Gender and Protection Checklist | Education

Why does gender and protection matter in education programs?

- Disasters can change educational needs and the ability of boys and girls to attend school. The number of girls who attend school is often lower than boys and this gap can increase following a disaster.

- Education programs can protect children following a disaster by providing routine and reducing their vulnerability to exploitation, abuse, violence and injury, e.g. trafficking, child labour or child marriage.

- Responses need to be careful not to increase protection risks for children, e.g. exposing children to sexual harassment or exploitation while travelling to and from school, or when at school.

- All children have a right to education, so it is important to make sure that everyone, including vulnerable children, can access it. Vulnerable children may include girls (including married and/or pregnant girls), children living on the street, child heads of households, and children with disability or chronic illness.

- Understanding the needs of vulnerable children and targeting them in education programs, helps the whole community recover faster from disasters and build resilience.

Assessment

- Consult directly with vulnerable children to make sure their concerns and needs are heard, e.g. encourage girls and boys to speak for themselves.

- Assess the education needs of vulnerable children by sex, age and disability and prioritise these (e.g. include child heads of households, unaccompanied children, children living on the street, displaced children and children with disability).

- Assess the number of children, number/capacity of schools and availability of both male and female teachers.

- Disasters can impact on children's school enrolment, attendance and drop-out rates, by sex and age, so it is important to investigate how girls and boys are affected. E.g.

  ➢ have household and care-giving responsibilities for girls reduced their time for homework, or forced girls to drop out of school and marry early?

  ➢ has food insecurity forced girls or boys to drop out of school and/or take up paid work?

  ➢ are there customs limiting access to education, e.g. preference of boys' education over girls'?

- Assess whether learning materials are equally relevant to girls and of boys of all ages. Examine whether learning materials include a disaster risk reduction component.

- Identify any protection risks associated with education, e.g. unsafe routes to school; or unsafe environments at school, including risk of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Access

- Prioritise the most vulnerable children for education programs; e.g. pregnant and/or married adolescent girls, children with disability, child heads of households or unaccompanied children.

- Consult separately with girls and boys of different ages (including children with added difficulties) about barriers they face to accessing education and take action to address them.

- Make sure schools are accessible to vulnerable children, e.g.
  - located in accessible areas
  - advocate for flexible school hours for different needs
  - provide non-formal education or catch-up classes
  - minimise financial or administrative barriers to access to school; e.g. advocate for pregnant and married girls to continue their education; advocate to waive school fees for unaccompanied children
  - provide mentoring programs to girls.
- Promote the employment of both female and male teachers.
- Communicate information on education through different methods (e.g. extension workers, radio, sms messaging, posters, newsletters, television or loudspeaker), so that information reaches everyone (e.g. literate, illiterate, deaf, blind or children).
- Consider how cultural practices may limit access to education and discuss with community leaders ways to prevent discrimination, exploitation and abuse.

Saefty and dignity

- Consult with parents, boys and girls about ways increase safety for education programs, e.g.
  - safe locations of and routes to schools
  - acceptable distances for children of all ages to walk to school
  - accessibility features on school grounds for children with disabilities
  - washing facilities and water points, as well as separate, lockable school latrines for girls and boys
  - education programs to promote schools free from injury, bullying, exploitation, abuse and violence
  - teacher training on child protection responsibilities and children's rights
- Put in place guidelines and mechanisms to monitor safety concerns in schools, including bullying between children, interaction between teachers and other people with children, sexual exploitation and abuse, use of corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading punishments.
- Monitor and respond to safety concerns about schools and education programs.
- Make sure that girls and teachers are not at risk of increased harm in the running of education services for women and girls.
- Consult with gender based violence specialists on ways to respond safely and confidentially to cases of child exploitation and abuse, including where to refer survivors to services and support. Make sure children know how to report exploitation, abuse or violence.

Participation, empowerment and accountability

- Provide staff with guidance and training about the situation for and capacities of vulnerable children.
- Inform parents and children about rights to education, and where and how to access schools, e.g.
  - hold same-sex focus groups to identify ways to help vulnerable children access, participate and stay in school
  - hold discussions with parents and community leaders to promote the importance of girls' education, e.g. women with an education are healthier, more likely to have fewer and healthier children, and are better able to earn an income.
- Engage boys and girls in student associations, and mothers and fathers in parent-teacher associations.
- Engage girls, boys and communities in school location, design and construction to promote ownership.

- Provide teacher training and a teacher's code of conduct on prevention of violence against children, including physical and humiliating punishment, and sexual exploitation and abuse. Set up fair and transparent systems to make teachers accountable for breaches of the Code of Conduct.
- Set up accessible, confidential and well-understood mechanisms for suggestions and complaints.

Monitoring

- Collect and monitor data on child beneficiaries by sex, age and disability.
- Monitor school enrolment and drop-out rates to find out who is not accessing education, and address any barriers they face.
- Involve male and female parents, students and teachers in the assessment, monitoring and reporting on education matters.
- Monitor for unintended outcomes of education programs; e.g. increased and heavy workloads for girls due to education and household responsibilities.

This checklist was adapted from:
- IASC Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action, 2015
- Education Programs – Tips for Protection Mainstreaming, Global Protection Cluster, May 2014
- Education Gender Marker Tip Sheet, Inter-Agency Standing Committee, September 2012
- Mainstreaming Child Protection into Education - Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, Child Protection Working Group (CPWG), 2012