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EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES: CHILDREN IN DISTRESS

A CHILD PROTECTION RISK ANALYSIS FOR NRC AFGHANISTAN'S EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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This study seeks to provide an in-depth analysis of the major protection risks that displaced children in Afghanistan face and how these risks affect their ability to access schooling and learn effectively.

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ACRONYMS

ACTED	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
ALP	Accelerated Learning Programme
CPAN	Child Protection Action Network
EiE	Education in Emergencies
ERM	Emergency Response Mechanism
FGD	Focus group discussion
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDP	Internally displaced person
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
MoE	Ministry of Education
NSAG	Non-state armed group
PED	Provincial Education Department
PFA	Psychological first aid
PSS	Psychosocial support
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SDR	Secondary data review
UNAMA	UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UXO	Unexploded ordnance
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene

KEY CONCEPTS

CHILD PROTECTION

Child protection refers to the "prevention and response to violence, exploitation and abuse against children – including commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labour and harmful traditional practices, such as child marriage."[1]

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE

Internally displaced people (IDPs) are "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally-recognized State border."[2]

PSYCHOSOCIAL

The combined influence that psychological factors and the surrounding social environment has on physical and mental wellbeing and ability to function.

PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID

"Humane, supportive and practice assistance for people who are distressed, in ways that respect their dignity, culture and abilities."[3]

PROTECTION

Protection is a term that "broadly encompasses activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of individuals in accordance with international law … regardless of their age, gender, social ethnic, national, religious, or other backgrounds."[4]

RETURNEES

Returnees are defined as "every person who returns to Afghanistan after he or she was compelled to leave the country due to persecution or a situation of generalized violence, including returning asylum seekers and refugees."[5]

REFUGEES

Non-Afghan nationals forced to flee their country due to persecution, war, violence or threat to wellbeing, now residing in Afghanistan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

It is not easy to be a child in Afghanistan. As the conflict continues, children's challenges increase, threatening their safety, wellbeing and access to education. NRC's education programmes aim to mitigate the devastating impacts of conflict and forced displacement by providing a sense of normality and stability. They provide quality education that supports children's emotional and cognitive development and open pathways for their reintegration into formal schooling systems. But with increasing numbers of children out of school and the complex psychosocial and protection needs of displaced boys and girls, how can NRC's education programmes be improved to be as relevant as possible to the most egregious risks they face, and to meet international standards?[6]

The research outlined in this report sought to identify the main protection risks children face and to examine how these affect their ability to access schooling and learn effectively. It also aimed to assess the extent to which NRC's schools provide the safe, protective and inclusive learning environments that children need to recover from conflict and fulfil their potential. The report combines the results of 49 focus group discussions with 319 participants, 36 key informant interviews, observations at schools and in the community and 1,052 responses to a questionnaire, bringing together the voices of children, parents, teachers, community leaders and key organisations in the provinces of Faryab, Herat, Kandahar, Khost, Kunar, Kunduz, Nangarhar and Saripul.

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KEY FINDINGS

Barriers to school attendance

Pressure to work

Forty-two per cent of participants said the main reason boys and girls did not attend school was the need to work to support their families financially. The study demonstrated a direct correlation between displacement and child labour, highlighting the negative impact of displacement on children in terms of the increased adoption of negative coping mechanisms. Only 11 per cent of child participants were working in their place of origin, compared with 36 per cent at the time of this study. Parents who participated in focus group discussions (FGDs) said the struggle to find work in their place of displacement, combined with an increase in living costs, meant there was greater pressure on children to take up work and reduce the family's financial burden.

Many boys and girls who took part in the study explained that long working hours prevented them from attending school at all, particularly as the hourly rate is so low that working just a half day would not result in sufficient wages to support the family. Children able to juggle their work and education said they still missed school frequently, particularly on market days, or for weeks at a time during busy periods.

Attacks to education

> *"They burnt down the school and then they set our house on fire."*

Twenty-three per cent of participants said conflict and insecurity were the biggest barrier to school attendance, affecting children in three ways; attacks on schools, their closure because of the conflict and dangers on the journey to school. Fifteen per cent of children had experienced shooting near to or inside their school, and 11 per cent had received verbal or written warnings from armed opposition groups (NSAGs) that their

school would be targeted. Twenty-eight per cent had come from areas where their school or one nearby had been closed because of the conflict, and some children, particularly in Kunar and Faryab, still have to travel long distances because the nearest school has been damaged beyond use or closed because of insecurity.

In terms of dangers en route to and in school, participants identified risks of kidnapping, landmines, harassment from opposition groups, verbal or written threats and regular shooting.

Attitudes to gender

> *"A girl has two options, to stay at home … or to die."*

Nineteen per cent of participants said parent's attitudes were the main reason that girls did not attend school. Female participants said parents or wider family members, particularly uncles, thought that girls should not leave the house and did not need or should not have an education. A significant proportion of girls who took part in the study had experienced verbal harassment from community or family members telling them not to go to school, affecting their self-esteem, confidence and sense of self-worth. Twelve per cent of participants said child marriage was a significant barrier to girls' education and four per cent identified themselves as married under the age of 16.

Many boys also felt their parents did not value their education, and that they attached more importance to work. Some said their parents took them out of school once they were able to read and write, believing that basic literacy and numeracy was sufficient education.

Overcrowded and inaccessible schools

Eleven per cent of respondents said overcrowding was an issue in their school. This was particularly common in Nangarhar, where classes of as many as 250 children in one tent were observed. Overcrowding makes classrooms and tents unbearably hot, making concentration difficult. It also puts a strain on schools to provide enough teachers to cover the large student population.

Five per cent of children saw distance as the biggest barrier to school and many children shared they were unable to go to school in their place of origin because the only available school was too far away. Far fewer children face this problem after displacement, but it is clear that many in conflict-affected areas have no school within walking distance. This is particularly problematic for girls, who are not allowed to walk long distances on their own and are more likely to face harassment en route.

Main protection risks

Psychosocial health

> *"They burnt down our family shop, we lost everything and at night I wake up crying and screaming."*

Fifty-five per cent of participants cited psychosocial health needs as the biggest challenge for displaced Afghan children. Nightmares, flashbacks, physical pain, nausea, fainting, difficulty concentrating or socialising and strong emotional responses such as frequent crying or feelings of anger were all common. Many children interviewed had witnessed horrific violence and were troubled by gruesome and intrusive memories that made it difficult to function in daily life, let alone study.

Parents also described struggling with daily life after their traumatic experiences of conflict, making it difficult to look after themselves and their children. Both children and parents said the lack of support services left them feeling hopeless and isolated.

Risks on the journey to school

Eighteen per cent of all participants felt that the main risk for displaced Afghan children was the number of risks children face on their route to school. Thirty-six per cent of children felt the main risk to their safety on the journey to school was the possibility of kidnap. Seven per cent were most concerned about the presence of NSAGs, particularly in Faryab and Kunduz, where children came across them on their walk to school and were sometimes questioned about their journey. Both boys and girls said they had experienced frightening or violent language in the community, but it was more common for girls, who also said

that strangers had asked them to get in their car, and that community members had shouted at them on their way to school.

Domestic violence

> *"When she was really angry she slammed my head on the kitchen stove. There was a lot of blood."*

Sixteen per cent of all participants said domestic violence in the home was the main risk children faced, and child participants shared stories of physical abuse carried out by family members. The study found a correlation between displacement and increased domestic violence, once again highlighting the negative impact of displacement on children in relation to an increase in negative coping mechanisms amongst family members. Children said the most common reason for a parent to punish them was because they did not bring home enough money from work. Stories of domestic violence caused by arguments over household debt were also common. The majority of children had witnessed a violent dispute between their parents and close relatives.

Road accidents

Seven per cent of participants cited road accidents as the biggest risk for both in school children and out of school children. Twenty per cent of FGD participants had witnessed a road accident which had caused serious injury, and several children had witnessed someone's death or experienced the loss of a friend or family member. Participants in key informant interviews (KIIs) said traffic was a major risk for children, and that they did not know how to cross the road safely. Nine per cent of all participants identified road accidents as the main risk in-school children faced on their way to school.

Harmful labour[7]

KIIs highlighted the prevalence of girls working as carpet weavers. FGD participants did not discuss child labour in terms of the harmful impact on children's health and development, but focused instead on its effect on their education. Carpet weaving is nevertheless widely acknowledged to have a severe physical impact because of the bad lighting, sharp tools and poor posture involved.[8]

Child protection gaps in NRC schools

Poor awareness

Very few teachers who participated in the study were aware of child protection issues and risks to children's safety, and many were unsure of their role in protecting children. Teachers felt that speaking to parents to encourage school attendance was part of their role, but that broaching topics of violence, abuse and other risks was not. They also said they felt uncomfortable identifying children in need of additional support or protection, and very few were aware of any organisations they could refer children to.

Observations for the study also revealed teachers' lack of awareness about children's rights, particularly their right to share their opinion, participate and consent to participation.

Lack of psychosocial support

Ninety-six per cent of participants said there were no psychosocial support services available in schools, and 93 per cent felt it was the main service needed. None of the schools observed had teachers trained in psychosocial issues and no teachers were aware of support services in the community.

Inadequate infrastructure

The infrastructure of NRC schools was observed to pose a number of risks to children's safety. These included improperly secured facilities and grounds, and damage such as crumbling walls and broken windows and doors. Bullet casings were seen outside the classrooms of some schools. Both Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) and Education in Emergencies (EiE) schools had cramped classrooms in which children were almost sitting on top of each other. Many of the classrooms in ALP schools were dark with crumbling, bare grey walls.

The majority of schools observed did not have enough recreational space or facilities for children to play or do sport. Nor did timetables have much space for creative activities, life-skills coaching or opportunities for children to share their opinions. This was a particular problem in ALP schools.

Disconnect between school and community

NRC schools tend not to engage enough local people in the setting up and running of facilities, reducing the likelihood that the community will feel a sense of ownership over their children's education. There were no regular meetings with parents at which children's performance and the risks they face might be discussed, and staff and teachers did not involve local community members in coming up with practical solutions to keep children safe on their way to school.

Children with disabilities marginalised

Only four classes of the 22 observed included a child with a disability. Twenty-seven per cent of children, parents and teachers who participated in the questionnaire knew at least one school-aged child with a disability who was not attending school because of their condition. Despite the significant number of children with physical or mental disabilities in all three areas, very few centres are able to accommodate them. Buildings are not equipped to support those with limited mobility, and teachers said they did not feel able to provide appropriate teaching support to children with disabilities in the classroom.

Lack of WASH facilities and hygiene training

Forty-seven per cent of children and teachers said they had no hand-washing facilities in their schools and 78 per cent that there were no separate toilets for girls and boys. Nineteen per cent said there were no functioning toilets at all at their school and 14 per cent that there was only one. None of the schools visited had been given hygiene training and there were no visual aids to promote hand washing or other safe practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Advocate for a stronger response to child protection risks within education across the child protection, protection and education working groups

a. NRC to conduct regular risk analysis of threats near to schools, providing evidence for advocacy messaging

b. APC, CPiE SC and EiE WG to provide a joint tool for protection analysis and work collaboratively with working group members to create and publicise advocacy messages to ensure children's safety when accessing education

c. Afghan government to redouble efforts on its commitments to Oslo Safe School declarations, which NRC can support on technical guidance for

2

Engage and advocate with armed actors, including NSAGs on the protection of education from attacks

a. NRC to work in partnership with communities and local and international NGOs to engage effectively with armed actors to better understand motivations for attacks on schools and advocate for commitment to protection education from attacks

b. APC, CPiE SC and EiE WG to advocate with humanitarian and political counterparts to denounce violations of IHL norms, policies and guidelines related to Protection of Education from Attacks, mobilize resources for programme implementation and support community and NGO partnerships aiming at facilitating access to direct engagement with duty bearers and perpetrators of attacks to education

3

NRC to set up community centres that provide basic education for children engaged in work, with fewer contact hours a day and flexibility to accommodate their work schedules. This would serve as a transition toward formal education, gradually exposing children and parents to full-time schooling

4

NRC to integrate NRC's Recovery Box and Better Learning Programme in schools and community spaces to provide psychosocial support, life skills and risk awareness for both children and parents

5

Strengthen community based efforts to involve the community in identifying risks to children and establishing risk mitigation strategies

a. NRC to introduce regular community meetings which focus on identifying risks to children at the community level and establishing risk mitigation strategies to keep children safe, particularly with regards to the Oslo Safe School Declaration and related technical guidelines conduct regular meetings and workshops with communities on current risks and potential mitigation strategies

b. EiE WG partners and CPiE SC partners to coordinate and strengthen relationships between communities and different education actors

6

Identify a referral response within the community and through local NGOs for child protection risks and psychosocial needs

a. NRC to support the CPiE SC to identify referral partners for child protection risks

b. CPiE to complete child protection actor mapping and develop a safe and timely referral pathway for child protection cases

7

Upgrade existing classrooms and select better new ones to improve the safety and learning environment of school buildings and include space for recreation

a. NRC to establish minimum standards and ensure vital upgrades in the next 6 – 12 months

b. Shelter, WASH and EiE clusters to collaborate in advocating for increased allocation of funds to EiE projects, to ensure that learning environments are safe and child-friendly. Donors and pooled funds to provide more flexibility in terms of inclusion of recreational space and safer building structures.

