Education

The checklist is not exhaustive, but highlights practical actions that should be taken to ensure the integration of protection principles in the implementation of education programmes.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**ANALYSIS**

* Using local knowledge, carry out **an analysis** before establishing any new education facilities.

***Notes:***

* + *Analyse the potential protection risks in the programme location with a focus on the potential for violence, coercion, deliberate deprivation or discrimination against specific groups. These might include the forced recruitment of boys to armed groups, trafficking, presence of landmines, high levels of SGBV etc.*
  + *Discuss with all representative samples of society in separate groups (e.g. men, women, girls, boys, elderly, ethnic groups, children with disabilities) the potential safety and/or dignity issues with setting up an education project.*
  + *Ask children directly (and especially adolescent girls) about the safety of their travel to and from school.*
  + *Consider the potential barriers to boys and girls taking up schooling including: physical (lack of transport, location of education facilities); financial (lack of income to cover fees or materials); information (lack of or inaccessible information about what assistance is available and where); cultural (prioritisation of education for boys, reliance on girls to do household chores, stigmatisation of specific groups such as ex-child soldiers, survivors of rape or children living with HIV etc.); administrative (lack of ID).*
* Identify what are the **power dynamics** within the intervention area. Who has access to education services? Who has the ability to influence decisions on education services? Who tends to be/not to be teachers?

***Notes:***

* *Consult community members on power dynamics as perceived by them. Assess whether inequitable access to education is causing tension or conflict within the community and with other surrounding/local communities.*
* *Consult with the Protection Cluster/ Protection Actors, including the GBV and Child Protection sub-clusters, about power dynamics in the area of intervention.*
* *Use this information to inform monitoring activities and identify any barriers to access or discrimination against particular groups. Take this into consideration when determining locations for schools.*
* Collect **sex, age and disability disaggregated data (SADD)** in the needs assessment

***Notes:***

* *Compare figures to existing demographic data. Discrepancies can tell you which groups do not have access.*

**TARGETING PRIORITY GROUPS**

**Safety and dignity**

* Ensure that the **location** of education facilities and routes to them are away from actual or potential threats such as violence; especially the risk or threat of gender-based violence (GBV), and attacks from armed groups.

***Notes****:*

* + *Keep in mind the distances children have to travel and the mode of transport. Learning environments should be located in close proximity to the populations they serve.*
  + *Do not place facilities near possible perpetrators. N.B. The police and armed forces are often seen as perpetrators of violations. Whether they provide a reassuring feeling or instil fear depends on the location. It is important to consult the children, community, and potential beneficiaries about their thoughts.*
  + *Consider ways to reduce/manage/cope with these threats, including changing the location, accompaniment (e.g. children walking in groups, adults escorting the children, or providing torches and/or whistles, etc.)*
  + *In case of displacement, locate facilities near or within camps or settlements.*
  + *Ensure that child-friendly spaces, teacher learning centres, schools, classrooms, playgrounds and surrounding areas are in good condition, and pose no safety risks to children and teachers. For example, that there are no exposed wires, no dangerous materials on the ground, not in areas known to have landmines, and that they are not close to busy roads*
  + *Arrange appropriate policing if required (e.g. police, community patrols)*
  + *See if there is a possibility to offer psycho-social support to children in the schools, teachers who have been displaced may also need these services.*
* Communities should advocate for **ending practices of using schools for political purposes**, including political rallies, recruiting students and teachers to attend political events, and using schools as polling stations during elections where this could cause tensions or problems. The use of schools and teachers during elections, for instance as polling officials or vote counters, has triggered election and post-election violence against them in some countries.
* Ensure that girls and teachers are not put at risk of increased harm in the **establishment and running of education services for women and girls**.

***Notes:***

* + *Based on the risk assessment, put in place measures to reduce the risk, such as low profile, culturally sensitive uniform or dress codes etc. Girls have an equal right to education, and their safety should be ensured.*
* Ensure there are separate, secure (locks and lighting), hygienic and private **washroom facilities** for boys and girls and consult with them about their location and design.
* Ensure a **secure environment** in schools.

***Notes:***

* + *Ensure that the children are supervised during breaks and where possible to and from school.*
  + *Ensure visible boundaries and clear signs mark the learning site.*
  + *Do not allow visits to the facilities without prior checks. Visits must include a liability disclaimer signed by the visitor.*
  + *Ensure facilities have safety features such as evacuation exits and health and safety equipment and that first aid kits are available/equipped.*
  + *Ensure teachers are trained in first aid.*
* **Age limits** should not be enforced for disaster or conflict affected children and youth. However, there are potential safety issues of combining much older children with young children in education facilities. These can be addressed by proper supervision and where appropriate separate classrooms and/or play areas.

**Meaningful Access**

* Ensure that the **locations** of schools are accessible to all.

