



Knowledge hub
-
Collection of best practices

Summary of the best practice

1. Title of the best practice (e.g. name of policy, programme, project, etc.) *

Integrated Response in Education, Child Protection and MHPSS for Children in Emergency Situations in the Sahel

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger

3. Please select the **most relevant** Action Track(s) the best practice applies to *

- Action Track 1. Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools
- Action Track 2. Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development
- Action Track 3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession
- Action Track 4. Digital learning and transformation
- Action Track 5. Financing of education

4. Implementation lead/partner organization(s) *

Save the Children

5. Key words (5-15 words): Please add key descriptive words around aims, modalities, target groups etc. *

Children in IDP and displacement context, education in emergencies, integrated programming (EiE and Child Protection), gender-sensitive approach

6. What makes it a best practice? *

Save the Children and DG ECHO have entered into a partnership agreement which aims to deliver targeted education, protection and mental health and psychosocial support to the Sahel region's most vulnerable children. Over a three-year period, the programme works to improve the protective environment, well-being and learning of IDP and host communities in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. The programme seeks to address children's immediate needs, and establishes risk mitigation measures in emergency contexts through coordination and integration with existing rapid response mechanisms. The rapid education response being rolled out is also informing work of the Global Education Cluster, through additional DG ECHO funding to have systemic approaches in place to rapidly respond to education disruptions for the most vulnerable children and young people in emergencies. Activities are designed and delivered in close collaboration with local actors in order to ensure sustainability of the intervention. The Action has a dedicated result working with local actors on the seven pillars of localisation and has managed to reinforce local actors' capacity to be autonomous actors in the EiE response.

Description of the best practice

7. Introduction (350-400 words)

This section should ideally provide the context of, and justification for, the practice and address the following issues:

- i) Which population was affected?
- ii) What was the problem that needed to be addressed?
- iii) Which approach was taken and what objectives were achieved? *

Over the past decade, the economic and security situation in the Sahel has steadily deteriorated into one of the world's most pressing humanitarian crises. Escalating violence by non-state armed actors has severely disrupted access to basic social services and increased insecurity in the region, resulting in the displacement of over 3 million people in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. 55% of those displaced are children.

Targeted attacks on education facilities, teachers and pupils has forced schools across the region to close – latest figures from the Clusters indicating that 6,591 schools are closed due to insecurity. This situation linked with the large number of children who were already out-of-school before the crisis means that around 8 million children are being deprived of their right to education. This severely limits children's future opportunities, impacts their mental health and development, and increases their vulnerability to a range of protection risks including violence and exploitation, child labour, child marriage, gender-based violence and recruitment into armed groups. This situation is further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to additional school closures, increased economic hardship for families, worsened mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, and increased gender-based violence and child protection risks. Over the three year course of the programmatic partnership, around 200,000 children in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger will directly benefit from conflict-sensitive education, child protection and mental health and psycho-social services. In addition, approximately 20,000 parents, caregivers, teachers and case management workers receive training and support, and over 100 local organisations are strengthened through capacity building and professional development.

8. Implementation (350-450 words)

Please describe the implementation modalities or processes, where possible in relation to:

- i) What are the main activities carried out?
- ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?
- iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?
- iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation?

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This programme of over EUR 12 million includes activities to respond to the urgent protection and education needs of crisis-affected girls and boys, enabling children to return to learning in a protective environment within 3 months of displacement.

The programme ensures access to uninterrupted quality, and inclusive education and protection, including mental health and psycho-social services to boys and girls.

The capacity of national partners and local authorities are being strengthened to provide continuity of services in crisis.

9. Results – outputs and outcomes (250-350 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the questions below:

- i) How was the practice identified as transformative? (e.g., impact on policies, impact on management processes, impact on delivery arrangements or education monitoring, impact on teachers, learners and beneficiary communities etc.);
- ii) What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?
- iii) Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results? *

The 3-year programme is ongoing since July 2020 and offers learning alternatives suited to the needs of the most vulnerable children in the challenging Sahel context. There is increased recognition of the importance of integrated programming between education and child protection, including also mental health and psychosocial support, with activities comprising:

- capacity strengthening (mobile teams, capacity building, mentoring, monitoring for teachers, facilitators, education personnel);
- ensuring children integration as part of curricula and learning;
- measuring outcomes and impacts through a holistic assessment tool incorporating social, emotional and academic skills.

So far, around 100,000 children have received education support through formal learning, accelerated education programmes and child friendly spaces. The programme includes support to educational structures hosting a large number of displaced children.

Particular emphasis is placed on reaching the least accessible children with a rapid response mechanism and then referrals to formal and non-formal opportunities. Alternative and innovative approaches are also being employed for example with distance learning, accelerated education and Renovated Koranic Schools pilot, catch-up as well as oral curriculum, ajami and others. The action is flexible to be response to the changing and precarious context where education is the target for the non-state armed groups.

Strong advocacy component is built around the Safe School Declaration, with advocacy work undertaken at school level but also at political and institutional level, including through setting up and coordinating the Sahel Platform on Protection of Education from Attack.

10. Lessons learnt (300 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the following questions:

- i) What were the key triggers for transformation?
- ii) What worked really well – what facilitated this?
- iii) What did not work – why did it not work? *

The programmatic partnership on Integrated Response in Education, Child Protection and MHPSS for Children in Emergency Situations in the Sahel provides a holistic and joint approach to children's needs in a highly challenging and insecure context.

With the highly volatile context, education actors recognised the need for a rapid, protective response and the Save the Children programmatic partnership has been a catalyst for moving this agenda forward.

Flexible multi-year investment in education in emergencies and strong focus on the quality of partnerships with key engagement with local and national actors builds trust, ensures efficiency and provides for joint mitigation measures in high risk environment.

While Non State Armed Groups target public schools in the Sahel region, Quranic schools can provide uninterrupted learning and an entry point to integrating children into formal aspects of learning as well as ajami and mother tongue learning.

A joint effort must be made together with the ministries of education to conduct community consultation, analysis of risks, needs assessments in areas where schools are closed due to insecurity.

Coordination between parents, teachers and religious leaders is paramount to ensure participation and buy in; coordination with authorities for an integrated education framework, including a flexible approach to the curricula and learning content, provision of training to community and teachers on child protection and resilience, and on gender is of key importance.

It is primordial to integrate conflict-sensitive lens into the programming and working with teachers.

11. Conclusions (250 words)

Please describe why may this intervention be considered a "best practice".

What recommendations can be made for those intending to adopt the documented "best practice" or how can it help people working on the same issue(s)? *

Providing education to children living in highly insecure areas requires principled humanitarian response, better preparedness and early action. It has to answer to predictable and unpredictable needs, integrate learning, protection and well-being dimensions. Strong partnerships, community engagement, coordination with authorities lead to more transformative outcomes.

12. Further reading

Please provide a list and URLs of key reference documents for additional information on the “best practice” for those who may be interested in knowing how the results benefited the beneficiary group/s. *

<https://www.savethechildren.net/blog/consequences-conflict-and-covid-19-children-sahel-region>