

## Child protection and Food Security and Livelihoods Tips and Recommendations

Child protection is defined as “All activities aimed at preventing and responding to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence affecting children” The UN Convention on the rights of the child defines a child as any human being below the age of 18 years. For a full explanation of child protection see <http://www.cpwg.net>

Food security is based on the four pillars of availability, access, stability and utilization. One of the widest used definition states that “Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989<sup>1</sup>) recognizes the child's right to the highest standard of health (Article 24) and the obligation of signatory governments to "take appropriate measures to combat disease and malnutrition..., through inter alia...the provision of adequately nutritious foods" (Article 24). Article 27 also specifies good nutrition as part of the adequate standard of living to which children have a right. (Article 32) stipulates child labour, children should be protected from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or their education. While the Convention protects children from harmful and exploitative work, there is nothing in it that prohibits parents from expecting their children to help out at home in ways that are safe and appropriate to their age. In particular, gender roles may determine the work conducted in the home and outside, and may put girls and boys at different risks. If children help out in a family farm or business, the tasks they do be safe and suited to their level of development and comply with national labour laws. Children's work should not jeopardize any of their other rights, including the right to education, or the right to relaxation and play.

Food insecurity exposes children to different risks and negative coping mechanism. Gender roles and dynamics should be taken into consideration and analysed because girls and boys may face different risks based on gender and age.

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<sup>1</sup> A summary of the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child  
[https://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights\\_overview.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights_overview.pdf)



Whole of Syria - SOUTH TURKEY  
**FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS CLUSTER**  
*Strengthening Humanitarian Response*

## **Introduction:**

The below checklist and recommendations have been developed by the FSL Cluster and Child Protection in order to give a guidance to the Clusters' members on different action to be taken in order to ensure that CP is mainstreamed in FSL activities. This document has been finalized in consultation with Cluster members.

The Syrian conflict has dramatically impacted children; in regards to food security - children are considered among the most vulnerable especially children who head the family, wounded, unaccompanied/orphans, those involved in WFCL, and children who are displaced with or without their families. Food Security of girls and boys may be affected differently due to the gender roles and expectations placed upon them by their families and communities, including impact on nutrition. Moreover food insecurity often leads to the adoption of negative and irreversible coping strategies that may impact girls and boys in different ways: consuming less or skipping daily meals, sending children to eat elsewhere (out of the family), early and forced marriage (especially for girls), wood gathering, begging, removing children from schools, child labour<sup>2</sup>, "high risk/illegal" labour, etc. as highlighted by several assessments, including FSL Cluster Assessment 2016. Interventions to address these concerns must include women and men, as well as boys and girls to foster an effective response. Programs that support livelihoods and food security must consider both the direct (i.e. increased household food consumption) and indirect impact on children (i.e. children left alone when parents are at work). While one goal of our program is to reduce negative coping strategies – especially child labour and early marriage – we must also consider the contribution these programs can make towards supporting safe work for youth<sup>3</sup>.

Often, livelihoods programs exclude anyone under the age of 18. However, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO) "Not all work done by children should be classified as child labour that is to be targeted for elimination."<sup>4</sup> Child labour is work which is harmful to the child, though there are many circumstances in which child participation in employment can be beneficial to the child and support household food security. The economic participation of children is guided by international principles outlined in ILO Convention 138 on Minimum Age and ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL).

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<sup>2</sup> According to FAO statistics, 98 million boys and girls between 5 and 17 years are identified as child labourers in agriculture, and worldwide, nearly 60 percent of child labour is found in agriculture.

<sup>3</sup> International Labour Organization. "Safe Work for Youth." <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/areas/Safeworkforyouth/lang--en/index.htm>

<sup>4</sup> International Labour Organization. "What is Child Labour" <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/facts/lang--en/index.htm>

## **DISTRIBUTIONS**

- How we do distributions has a HUGE effect on women and children’s vulnerabilities.
- Food is also a very symbolic and sensitive resource in the Syrian context, often whoever controls the food controls the power – checks and balances must be in place to make sure that power is not abused by staff, volunteer food distributors or community members.

### **1. Food assistance distribution points**

- Are distribution points accessible to all beneficiaries, including the most vulnerable?
- Is there adequate shade at the distribution points?
- Are the distribution points near water points?
- Are the beneficiaries able to carry the quantities of food the distance to their homes?
- Are the food distributions points and the manner of distribution safe and secure for beneficiaries?
- Are there sex separated sanitation points near the distributions sites?
- Are there first aid/medical facilities near the distribution points?
- Ensure that food is stored safely and securely prior to distribution so that it does not either get stolen or infested with insects etc.