8

Greater emphasis on including children with disabilities

a. NRC to improve selection criteria to actively include children with disabilities in NRC's education programmes

b. APC, CPiE SC and EiE WG to develop guidelines on inclusion of children with disabilities within EiE in Afghanistan and identify referral partners who specialise in education for children with disabilities.

9

Upgrade school WASH facilities

a. NRC to review WASH infrastructure of all EiE-assisted schools, and ensure vital upgrades as practicable in the next 6-12 months

b. EiE WG and WASH Cluster to provide localised guidance on minimum WASH standards in EiE operations

c. Donors and pooled funds to provide more flexibility in terms of inclusion of WASH infrastructure support in EiE operations

d. Ministry of Education to abstain from financial penalties when calculating

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN AFGHANISTAN

Education is a fundamental right for all children. In conflict zones it can be lifesaving, protecting them from threats in the community, restoring a sense of normality and supporting their cognitive, social and emotional development. Afghanistan's education system has been devastated by more than three decades of conflict. Under the Taliban in 2001, only around 900,000 children attended school, nearly all of them boys. Girls were almost completely excluded, and boys received only religious education.

The Afghan government launched a "back to school" campaign in 2002, which resulted in an enormous increase in the enrolment of both boys and girls. By 2016 there were 9.2 million children in education, 39 per cent of whom were girls. But the unprecedented number of schools constructed and teachers hired in such a short period of time made it challenging to improve the quality of education at the same speed. The hasty process of revitalising the education system also brought with it serious corruption problems.

A recent anti-corruption assessment by the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (MEC) for the Ministry of Education (MOE) revealed that it was such common practice for untrained candidates to bribe their way into teaching positions that qualified professionals struggled to find work unless they were prepared to pay for it. Nepotism and favouritism have led to an acceptance of poor standards, teacher absenteeism and falsification. Students can purchase exam results, and some have been able to pay to be marked as attending and graduate without actually showing up to school.

The quality of education has suffered significantly as a result. There is a shortage of 40,000 qualified and capable teachers across the country, and women make up only 33 per cent of teaching staff. The curriculum is also outdated and student capacity is low. Escalating conflict in recent years has further weakened the system, resulting in serious infrastructure damage, yet more untrained teachers and fewer qualified staff.[9]

1.2 BARRIERS TO CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Conflict and widespread displacement have had a severe impact on children's access to education. About a third of Afghan children, or 3.5 million, are currently out of school, 75 per cent of them girls. An additional 400,000 children are expected to face acute education needs in 2018.[10]

In areas held by NSAGs, education continues to be denied, disrupted and controlled, particularly for girls. Attacks on schools continue, and more than 1,000 are currently damaged, destroyed or occupied, leaving children in some areas unable to access any form of education. Even when facilities are available, children face conflict-related risks on their journeys to and from school. Increased reports of kidnapping, crossfire shootings, explosions and injuries caused by unexploded ordnance mean that many families are too frightened to allow their children to go to school, Forty-two children were abducted in 2017, at least 83 boys were recruited into armed groups and 41 schools were occupied by armed groups.[11]

In other parts of the country, the influx of returnees from Pakistan and internally displaced families fleeing the conflict has led to the overcrowding of education facilities, which simply do not have the capacity to meet the increased demand for services. Around 653,000 people were displaced by conflict and violence in 2017 alone, and 56 per cent of internally displaced people (IDPs) in Afghanistan are children.[12] A combination of shortages of teachers, classrooms, drinking water and toilets, and differences in language, culture and education levels mean that many children are turned away. About 41 per cent of schools have


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no buildings, so classes take place under tents or in the open air. These schools close at the height of summer and winter, or children are unable to attend during the hottest and coldest months.[13]

Overcrowding is just one of many barriers to children's education in Afghanistan. Displacement is also a significant drain on families' financial assets. Data from the EU's Emergency Response Mechanism (ERM) shows a five-fold increase in average household debt following displacement and a 69 per cent drop in household income. Thirty-seven per cent of ERM beneficiaries have debts of more than 8,000 afghanis (USD 112). Displaced families struggle to find work and at the same have new expenditure such as rent or increased living costs in urban areas. Many heads of household are unable to transfer their employment skills to their new environment, and others may have been injured as a result of the conflict, making it difficult for them to work.

Such economic pressures reduce households' ability to send children to school and increase the likelihood of their resorting to negative coping mechanisms such as child labour. More than 25 per cent of children between the ages of seven and 14 work to support their families, and the long days leave little or no time for study.[14] Only half of Afghanistan's child labourers are in education.[15] Those who do go to school miss classes regularly on market days or for long periods to help their parents or relatives in shops and other businesses. A minimum of four hours a day is required at school, which makes studying and working at the same time exhausting, and children struggle to keep up. Many of these findings were also borne out by FGD participants.

Around two-thirds of Afghan girls do not attend school because of discriminatory attitudes that do not value their education. Girls are pressured to stay at home, particularly in more conservative parts of the country where the view that girls should not be seen outside the home is widespread. Early marriage is also common. At least nine per cent of girls are married by the time they are 15, but it is widely acknowledged that the issue is significantly underreported. If child marriage is defined as taking place before the age of 18, as it is under the international conventions to which Afghanistan is a signatory, the figure rises to 40 per cent.[16] Once they are married, and often once they are engaged, girls are forced to drop out of school and discontinue their education. In families who can only afford to send one child to school, boys tend to be prioritised.[17]

2.3 CHILD PROTECTION IN EDUCATION

The 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview for Afghanistan estimates that 3.3 million people will require life-saving assistance during the year.[18] Well over a million people face acute or prolonged displacement from their homes. In addition to the 653,000 people internally displaced by conflict and violence in 2017, around 462,361 Afghans returned from Iran and 97,225 from Pakistan.[19] This despite Afghanistan being reclassified from a post-conflict country to one in active conflict again. These population movements have heightened the needs and vulnerabilities of all groups, and particularly child protection concerns. Children returning from Pakistan faced police brutality and harassment while away, and the number of unaccompanied minors deported from Iran is increasing, many of whom have survived illness, abuse and even torture.[20]

Afghanistan is one of the toughest places in the world to be a child, and progress in child protection lags far behind in comparison with other sectors. Children continue to be disproportionately affected by the conflict, suffering death, injury, other grave violations of their rights and the impacts of negative coping mechanisms. They accounted for 30 per cent of civilian casualties in 2017, when 3,179 children were killed or injured.[21] There was also a rise in the number of children recruited and used by parties to the conflict in the first six months of the year compared with 2016.[22] Landmines and unexploded ordnance killed 142 children and injured 376 in Afghanistan in 2017.[23]

More than a third of children have been exposed to psychological distress as a result of losing family or community members and the constant risk of death and injury.[24] Schools and health facilities do not, however, have psychosocial services to support them or areas that encourage play and recreation. Domestic abuse is also prevalent. Ninety-one per cent of children experience at least one form of violence in the home on a regular basis, and corporal punishment and humiliation are common in state schools.[25]

NRC'S EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

NRC is one of the main providers of non-state education in Afghanistan, ensuring that children who have missed out on part of their schooling can catch up through the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) or enrol in state schools via the Education in Emergencies (EiE) programme. More 300 ALP classes and a similar number of EiE classes in Balkh, Faryab, Heart, Kandahar, Khost, Kunar and Nangarhar provide thousands of internally displaced, returnee and refugee children with access to high-quality education within safe walking distance of their homes.

Many children who have never attended school before or would otherwise be unable to return to school receive an education provided by trained and qualified teachers. As the conflict continues, however, and child protection concerns increase, children are exposed to a growing number of risks en route to school, in school or which prevent them attending school altogether.

2.4 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The study seeks to identify the main protection risks children face and the relationship between these risks and children's ability to access education and learn effectively. Secondly, the study aims to assess the extent to which NRC's education programmes provide safe, inclusive and protective learning environments that are accessible to all those in need by answering the following questions:

- What are the main barriers to children accessing NRC's education programmes?
- What are the main protection risks children face and how do they affect their learning?
- Which protective factors do NRC's education programmes currently lack, and which would help children recover, develop and learn in a safe environment during displacement and conflict?

2 METHODOLOGY

A mixed methodology was used to conduct the analysis for this study, beginning with a desk review to develop contextual understanding of the education system in Afghanistan and children's protection risks within and outside it. This highlighted a lack of data on protection concerns for children in education, further supporting the need for this study. Given the sensitive nature of the topic, a qualitative approach was taken during the primary data collection phase, through FGDs with teachers, community leaders, parents and children, both boys and girls. KIIs were also conducted with protection and education agencies. Observations were carried out at education facilities and in the surrounding community to validate the data gathered through the FGDs and KIIs.

Primary data collection was conducted between October 2017 and January 2018 in Faryab, Khost, Kunar and Nangarhar provinces. The locations were chosen based on the scale of NRC's education programmes and the number of displaced children living there, and because they provided a representative sample of the programmes in other parts of the country. The primary data collection stage involved 349 community members and 37 representatives from relevant organisations.

Quantitative follow-up data was then collected to gain further information about how displacement affects threats to children's wellbeing and access to education, and to provide a broad overview of the other areas of the country where NRC has education programmes. To do so 1,052 surveys were conducted in schools and communities with children, parents and teachers in Faryab, Herat, Kandahar, Khost, Kunar, Nangarhar and Sari Pul.

All children who participated in the FGDs and the questionnaires were of school age.

FGDs	KIIs	Survey
349	37	1,052
1,438 Total number of respondents		

2.1 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Data collected via FGDs included a range of viewpoints within the community, but the main target group were boys and girls. Their views have tended to be underrepresented in previous studies, and this research aimed to understand the risks, barriers and needs from their perspective, upholding their rights to participate and have their voices heard. There were between six and eight participants in each focus group.

Girls	Boys	Teachers	Fathers	Mothers	Community leaders
110	105	24	41	35	34

Participants were identified in collaboration with NRC's education team in each province, ensuring that their selection was representative of the different groups of people present in the areas within which NRC works – IDPs, returnees from Pakistan, host community members and, in the case of Khost, refugees from Waziristan.

	Host community	IDPs	Returnees	Refugees
Nangarhar	23	21	26	0
Kunar	8	16	8	0
Khost	20	0	0	82
Faryab	36	89	0	0

The study considered the viewpoints of children enrolled in NRC schools and state schools, and those not in education. The aim was to build up a picture of the range of different issues affecting children in different educational circumstances and identify patterns or differences between the groups. Education teams selected children from ALP and EiE centres to cover a diverse sample in terms of age, language, district and place of origin. To identify children enrolled in state schools, NRC spoke to teachers and headteachers, and to select out-of-school children, to community leaders in each district.

Attending ALP/EiE	Attending state school	Out of school
111	39	65

FGD tools were developed in accordance with the global protection cluster's child protection rapid assessment toolkit and Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support in emergencies. The study had only a limited focus on shelter, food, WASH and health because NRC's protection report – Escaping war, where to next? – covers these topics in more detail. It aimed instead to fill the gaps in awareness and understanding of child protection issues in the locations outlined.

Based on the initial desk review, FGDs covered the following topics:

- Place of origin and, if relevant, reason for displacement or return
- Experiences of conflict
- Occupation and experiences in work
- Main risks to children in the community
- Social support networks
- Teaching quality and school facilities
- Shelter, food and WASH facilities at home and in school
- Barriers to accessing education
- Psychosocial support needs
- Experiences of violence at home, in school and in the community

2.2 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Key informants were selected based on their organisation's focus on either child protection or education in order to gather the perspectives of a range of organisations. The interviews provided stronger contextual understanding and an overview of the challenges organisations face in the field, drawing comparisons and differences with the FGDs to strengthen the reliability of the data.

