terms of health, nutritional status and social and linguistic skills) and once they have returned to their homes, communities and workplaces.

**3. It is child-centred:** The school encourages children's participation, creativity, self-esteem and psycho-social well-being. It promotes a structured, child-centred curriculum and teaching and learning methods appropriate to the child's abilities and learning style. Furthermore, it gives precedence to the needs of children over those of other actors in the system.

**4. It is gender-sensitive and girl-friendly:** The school promotes parity in the enrolment and achievements of girls and boys; reduces constraints to gender equity, eliminates gender stereotypes and provides facilities, curricula and learning processes that are welcoming to girls.

**5. It provides education based on the reality of children's lives:** The school ensures that the curriculum responds to the learning needs of individual children as well as to the general objectives of the education system. Learning materials are pertinent to the local context and respects the traditional knowledge of families and the community.

**6. It acts to ensure inclusion, respect and equality of opportunity for all children:** The school does not stereotype, exclude, or discriminate on the basis of difference; and recognizes the varying circumstances and needs of children as determined by gender, culture, social class and ability level.

**7. It promotes mental and physical health:** The school provides emotional support, encourages healthy behaviour and practices, and guarantees a hygienic, safe, secure and joyful environment.

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<sup>10</sup> These standards have been established on the basis of UNICEF's child-friendly school concept. Refer to UNICEF's website: [http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index\\_7260.html](http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7260.html)

**8. It is inclusive and provides education that is affordable and accessible:** The school is especially welcoming to vulnerable children and families and those with special needs.

**9. It enhances the capacity of teachers and builds their morale, commitment and status:** The school makes sure that its teachers have enough professional training in human, women's and children's rights, positive-discipline methods and psycho-social awareness. It also tries to boost teachers' status and provide them with a respectable income.

**10. It is family and community-based:** The school attempts to work with and strengthen families. It helps children, parents and teachers establish harmonious, collaborative partnerships and strengthen school governance through a decentralised, community-based approach. The school encourages parents, local authorities, community organizations, students, and other institutions of civil society to participate in the management and financing of education. It promotes community partnerships and networks focused on the rights and well-being of children.