

How food security impacts children and their protection

Evidence from the most impacted contexts and recommendations for urgent humanitarian action



Today's Agenda

Opening Remarks

Impact on Children - Findings from Evidence Review

Voice of Children on Impact of Food Security

Q&A Part 1

**Country-based Case Studies - Somalia, Myanmar and
Egypt**

Key Recommendations

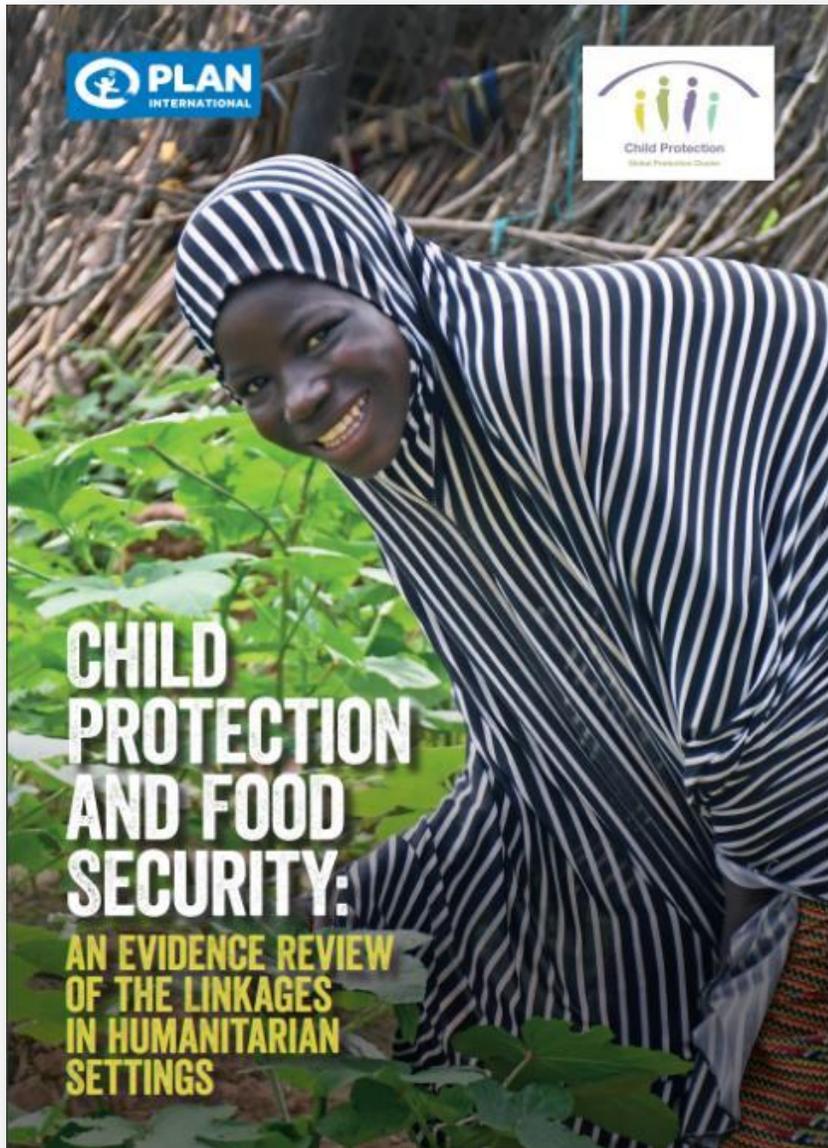
Q&A Part 2

Closing Remarks



Evidence Review

Child Protection and Food Security: A Review of Linkages in Humanitarian Settings



Available in EN, FR, SP, AR

Initiative: Enhancing Field Support and Coordination between Child Protection and Food Security

Goal: Strengthen cooperation between child protection and food security sectors to develop integrated approaches to address children's protection and well-being.

Approach: Inter-agency, technical support

Duration: January 2022 – January 2023 (Phase I)

Location: Global, focus in 3 country contexts (Central African Republic, North-East Nigeria and South Sudan)





Unmet basic needs, such as food, is recognized as a **universal risk factor** for harmful outcomes for children.

Previous food crises have exacerbated pre-existing child protection risks; at the same time, previously unreported issues arose.





Background and Objectives

- Research from developed contexts shows food insecurity is linked with child protection issues.
- Limited understanding of food insecurity's impact on children's protection and well-being in humanitarian contexts.
- The **objectives** of the evidence review were to examine:
 1. How does food insecurity impact child protection risks in humanitarian settings?
 2. How have child protection and food security actors worked together to achieve child protection outcomes, and what have been the results?

(1) Food insecurity is linked with **poor mental health and psychosocial distress of children and caregivers** in every region of the world.



Poorer mental health indices for women and men and parental depression and stress

Worsens child-caregiver relationships and triggers various forms of child protection risks

Children's feelings of stress, anxiety, sadness, and shame

Neglect, physical and emotional violence, peer violence, and exposure to intimate partner violence

(2) When children and families do not have enough food to eat or enough money to buy food, they may resort to **extreme coping mechanisms** in order to acquire food.



- [Family separation](#): Both caregivers and children themselves may leave home in search of food and livelihoods opportunities.
- [Child labour](#): Children's work, including hazardous labour, may be perceived as key to a family's survival.
- [Child marriage](#): May be used to lower financial burdens and have one less family member to feed. In some cases, girls may initiate marriages in order to increase their access to food.
- [Recruitment and use by armed forces and armed groups](#): Access to resources, such as food, influences both voluntary and forced recruitment of children.
- [Sexual exploitation](#): Transactional sex, sex in exchange for access for food or money to buy food, most affects adolescent girls.