KIIs	Number of participants
NRC education staff	19
NRC protection staff	2
UNICEF	2
UNAMA	2
Save the Children	1
CPAN	3
ACTED	3
Human Rights Commission	3
MoE	2
Total	37

* UNAMA: UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan; CPAN: Child Protection Action Network; ACTED: Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development; MoE: Ministry of Education

2.3 OBSERVATIONS

Observations were carried out in each location to increase understanding of behavioural patterns, hazards on school sites and in surrounding areas and the physical conditions of the location. They were used to validate the data collected by triangulating their findings with those of the FGDs and KIIs.

The observations focused on the following:

- Minority groups in the community
- Inclusion or exclusion of minority groups in the community and in school
- Hazards in and around schools
- Gender-specific latrines with locks
- Violence and aggression in the community
- Areas and equipment for recreation and play
- Child labour
- Signs of psychosocial support needs or difficulty in social interactions

2.4 QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was developed to gather further information on the topics raised in the FGDs and KIIs, particularly about the facilities available in NRC schools and the link between the economic impact of displacement and child labour. It enabled the researchers to include community voices in parts of the country not included in the primary data phase, providing a more general overview of NRC's education programmes nationwide. It also strengthened the findings in the geographical areas targeted in the primary data phase. It targeted all areas of the country where NRC has education programmes, but staff capacity meant it was not possible to cover Mazar. The survey took place in the following locations:

	Children	Teachers	Parents
Khost	97	54	48
Kunar	21	12	10
Nangarhar	101	59	47
Kandahar	98	48	50
Herat	91	1	1
Faryab	113	40	51
Kunduz	26	4	8
Sari Pul	39	19	14

2.5 LIMITATIONS

In some areas, the research covered a small sample size, due to staff availability and it was not possible to carry out quantitative FGDs in all areas. The sample was drawn from government-controlled areas because of security restrictions, and so is not representative of the views and needs of children outside these areas.

The lead researcher is trained and experienced in psychosocial support and child protection, so was aware of sensitive nature of the study and able to conduct themselves accordingly. Support staff in each location were unfamiliar with the terminology and the subject matter, however, which caused some disruption to the FDGs and undermined the feeling of safety required to divulge information about sensitive topics. Issues included participants being cut off, their views being dismissed and or being pointed at by teachers and education

© NRC / Enayatullah Azad, Tebar village in Sar-e-pul city

staff. The inexperience of support staff also led to initial challenges in identifying participants, and in some cases students appeared to be selected based on their education level rather than as a representative sample.

The research team was fortunate to have a skilled male translator trained in child protection and child-friendly communication methods. There were, however, very few female translators available, which was a significant challenge during the FGDs. Some female staff who were available to support the FGDs had very little experience with translation which meant that the original meaning of the questions or answers was altered, possibly affecting the validity of the data.

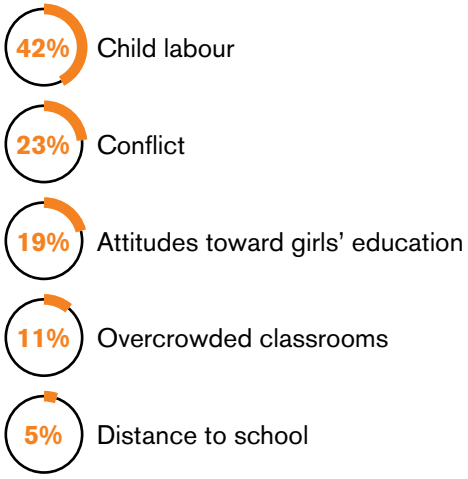
The study's main limitation, however, was the small number of out-of-school children it involved. The FGDs included only 65 and the questionnaire only 73, which means the research may not paint a full enough picture of the barriers and child protection risks out-of-school children face. The study was, however, able to speak to hundreds of children who had been out of school in their places of origin and so to better understand the barriers they previously faced even though they were now able to attend school.

3 KEY FINDINGS

3.1 BARRIERS TO EDUCATION

Despite the range of participants consulted, there was a broad similarity between answers across the different groups. Participants from Faryab, Kunar and Nangarhar also gave similar responses to questions, but results in Khost showed some variations. The vast majority of refugees in Khost live in camps, where education facilities are available inside the camp, meaning children do not have far to travel to school. Threats in the community are minimal compared with Faryab, Kunar and Nangarhar, where the threat of kidnap or harassment was a major concern. There were also small but noticeable differences between children's responses and those of their parents and community leaders.

The top five reasons given by participants in the KIIs, FDGs and questionnaire for children not attending school were as follows:



Child labour

All groups cited child labour as a significant barrier to children's education. Many children who participated in the study were unable to attend school or missed their classes regularly because of pressure to work and help support their families. Of all the children interviewed, 36 per cent were in some form of work; 20 per cent in school and working and all of the out-of-school children were working, either to earn income or helping at home. Seventeen per cent of child participants said an older brother was their family's main source of income and worked daily instead of attending school. Fifty-three per cent had at least one sibling not in school because they had to work to support their family.

> *"If I could, I would make it so no children in Afghanistan had to work and all children could go to school."*
>
> Out of school boy, 11, Kunar province

> *"We cannot afford food to eat, how can we afford stationery?"*
>
> Mother, Maimana city, Faryab

4 per cent of the children interviewed had become their family's sole provider because their father had died or was injured, disabled, ill or elderly. Despite this, child respondents earned only 1,500 to 3,000 afghanis (USD 21 to 42) a month, and some earned as little as 1,000 afghanis (USD 14) a month.

The study demonstrates the negative impact of displacement on children, identifying a direct link between displacement and an increase of families taking on negative coping mechanisms to adapt to the financial burden of displacement. Rates of child labour for both in-school and out-of-school children increased for participants following displacement. The proportion of children who

© NRC / Sandra Calligaro, Kandahar city

were in school and also working rose from nine per cent in their places of origin to 20 per cent after displacement. For out-of-school children, the increase was more than four-fold, from 23 per cent to 100 per cent. Forty per cent of children who had been in school in their places of origin said they had dropped out or not enrolled after their displacement, apparently because of the need to work.

Displaced parents said they were unable to pursue their previous livelihoods and at the same time had new costs including rent to cover, leaving them with no option but to take their children out of school and ask them to support the family financially. Children said they did not want to work, but felt forced or pressured to do so by family members.

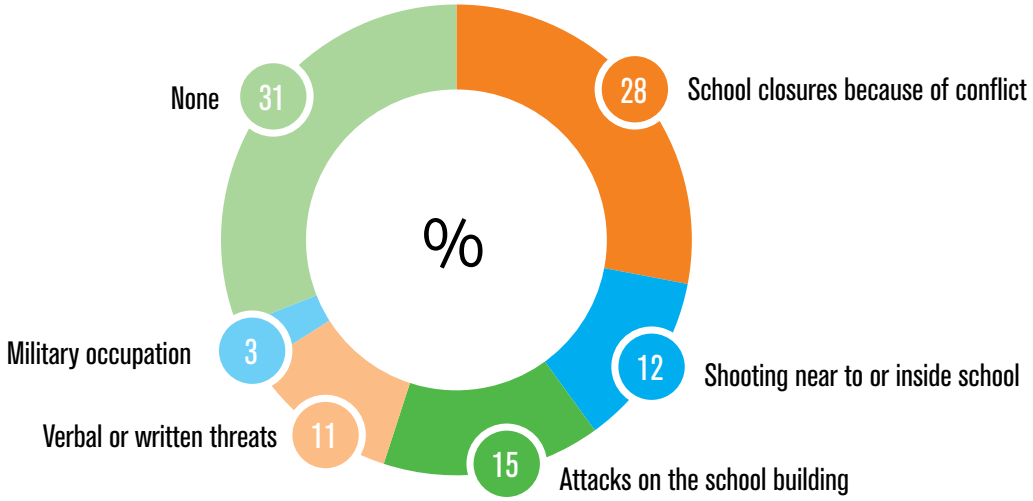
Eighty per cent of in-school children answered "no" when asked if they had a job, but a large proportion were involved in irregular work to support their families. Many said they would sometimes have to miss school to help their families twice a week on market days, or to take part in the family business during busy periods. There were several cases in Faryab of children being taken out of school for two months at a time to work in the family bakery or shop. Students' poor attendance because of family commitments was a key concern for teachers, who noticed that they struggled to catch up when they missed school regularly.

GEOGRAPHICAL DIFFERENCES

Economic concerns were prevalent was across all the locations, but the number of children in work in Khost was noticeably lower than in other areas. This appears to be because the majority of children who attend NRC's education programmes live in Gulan camp, where they receive shelter, food, water and medical support. Residents said they were completely dependent on NGO services and had no financial freedom or economic options for the future, but given the support they receive fulfilling their immediate basic was not as pressing a concern as it was for participants in the other locations.

This appears to have reduced the pressure on children to support their families economically, and the majority of school-age children in Gulan camp were attending school regularly. The limited opportunities for work in the camp also contributes to the lower incidence of child labour.

The majority of Waziristan refugees in Khost live in Gulan camp, but among the children of those who do not, there appeared to be a pattern of school attendance linked to whether or not they had been in education in Pakistan. Children attending ALP centres outside the camp had all been in some form of education before they fled. Nor were they working in Afghanistan, except during school holidays. Out-of-school children, by contrast, had not been in any kind of education in Pakistan and were now engaged in daily work to support their families instead.



Attacks to education

Afghanistan's conflict was cited as a major barrier to children's education throughout the FGDs, KIIs and questionnaires, and across all respondent groups. Twenty-eight per cent of children and parents said schools in their places of origin had been closed because of the conflict. The figure for respondents from Faryab was 62 per cent and Kunduz 43 per cent. KII participants in Faryab said fighting had led to the closure of several state schools in insecure districts throughout the province. Some have been replaced by madrasas, which only educate boys, but some districts have no schools open at all.

A KII participant from UNICEF explained that although state schools are closed, officials frequently record them as open. The reason being that the Ministry of Education is significantly underfunded and facing cuts, and they fear that if schools are declared closed, the province's annual budget will be reduced. This falsely inflates the number of schools open and active, particularly in areas affected by the conflict, which in turn makes it more difficult to advocate for increased education provision. Given that very few NGOs are able to access these areas, it is likely that entire districts are left without access to any form of education.

UNICEF has been able to provide some accurate data on the issue, and reports that at least 1,000 schools nationwide are closed. According to its report, the main reason for the closures is insecurity, most commonly threats from NSAGs The table below shows the number of schools UNICEF reported as closed at the time of writing in the areas covered by this report:[26]

Location	# of closed schools	# of occupied schools
Khost	2	
Nangarhar	12	3
Kunar	6	
Herat	41	
Faryab	52	4
Sari Pul	2	7
Kandahar	154	
Kunduz	300	

Twelve per cent of participants in the FGDs and questionnaire said school buildings had been attacked, and FGD participants in Faryab and Nangarhar spoke of mortar shelling very close to their facilities. Although details of specific attacks were not given, the testimonies revealed that many children do not feel safe at school.

Afghanistan has endorsed the Oslo Safe Schools Convention, committing to protect students, teachers and education facilities during times of armed conflict. Attacks on schools continue to be reported, however, including a recent attack on a madrasa near one of NRC's ALP centres in Kunduz in April 2018, and a mortar attack on a state school in Laghman in February 2017. Fifteen per cent of participants also reported fighting near schools, and UNICEF reported at least 25 schools closed because they had been caught in crossfire between government forces and NSAGs.

The majority of security incidents respondents reported took place in their places of origin, but armed clashes remain a concern for many displaced parents in their new communities, where they still feel it is unsafe for their children to go to school in case they are caught in crossfire. This was particularly common in Faryab, where fighting continues throughout the province and gunfire can be heard even in the safer districts. This has prompted some parents keep their children at home at times when the security situation is particularly tense, and others to take them out of school altogether.

