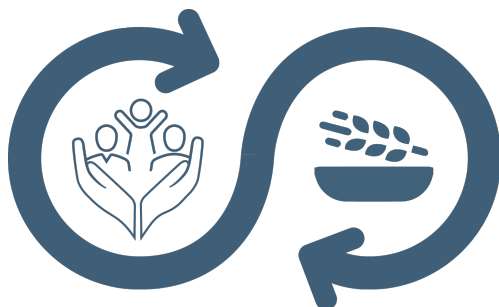


STANDARD 21: FOOD SECURITY AND CHILD PROTECTION

The following should be read with this standard: Principles; Standard 22: Livelihoods and child protection; and Standard 25: Nutrition and child protection.



Food security is a life-saving humanitarian response that can significantly improve the safety and well-being of children. 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. Food insecurity increases child protection risks and the possibility of choosing negative coping strategies such as neglect, child marriage and child labour.

Child protection can be integrated within each of the four food security pillars – availability, accessibility, stability and utilisation – in order to support children’s well-being and protection. This standard outlines a systematic, integrated approach between the food security and child protection sectors that is based on coordination and complementarity.

STANDARD

All children affected by humanitarian crises live in food secure environments that mitigate and respond to child protection risks.

21.1. KEY ACTIONS

KEY ACTIONS FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND FOOD SECURITY ACTORS TO IMPLEMENT TOGETHER

- 21.1.1. Adapt existing food security and child protection assessment and monitoring tools, methodologies and indicators for joint identification, analysis, monitoring of and response to households at risk of food insecurity and/or child protection concerns:
 - Collect baseline data on children's food security and protection status;
 - Establish whether child protection concerns are improving or worsening the food security situation;
 - Include children's own perceptions in all monitoring and assessments; and
 - Disaggregate data by gender, age and disability, at a minimum.
- 21.1.2. Agree upon the most effective joint mechanism for sharing information generated by assessments, evaluations and analysis.
- 21.1.3. Identify common areas of concern to food security and child protection through consultation with communities, including children.
- 21.1.4. Establish joint prioritisation criteria for targeting children and households at risk.
- 21.1.5. Implement response interventions for households at risk of both food insecurity and/or child protection concerns throughout all phases of the programme cycle.
- 21.1.6. Coordinate interventions throughout all phases of the programme cycle.
- 21.1.7. Ensure adequate representation of children in child-friendly, accessible and confidential decision-making processes and community-based participation structures for food security activities. This is part of *Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)*. (See *Principles*.)
- 21.1.8. Train food security and child protection staff on child protection and food security concerns, principles and approaches so they can each correctly refer disclosed or detected cases of child protection and food insecurity.
- 21.1.9. Develop and implement child-friendly, multisectoral child protection referral mechanisms so food security workers can safely and efficiently refer child protection cases.
- 21.1.10. Establish joint data protection protocols and confidential referral mechanisms for child survivors, children at risk and their families.






- 21.1.11. Document and address any unintended negative consequences and reproduce promising practices in relation to the:
- Possible impacts of food security interventions on children's safety and well-being; and
 - Possible impacts of child protection interventions on household food security.
- 21.1.12. Include child-friendly child protection messages in food security interventions.
- 21.1.13. Collaborate with children and other stakeholders to design, establish, implement and monitor joint, child-friendly, accessible and confidential feedback and reporting mechanisms for child protection concerns as part of Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP).
- 21.1.14. Ensure that all food security and child protection staff are trained on and sign safeguarding policies and procedures.
- 21.1.15. Review at regular intervals the links and collaboration between child protection and food security.
- 21.1.16. Include or advocate for measures to address the links between food security and child protection interventions in strategic, preparedness and contingency planning; response evaluations; early recovery; and resource allocation.
- 21.1.17. Coordinate with food security actors and community members to include child protection in the preparedness, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of food security programmes and interventions that:
- Are safe, inclusive, protective and accessible to all children, including the most at risk; and
 - Address children's different genders, ages, disabilities, developmental stages, vulnerabilities, nutritional needs and family settings.
- 21.1.18. Include child protection staff in food security teams (for example as a focal point or child-friendly help desk) when:
- Identifying households and beneficiaries who are at risk;
 - Distributing food and supplies; and
 - Monitoring response activities.



KEY ACTIONS FOR CHILD PROTECTION ACTORS

- 21.1.19. Include information on and referrals to food security assistance – including in-kind, cash and voucher assistance – in child protection activities.
- 21.1.20. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of existing social protection services that are accessible to children. Mitigate any gaps, bottlenecks or barriers to children's access.