***Notes:***

* + *If necessary, adapt the location to reduce the distance and to ensure that the most vulnerable/marginalised have access.*
* Ensure there are no **physical barriers** to education infrastructureand services so they can be accessed by persons with reduced mobility (e.g. persons with physical disabilities, bed-ridden children) as well as persons with non-mobility-related disabilities (e.g. the blind, hard of hearing, intellectually disabled).

***Notes:***

* + *Make access paths smooth and fit ramps for wheelchair access. Consider different physical disabilities.*
  + *Different wheelchairs may require different amounts of space. Artificial limbs may make even relatively short distances difficult. Talk to children with physical disabilities about what solutions would best fit their needs.*
  + *Train teachers on how to teach children with disabilities. Teachers should at the very least be aware of any special needs of children with disabilities to facilitate learning and are mindful of discrimination by other children.*
  + *Install seats in latrines for children with disabilities.*
  + *If some children cannot access the services, consider what alternatives are possible (e.g. distance learning, audio-visual materials, radio or television broadcasts, books, etc.).*
  + *Provide information about services in both verbal and written form.*
  + *Ensure that staff are trained to work with individuals with intellectual disabilities, including on how to ensure proper confidentiality and informed consent. Local NGOs often already have the technical knowledge.*
* Ensure there are no **financial barriers** to accessing education.

***Notes:***

* + *See if there is a possibility to waive school fees for children affected by the conflict or a natural disaster.*
  + *Consider the costs of school materials (e.g. uniforms, books) and whether this prevents access.*
* Mitigate the impact of **administrative barriers**, such as lack of documentation, which can be excluding children from accessing education and training opportunities.

***Notes:***

* + *If documents (such as birth records, school certificates) are prerequisite for education, work with the authorities to waive the requirement for disaster-affected children or establish alternative procedures for ensuring all children have access to education.*
  + *In camp settings, accept children with missing documents. If this is not possible because of overlap with local communities, consider a grace period during which parents can be assisted to obtain the documents.*
* Identify solutions to **context-specific or** **cultural barriers** to attending school.

***Notes:***

* + *Flexible hours of schooling to accommodate different needs. Children may have unavoidable commitments during the day. Adult learners may need to go to work. Nomadic groups may be involved in agricultural activities at certain times of the year.*
  + *Non-formal education / after school classes for those students who need to catch-up (e.g. adults that missed some aspects of formal education, girls who may not have access to education because of traditional practice in the area).*
  + *Sensitise the community about the value and benefits of girls’ education. Build this into the program activities.*
  + *Include proactive activities to encourage equal registration of boys and girls and maintain retention rates that are specific to adolescent girls and boys because they have different reasons/pressures for quitting early.*
  + *Support non-formal education / after school classes where formal schooling for girls is not available.*
* **Monitor access and discrimination**

***Notes:***

* + *Ensure project indicators (e.g. number of individuals accessing education services) are disaggregated by age, gender, and location or specific group (e.g. persons with disabilities, poverty, language ethnic minorities).*
  + *Compare enrolment figures to existing demographic data. Discrepancies can tell you which groups do not have access (e.g. if 10% of children are from an ethnic minority, are 10% of students also from this group?)*
  + *Where possible train the parent committees to do this. Committees can also work with contractors to make sure designs are disability friendly.*
  + *Involve men, women, boys, and girls, parent, students and teachers in the assessment, monitoring and reporting on education matters.*

**COORDINATION AND ADVOCACY**

* Identify **responsible government authorities** for education, support their role if possible and advocate for policy changes where possible/appropriate.
* Identify local authorities and civil society specialised in working with **persons with low mobility or disabilities**. Strengthen and support their role, and learn from their experience how to improve service delivery.

***Notes:***

* + *Most countries already have national or local NGOs offering services to vulnerable groups. These may not operate in the same areas, but could become a valuable resource for the training of staff and the referral of cases.*
  + *Coordinate with specialised agencies to identify children with disabilities and provide them with specialist assistance devices (e.g. crutches, wheelchairs, hearing aids, Braille books).*

**MAPPING AND REFERRAL**

* Report and share protection concerns with the Protection cluster, including the GBV and Child Protection sub-clusters. Other actors may be able to provide assistance.

***Notes:***

* + *Cases of violations should be referred promptly and in accordance with standard operating procedures established in the area.*
  + *Establish reporting mechanisms to report security incidents to enable proper monitoring and prevention of threats. Monitoring and reporting is vital to enable government and other actors to respond to threats to education; as well as to assist legal accountability and advocacy. Education clusters can take a lead by co-coordinating the development of such partnerships and ensuring use is made of existing human rights monitoring capacity.*
  + *Train staff in basic psychosocial support to victims of abuse so they are able to refer them safely and appropriately.*

**INFORMATION**

* Share information with the community in **a variety of formats** to ensure different groups receive accurate and timely information about the programme.

***Notes:***

* + *Ensure the community are aware of what the programme entails, who is eligible, timeframe and the location of the activities.*
  + *Consider using different approaches to reach different groups such as children, isolated people, people who are unable to read or write, people with visual or hearing impairments etc. Different formats could include printed materials (posters, leaflets, photos, cartoons etc.) or audio (radio, television, loudspeakers, house to house visits, community meetings etc).*
* Ensure that beneficiaries know their right to education, and where/how to obtain it.