Attitudes towards girls' education

Both boys and girls who participated in the FGDs and questionnaire emphasised the difficulties girls face in accessing education in Afghanistan. Twenty-nine per cent of survey participants said girls were most likely to be excluded. This was particularly common amongst female respondents, who said that many parents did not believe that girls should be educated. Twenty-four per cent of girls who participated in the questionnaire were out of school, compared with 10 per cent of boys. Based on Afghan government data from 2010-2011, UNICEF reported in 2017 that 66 per cent of Afghan girls of lower secondary school age - 12 to 15 years old - were out of school, compared with 40 per cent of boys.[27]

> *"My uncle won't let me go to school. He says that girls shouldn't leave the house. Society cares about boys, but not about girls."*
>
> Out-of-school girl, 12, Talas Khan, Faryab

> *"In Pakistan I had lots of dreams, I wanted to be a doctor. When I came here, they told me to forget my dreams."*
>
> Returnee girl, 15, from state school, Jalalabad city

> *"They will shout at you on the way to school, they say "a girl has two options, to stay at home … or to die."*
>
> Returnee girl, 16, Khas Kunar

© NRC / Enayatullah Azad, Jalalabad city, Nangarhar Province

KIIs in Faryab, Kunar and Nangarhar revealed that it was common for parents to take girls out of school when they reach adolescence, normally at around 12, because of cultural views that young women should stay at home. This was particularly difficult for returnee girls in Kunar and Nangarhar, who had previously had access to education and more freedom to explore options for their education and careers. FGD participants said that once back in Afghanistan they had faced negative attitudes and harassment from community members simply because they were going to school. They said the lack of support for their education had been hard to adjust to, and had reduced their interest in attending school.

There also appears to be a correlation between displacement and an increase in the number of child marriages, which 12 per cent of respondents identified as a significant barrier to girls' education. Four per cent of the girls under 16 who responded to the questionnaire were also married, and all of them said they had married after their displacement. Some also said that their marriage took place after their family's economic situation had deteriorated.

It is common for girls to drop out of school when they get married, and two per cent of male participants said they had a school-aged sister for whom this was the case. Young brides are normally expected to stay at home. They are not usually allowed to attend school or to participate in FGDs or surveys, so this study spoke to only a small number of married girls. It is likely that their number is much higher.

The questionnaire also revealed that girls in conflict-affected areas are more likely to face barriers to their education than boys. Twenty-seven per cent of girls in such areas said their schools had closed while boys' schools remained open. . However, following their displacement, they are now able to attend school at NRC's ALP centres, showing that displacement can sometimes offer new opportunities. In Khost, there was a significant increase in girls" education following displacement. KII participants in Khost said it was particularly challenging to engage girls from Waziristan in education, but social mobilisation from NRC staff has helped to convince parents that their daughters should go to school. Seventy-eight per cent of girls in Khost felt their parents had become more supportive of their education since their displacement.

PARENT'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS EDUCATION FOR BOTH GIRLS AND BOYS

Girls appear to face more resistance from their parents toward their education, but the data shows that parental attitudes are also a barrier for boys. Nineteen per cent of all participants felt that parents' lack of support for their children's education was the main barrier to their schooling, whether girls or boys. Amongst child participants, the figure rose to 36 per cent.

KII participants noted that many boys are also taken out of school at a young age, because their parents believe that being able to read and write is sufficient education. Teachers who participated in the FGDs said some parents had told them that they thought their children would gain more from working than they would from education. This viewpoint appears particularly common amongst parents who did not go to school themselves.

UNICEF's 2017 report on out-of-school children highlights the extent to which a head of household's education level predicts their children's school attendance, showing that children whose head of household had at least some level of education were more likely to attend school themselves. This was echoed in the FGDs for this study, during which some parents said they wanted their children to have the same education opportunities as they had had.

Overcrowded classrooms

Twenty-seven per cent of respondents said that overcrowded classrooms were a problem in their schools, and 11 per cent thought they were the main barrier to children's education. This widespread issue is particularly acute in Kunar and Nangarhar provinces, where schools struggling to cope with the steady influx of returnees from Pakistan. It is common for classes in Nangarhar to have as many as 250 students, and t primary school classes in state schools have between 80 and 150 students.

Many schools rely on tents provided by NGOs to set up temporary classrooms in the grounds, but

the tents become extremely hot in the summer and need frequent repair for sun damage. Many are so crowded that the children at the edges are only half-covered by the canvas. Schools that don't have tents run open-air classes, without shelter or shade in 40C (104F) heat.

Classes in Nangarhar were also observed to take place in corridors and entrance areas or on any spare ground available, with numerous disruptions and distractions. Two classes outside Gulan camp in Khost were taking place simultaneously in the same room, with a piece of cloth hanging from the ceiling to separate them. Children said it was difficult to concentrate when they could hear the other lesson in progress, and that their classroom was cramped and uncomfortable.

Nor do many schools have enough teachers to cover all classes. One teacher in Jalalabad city was observed trying to teach two classes of more than 170 students each at the same time, moving back and forth between them. Other classes were observed taking place with no teachers at all. Students were left to study without instruction or supervision.

Overcrowded has also led to a shortage of materials. Six per cent of participants said they had no school textbooks. During one observation in Behsud, Nangarhar, a class was sent home because the teacher had no materials available.

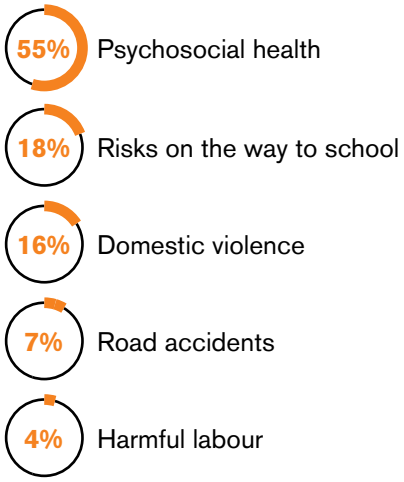
Distance to school

Distance to school affects very few of participants in their current location, but it was a significant issue for children in their place of origin. Eight per cent of children who participated in the questionnaire said they had been unable to attend school in their place of origin because the nearest facility was not within walking distance. This issue was also a significant concern for parents, who felt that a long journey to school increased the likelihood of violence and harassment, particularly for girls.

Distance to school was a significant issue in Faryab, because many state schools were closed as a consequence of ongoing fighting. Parents in the Faryab FGDs said they would not allow their daughters to walk long distances unless they were accompanied by male for fear of harassment, kidnap or attack.

3.2 CHILD PROTECTION RISKS IN THE COMMUNITY

A recent joint educational and child protection needs assessment carried out by the REACH Initiative highlighted a number of child protection risks in the home and community that affect children's physical health, psychological wellbeing and their ability to engage at school and learn effectively. The chart below shows the five main risks identified in this study:



Psychosocial health

The REACH assessment identifies psychological trauma as the primary concern for boys and girls, with 42 per cent of participants reporting psychosocial needs.[28] The majority of children interviewed for this study had fled their place of origin either because of the Afghan conflict or police brutality and threats in Pakistan. Fifty-nine per cent of the children interviewed had witnessed conflict in their place of origin and many had seen family members being killed or injured. The majority of participants said they felt safe in their new communities, but children were disturbed by their memories and were easily startled by sounds or visual triggers. Many also reported regular nightmares and disturbed sleep.

> *"They burnt down the school and then they set our house on fire. My neighbours' house was hit by a rocket, there were dead bodies everywhere. My uncle had his legs cut in the explosion, his skin was coming off. I want to forget the sound of the bombs and the images of the dead bodies."*
>
> Girl, 11, ALP class, Behsud, Nangarhar

> *We were working in the field when suddenly there was a bombardment and the Taliban came, shooting. They used us as human shields, they put us in front of them so that the opposition wouldn't shoot them. There were bullets everywhere and the bullets hit our homes. They burnt down our family shop, we lost everything and at night I wake up crying and screaming. The Taliban are still too close. You can hear the shooting. I think it will happen again and I feel very scared."*
>
> Boy, 13, ALP class, Qaisar, Faryab

> *They were taking the women and girls, we heard they were being raped. On our way to school one day we saw Isis beheading someone. We wanted to leave, but they made us watch. I have bad dreams, I dream that they kill me, that they kill my father and my relatives."*
>
> Boy, 8, ALP class, Tagab, Nangarhar

> *My uncle was taken by the Taliban. They killed him and took a video of it. I saw the video. Everyone in the community saw the video. I have nightmares every night. I can't stop seeing the shooting."*
>
> Girl, 12, ALP class, Maimana city

The FDGs provided further insight into the range of symptoms children presented. Mothers said their children would wake up at night in a state of panic, thinking the house was being attacked. They also described seeing their children in shock: "They can't talk, they sit there quietly. It's like they are here physically, but mentally they have gone somewhere else." Teachers observed children struggling to concentrate in class, becoming angry very easily and crying uncontrollably without obvious reason.

The common response to these symptoms seemed to be to take the children to the doctor, who generally prescribed medication. Mothers and teachers were aware that children were suffering because of traumatic memories, and were dismayed that they did not know how to respond or support them.

Reactions to children's stress differed between parents. Mothers seemed concerned about the emotional strain on their children, but fathers thought they were too young to remember the conflict and so were not traumatised by their experiences. These different reactions appear indicative of broader family dynamics.

Thirty-two per cent of children said they would seek comfort and support from their mothers, but none said they would turn to their fathers.

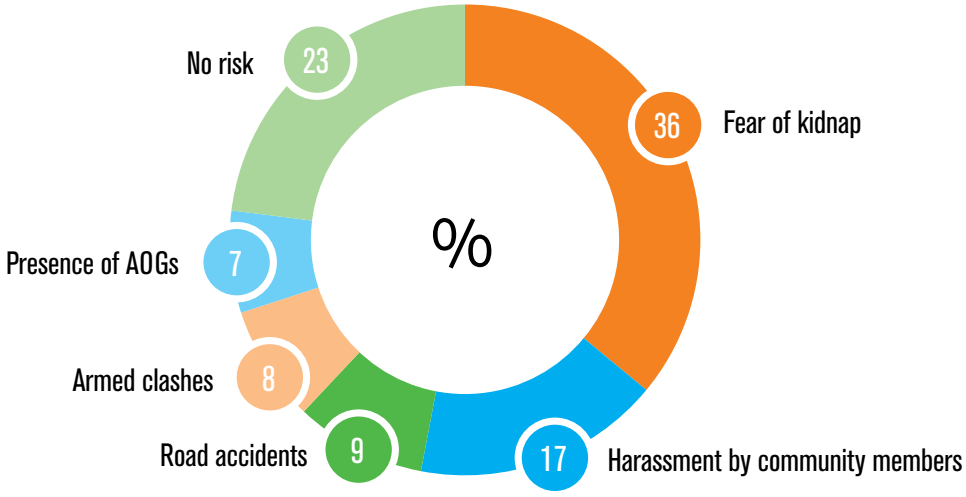
Despite this, some of the fathers interviewed did talk about their own difficulties in sleeping or struggling to cope with flashbacks from the conflict. Those more familiar with the terminology even requested psychosocial support to help them cope with their experiences.

MEMORIES FROM PAKISTAN

Psychosocial symptoms and traumatic memories of violence were common among children displaced by Afghanistan's conflict, but much less so among returnees from Pakistan. Some children in Kunar and Nangarhar talked about distressing experiences in Pakistan, including the police beating family members and storming their homes. These experiences appear to have been frightening and upsetting, but not as traumatic as those of internally displaced children. Relatively few returnees reported nightmares or flashbacks.

Nor did so many children in Khost reporting feelings of fear or sleep disturbance, but some refugee children from Waziristan clearly harboured a deep-seated sense of anger. After fleeing their homes and witnessing violence and brutality meted out by the Pakistani authorities they expressed a desire to seek revenge. One boy in an ALP class in Gulan camp said:

> *I want revenge on those who hurt me. I feel such rage … Either I will destroy them or it will destroy me … or I will destroy someone else."*



Risks on the journey to school

Participants cited risks associated with conflict and crime on the journey to school as their second biggest child protection concern in the community. It was of particular concern to families in Faryab, Kunar and Nangarhar, whose children were visibly shaken by recent kidnappings in which two girls and a boy had been held for a total of 40 days.

> *"They (Taliban) ask us where we are going, what we're doing, we don't tell them we're going to school, we're too scared."*
>
> Boy, 12, ALP class, Maimana city

The participants were unclear as to who had carried out the kidnappings. They said both the Taliban and criminals demanding ransoms had previously undertaken abductions in the area, but they appeared more concerned about the threats posed by NSAGs. Girls in Afghan Kot, Faryab, also said strangers would sometimes talk to them in the street and asked them to get into their car.

Thirty-six per cent of girls in Faryab, Kunar and Nangarhar cited fear of kidnap or conflict as the main deterrent to attending school. Some children also said they had received direct threats from NSAGs warning them not to attend school.

Participants studying at an ALP girls' school in Kunar said Isis had told them not to go to school and warned them that girls should not be educated. An investigation determined that the threat had been a rumour, but it still left girls feeling frightened and unsafe. Male ALP students in Pashton Kot, Faryab, also said they had faced hostile questioning about where they were going from Taliban members on their way to school.