KEY ACTIONS FOR FOOD SECURITY ACTORS

- 21.1.21. Include child protection and children's participation in all phases of the food security programme cycle.
- 21.1.22. Involve all subgroups of the affected population in designing, implementing and monitoring food security interventions.
- 21.1.23. Conduct a risk analysis during programme design that:
- Provides baseline data on children's food security and protection status;
 - Assesses the physical safety risks involved in accessing markets, distribution sites and other forms of assistance;
 - Identifies requirements for recipients, such as literacy or identification;
 - Assesses the best timing for interventions; and
 - Determines the needs of specific groups, such as those caring for young children.
- 21.1.24. Ensure that all food security workers have signed and been trained on safeguarding procedures, codes of conducts and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) policies. Train all staff on the relevant reporting and referral mechanisms. 
- 21.1.25. Apply safeguarding principles to all forms of assistance, including in-kind, cash and vouchers. 
- 21.1.26. Ensure assistance reaches all members of the affected population by:
- Using assessments to identify children who may have difficulty accessing food;
 - Identifying barriers to access for different groups;
 - Collaborating with child protection actors to identify and implement strategies to overcome barriers; and
 - Registering all adult women as the main recipients of assistance in contexts where polygamy is practiced to avoid excluding subsequent wives and their children.
- 21.1.27. Provide beneficiary cards to child heads of households and children who are unaccompanied or separated so they can access assistance – in-kind, cash and voucher – in their own names.
- 21.1.28. Work with child protection actors to:
- Prevent the intentional separation of families who are seeking to increase the assistance they receive;
 - Avoid making children targets of theft or exploitation; and
 - Ensure the timing of cash-for-work interventions does not coincide with peak livelihoods season to avoid encouraging child labour. 

21.2. MEASUREMENT

All indicators about children should be disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other relevant diversity factors. The indicators below measure progress against the overall standard. Indicators and targets can be contextualised with the goal of meeting the indicative targets below. Additional related indicators are available *online*.

| Indicator | Target | Notes |
|---|--------|--|
| 21.2.1. % of food security programmes in target location that include an integrated approach to child protection. | 100% | 'Integrated approach' refers to child protection programming interventions that are integrated into the design of food security programmes to promote the well-being and protection of children. |

21.3. GUIDANCE NOTES

21.3.1. CHILDREN AT RISK

Child protection and food security workers should coordinate efforts to identify children at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. For a full list of children who are most often at risk across different contexts, see 'What do we mean when we say "children"?''. When conducting assessments and monitoring, remember that the classic 'household' model may not apply to many children at risk, such as children living alone, on the street or in child-headed households.

21.3.2. FOCAL POINTS

To support joint identification and mitigation of child protection risks, consider:

- Establishing child protection focal points within food security teams;
- Working with colleagues in the child protection team; and/or
- Collaborating with any existing community/village child protection committees.

Focal points can support collaboration, encourage agreement on key decisions and processes, refer child protection concerns and ensure food security interventions are child-friendly, accessible and safe. The child protection focal

points must have a good understanding of child protection issues and how they relate to gender, age and disability.

21.3.3. TARGETED ASSISTANCE

Food security and child protection actors should work together to develop indicators for identifying and assisting children at risk. Collaboration will help both sectors:

- Reach vulnerable populations with appropriate services; and
- Develop joint advocacy messages when access to affected populations is restricted or resources are limited.

21.3.4. FOOD DISTRIBUTIONS

When the food security response involves food distributions, ensure that sites and processes are safe for children. Measures may include:

- Establishing safe, clearly marked and frequently used routes to distribution sites that do not require women and children to travel long distances or after dark;
- Posting visible, child-friendly messaging on child safeguarding and preventing and reporting sexual exploitation and abuse at all distribution sites;
- Hiring both male and female staff members to work with communities;
- Rotating distribution teams;
- Designing queuing arrangements that (a) ensure children remain with their parents and (b) include a lost child help zone;
- Providing shade or safe places at distribution sites for caregivers with babies and young children;
- Establishing separate waiting and entry lines at registrations and distributions for individuals who may find it difficult to stand in long queues due to physical or protection-related concerns;
- Developing alternative means of distribution for those with difficulty accessing distribution sites; and
- Including specific items for children and for pregnant and breastfeeding girls and women.



21.3.5. FEEDBACK AND REPORTING MECHANISMS



Confidential, child-friendly, accessible feedback and reporting mechanisms that receive and address allegations of harm to children should be set up in collaboration with communities. Senior staff should regularly review the number and types of reports being received. Reports should trigger immediate response and assessment of the report, as delays may lead to further harm, including repeated abuse, exploitation or intimidation of survivors.



REFERENCES

Links to these and additional resources are available *online*.

- *'Food Security and Nutrition', The Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*, Sphere Association, 2018.
- *The Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action*, IASC, 2017.
- *'IASC Task Team on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action'*, IASC, 2019.
- *Protection in Practice: Food Assistance with Safety and Dignity*, World Food Programme (WFP), 2013.
- *FAO Guidance Note: Child Labour in Agriculture in Protracted Crises, Fragile and Humanitarian Contexts*, FAO, 2017.
- *'Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS)'*. [Website]
- *Humanitarian Inclusion Standards for Older People and People with Disabilities*, CBM International, Bensheim, HelpAge International, London, Handicap International, Lyon, 2018.
- *Cash Transfer Briefing Package for Food Security Cluster Coordinators 2017*, Global Food Security Cluster, 2017.
- *Child Safeguarding in Cash Transfer Programming: A Practical Tool*, The Cash Learning Partnership, Save the Children, Women's Refugee Commission, 2012. [Update Pending]
- *Cash Based Assistance: Programme Quality Toolbox*, The Cash Learning Partnership (CALP), 2018.
- *Toolkit for Optimizing Cash-based Interventions for Protection from Gender-based Violence: Mainstreaming GBV Considerations in Cash-based Initiatives and Utilizing Cash in GBV Response*, Women's Refugee Commission, 2018.
- *'Keeping Children Safe'*. [Website]