(3) When children and families are **producing, searching for, or preparing food** in order to meet their food needs, children are exposed to various child protection risks.



- Child protection risks include **neglect, child labour, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, dangers and injuries, and recruitment and use by armed forces and armed groups.**
- Globally, 71% of children's labour is concentrated in agriculture, including farming, fishing, forestry, and livestock herding.
- Collecting food, water, or firewood puts children at risk of sexual violence, abduction and attacks, and other injuries.



(4) Interventions used to address food insecurity can expose children to protection risks.

- Changes in programming, such as reductions in rations or delays in distributions, are perceived as a significant source of **stress and worry** in children.
- Caregivers who participate in livelihoods programs face challenges in finding appropriate supervision for children, increasing children's risk of **neglect**. Children may replace caregivers in previous forms of employment, creating a pull-factor for **child labour**.
- Distributions can also create risks of **dangers and injuries**, **sexual exploitation**, and **discrimination**.

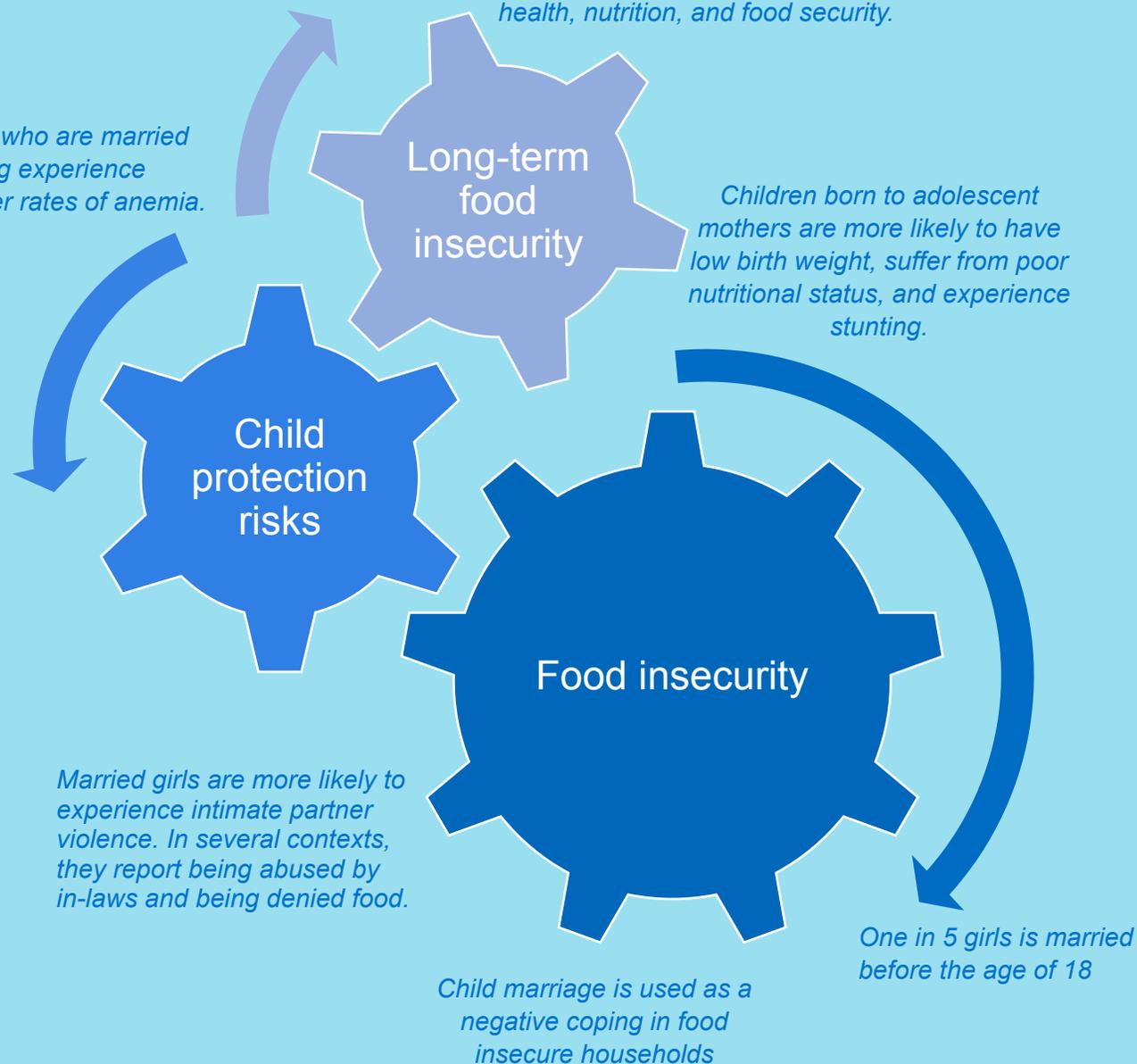
Across all contexts, children and adolescents view food security, particularly dietary diversity, as essential to their **well-being** and **living “a good life.”**

- Meeting short-term survival needs impairs children’s ability to break-out of a **cycle of vulnerability**
- Children and adolescents are **rarely consulted** and their experiences are rarely captured in food insecure contexts.
- Most data collection related to children’s food insecurity is centred on anthropometric measures of malnutrition in children below 5 years.

Girls who are married young experience higher rates of anemia.