GEOGRAPHICAL DIFFERENCES

Participants living in Gulan camp in Khost have a short and safe walk to school within the camp, and said there had been no known incidents involving children en route. All said they felt safe in their communities and treated well by their hosts. The only danger to children in the community mentioned were disputes among families and neighbours over land or money that they might be caught up in.

Domestic violence

The third biggest concern for children who took part in the study was domestic violence. All who took part in the FGDs said they had witnessed such violence regularly. Seventy-five per cent had suffered direct physical violence at the hands of a parent or an aunt or uncle, and some had visible scars from the incidents. Teachers also shared their concerns about the prevalence of violence toward children in the home. They said it was a very common problem and they had witnessed children coming to class with injuries caused by family members. Of 21,970 children interviewed for a Save the Children knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) survey, 91 per cent said they had

© NRC / Nisar Ahmad, Gulan camp, Khost province

experienced domestic violence, and 20 per cent had experienced as many as 30 different kinds.[29]

For many participants, domestic violence appeared to take place more frequently following displacement, once again demonstrating the negative impact of displacement on children where the likelihood of families taking on negative coping mechanisms. Children and parents both said disputes between family members were often caused by debts incurred after abandoning their homes and livelihoods. Difficulties in paying rent and disputes over land were also common causes of violence that children had witnessed at home.

Displacement also seems to increase the amount of violence that children experience directly. They said the most common reason their parents would hit them was because they had not brought enough money home from work, or because they had not gone to work at all. The increased economic pressures and the new responsibilities that children take on following displacement appear to have increased tensions between them and their parents, often resulting in violence.

> *"Our father was very angry with my brother, he threw a knife at him and it cut his hand. He still has the scar. I thought he was going to kill him, I am sure he tried to kill him."*
>
> Girl, 8, ALP class in Maimana city

> *"My uncle was looking after some land for us here and when we came, my father asked for the land. My uncle wouldn't give it to him and so they fought. My uncle was strangling my father in front of us."*
>
> Boy, 13, EiE class, Jalalabad city

> *"Sometimes my mother shouts at me if I don't bring money home from work and sometimes she hits me. Once when she was really angry she slammed my head on the kitchen stove, and there was a lot of blood."*
>
> Girl, 9, ALP class, Pashtun Kot

> *My uncle's wife hit me so hard I fell on the ground and hit my head. It gave me a black eye for a long time."*
>
> Girl, 10, out of school, Kaz Kunar

Road accidents

Seven per cent of all participants cited road accidents as the biggest risk to all displaced children in Afghanistan, both in school and out of school. Nine per cent of participants saw road accidents as the main risk for school attending children on their route to school , but the problem was raised far more frequently in the FGDs and KIIs. Twenty per cent of FGD participants said they had witnessed a road accident in which someone had been seriously injured, and several children had witnessed someone's death or lost a friend or family member. KII participants also said children did not know how to cross busy roads safely and ran out without looking.

Harmful labour

As outlined earlier in the report, all participants considered child labour a significant concern because it impedes children's access to education. Some also raised the physical and psychological impact of the practice, even for those able to juggle school and work. They also spoke about the "worst forms of labour", including carpentry, brick laying and carpet weaving.[30] These concerns, however were raised by NGOs and UN agencies rather than children themselves. Children talked about work only as a barrier to education rather than a risk to their physical health. This could suggest a lack of awareness amongst children on the negative impacts of harmful labour on children's health and physical development.

The majority of boys interviewed who were in work had jobs riding rickshaws, and a small number were shoe shiners or street vendors. None said they worked in carpentry or brick making, but this is likely to be because of sampling issues. A 2011 report by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that roughly half of all employees in Afghanistan's brick kilns are under 18. The study focuses on brick kilns in Nangarhar's Surkhorad district and found that around 4,180 children are working in brick kilns in this area.[31] Children who work in brick kilns, however, tend to live on site, so the sample for this study did not include any who may be working in the industry.

Twenty-seven per cent of girls who participated in the FGDs worked as carpet weavers. None raised the damaging health impacts of this type of work, but they have been widely reported. Weavers sit in front of the loom with their head, neck and arms in awkward positions and have to make repetitive movements which can lead to inflammation of the knuckles and neuralgia. The work can also cause eye strain and respiratory problems from inhaling fine wool dust. The girls who participated in the study said they would not choose to do carpet weaving, but felt forced to by family members.

CHILD RECRUITMENT

Participants in the FGDs and questionnaire did not raise child recruitment as a issue, but KII participants in Faryab cited it as their main concern. Those in Kunar and Nangarhar were also concerned about the number of children still being recruited into Taliban and Isis ranks, and it was seen as a pressing issue in Jalalabad.

The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) registered 85 cases of child recruitment into NSAGs in 2017 and it has been working closely with the government to reduce the number of cases involving the armed forces.[32] Along with UNICEF, it has supported the establishment of a child protection unit at the national police recruitment centre in Jalalabad, and hopes to continue raising awareness of the issue at the community level. UNAMA has also highlighted former child soldiers' need for psychosocial support, an area it is beginning to work in.

The fact that the FGDs and questionnaires with community members did not raise child recruitment into NSAGs or any links with displacement may be because of the sensitive nature of the topic, or because the research took place in government-controlled areas, where it is much less of an issue.

3.3 MAIN CHILD PROTECTION GAPS IN NRC SCHOOLS

This section of the report examines whether NRC is meeting the minimum standards for education in emergencies in providing safe spaces for children to learn, develop and recover from conflict. It identifies five areas in which NRC's education programmes need to strengthen protection standards:

- Awareness of protection concerns and services available
- Availability of psychosocial support services
- Child-friendly environments
- Engagement with parents and community members
- Inclusion of marginalised groups
- Provision of WASH facilities and hygiene training

Awareness of protection concerns and services available

FGDs, KIIs and observations revealed that awareness of child protection and children's rights among teachers at NRC's ALP and EiE schools is low. Teacher training does not include protection issues or child-friendly teaching methods, apart from an agreement not to use corporal punishment. When asked about child protection, most teachers had either never heard the term before, or associated it purely with economic concerns.

When asked directly about violence and abuse against children, the majority were aware of its prevalence in the home but did not believe it took place in school, or that child sexual abuse took place anywhere in the community. Nor did many teachers believe that child marriage or child recruitment were issues in their communities, despite statistical evidence and observations suggesting otherwise.

Teachers saw themselves as having an important role to play in encouraging parents to support their children's education, but many did not see it as their role to speak to them about violence or abuse. A number of reasons were given for this. Some teachers thought speaking to parents could do more harm than good, others that it was not their business and others still that they did not feel confident in broaching the issue and would not know how to help. None were aware of other organisations or agencies in the area which could provide support, nor did they know how to contact them.

KII participants said teachers struggled to recognise cases of concern and felt they did not have the capacity to respond. A lack of awareness of children's rights was also observed. Children were sometimes prevented from sharing their opinions during FGDs, when teachers interrupted them or spoke for them. Teachers were also observed openly laughing at children and dismissing their contributions. There were some cases in Kunar and Nangarhar of male teaching staff walking into girls' classes without warning, or and sitting and smoking near their classroom windows, leading to complaints from students and mothers.

Availability of psychosocial support services and recreational spaces

The study revealed that 55 per cent of children were in need of psychosocial support because of traumatic experiences in their place of origin. None of the schools assessed, however, have such services available or teachers trained in the subject

Children had high praise for their teachers and felt comfortable and safe with them, but the majority did not feel they could speak to them about their distressing memories or nightmares. Both mothers and teachers recognised the latter's role in children's wellbeing and the need for psychosocial support services in schools. Teachers expressed concern for children's wellbeing, but most were unsure how they could respond to their psychosocial needs appropriately.

None of the teachers were aware of support services available in the community, and more than half thought the only course of action was to visit a doctor for medication. Forty-nine per cent of teachers who responded to the questionnaire felt that psychosocial support was the service most needed in schools, given the number of children in their classes who had fled conflict.

Child-friendly environments

Observations revealed a number of infrastructure risks to children's safety at NRC schools, particularly improperly secured facilities and grounds. Other damage and dangers observed in school grounds or the immediate surrounding area including large holes in the ground, and exposed building works, metal spikes and other sharp objects. Bullet casings were seen outside some classrooms.

Parents and teachers also raised concerns about mines and improvised explosive devices on routes to school, and the risk of road accidents. None of the schools observed or children interviewed had received mine risk education. Nor had they been taught earthquake drills despite many parts of Afghanistan experiencing seismic activity.

In order to feel safe and comfortable at school, children need a warm and welcoming environment. Classrooms should ideally be spacious and well lit with brightly coloured walls and posters. Both ALP and EiE schools, however, have cramped classrooms where children almost have to sit on top of each other to fit in. Many ALP classrooms are dark with crumbling, bare grey walls.

Many school buildings have damaged walls with holes, missing and broken windows, or in some cases no window at all. One classroom had no door, and students had to jump up and climb in through the window. Both ALP and EiE schools rely on tents for many of their classes, which are extremely hot in the summer and easily damaged.

The majority of schools observed did not have enough space for children to play, nor materials or equipment for recreation and sport. Children who go to work as well as school have few opportunities to play outside school. According to REACH's assessment, 24 per cent of boys and 57 per cent of girls do not engage in any kind of recreational activity.

School timetables also have little space for creative activities, the teaching of life skills or opportunities for children to share their opinions. This is particularly true of ALP schools.

Engagement with parents and community members

Observations revealed a disconnect between schools and their wider communities, in which teachers and education teams spend very little time with parents and community members. Given that many schools' have central locations, facilities are not being used to their potential to engage with the community about education and risks to children's safety.

Inclusion of marginalised groups

Despite the high number of children with physical or mental disabilities in the areas studied, very few centres include them. Only four of the 22 classes observed included a child with a disability. Twenty-seven per cent of children, parents and teachers who participated in the questionnaire knew at least one school-aged child who was not attending school because of their disability.

Many teachers said they did not include children with disabilities in their classes because they did not feel they had the capacity to teach them.

None of the schools observed had access arrangements for children with physical disabilities, and a number had steps or raised platforms that would be difficult or impossible to negotiate for children with reduced mobility. Nor are classrooms equipped or material and activities appropriate for all, excluding children who are partially sighted, hard of hearing or mute. In one class in Nangarhar province, a child who was mute was left out of conversations and group work because he was not given time to write down his contributions.

Language issues also marginalised returnees from Pakistan in Kunar and Nangarhar who spoke Pakistani Pashtun. Differences in script, accent and vocabulary meant that some struggled to keep up in class and were unable to complete their homework using local textbooks and worksheets. This was also a problem for some children in Faryab, where the majority speak Uzbek and only a few Dari. All teachers speak both languages, but tend to revert to their Uzbek mother tongue, marginalising Dari-speaking students in the process.

© NRC / Sandra Calligaro, Maimana city, Faryab Province

Provision of WASH facilities and hygiene training

Forty-seven per cent of children and teachers said there were no hand-washing facilities in their school and 78 per cent that there were no separate toilets for girls and boys. Nineteen per cent said their school had no functioning toilets at all, and 14 per cent only one that worked. Observations revealed that two centres close to each other had only one toilet between them, and elsewhere not all toilets had roofs or working locks. None of the schools visited had been given hygiene training and there were no visual aids to promote hand washing or other safe practices.

CHALLENGES FOR TEACHERS WITH CHILDREN

Teachers who are also mothers face challenges in fulfilling their dual responsibilities. With no adequate or affordable childcare available, they have to bring their young children to work with them. The issue is particularly difficult for those who are breastfeeding, but are unable or unwilling to take time off of work. In one observation, a teacher's young son was brought into the class crying and she had to continue teaching whilst breastfeeding and soothing him. Teachers said managing the two roles was exhausting, but that they did not want to miss any of their classes to care for their children, so felt they had no other option.

4 CONCLUSION

Displaced children in Afghanistan are exposed to a range of risks that threaten their wellbeing and prevent them from attending a school where they can feel safe, be protected from harm and recover from the consequences of conflict. Displacement puts economic pressure on families, and many children are obliged to earn money to support their household, limiting their time available for education. The stresses and strain of displacement also increase domestic violence and expose children to negative coping mechanisms, limiting their ability to play, learn and develop in a caring environment.

Children living in new communities are less protected from violence and insecurity, whilst they struggle to cope with traumatic memories of the war that led to their displacement. All of these risks not only prevent children from physically going to school. They also cause intense psychological stress, hampering their ability to socialise, concentrate and study. Without access to strong support systems in a safe and protective learning environment, it can be extremely difficult for children to recover from the negative impacts of conflict and displacement.

