



Photo: Save the Children Somalia

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE: DROUGHT#5

23rd May, 2017: Results from the post-Jilaal assessment and recent SMART surveys indicate that Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of acute food insecurity persist in many areas of Somalia. In addition, a severe AWD/cholera outbreak is ongoing. While large-scale humanitarian assistance has reduced household food consumption gaps and contributed to reduced staple food prices, there remains an elevated risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5) due to the combination of severe food consumption gaps, high acute malnutrition, high disease burden, and reliance on humanitarian assistance. It is now estimated that approximately 2,510,000 people will be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and 700,000 will be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) between now and June. Furthermore, given the high likelihood that Gu production will be well below average, food security outcomes are only expected to improve modestly in July/August. Continued large-scale humanitarian assistance, including both food assistance and efforts to prevent and treat AWD/cholera, are needed throughout 2017. (FSNAU, 6th May, 2017).

EDUCATION SITUATION

Currently more than 379,000 children are enrolled in schools in drought affected areas. At least 30% of these children are in immediate risk of dropping out. In addition, an estimated 270,000 children of school going age have displaced since November 2016.

Student absenteeism is increasing in schools in areas affected by drought, as families rely on negative coping strategies including enlisting children to search for **water resources**. Rising food and water prices have cut into the incentives for teachers provided by parents and communities, resulting in teachers not showing up in schools, thus further jeopardizing children's education. In Puntland 70% of school children do not have access to safe drinking water and 80% do not have access to food provision. In Somaliland 41% of school children do not have access to safe water and 77% have no access to food provision. In Central and Southern regions an estimated 90% of schools do not have access to safe drinking water.

EDUCATION RESPONSE STRATEGY

The school serves as a unique entry point for other lifesaving services, including access to safe drinking water, food, AWD/cholera prevention, and protection mechanisms reaching one of the most vulnerable groups – children.

The 1st priority for the Education Cluster is to support children where they live and ensure they can stay in school through provision of community-based school feeding and water in the schools, AWD/Cholera prevention and hygiene promotion, and the provision of appropriate teaching/learning materials.

The 2nd priority for the Education Cluster is to support children where they move to and ensure they can continue their education. Displacement due to the drought is increasing the pressure on the existing education facilities especially in urban areas.

ON-GOING EDUCATION RESPONSE

Education Cluster partners have scaled up the response to the deteriorating situation with priority 1 and 2 activities. The cluster is utilizing schools as a community-level entry point to reach the most vulnerable children to save lives, protect those at risk, and ensure their well-being.

An estimated **528,000 school children are in need** of humanitarian assistance to stay in school. The Education Cluster is **targeting 250,000 of these school children** and have to date reached more than **113,000 school children with assistance**.

The main barrier for an effective response is insufficient funding and lack of donor prioritization of education in emergency. The Education Cluster is estimating that **USD 33 million is needed to reach 250,000 school children in immediate risk**. To date the education drought response has received 6.3 million which is only 1% of the total funding that has come in to the overall response.

EDUCATION =

Keep children alive + Protection + Future

WHAT IS AT STAKE?

Lessons learnt from the 2011 famine show that many of the deaths of children caused by the drought could have been prevented if children had access to life-saving services at safe and protected schools that ensured children remained in school and surrounding communities were supported through reach out activities extending from school facilities. Safe learning environments and access to education are critical to ensuring that children displaced by or affected by drought are better able to cope, survive and recover from drought impacts and contribute to longer term peaceful development of Somalia. An existing community structure like the school serves as a unique entry point for other lifesaving services, including access to safe drinking water, food, AWD/cholera prevention, and protection mechanisms reaching one of the most vulnerable groups – children. In the 2011 famine, a large proportion of the children who dropped out of school never returned. Children and youth who do not continue their learning are at great risk of joining the cohorts of out of school children and adolescents putting them at risk of harmful practices, especially child marriage, possible child labor and recruitment by armed groups.

DISPLACEMENT & EDUCATION

According to UNHCR 683,000 people have been displaced by the drought since November 2016. An estimated 270,000 of these are children between 5-18 years old. The majority of people on the move arrive in urban centers in the hope of getting access to humanitarian assistance. It is crucial to provide security, safety and immediate assistance to these people as many of them have already lost their entire livelihood and safety nets. During mass displacements children become even more vulnerable and at high risk of harmful practices. Therefore, their safety, security and wellbeing is of particular concern. Access to education for displaced children does not only give them an opportunity to continue or begin their education, but also provide a safe space and access to food and water. The significant increase in displacement is putting additional pressure on the already strained education system in the urban areas. There is a need to increase the capacity of existing public schools to allow for displaced children to enroll as well as establishing temporary learning spaces in new IDP settlements where there are no public schools nearby.

PROTECTION & EDUCATION

Schools should be considered as recreational and safe spaces during the school break. The well-being and safety of school children during the school break in June -August is causing severe concerns. The Education Cluster is strongly encouraging schools to remain open during the break and offer children a safe space, recreational activities, remedial classes and continued provision of food and water at school facilities during the months of June, July and August. This will not only protect children and keep them safe and alive, but also increase the likelihood of children continuing their education after the school break.

SUSTAINING THE EDUCATION RESPONSE

In spite of the fact that the Education response is significantly underfunded, Education Cluster partners have so far reached impressively 113,000 school children with education in emergencies assistance. The Education Cluster is targeting 250,000 children and is at this point at almost 50%. It is however, important to continue to increase the funding to education in order to ensure that the current response and further scale up is sustained. Much of the on-going response for Education is short-term (4-6 months funding) which means that it will not be sufficient to sustain the current response throughout the crisis. Education and provision of food and water in schools need to continue throughout the crisis and reach the school children every day. If the response is not sustained the great investment and efforts to keep school children alive, healthy and in school will be lost. Education is a process – not a one-off distribution.

CALL FOR ACTION!

The Education Cluster strongly encourages donors and partners to take this opportunity to save the lives of thousands of school children and give them a chance for a better future by:

- Funding Education partners to enable a prompt response in prevention of famine
- Prioritizing an integrated response across clusters and include schools and school children as a specific target group in WASH, Health, Food Security, and Nutrition response projects
- Allowing partners to reprogram development funding to address the critical needs of school children and protect development gains already made
- Including retention of children in schools as a conditionality in cash transfer projects encouraging families to let their children stay in school throughout the crisis