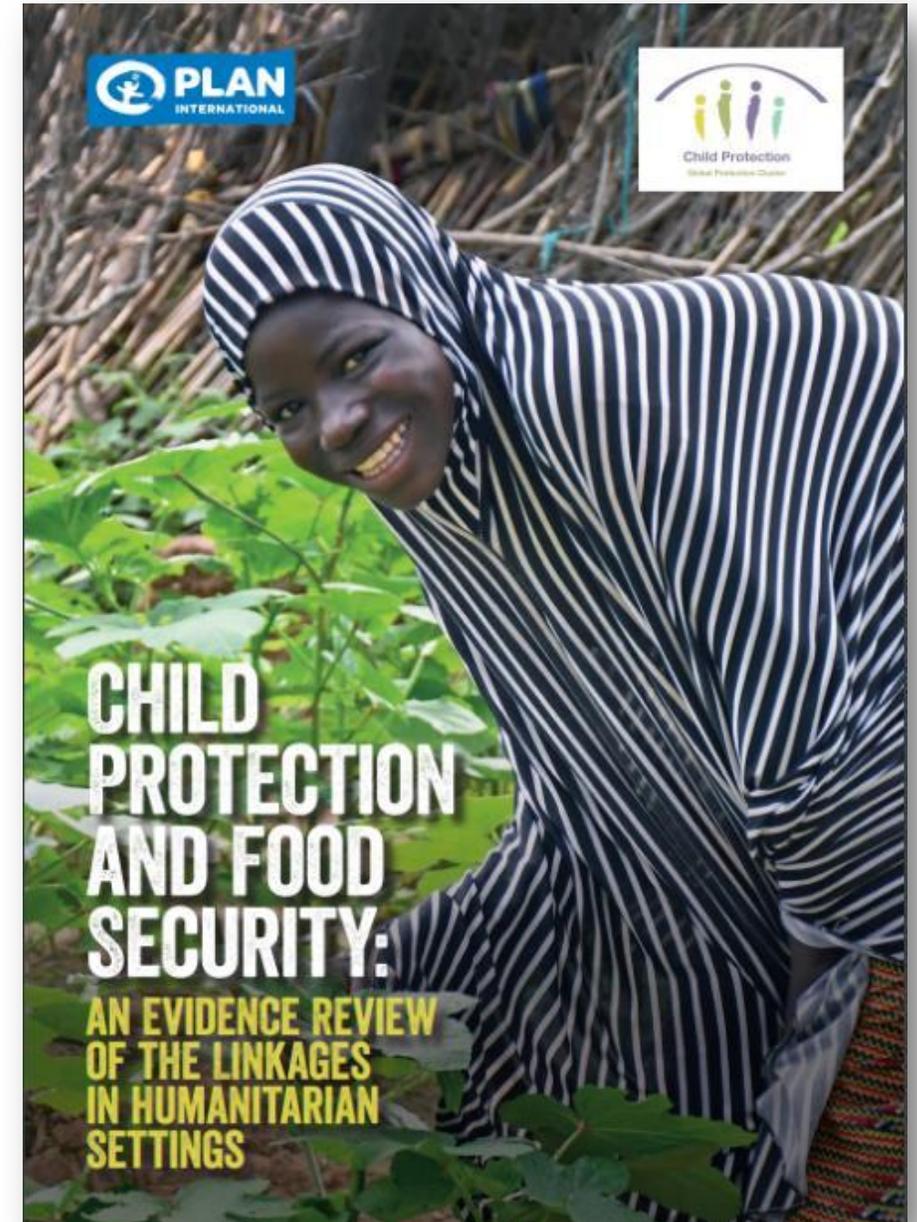
Married girls face challenges in advocating for their own access to food and lack knowledge about their own health, nutrition, and food security.

Children born to adolescent mothers are more likely to have low birth weight, suffer from poor nutritional status, and experience stunting.



Food security and child protection are both life-saving responses that can significantly improve the safety and well-being of children.

- Collaboration between child protection and food security actors remains limited and ad-hoc. Main **barriers** cited include lack of funding and lack of guidance, tools, or capacity-strengthening.
- **Good practices** include capacity-strengthening, joint development of vulnerability criteria, referral pathways, and linking family strengthening interventions
- Findings and **recommendations** include opportunities for child protection and food security actors to strengthen their collaboration across the program cycle, particularly to go beyond child protection mainstreaming to **integrated child protection and food security programming** in order to promote child protection and well-being outcomes





Thank you!

For more information: https://www.cpaor.net/ChildProtection_and_FoodSecurity



Voices of Children on Impact of Food Security

Listen to Suldana!



A displaced girl forced to work in Somalia

Listen to Suldana's friends

The experience of Suldana and her friends aligns with what has been highlighted in the report of the initiative from Plan International and the Global CP AoR.

World Vision believes in the **irreplaceable value of children's views** to make the response effective for children first and foremost.

Survey conducted in 6 West and Central African countries, on food insecurity impact on children.

Internal World Vision report on dialoguing with children from 15 countries/crises, as part of internal procedures and practices on World Vision remaining accountable to children.