Participants in this study tended to give similar responses across locations and population groups, but there were some recognisable differences on certain topics. Immediate economic needs tended to be less acute for refugees living in Gulan camp in Khost, where they receive regular food and adequate shelter. Education was more readily and safely available and the overall security situation seemed relatively calm.

There also appeared to be little difference between the needs of IDPs and returnees. Both groups were struggling to cope economically and adapt to the strains of displacement in a new community. It did appear, however, that children who had been internally displaced by conflict suffered greater psychological trauma and struggled with nightmares and symptoms of shock and depression.

This study highlights a number of threats to children's safety and wellbeing both now and in the future, but of particular concern are the pressure they face to work, the psychological impact of conflict and the threat of violence at the home and in the community. Huge numbers of children are unable to attend school because they have to work. Those who are able to attend face the risk of violence and abuse on the journey to and from school.

NRC needs to support more children so they are able attend school, heighten community awareness about violence against children, improve the physical safety and broader conditions of their schools and increase teachers' capacity to provide psychosocial support and refer protection cases.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 BARRIERS TO EDUCATION

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Advocate for a stronger response to child protection risks within education across the child protection, protection and education working groups

The problem: Attacks on schools and school closures because of insecurity

Recommendation for NRC: NRC conducts regular risk analysis of threats near to schools, providing evidence for advocacy messaging

Recommendation for Stakeholders: APC, CPiE SC and EiE WG to provide a joint tool for protection analysis and work collaboratively with working group members to create and publicise advocacy messages to ensure children's safety when accessing education

Afghan government to redouble efforts on its commitments to Oslo Safe School declarations, which NRC can support on technical guidance for

The study focuses on children who are resettled in government held areas, but more research should be done to better understand the extent of the risks children face in non-government held areas or contested locations. Awareness of the changing security situation is needed for teachers, education actors, community and government in order to establish mitigation measures. Continued analysis is required to form strong advocacy messages which call for better protection of education and the risks children face within schools in Afghanistan.

NRC will not be able to tackle the risks this report identifies alone. A collaborative response is required from relevant working groups to advocate for the Afghan government to uphold the Oslo Safe Schools Declaration and ensure that education facilities are protected from attack.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Engage and advocate with armed actors, including NSAGs on the protection of education from attacks

The problem: A lack of engagement with perpetrators of attacks on schools and subsequently, a lack of understanding of the motivations and possible preventative measures

Recommendation for NRC: work in partnership with communities and local and international NGOs to engage effectively with armed actors to better understand motivations for attacks on schools and advocate for commitment to protection education from attacks

Recommendation for Stakeholders: APC, CPiE SC and EiE WG to advocate with humanitarian and political counterparts to denounce violations of IHL norms, policies and guidelines related to Protection of Education from Attacks, mobilize resources for programme implementation and support community and NGO partnerships aiming at facilitating access to direct engagement with duty bearers and perpetrators of attacks to education

Whilst all parties to the conflict have occupied and attacked schools, a shift has taken place amongst Taliban fighters, where previous direction recommending attacks on schools and teachers have been reversed and the Layha code of conduct has been updated to remove this guidance. This shift has opened up more available opportunities to engage meaningfully with armed actors around protection of education from attacks. NRC must take advantage of this opportunity and seek to engage with armed actors in order to identify solutions to better protect education.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This action must be done simultaneously with increased engagement and advocacy with the government, who despite being one of the first signatories to the Safe Schools Declaration, has made limited progress to tackle attacks on education. Strengthening relationships with duty bearers is essential to effectively compel them to uphold the declaration and take action to protection education against attack. “

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Community centres for basic education, transition to formal education and parent-teacher meetings

The problem: Children are unable to attend school because they have to work long hours, either to earn money or in the home

Recommendation for NRC: Use community-based education to accommodate the pressures on children’s time and as a transition to full-time schooling

Community spaces should be used for reduced-hours basic education, psychosocial support and life-skills coaching, which has the potential to benefit both in-school and out-of-school children. Those working full time said they were unable to commit to an entire morning or afternoon of education, and parents who feel caught between their child’s education and the need for extra income may be more receptive to them attending school if it were only for an hour or two each day or on certain days of the week. Reduced hours’ education offer a more realistic opportunity for families who feel they have no option other than to send their children out to work in order to survive.

It is also common for children who have never been in education to feel intimidated by the idea of school, or uninterested and unmotivated. Community spaces that offer basic literacy and numeracy classes would help to introduce children to education by beginning with short, informal classes.

The goal of community-based education should be to familiarise children with the concept of schooling and learning to prepare them and their parents for their transfer to an ALP centre or EiE school for full-time education. In the interim, children should be able to meet their future teachers, become more familiar with the school environment and generally take gentle steps toward more regular education. Teachers should also spend time with parents, familiarising them with the classes and initiating informal sensitisation sessions, including school visits.

The problem: Parents do not see the value of their children's education, particularly for girls

Recommendation for NRC: Use community spaces for social mobilisation

Teachers tend to have relatively little interaction with parents, despite awareness of parents' lack of support for education, particularly for girls, little is being done to alter people's mindset, which is based on deep-seated cultural norms. Regular meetings and workshops with parents should be organised to encourage understanding on the importance and value of education and to discuss perceptions about girls' schooling in particular. By holding these sessions in the same community centres that provide basic education could also expose parents gently to the benefits of schooling for their children.

The problem: Distance to school and overcrowded classes

Recommendation for NRC: Partner EiE schools with community centres to run classes

For children who have far to travel or who go to overcrowded schools, linking EiE schools to a "sister" community space could help to create more education opportunities closer to home and with more space to learn.

5.2 CHILD PROTECTION RISKS IN THE COMMUNITY

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Integrate the Recovery Box and the Better Learning Programme in schools and community spaces

The problem: Many children are traumatised by their experiences of conflict

Recommendation for NRC: Recovery Box training for all teachers in schools and community centres

NRC's Recovery Box covers the five principles of recovery to help children assimilate their trauma and realise their full potential. It includes child-friendly communication, psychological first aid and recreational activities. The basic Recovery Box training package equips teachers with the skills and knowledge to respond appropriately to children in distress and introduce classroom activities that help to strengthen social networks and improve wellbeing.

The Recovery Box should be integrated into all education programmes, so that children are able to learn in a safe, inclusive environment that is conducive to their recovery and wellbeing. The training package encourages teachers to make time for play, socialising and identifying and coping with symptoms of stress. It also includes a basic package for NRC staff, so that they are able to support teachers in implementing, adapting and expanding the Recovery Box, responding to the individual and unique needs of their students.

Recommendation for NRC: Expand the Better Learning Programme

The Better Learning Programme is an essential element of the Recovery Box, and is covered in the latter's full training package. It provides psychosocial support for children affected by conflict and displacement. It takes place in schools and is delivered weekly by trained teachers who support children in gaining the skills they need to calm and self-regulate, empowering them to change their own situation and recover from trauma. The programme also works with parents to increase awareness about the importance of psychosocial issues and encourage them to support their children at home.

NRC should implement the Better Learning Programme across schools in all locations where children present psychosocial symptoms to improve their resilience and capacity to learn, and reduce stress and the long-term effects of psychological trauma.

The problem: Children face numerous risks on the way to school

Recommendation for NRC: Equip parents and children to identify and respond to risks

Both children and parents identified a number of serious risks en route to school, including kidnapping, landmines, harassment and road accidents. Life-skills training should be provided to help children recognise and protect themselves from these risks by increasing their awareness and helping them to identify who and what can support them when they are in danger.

Input should include teaching children how to cross a road safely, and regular discussions in class about risks such as kidnapping. These should encourage children to be alert and aware of the security situation, which areas are dangerous, what might make them a target, how to react if approached and who to turn to if they hear a rumour or threat.

Encouraging children to talk to their parents, teachers and community leaders about issues such as harassment would help them feel more comfortable in voicing their concerns. Life-skills training is more effective if parents are also involved, so that they too understand the risks their children face and are able to come up with and deploy practical solutions to keep them safe.

Life-skills training is an important part of the Recovery Box and can be integrated into both schools and community spaces.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Strengthen community based efforts to involve the community in identifying risks to children and establishing risk mitigation strategies

The problem: Children face numerous risks on the way to school and inside of school

Recommendation for NRC: Introduce regular community meetings which focus on identifying risks to children at the community level and establishing risk mitigation strategies to keep children safe, particularly with regards to the Oslo Safe School Declaration and related technical guidelines

Recommendation for Stakeholders: Commitment from EiE WG partners and CPiE SC partners to coordinating and strengthening relationships between communities and different education actors

Regular community meetings are essential to ensure durable solutions to lack of education and child protection risks. Involving the community in the development of the schools' facilities, education events and celebrations would strengthen community support and engagement, and ensure that NRC and other education actors are eventually able to exit when the community takes ownership of its children's education.

Schools are in accessible, well-known locations and provide an ideal space for parent-teacher associations and community meetings. They should be used for structured meetings and workshops where communities can come together to discuss recent risks and come up with ways of keeping children safe. led by the needs and suggestions of community members.

Involving parents, elders and children in the process would also provide opportunities for risk mapping and strengthen community autonomy. Guided by trained education staff, such events would also be good opportunities for sensitisation about the importance of education, particularly for girls.

Other EiE actors will also need to coordinate to ensure a consistent community response that works together to identify community risks and needs and respond appropriately to keep children safe.

Recommendation: Introduce a "walking school bus"

To reduce the number of children, particularly girls, who face harassment in the community, arrangements should be made for them to travel in groups, accompanied by a respected community member. Connections need to be fostered with such figures and encourage them to walk alongside children on their way to school. A "walking school bus" would also demonstrate community support for their education through the public endorsement of respected members of the community.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

Identify a referral response for child protection risks and psychosocial needs

The problem: Children are exposed to domestic violence and harmful labour

Recommendation for NRC: Support the CPiE SC to identify referral partners for child protection risks

Recommendation for Stakeholders: Complete child protection actor mapping and develop a safe and timely referral pathway for child protection cases

Throughout the country there are very few child protection actors able to take on cases, so even when teachers and NRC staff identify child protection cases they rarely have anyone to refer them to. CPAN is active throughout Afghanistan but currently has little capacity and few resources so are often unable to respond to cases. The CPiE cluster should determine a safe and timely referral pathway and identify the role CPAN plans within that. NRC should advocate with UNICEF to increase CPAN's capacity and reach so it can respond to the child protection concerns that teachers face on a daily basis.

Once the system has been strengthened, teachers should be trained in sensitive referrals. In the interim, NRC should clearly outline the need to refer child protection cases to the child protection coordinator and protection advisor so that children at risk can be responded to quickly and safely.

5.3 CHILD PROTECTION GAPS IN NRC SCHOOLS

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Upgrade classrooms and improve school selection criteria

The problem: Lack of recreational spaces, and poor infrastructure and classroom environments

Recommendation for NRC: Establish minimum standards for NRC schools and ensure vital upgrades in the next 6 – 12 months

Recommendation for Stakeholders: Shelter, WASH and EiE clusters to collaborate in advocating for increased allocation of funds to EiE projects, to ensure that learning environments are safe and child-friendly. Donors and pooled funds to provide more flexibility in terms of inclusion of recreational space and safer building structures.

Neither ALP centres nor EiE schools meet the standard for child-friendly environments, and they are not conducive to children's recovery and wellbeing. NRC's education team should revise the selection criteria for ALP centres to ensure that all sites are in a good state of repair and free of risks, that they have adequate perimeter walls and enough space for children to play and take breaks, and that classrooms have windows and are bright and well lit. This will have funding implications and therefore NRC must work with the relevant clusters to ensure that all actors are consistent in their donor approach, so that safe and child friendly structures are prioritised within education funding applications.

Permission should also be sought from landlords to upgrade existing sites by painting the walls, fixing windows and repairing structural damage. Involving children in painting murals would be an excellent way of improving both the school environment and their psychosocial wellbeing, and would increase a sense ownership so that children feel responsible for keeping the facilities clean and well looked after.

NRC needs to strengthen community relationships, encouraging communities to become more involved on the design, building and funding of learning centres.

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RECOMMENDATION 8:

Greater emphasis on including children with disabilities

The problem: Children with disabilities tend to be excluded from education

Recommendation for NRC: Improve selection criteria to actively include children with disabilities in NRC's education programmes

Recommendation for Stakeholders: APC, CPiE SC and EiE WG to develop guidelines on inclusion of children with disabilities within EiE in Afghanistan and identify referral partners who specialise in education for children with disabilities.