### **2. Food assistance distribution methods**

- Ensure that women and children are consulted in regard to the design and implementation of the projects (throughout all the process) and food distribution when one-off (especially regarding new displacements).
- Inform beneficiaries about the dates, times and locations of planned distributions well ahead of time.
- Ensure that child-headed households and unaccompanied and separated children are given ration cards in their own names, and that they receive distributions of food and NFIs as necessary, in a way that does not cause further separation;
- Set up separate waiting and entry lines at registrations, distributions, and fairs so that vulnerable individuals such as pregnant women, people with infants, unaccompanied children and the elderly, sick, and those with disabilities are helped first
- Are their factors increasing the likelihood of children becoming separated from their families during food distributions? (Such as size of gathering, lack of proper queuing etc.) Are better

forms of 'crowd control' needed? Additional care should be considered during distributions of newly displaced people.

- Ensure that rations are well packaged in containers which are easily transportable. Do not allow young children to carry extremely heavy loads.
- Ensure that there are always female staff assigned to work with communities to raise awareness on beneficiaries' rights and the process of collecting distributed items. When no female staff are available in the Food SC team, coordinate with Protection staff to identify support from women's centers / teachers / doctors etc.
- Use community based security to control the crowd at distribution points. Ensure the security is a combination of women and men, is not armed and that they have been trained on our Child Safety Policy and the need to respect the dignity of those coming to receive relief.
- Use mega phones or loud speakers for crowd control and avoid physical contact as much as possible.
- Make sure that distributions end at a time agreed at the ward/community level which enables enough daylight hours for beneficiaries to return to their shelters or homes before dark.
- Ensure that those working in distribution have signed up to and been trained in a code of conduct or other policy which covers child safeguarding; and
- Invite child protection workers to trainings, retreats or workshops where you think their perspective and information may enhance the outcome.

### 3. Distribution of Cash

- When designing cash programmes, ensure that children are consulted. Consider the possible negative impact your programme objectives and design might have on children's well-being.
- Work with child protection sector to identify especially vulnerable children and think through ways they can be supported.
- Children may be direct beneficiaries of the cash transfer, or may be supported by cash transfer conditionality.
- For those programmes using cash transfers to achieve outcomes other than child protection, there should be far greater emphasis on measuring their impact on children's lives. This can be achieved through the collection of sex- and age disaggregated data and by including children in programme evaluations.
- Ensure that programming is gender and child sensitive, and context specific, taking into consideration intra-household relations so that cash transfers do not lead to negative outcomes for children, such as children being pulled from school to care for younger children while parents take part in cash-for-work activities.
- Use the "Child safeguarding in cash transfer programming<sup>5</sup>" tool to ensure that risks to children are minimised.

<sup>5</sup> Save the Children's Child safeguarding in cash transfer programming  
[https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/Child\\_Safeguarding\\_in\\_Cash\\_Transfer\\_Programming.pdf](https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/Child_Safeguarding_in_Cash_Transfer_Programming.pdf)

#### 4. Vulnerable groups and protection issues

- Monitor changes in the composition of the food basket, in coordination with Nutrition staff, especially regarding suitability of food for under 5's. Separate food packages should be arranged for children under 5 years old. Ensure that composition of food baskets are appropriate at the community level, there can be differences in religion/culture and diet as well as average numbers of children, and family members from one town to the next.
- Make sure that vulnerable members of the community are actually receiving food; female and child-headed households, children with disabilities, unaccompanied and separated children, children whose parents have disabilities etc.
- Ensure child headed households, separated and spontaneously fostered children have ration cards in their own names.
- Do you hear of or observe any protection concerns for children, or come across any vulnerable/at risk/abused children? Inform child protection actors immediately
- Are mothers or children showing signs of psychosocial distress? Such as crying excessively, self-isolation from the crowd, use of abusive language and aggressiveness (Mothers who watch their children starve are bound to be affected).
- If you identify any children that you think might be extremely vulnerable, for example, child headed households, separated and unaccompanied children or disabled children, please pass concerns onto the Protection team.
- Is there any contingency budget allocation for follow up of any child protection cases identified during implementation of the programme?
- Remember that girls and boys may have different experiences, needs, and opportunities, due to gender roles and dynamics, that may further compound their vulnerability

#### For Supervisors

- Ensure that all staff/volunteers receive the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct training and sign the Code of Conduct. Copies must be readily available in Arabic and English.
- Is the Code of Conduct clearly displayed in field offices in English and Arabic?
- Aim for all food distribution staff to attend protection awareness training.
- Are beneficiaries clear that they are not expected to give anyone anything in return for the food? Work with Protection team to develop illustrated posters to be displayed at distribution sites which clearly show that acts of abuse during distribution will not be tolerated.
- Do girls and boys know who to call, where to go to ask for assistance or report, if they are at risk of any abuse?
- Work towards gender balance in food distribution teams and food distribution committees.
- Ensure any police or armed forces attending distributions are not armed and are trained on the Child Safety / Child Protection Policy.
- Rotate distribution teams as regularly as possible to try to discourage staff/volunteers from establishing improper relationships with beneficiaries.
- Visit distribution regularly to carry out 'spot-checks'; verify that deliveries/distributions are conducted properly, that food is actually reaching the intended beneficiaries. Meet with food distribution committees regularly and keep an open communication channel with them.