***Notes:***

* + *Rights awareness should be provided in sufficient quantity in languages understandable to all beneficiaries, especially to new arrivals in displacement settings.*
  + *Printed materials should consider literacy levels (e.g. use of pictograms instead of text). Lack of awareness about rights and services is regularly a gap identified in assessments.*

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

* **Consult** with education authorities, local government, teachers, men, women, boys, and girls in the community to take into account their ideas and opinions about education needs in the community.

***Notes:***

* + *Ensure that local authorities are involved in education, including curriculum development and school certifications.*
  + *Curricula and instructional materials developed or supported should be gender-sensitive, recognise diversity and different learning needs, and promote respect for learners. Policies, curricula, textbooks and methods of learning need to be adjusted to promote tolerance, understanding and conflict resolution skills, as well as understanding of human rights, child rights, and non-discrimination.*
* Ensure school management committees are democratic and inclusive. Involve religious or community leaders in school governance. This can remove ideological or religious motives to oppose or attack schools.
* Engage children (both boys and girls) in **student associations** and parents (both men and women) in **parent-teacher associations.**

***Notes:***

* + *Empowering the persons whose protection is concerned can help make response more relevant and sustainable, while boosting the self-esteem and capacities of the working individuals concerned.*
  + *Ensure children (both boys and girls) have participatory committees (student advisory boards) to regularly ensure engagement between educators and the children themselves.*

**FEEDBACK MECHANISMS**

* Set up accessible, well understood **mechanisms for suggestions and complaints**

***Notes****:*

* + *Do not assume an “open door” policy is enough. Make sure that there are other possibilities for submitting complaints that do not require the beneficiary exposing themselves to education/project staff.*
  + *RESPOND to complaints, regardless of whether corrective measures can/need to be put in place.*
  + *Consider how children and different groups such as women, older people, people living with disabilities, and people from ethnic groups will communicate their feedback e.g. via mobile phones, or through face to face visits etc.*
  + *Organise awareness raising sessions so that all those concerned know how it works (i.e. children, students, parent committees, and teachers).*
  + *Consider a joint complaints mechanism with other sectors (e.g. Protection) to minimise confusion.*
  + *Train staff so they know how to respond or refer cases when they receive sensitive complaints (e.g. about the behaviour of staff.)*

**STAFF CONDUCT**

* Put in place guidelines and mechanisms to **prevent**, **monitor and report instances of abuse and exploitation**.

***Notes:***

* + *Ensure that Education Sector Members all have in place a system for carrying out background checks for new staff working with children.*
  + *Provide a short version (1-2 pages) of the organization’s Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy in the local language.*
  + *Ensure those involved in education projects, including permanent and temporary staff, volunteers and the children themselves, are oriented on these policies, as well as on expected behaviour and ways of reporting allegations. Ensure they understand there is a zero-tolerance policy of exchanging aid for sex or other favours. Staff should also be aware of their responsibility to report allegations or suspicions.*
  + *The Code of Conduct should include a prohibition on corporal punishment.*
  + *Proactively monitor the behaviour of educators and care givers and investigate any allegations or suspicions with the support of specialised Child Protection Staff.*
  + *Where appropriate, display the Code of Conducts and Child Protection Policies in public places*
* Employ staff and volunteers that represent the cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity of the community and aim for equal numbers of men and women.

***Notes:***

* + *Consider recruiting diverse community members to support activities in school and be involved in teaching/mentoring.*
  + *Use creative ways to recruit and retain female teachers and ensure they are able to participate in school meetings and professional development.*
  + *Advocate for enrolling female teachers in the higher levels. If there are not enough qualified female teachers have female teacher’s aides who accompany classes and club activities.*
* Consider whether the organisational environment is conducive to staff well-being and adequately resourced

***Notes*:**

* + *Consider working conditions including work hours*
  + *Allow regular opportunities for staff to benefit from leisure time and leave*
  + *Mitigate potential security risks at project locations and in project implementation*
  + *Ensure adequate supervision of staff and volunteers*
  + *Hold regular de-briefs and other opportunities for staff to raise challenges*
  + *Consider appointing staff-care focal points.*

1. For further details see: [Minimum Inter-Agency Standards for Protection Mainstreaming](http://reliefweb.int/report/world/minimum-inter-agency-standards-protection-mainstreaming-enar) (WVI), [Disabilities among Refugees and Conflict-Affected Populations - Resource Kit for Fieldworkers](http://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/resources/document/610-resource-kit-disabilities-among-refugees-conflict-affected-populations) (WRC), [Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action](http://cpwg.net/minimum-standards/ms-resources/) (CPWG), Gender Handbook (IASC), Protection Principles, [Sphere](http://www.sphereproject.org/sphere/en/handbook/language-versions/) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)