NRC should review the beneficiary selection criteria for its schools to ensure that all children, regardless of their disability, ethnicity, language or gender are included. In accordance with NRC's mandate, education staff should reach out to the most vulnerable to ensure they are not excluded from education programmes. The relevant clusters should also identify referral partners who are able to provide education for children with disabilities or special education needs.

When conducting initial community assessments for new schools and programmes, NRC should actively seek out children with additional vulnerabilities who may be missing out on their education. Education staff should conduct thorough needs assessments to understand vulnerability in the area by speaking to community elders, families and children, and respond accordingly.

Schools should also be made accessible for children with reduced mobility, including ramps at the entrances to classrooms, and equipped with materials for children with visual and speech impairments such as large-print textbooks and separate writing materials.

RECOMMENDATION 9:

Upgrade school WASH facilities

The problem: Lack of WASH facilities and hygiene information

Recommendation for NRC: Review WASH infrastructure of all EiE-assisted schools, and ensure vital upgrades as practicable in the next 6-12 months

Recommendation for Stakeholders: EiE WG and WASH Cluster to provide localised guidance on minimum

- WASH standards in EiE operations
- Donors and pooled funds to provide more flexibility in terms of inclusion of WASH infrastructure support in EiE operations
- Ministry of Education to abstain from financial penalties when calculating

All schools should be reviewed to ensure they have enough gender-specific latrines and hand-washing facilities with good-hygiene messaging, and that they are in working order with roofs and locks, the lack of the latter being a protection risk. WASH facilities should be monitored regularly to ensure that they are repaired promptly when necessary, and that more are added if needs be as student numbers increase. Adequate WASH facilities should be in place at new facilities before classes begin.

Collaboration between relevant clusters is essential to ensure that all education actors are meeting the minimum standards for WASH. A commitment must be made from education partners to include allocation for WASH within schools within all funding proposals.

6 ANNEXES

ANNEX I: OBSERVATION TOOL

Topic	No.	Observation question	Response
Community observations			
Children in the community			
1.1		Street working children observed in the area	Number of girls ☐ Number of boys ☐
1.2		Prevalence of children with disabilities	Number of girls ☐ Number of boys ☐
Security			
2.1		Signs of landmines or mine removal teams	Mine removal ☐ Sign of landmines ☐
2.2		Checkpoints observed	None ☐ Few ☐ Many ☐
2.3		Shooting /explosions heard	None ☐ Once ☐ Regularly ☐
2.4		Military forces observed	None ☐ Few ☐ Many ☐
Facilities			
3.1		Medical facility nearby	Yes ☐ No ☐ Distance in km from school ☐
3.2		Number of and type of schools in the area	Government ☐ NGO ☐ Madrasas ☐
Education facility observations			
Building and site damage /risk			
4.1		Damage of surrounding walls	Non-existent or destroyed ☐ Severely damaged ☐ Damaged ☐
4.2		Damage of school building	Destroyed ☐ Severely damaged ☐ Damaged ☐

Topic	No.	Observation question	Response
4.3	Dangers in school grounds		Open holes in the ground ☐ Spikes, glass or sharp metal ☐ Trip hazard ☐ Other ☐
4.4	Bullets, weapons or UXO in the area		Yes ☐ No ☐ War remnant found.....
Classrooms			
5.1	How many classrooms are there in this school?		Number of classrooms ☐
5.2	How many students are in each classroom?		Number of students ☐
5.3	How many classes taking place in each classroom?		Number of classrooms with multiple classes ☐
5.4	Are any of the functioning classrooms being held in temporary structures?		Yes ☐ No ☐ Type of structure ☐
5.5	Is the temperature within the classrooms acceptable for teaching		Yes ☐ No ☐ Too cold ☐ Too hot ☐
5.6	Are classes taking place outside?		Yes ☐ No ☐ How many ☐
5.7	Are classrooms missing essential materials?		Whiteboard ☐ Flipchart ☐ Desk ☐ Teaching aids ☐
WASH			
6.1	Does this school have access to a source of safe water within/near to the school compound?		Yes ☐ No ☐ Distance ☐
6.2	How many functioning latrines or toilets are there at this school?		Number ☐
6.3	Are there separate latrines/toilet facilities?		male and female students? ☐ teachers and students? ☐ male and female teachers? ☐
6.4	Are latrines clean/sanitary?		Yes ☐ No ☐
6.5	Are any of the latrines accessible for people with disabilities?		Yes ☐ No ☐
6.6	Are there locks on the inside of latrine doors?		Yes ☐ No ☐
6.7	Are hand-washing facilities available at or near the latrines?		Yes ☐ No ☐
6.8	Are there hand washing education materials visible?		Yes ☐ No ☐
Health and PSS			
7.1	How far is the nearest health facility from this school/learning space?		Distance ☐
7.2	Does the school/learning space have basic first aid facilities?		Yes ☐ No ☐
7.3	Does this school have a school counsellor or identified person to provide counselling and guidance for learners?		Yes ☐ No ☐
7.4	Does the school have a space for recreation within the compound of the school?		Yes ☐ No ☐

Topic	No.	Observation question	Response
Teaching and student behaviour			
Risk caused by teachers			
8.1	Are any classes unattended?		Yes ☐ No ☐
8.2	Do male staff teach male students?		Yes ☐ No ☐
8.3	Do female staff teach female students		Yes ☐ No ☐
8.4	Observation of harm caused to children		Violence ☐ Shouting/insulting ☐ Humiliation ☐ Pointing at or laughing at ☐ Other ☐
Student profile			
9.1	Do any children from vulnerable or at-risk groups attend this school?		Children with disabilities ☐ Children without a parent or guardian ☐ Married under the age of 16 ☐ Over-age children ☐ Pregnant learners or young mothers ☐ Minority ethnic or religious groups ☐ Returnee students ☐ Displaced students ☐ Former combatants ☐
9.2	Mother tongue of students		Majority ☐ Some ☐ Very few ☐
9.3	Language of teaching		☐

ANNEX II: FGD QUESTIONS

CHILDREN

Introduction

Hello my name is (.....). I work for NRC and my job is to keep children safe and support them to go to school. I want to hear from you about your experiences so we can try and make education safer for children like you. There's no need to feel worried, there's no right or wrong answer, I just want to hear about your opinions and experiences. If there are any questions that you don't feel comfortable with, please let me know. You don't have to answer any questions you don't want to, there's no pressure at all.

Let's start with some introductions, could you tell me your names and hold you are?

- Could you tell me where you were born and if you're from this village or somewhere else?
- Why did you leave your home?
- Could you tell me a bit more about that experience?
- Did you witness that with your own eyes?
- That must have been so scary for you? Do you still feel scared about these things now?
- Do you ever see these images from before in your mind now?
- Do you ever have trouble sleeping or have bad dreams because of these experiences?
- What about now? Do you feel safe here in this community?
- What are you scared might happen in this community?
- What are some of the other challenges for children here in this community?
- What are some of the challenges for your parents?
- Do any of you work to support them?
- *(If not already mentioned previously)* Are any of you in school?
- *(If working and at school)* How do you manage working and being at school at the same time?
- Why do you think boys/girls might not be able to go to school?
- What is your school like?
- What happens if anyone misbehaves or is late in your school? How do your teachers respond?
- Do you think children see a lot of violence in their homes?
- What kind of violence do you see in your home?
- Sometimes kids get harassed or people say hurtful or mean things to them. Has this happened to you? Could you tell me about it?
- Sometimes kids get pushed around, hit or beaten up by people. Has this happened to you? Could you tell me about it?
- Do you ever have to do things you don't want to do?
- What happens if you say you don't want to do them?
- For girls only – what age do girls normally get married here?
- If you were in charge of making children safe, what would you do?

Thank you so much for giving up your time to talk to me and for being so honest and open with me, I feel really lucky to have heard your stories and experiences.

- Has anybody ever asked you questions like this before?
- How did it feel for you to be asked these questions? And to answer them?

Closing

Thank you so much for sharing so much with us today. It was a pleasure to listen to you and an honour to be a part of your experiences. If you have any questions, please do let us know.

PARENTS

Introductions

Hello my name is (.....). Thank you so much for taking the time to chat to me today. I really appreciate it. I work for NRC and my job is to support children to access education, so we want to speak to you to find out a bit more around the challenges for children accessing school. We would love to find out about your experiences and see if there are areas we need to improve within the programme.

Could we start with some introductions? Could you tell me your names, where you are from originally and how long you have been here in this community? If you want to add anything else please feel free.

1. What made you leave your old community?
2. What experiences do you have in relation to the community?
3. That must have been very scary for you, did your children witness a lot of conflict?
4. Do you think your children are still affected by the things they saw?
5. Have you noticed your children cry a lot, feel very angry or struggle to sleep at night?
6. Do you feel safe in this community now?
7. What do you think are the main challenges for your children in this community?
8. Are they in school?
9. If not why not?
10. When they are not in school, what do they do?
11. How do your children support your family?
12. How important do you think education is for your children and your family right now?
13. What do you think are the main barriers for children accessing education?
14. Do you feel safe when your children are at school?
15. Is their journey to school safe?
16. Do you think your children get treated well at school?
17. What are the main challenges for you as a parent?
18. Do you see any children misbehaving in this community?
19. How do they misbehave?
20. What do you think is the best way to discipline children when they misbehave?
21. What do you hope for, for your child's future?
22. What can we do to better support children and their future?

Closing

Thank you so much for sharing so much with us today. It was a privilege to hear your opinions and experiences. I would like to leave some space now for if you have any questions or anything you'd like to add?

Thank you once again for sharing with us today. If you have any questions, please do let us know.

TEACHERS

Introductions

Hello my name is (). Thank you so much for taking the time to chat to me today. I really appreciate it. I work for NRC and my job is to support children to access education, so we want to speak to you to find out a bit more around the challenges for children accessing school. We would love to find out about your experiences and see if there are areas we need to improve within the programme.

Could we start with some introductions? Could you tell me your names and what age you teach? If you want to add anything else please feel free.

Main questions

a. What do you think are the main barriers for children here accessing education?

b. Who might stop them from accessing education?

c. What do children who aren't in school do?

d. Do you work with children with disabilities or special needs?

e. Do you have many IDPs/returnees in your class?

f. What experiences have they had?

g. Have you noticed any children who appear very upset, angry or tired all the time? Or any children who struggle to be with other children or fight a lot?

h. What is the drop out rate of children accessing the programme?

i. What do you think are the main reasons children may drop out of education?

j. How do you discipline children when they misbehave?

k. Do you think children see a lot of violence in their family home?

l. Are there any risks to children you can think of either on their way to school or in school?

m. Are you worried about recruitment/child marriage?

n. What do you think are the main dangers to children's wellbeing in this community?

o. What support do you get as a teacher?

p. What is the biggest challenge for you as a teacher?

The remaining questions will be based on the teachers answers – their interaction with parents, attitudes to education and psychosocial in the community, children's experiences etc

Closing

Thank you so much for sharing so much with us today. It was a privilege to hear your opinions and experiences. I would like to leave some space now for if you have any questions or anything you'd like to add?

Thank you once again for sharing with us today. If you have any questions, please do let us know.

ANNEX III: QUESTIONNAIRE

CHILDREN

*** 1. Respondent name**

*** 2. Location**

*** 3. Respondent gender**

- ○ Male
- ○ Female

*** 4. Respondent age**

*** 5. How many people are in your family?**

*** 6. Who is the head of your household?**

- ○ Father
- ○ Mother
- ○ Grandparent
- ○ Uncle
- ○ Older sibling
- ○ Myself

*** 7. How many brothers do you have and what age are they?**

- ○ 0 – 1 years
- ○ 1 – 4 years
- ○ 5 – 9 years
- ○ 10 – 15 years
- ○ 16 – 17 years

*** 8. How many sisters do you have and what age are they?**

- ○ 0 – 1 years
- ○ 1 – 4 years
- ○ 5 – 9 years
- ○ 10 – 15 years
- ○ 16 – 17 years

*** 9. Do any of your siblings have a disability?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

*** 10. Are they attending school?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

*** 11. What is your place of origin?**

*** 12. Who is currently working in your family and providing your family with income?**

- ☐ Father
- ☐ Mother
- ☐ Uncle
- ☐ Brother
- ☐ Sister

How many brothers and/or sisters?

*** 13. What was the main reason for displacement?**

- ☐ Natural disaster
- ☐ Armed conflict
- ☐ Intimidation and harassment by NSAGs
- ☐ Intimidation and harassment by police/ government
- ☐ Inter-tribal fighting
- ☐ Kidnapping/abduction
- ☐ Rocket shelling
- ☐ Other (please specify)

*** 14. Are you working?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

*** 15. What is your job?**

*** 16. What is your weekly/monthly wage?**

*** 17. Were you previously working in your place of origin?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

What was the reason you began working in your current location? / What was the reason you stopped working when you moved to your current location?