Listen to Suldana's friends

The lack of affordable food is pushing children into **begging, prostitution, theft, etc.** *Niger*

We have witnessed the death of their own parents due to hunger. This leaves them extremely **vulnerable to exploitation**: we finish school, we steal, we become uncontrolled and easy to manipulate. *Central African Republic*

*“As a boy child, sometimes when i see that when some children are hungry, **they knock at other people's houses to asking for food.** I have also seen many children from my neighborhood looking for food in the garbage”.* *Angola*

Listen to Suldana's friends

House holds are not producing enough food to feed their families due to harsh weather conditions, climate change is really affecting us negatively. Parents have migrated to south africa to look for employment and this has increased **child neglect** and some children are **living alone**. The children are **exposed to sexual violence**. *Lesotho*

The common feeling among children was that many parents and caregivers were struggling to make ends meet. There has been an upsurge of children spending time on survival tasks for instance **supporting their households with cropping activities and earning income from child labor**. This unfortunately disproportionately affects the most vulnerable children. *Myanmar*

Children's Asks

Consultations with children has highlighted the need for increased collaboration to meet their various needs and for increased resource allocation for integrated response and services.

- *Reaching even **remote areas** so that the most vulnerable children could be reached;*
- *For the child protection committees to better monitor cases of child abuse and **to strengthen the channels for reporting cases** of abuse;*
- *Strengthening support for **child protection services and efforts**, because there is a lack of willingness from some governments to improve child protection;*
- *To prevent **child begging, child labor, and child marriage**;*
- *To support parents to provide for their families;*
- *To address inadequate food and lack of sustainable school feeding programs.*

A group of women in traditional Somali attire, including headscarves and patterned dresses, are sitting on the ground. A young girl in the foreground is looking towards the camera. The image has a teal overlay.

Somalia

Child Protection Famine Prevention Strategy: An Integrated Approach

SITUATION OVERVIEW

The current drought in Somalia is unprecedented. Four consecutive rainy seasons have failed, a climatic event not seen in at least 40 years.



7M

PEOPLE AFFECTED

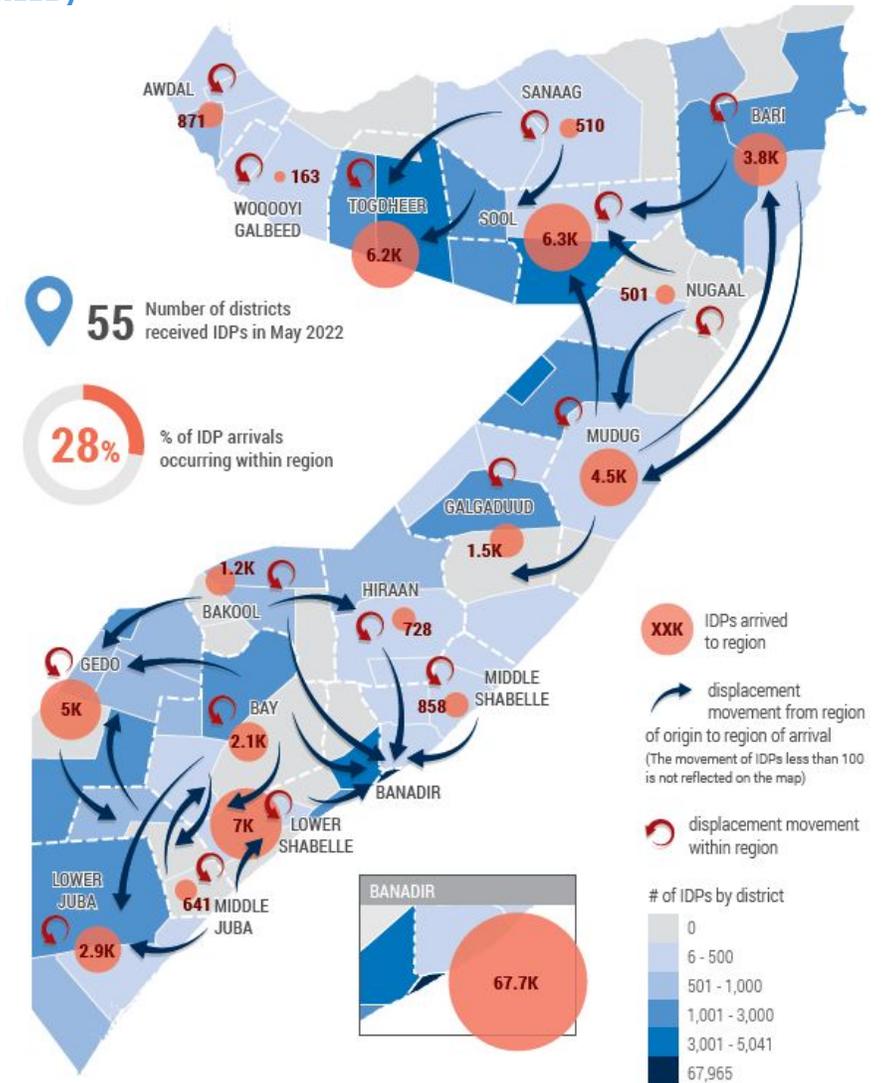


900K

INTERNALLY
DISPLACED

- **The next rainy season is also projected to underperform.** If that happens, humanitarian needs will continue increasing well into 2023.
- **Out of the 900,000 displaced, 66% of are children** (33% girls & 33% boys). 1.4 million people may be displaced by drought before the end of 2022.
- Some 213,000 people are facing catastrophic levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 5). At least 1.5 million children under 5 years of age face acute malnutrition, **including 386,400 who are likely to be severely malnourished.**
- **Humanitarians, including child protection actors, have stepped up response,** reorienting activities towards famine prevention and targeting most vulnerable people in areas of highest need.