- Lead by example by placing great importance on child protection issues and taking any suspected/reported incidents seriously.
- Immediately investigate suspected/reported abuse or recommend for an independent team to do so. Always take confidentiality of the victims as a priority.
- Where allegations are confirmed, the staff member who is found to be a perpetrator should be immediately suspended while a thorough investigation is conducted to examine the evidence.
- Put in place mechanisms to ensure that children and staff are not penalized for reporting abuse.
- Maintain an open door attitude.
- Annex Code of Conducts to any agreements with partners.
- Promote among staff the attitude that all sectors within Food Security Cluster are cross-cut by protection and that all our work is ultimately to achieve the common goal of making positive lasting changes in the lives of children.

## LIVELIHOOD

### Key issues:

- Staff understand their role in ensuring that their work does not harm children (through employment of children, depriving children of parental care, etc.)
- Children are protected from harmful working environments
- Livelihoods programming ensures a positive impact on the lives of children, including providing opportunities for working age children
- Livelihoods programming strengthen and protect the HHs assets
- Livelihoods interventions contribute the decrease of HHs negative/irreversible coping strategies directly or indirectly involving the children's life

### 1. Livelihoods selection criteria

- What is the criteria for deciding who benefits from livelihoods programming? Is the programme accessible to the most vulnerable such as child-headed (where the "head of the family", the person managing and financially supporting the family unit, is under 18 years old), female-headed households and those children being supported by grandparents and elderly carers, children living with disabilities, separated and unaccompanied children?
- Has an analysis been done on whether safe work can be provided to working age children within the program?
- How does the programme ensure it will have a positive impact on the lives of children?
- Have women, and boys and girls, as well as men, been consulted and briefed about the livelihoods programme?
- Is there regular household monitoring to evaluate how the livelihoods intervention is affecting children? Is there scope for the community, including children, to be involved in monitoring livelihoods programming (including in relation to child protection issues) and to give feedback?
- Is there a child protection committee or child protection networks in the village?

- *If so how do they work with the livelihoods programme? Does the livelihoods programme have regular discussions with community representatives?*
- Does the programme lead by example by placing importance on child protection issues and ensuring there is a mechanism for reporting and addressing abuse allegations?

## 2. Work for adults or adolescents, including Agriculture and Livestock sector and trainings

- Have staff been trained in identifying the age of volunteers selected for livelihoods work? (Directly asking the age may lead to lying, better to ask indirect questions. For example: age when started school, no. of years at school, no. of years since left school, age when left school.)
- Is there a policy for dealing with cases of under-age beneficiaries?
- What measures are in place to prevent adolescent boys and girls from leaving school to participate in a livelihoods program?
- What measures have been put in place to ensure equal participation of adolescent males and females?
- What is the ratio of female to male staff/volunteers? Why is this the case?
- What child care arrangements are in place for mothers (including adolescent mothers) who come to work?
  - *If children are left at home, who looks after them?*
  - *If children are brought to work, where do they stay and what do they do? Who has access to them? Are they supervised? Is child care provided for working mothers?*
  - *Is their potential for integration with a Safe Space programme?*
- Is the workplace appropriate and safe for all staff/volunteers (adults or adolescents) including those with disabilities?
- How far is the workplace from worker's homes (including agriculture land)? Are any parts of the route dangerous?
- Does the work end with adequate time to reach home before dark (especially during harvest season)?
- Does the work start with an adequate time to go out of home with daylight (especially during harvest season)?
- Are the workers protected (equipment) from noxious materials such as pesticides, chemicals, sprayers used in the agriculture fields? <sup>6</sup>
- Children working with livestock, parents and local communities can all supply important information on the risks and hazards faced in this type of work. They can provide information on what types of work activities with livestock are perceived to be acceptable for children and under what conditions.
- Is the training/work tailored to the differing abilities and needs of different groups of people (elderly men and women, adolescent males and females, pregnant, disabled etc.)? For example, no hazardous work for adolescents.