*** 18. Do you currently regularly attend school? If so is it:**

- ☐ Government school
- ☐ Private school
- ☐ Madrasa
- ☐ NRC school
- ☐ No school

19. What is the reason you are not attending government school?

*** 20. Were you studying in your previous location?**

- ☐ Government school
- ☐ Private school
- ☐ Madrasa
- ☐ NRC school
- ☐ No school

*** 21. What is the reason that you attended school in your previous location but do not attend school now / What is the reason why you did not attend school in your previous location, but you are attending school now?**

*** 22. Are your siblings regularly attending school?**

- ○ All of my siblings are attending school
- ○ My brothers are attending school but not my sisters
- ○ My sisters are attending school but not my brothers
- ○ One of my siblings is attending school but not all of them
- ○ Two of my siblings are attending school but not all of them
- ○ None of my siblings are attending school apart from me

*** 23. What is the main reason you or your sibling are not able to go to school?**

- ☐ Working
- ☐ Helping at home
- ☐ Long distance to school
- ☐ Overcrowded classrooms
- ☐ Security/violence concerns on the way to school
- ☐ Fear of violence inside of school
- ☐ Harassment/bullying
- ☐ Parents don't believe in the value of education
- ☐ Language of curriculum/teaching
- ☐ Quality of teaching
- ☐ Cost of stationary
- ☐ Lack of gendered facilities
- ☐ Lack of proper WASH facilities
- ☐ Disability
- ☐ Other (please specify)

*** 24. Have your parents become more or less supportive of your education since your displacement?**

- ○ More
- ○ Less

How?

*** 25. Are there children who have more or less access to education – What groups of children are most excluded?**

*** 26. Why are you able to go to school, but not your sibling(s)?**

*** 27. Can you understand the language of teaching at school?**

- ○ Not at all
- ○ A little
- ○ Mostly understand
- ○ Completely understand

*** 28. Are there children with disabilities in your school?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

*** 29. Do you see children in your community with disabilities who are not attending school?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

*** 30. How long in minutes is the walk to school?**

*** 31. What is the biggest risk to you on the journey to and from school?**

- ☐ Landmines
- ☐ Kidnapping/abduction
- ☐ Harassment from community members
- ☐ Harassment from NSAGs
- ☐ Robbery
- ☐ Drug users
- ☐ Armed clashes
- ☐ Other (please specify)

*** 32. How often does this risk or other risks prevent you from attending school?**

- ○ Most days
- ○ Once a week or more
- ○ Once a month or more
- ○ Less than once a month
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Never

*** 33. What are the main concerns for children whilst they are at school?**

*** 34. Has your school – current and/or in place of origin ever been at risk of security issues?**

- ☐ Verbal or written threats from NSAG
- ☐ Active shooting inside or very close to the school building
- ☐ Attack on the school building
- ☐ UXO or landmine on the school site or very close to
- ☐ Military occupation
- ☐ Closure due to conflict

*** 35. Do you know of children working with or being used by armed forces or groups in your community or near to the school?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

How many children?

*** 36. How many functioning latrines are there at your school?**

*** 37. Are there separate latrines for girls and boys?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

*** 38. Are hand-washing facilities available at or near the latrines?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

PARENTS

*** 1. Respondent name**

2. Location

*** 3. Respondent gender**

- ○ Male
- ○ Female

*** 4. Respondent age**

*** 5. How many people are in your family?**

*** 6. Who is the head of your household?**

- ○ Father
- ○ Mother
- ○ Grandparent
- ○ Uncle
- ○ Older sibling
- ○ Myself

*** 7. How many daughters do you have and what age are they?**

- ○ 0 – 1 years
- ○ 1 – 4 years
- ○ 5 – 9 years
- ○ 10 – 15 years
- ○ 16 – 17 years

*** 8. How many sons do you have and what age are they?**

- ○ 0 – 1 years
- ○ 1 – 4 years
- ○ 5 – 9 years
- ○ 10 – 15 years
- ○ 16 – 17 years

*** 9. Do any of the children in your family have a disability?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

10. Are they attending school?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

11. If not, why not?

*** 12. What is your place of origin?**

*** 13. What was the main reason for displacement?**

- ☐ Natural disaster
- ☐ Armed conflict
- ☐ Intimidation and harassment by NSAGs
- ☐ Intimidation and harassment by police/ government
- ☐ Inter-tribal fighting
- ☐ Kidnapping/abduction
- ☐ Rocket shelling
- ☐ Other (please specify)

*** 14. Who is currently working in your family and providing your family with income?**

- ☐ Husband
- ☐ Wife
- ☐ Father
- ☐ Mother
- ☐ Other

15. What is their occupation?

*** 16. How many of your children are currently working?**

Girls 1 – 4 years

Boys 1 – 4 years

Girls 5 – 9 years

Boys 5 – 9 years

Girls 10 – 15 years

Boys 10 – 15 years

Girls 16 – 17 years

Boys 16 – 17 years

*** 17. What is the weekly or monthly wage of your children?**

*** 18. Were your children previously working in your place of origin?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

What was the reason they began working in your current location? / What was the reason they stopped working when you moved to your current location?

*** 19. Are your children regularly attending school? How many are attending?**

Girls 5 – 10 years

Boys 5 – 10 years

Girls 11 – 15 years

Boys 11 – 15 years

Girls 16 – 17 years

Boys 16 – 17 years

*** 20. What kind of school are your children attending?**

- ☐ Government school
- ☐ Private school
- ☐ Madrasa
- ☐ NRC school
- ☐ No school

*** 21. What is the reason they are not attending government school?**

*** 22. Were they studying in your previous location?**

- ☐ Government school
- ☐ Private school
- ☐ Madrasa
- ☐ NRC school
- ☐ No school

*** 23. What is the reason that they attended school in your previous location but do not attend school now / What is the reason why they did not attend school in your previous location, but they are attending school now?**

*** 24. If some of your children are attending school and others not, why is this?**

*** 25. What is the main reason your children are not attending school regularly?**

- ☐ Working
- ☐ Helping at home
- ☐ Long distance to school
- ☐ Overcrowded classrooms
- ☐ Security/violence concerns on the way to school
- ☐ Fear of violence inside of school
- ☐ Harassment/bullying
- ☐ Parents don't believe in the value of education
- ☐ Language of curriculum/teaching
- ☐ Quality of teaching
- ☐ Cost of stationary
- ☐ Lack of gendered facilities
- ☐ Lack of proper WASH facilities
- ☐ Disability
- ☐ Other (please specify)

*** 26. Has education become more or less of a priority since your displacement?**

- ○ More
- ○ Less

How?

*** 27. Are there children who have more or less access to education – What groups of children are most excluded?**

*** 28. Can your child/children understand the language of teaching at school?**

- ○ Not at all
- ○ A little
- ○ Mostly understand
- ○ Completely understand

29. Are there children with disabilities in your child's school?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

*** 30. Do you see children in your community with disabilities who are not attending school?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

*** 31. How long in minutes is the walk to school?**

*** 32. What is the biggest risk to your child on the journey to and from school?**

- ☐ Landmines
- ☐ Kidnapping/abduction
- ☐ Harassment from community members
- ☐ Harassment from NSAGs
- ☐ Robbery
- ☐ Drug users
- ☐ Armed clashes
- ☐ Other (please specify)

*** 33. How often does this risk or other risks prevent your child from attending school?**

- ☐ Most days
- ☐ Once a week or more
- ☐ Once a month or more
- ☐ Less than once a month
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

*** 34. What are the main concerns for children whilst they are at school?**

*** 35. Has your child's school – current and/ or in place of origin ever been at risk of security issues?**

- ☐ Verbal or written threats from NSAG
- ☐ Active shooting inside or very close to the school building
- ☐ Attack on the school building
- ☐ UXO or landmine on the school site or very close to
- ☐ Military occupation
- ☐ Closure due to conflict

*** 36. Do you know of children working with or being used by armed forces or groups in your community or near to the school?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

How many children?

*** 37. How many functioning latrines are there at your school?**

*** 38. Are there separate latrines for girls and boys?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

*** 39. Are hand-washing facilities available at or near the latrines?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

,TEACHERS

*** 1. Respondent name**

*** 2. Location**

*** 3. Respondent gender**

- ○ Male
- ○ Female

*** 4. Respondent age**

*** 5. Have you been displaced from your place of origin and if so why?**

- ☐ Natural disaster
- ☐ Armed conflict
- ☐ Intimidation and harassment by NSAGs
- ☐ Intimidation and harassment by police/ government
- ☐ Inter-tribal fighting
- ☐ Kidnapping/abduction
- ☐ Rocket shelling
- ☐ Other (please specify)

*** 6. How many children are there per class in your school?**

*** 7. What age do you teach?**

*** 8. Do you teach girls or boys?**

- ○ Girls
- ○ Boys
- ○ Mixed class

*** 9. How many children in your class have disabilities?**

*** 10. What is the language of your students?**

*** 11. What is the language of teaching?**

*** 12. How many children in your class are currently working?**

*** 13. What is the occupation of these children?**

*** 14. What is the weekly or monthly wage of these children?**

*** 15. Were these children previously working in your place of origin?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

16. What is the reason these children are working?

*** 17. Are there children who have more or less access to education – What groups of children are most excluded?**

*** 18. Do children in your school attend other kinds of school?**

- ☐ Government school
- ☐ Private school
- ☐ Madrasa
- ☐ NRC school
- ☐ No school

*** 19. What is the reason they are not attending government school?**

*** 20. Do all children from the same family attend your school? If not, why do some children attend school and not their siblings?**

*** 21. What is the main reason why children are not attending school at all?**

- ☐ Working
- ☐ Helping at home
- ☐ Long distance to school
- ☐ Overcrowded classrooms
- ☐ Security/violence concerns on the way to school
- ☐ Fear of violence inside of school
- ☐ Harassment/bullying
- ☐ Parents don't believe in the value of education
- ☐ Language of curriculum/teaching
- ☐ Quality of teaching
- ☐ Cost of stationary
- ☐ Lack of gendered facilities
- ☐ Lack of proper WASH facilities
- ☐ Disability
- ☐ Other (please specify)

*** 22. What is the main reason children are absent from school?**

- ☐ Leaving to work/help at home
- ☐ Market day
- ☐ Caring for a sibling/parent
- ☐ Long distance to school
- ☐ Overcrowded classes
- ☐ Security/Violence concerns
- ☐ Fear of violence at school
- ☐ Harassment/bullying
- ☐ Parents don't believe in value of education
- ☐ Children not interested in school
- ☐ Lack of gendered facilities
- ☐ Lack of proper WASH facilities
- ☐ Disability
- ☐ Other (please specify)

*** 23. Do you see children in your community with disabilities who are not attending school?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

*** 24. Are there children who have less access to education? What groups of children are most excluded?**

*** 25. How long in minutes is the walk to school for your students?**

*** 26. What is the biggest risk to children on the journey to and from school?**

- ☐ Landmines
- ☐ Kidnapping/abduction
- ☐ Harassment from community members
- ☐ Harassment from NSAGs
- ☐ Robbery
- ☐ Drug users
- ☐ Armed clashes
- ☐ Other (please specify)

*** 27. How often does this risk or other risks prevent children from attending school?**

- ○ Most days
- ○ Once a week or more
- ○ Once a month or more
- ○ Less than once a month
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Never

*** 28. Are there areas of landmines on the journey to school? If so, where?**

*** 29. What are the main concerns for children whilst they are at school?**

*** 30. Has the school ever been at risk of security issues?**

- ☐ Verbal or written threats from NSAG
- ☐ Active shooting inside or very close to the school building
- ☐ Attack on the school building
- ☐ UXO or landmine on the school site or very close to
- ☐ Military occupation
- ☐ Closure due to conflict

*** 31. Have any schools in your current location closed due to the conflict? If so, how many?**

*** 32. Do you know of children working with or being used by armed forces or groups in your community or near to the school?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

How many children?

*** 33. How many functioning latrines are there at your school?**

*** 34. Are there separate latrines for girls and boys?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

*** 35. Are hand-washing facilities available at or near the latrines?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

*** 36. Which service is most needed in your school?**

- ☐ Psychosocial support
- ☐ Landmine education
- ☐ Community engagement
- ☐ Parental involvement
- ☐ Classes/skills for parents
- ☐ Recreational activities
- ☐ Other (please specify)
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