DISPLACEMENT



IMPACT OF DROUGHT ON CHILD PROTECTION

CP RISKS & HARM

- **Mass family separation**, with number of **unaccompanied children**, increasing by 81% compared to the same period in 2021, including **child-headed households**.
- **Sexual violence** reported particularly amongst adolescent girls.
- Increase in reported case of **child marriage**.
- **Exploitative labour**, including reports of girls involved in survival sex.
- Behavioral changes of children due to increased **psychosocial distress**.
- Concerns about **possibility of increased use and recruitment of children** by non-state armed groups as a perceived coping mechanism by households.

IMPACT ON HOUSEHOLDS

- **Worsening of overall protective environment for children**.
- Observations of **negative care practices by parents and caregivers**, particularly single parents, resulting in malnutrition and other risks/effects.
- 50% of women report to have experienced **intimate partner violence** in Q1 2022 with 43% in Q1 2021 (assessment conducted in early 2022).
- **Displacement of families who are rejecting recruitment of children** by non-state armed groups in some locations.
- Safety and security concerns for families with limited safe spaces for children across all affected districts.

IMPACT ON CP SERVICES

- Existing **child protection services are overstretched** against increased CP caseloads, particularly in rural areas where humanitarian presence is limited.
- **Case management services need to be scaled-up who are at risk of and exposed to abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence** to ensure minimum standards are met and the social workforce is supported and strengthened for reach and quality.
- **Increased action on integrated referrals** together with Camp Coordination and Camp Management, Health and Nutrition particularly in scaling up within the response.
- **Safe interim care services for unaccompanied and separated children** are threatened by **negative foster care practices** used so that families can access higher assistance.
- **Increased need for specialized MHPSS services** and coordination with the MHPSS WG (including health and other actors) ongoing to strengthen services and capacity.

CHILD PROTECTION FAMINE PREVENTION STRATEGY

01

Scale case management services across all locations affected

02

Mental health and Psychosocial support services

03

Monitoring and surveillance including through Camp Coordination and Camp Management and other clusters

04

Work with Food Security & Livelihoods, Nutrition, WASH and Education sectors to integrate actions that enhance safety and protection of children

05

Strengthening capacity of service providers and advocacy to address gaps in services across prioritized states

06

Family based alternative care for unaccompanied and separated children

[Somalia: Drought Response and Famine Prevention Plan, May - December 2022 \(June 2022\) - Somalia | ReliefWeb](#) can be accessed here (see page 39 for CP component)

FAMINE PREVENTION CP RESPONSE (as of Aug 2022)


6.1M Affected
 3.8M Children Affected
 719K People Displaced

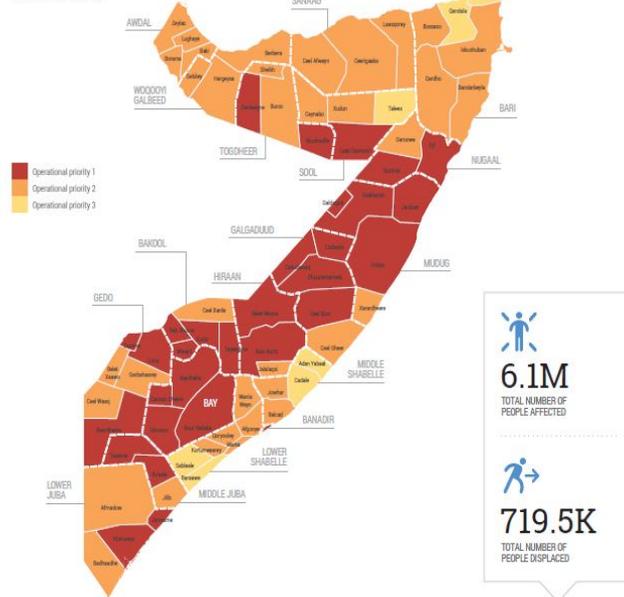

900K
 Targeted


58K Reached
 (10% of the target)


60 Districts

Operational Priority Districts

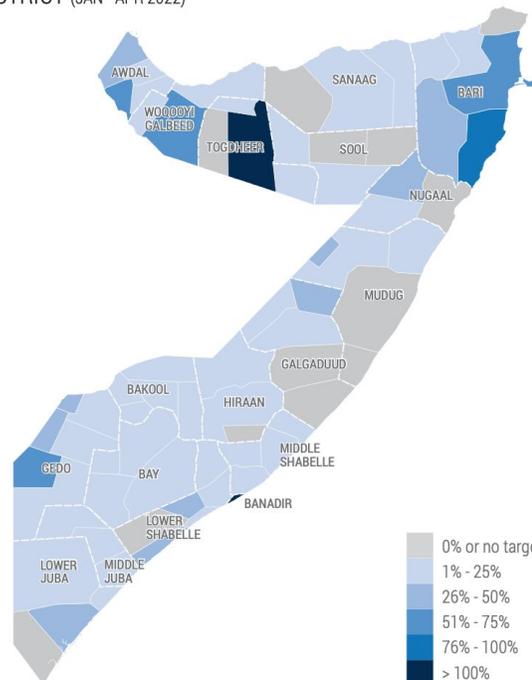
DROUGHT OPERATIONAL PRIORITY AREAS* BY DISTRICT