<sup>6</sup> Protect Children from Pesticides: <http://www.fao.org/3/b-i3527a.pdf> (Arabic); Hazardous Child labour <http://www.fao.org/3/a-au046e.pdf> (English)

- Are adequate protective materials provided where appropriate (such as gloves, masks, boots etc.)?
- What training is given on the use of materials, and on health and safety at work? Where adolescents are involved, is it delivered in a way that all adolescents will understand
- Have staff and adolescents been trained on the worst forms of child labour and safe work for youth?
- How close is the workplace to areas frequented by children? (i.e. playgrounds, schools etc.)
- Is water provided or are water points accessible nearby?
- Is sanitation provided? (Separate male/female, adolescent/adult latrines with adequate privacy, soap, water for washing etc.)
- Are there regular breaks during the day? (i.e. for eating, praying, breast feeding, etc.)
- Is there a place nearby that mothers can go to breast feed with privacy?
- Is there a stocked First Aid Kit on-site?
  - If yes, who is trained to use it? Who is responsible for replenishing it? Do people know who to go to?*
- Is there a medical facility nearby?
- If programming includes construction and machines (e.g. tractors, agriculture machines, trucks) or tools, how is the area cordoned off so that children do not play on agriculture fields, construction sites and with dangerous equipment during/after working hours?
- Is there an established complaint mechanism? Do staff, children and youth know where and what to do when they have a complaint or are not satisfied with the humanitarian services they receive.

#### **Mainstream recommendations on FSL and CP:**

- ✓ On Distribution sites: Ensure that rations are well packaged in containers which are easily transportable. Do not allow young children to carry heavy loads (Food Baskets, Ready to eat rations, cooked meals, etc.).
- ✓ Ensure that all humanitarian organisations include *Child safeguarding* in their Code of Conduct and that staff/volunteers are trained accordingly and sign an adherence agreement
- ✓ Raise the awareness of community leaders on the importance of including unaccompanied children, children with disabilities, and child/elderly/disabled headed households in community defined target groups.
- ✓ Work with community structures to identify vulnerable children and ensure their inclusion (and/or family inclusion) in food security and livelihoods programmes;
- ✓ Ensure the participation of boys and girls in all stages of the programme cycle, from needs assessment/baseline survey, programme design and implementation, monitoring and evaluation to programme closure
- ✓ Take into consideration the needs of children during the selection criteria for FSL programmes, emphasising the needs of disabled children, unaccompanied and separated children, orphans, children living with elderly or disabled caregivers, etc. who may be part of the HHs (special needs may include nutrition needs or access to livelihood options); Make sure to analyse experiences, impacts, needs, access and opportunities from a gender dimension.



- ✓ If during the FSL beneficiary registration data particularly on vulnerable children is identified, with the consent of the family and child, this may be referred for services and community support as appropriate.
- ✓ Use Cluster 4Ws and gap analysis to report vulnerable children and households identified and reached
- ✓ Measure child protection outcomes through FSL interventions: e.g. by including questions related to child labour and access to education in FSL baseline surveys;
- ✓ In coordination with FSL and Nutrition Clusters use the information gathered to develop programmes that target children and vulnerable children such as school feeding programmes, therapeutic feeding programmes, and livelihood projects);
- ✓ Ensure that adolescent males and females are included in asset and skills building activities – usually through their households but also potentially on their own, appropriate to context that may prevent and address a range of CP vulnerabilities and negative coping mechanisms such as exploitation (sexual, early marriage, recruitment, worst forms of child labour)
- ✓ Provide literacy and numeracy for out-of-school youth attending vocational skills training as an alternative education programme

#### **ADDITIONAL REFERENCES:**

ILO: Safe Work for Youth. <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/areas/Safeworkforyouth/lang--en/index.htm>

FAO - Handbook for monitoring and evaluation of child labour in agriculture: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4630e.pdf>

FAO: Protect children from pesticide: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3527e.pdf> (english) and <http://www.fao.org/3/b-i3527a.pdf> (Arabic)

ILO: Child labour in agriculture <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/areas/Agriculture/lang--en/index.htm>

FAIRTRADE INTERNATIONAL: Child labour <https://www.fairtrade.net/programmes/child-labour.html>

ILO Convention No. 138 on the minimum age for admission to employment and work (1973)  
[http://blue.lim.ilo.org/cariblex/pdfs/ILO\\_Convention\\_138.pdf](http://blue.lim.ilo.org/cariblex/pdfs/ILO_Convention_138.pdf)

IASC (2006). Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different needs –Equal Opportunities. IASC Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action. Chapter: Gender and Food Distribution in emergencies and Gender and Non-Food Items in emergencies <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/Gender%20Handbook.pdf>

Community-based Child Protection Network Resources <http://www.cpcnetwork.org/policy-and-practice-guidance/community-based-child-protection/>

UNICEF: Children working in commercial agriculture  
[https://www.unicef.org/wcaro/english/Briefing\\_paper\\_No\\_2\\_-\\_children\\_working\\_in\\_commercial\\_agriculture.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/wcaro/english/Briefing_paper_No_2_-_children_working_in_commercial_agriculture.pdf)

Global Food Security Cluster/Syria: <http://fscluster.org/syria>

Cash Calp: Cash and Child protection  
[http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/Cash%20Protection%20low%20res\(2\).pdf](http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/Cash%20Protection%20low%20res(2).pdf)