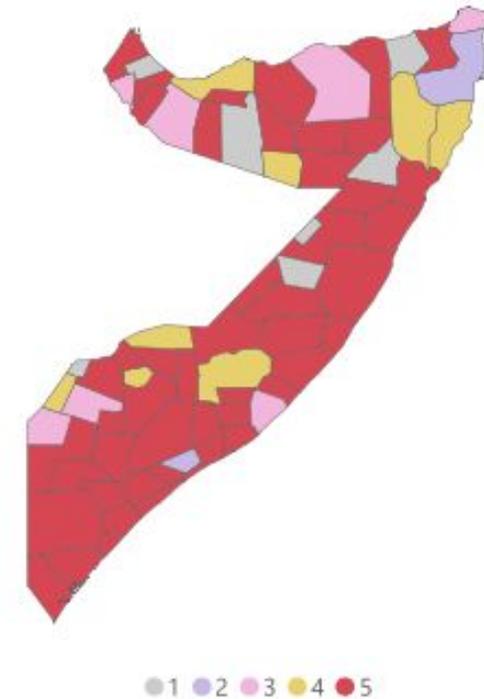
NUMBER OF DISTRICTS:
 ● OPERATIONAL PRIORITY 1: **31**
● OPERATIONAL PRIORITY 2: **36**
● OPERATIONAL PRIORITY 3: **7**

People Reached By Districts

% REACH BY DISTRICT (JAN - APR 2022)



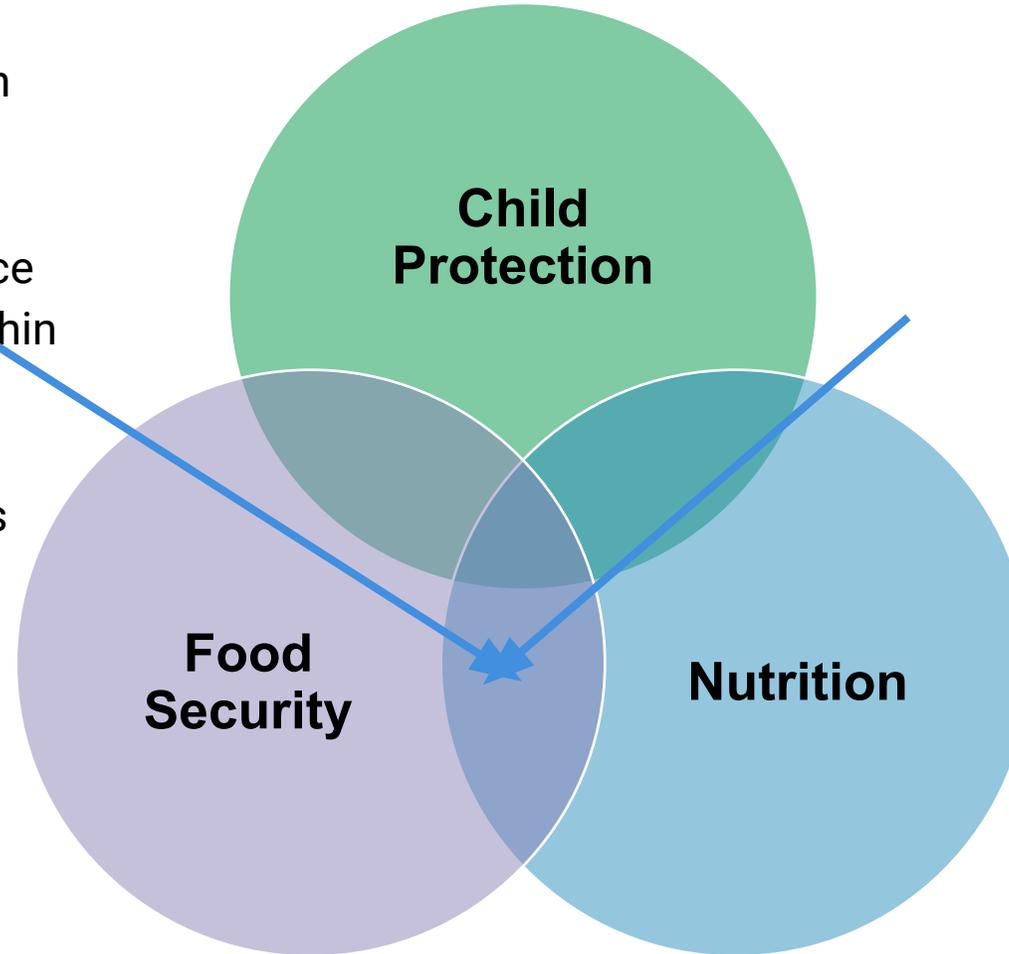
Service Gap Analysis by District



LINKAGES BETWEEN CHILD PROTECTION, FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Impact of food insecurity

- Severe and acute malnutrition amongst children
- Loss of life
- Increase of abuse and violence against children including within the home
- Loss of livelihoods
- Negative coping mechanisms for households

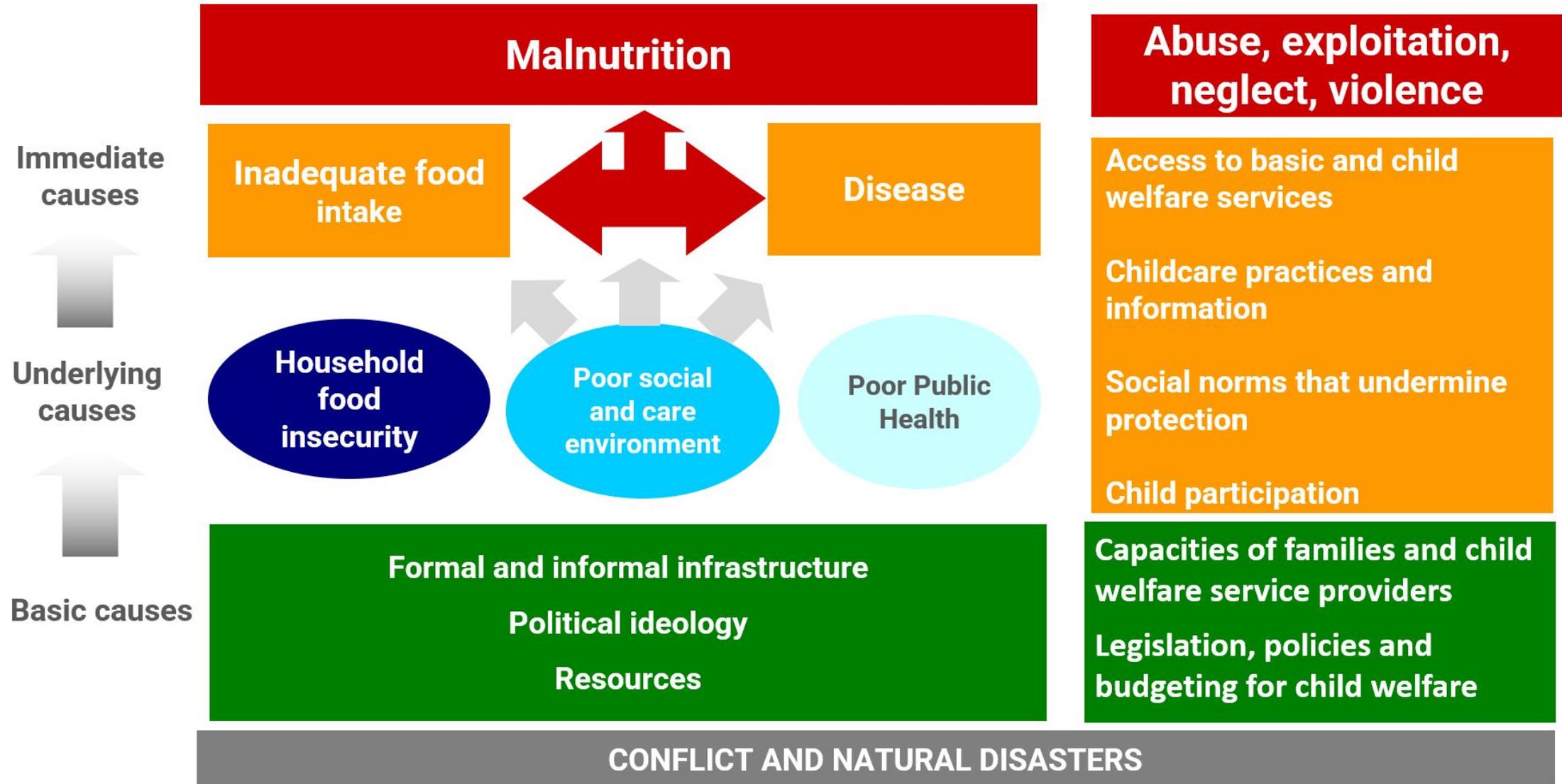


What happens when we work collaboratively

- Improved nutrition outcomes for children
- Saving of lives
- Improved child well-being and protection
- Prevention and reduction of violence and abuse against children
- Stronger protective environment for children
- Enhanced livelihood opportunities
- Fostering positive coping mechanisms for households and communities

Causes of Malnutrition & Linkages to Child Protection

Causes of malnutrition and linkages to child protection



SOMALIA CHILD PROTECTION - NUTRITION INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK AUGUST 2022



Common Objectives

- Child Protection and Nutrition actors understand their roles in enhancing the child protection and nutrition outcomes within the humanitarian response.
- Contribute to the right to life, survival and development of children and their caregivers
- Ensure adolescent/child mothers are supported throughout pregnancy to enhance their psychosocial wellbeing, child caring practices and their protection
- Ensure vulnerable children and those at risk have access to nutritional and protection services

The framework can be accessed here: [nutrition_and_child_protection_integration_framework.pdf \(humanitarianresponse.info\)](#)

Key actions in 3-year roll-out plan for the framework

- Joint CP and nutrition assessments
- Integration of identification of children at risk and referral and positive parenting in community health workers manual and IYCF counselling guide
- Training of nutrition workers on child protection, GBV and safeguarding and presence in 900 nutrition treatment sites
- Training of child protection workers on causes of malnutrition, identification and referral and establishment of child protection desks in nutrition treatment sites
- Co-location of service points e.g. child friendly spaces can be used for breastfeeding
- Dissemination of child protection referral pathways and key messages to communities on where to access services in nutrition catchment areas

Key Messages

- A holistic response to the impact of the food crises requires a rights-based approach that responds to the needs of children and their families, to avert and address immediate, medium and long-term harm and consequences.
- Child Protection and Food Security Actors have an opportunity to strengthen existing collaboration in planning and rolling out integrated approaches for drought response and famine prevention, learning from the example of collaboration between Child Protection and Nutrition in Somalia.

A photograph of a group of women sitting on the floor in a room. In the foreground, a young girl wearing a green headscarf looks directly at the camera. To her right, a woman is wearing a colorful patterned headscarf and is playing with a child's toys. Other women are visible in the background, some looking towards the camera and others looking away. The entire image has a green tint.

Myanmar

Integrated Child Protection and Food Security Programming in Rakhine State

Context and background

The Rakhine State of Myanmar is a highly complex context.

An estimated 91,000 IDPs in need of food assistance, in addition to food insecure communities.

Nearly half (49%) of the children live in poverty and 37.5% have stunted growth in Rakhine.

Food insecurity is a driver of child protection risks.

- 4.8 million people in Myanmar are in need of child protection support.
- Child protection risks driven by food insecurity and other economic factors as identified by community members and children in Rakhine:
 - Psychosocial distress in children and caregivers
 - Physical and humiliating punishment of children
 - Child labor
 - Trafficking
 - Child marriage.



Supporting Food Security through Cash Transfer for Vulnerable Girls, Women, Boys and Men IDPs in Rakhine State, Myanmar

Duration: 1 January – 31 December, 2022

Donor: WFP

Modality: Unconditional cash based transfers (CBT)

Target: All households, over 60,000 population

Location: 6 IDP camps in Sittwe Township (Khaung Doke Khar-1, Khaung Doke Khar-2, Ohn Taw Chay, Thae Chaung, Dar Paing and Say Tha Mar Gyi)

Strategic Outcome: Crisis-affected women, girls, men and boys in food insecure areas meet their food and nutrition needs all year round.

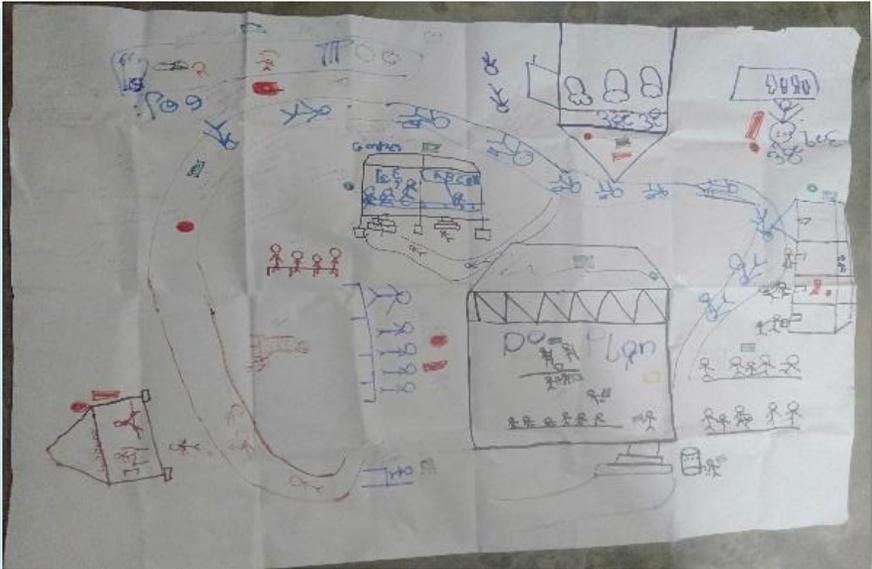


Child protection considerations – Safe delivery of cash

1. Safe Delivery



Children’s mapping of cash distributions



Training of the camp management committee on child protection

- **Training** all staff, volunteers, and associates on: safeguarding and PSEAH, CP risks and referral pathways, and psychological first aid
- Child-friendly **complaints and feedback mechanisms**
- Child protection **risk assessments** and mitigation plans
- **Consultations** with children and caregivers

Child protection considerations – Child protection outcomes



2. Child Protection Outcomes



- **Awareness raising** on child protection risks for cash beneficiaries
- **Positive parenting** sessions for parents, including self-care for caregivers
- **Life skills** and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) sessions with vulnerable adolescent girls
- Additional cash assistance for **child protection case management** and coordination with other CP actors
- **Children's participation** in assessments and monitoring
- Monitor outcome **at individual child level**
- Dedicated **child protection staff and community volunteers** for the project working in collaboration with the FS team.

Results of integrated CP-FS programming



PDM is ongoing. Initial results:

- Project staff and associates report **positive feedback** from communities
- 91% of parents and caregivers reported **decreased stress** over family income as a result of the project.
- All children either strongly agreed (50%) or agreed (50%) that since receiving cash assistance, **relationships between family members and with caregivers have improved.**
- All children either agree (85%) or strongly agree (15%) that because the family received cash assistance, parents use **less corporal punishment**
- 65% of children responded that they and their siblings get **better quality food** because of the cash their families receive

Good practices and lessons learned

- ✓ As half of food security programme beneficiaries are children, **integrated child protection and food security approaches may bring better outcomes** for both FS and CP than stand-alone sectoral programming.
- ✓ **Monitoring at individual child-level** gives insights into different outcomes of food security interventions, especially when combined CP interventions.
- ✓ **Strengthen financial support and technical resources** for child protection and food security actors, including **local actors**, to develop integrated approaches in order to promote children's holistic well-being.

Thank you



Egypt

Addressing Child Labour through Integrated
Approaches



World Food
Programme

Integrated Approach to Child Protection

WFP Egypt Country Office

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

Main Drivers Behind Child Labour in Egypt

- ❑ Child labour among 7% of children aged 5-17 (1.8 million)
- ❑ Negative coping strategy due to poverty and food insecurity
- ❑ Child Law prohibits children's work under the age of 15, but authorizes their work in seasonal professions
- ❑ Limited preventive and responsive services and weak law enforcement despite a strong child protection policy environment overall

Child protection issues due to deeply entrenched social norms:

- 90% FGM/C (decreasing)

- 6.4% child marriage of girls aged 15-17

- 93% children exposed to violent disciplinary practices

An integrated approach to mitigate the risks of child labour at the household, community and national level

Capacity building to local stakeholders

Cash transfer to families

Livelihoods support to mothers

Strengthening national systems

School digital and physical upgrades

School feeding





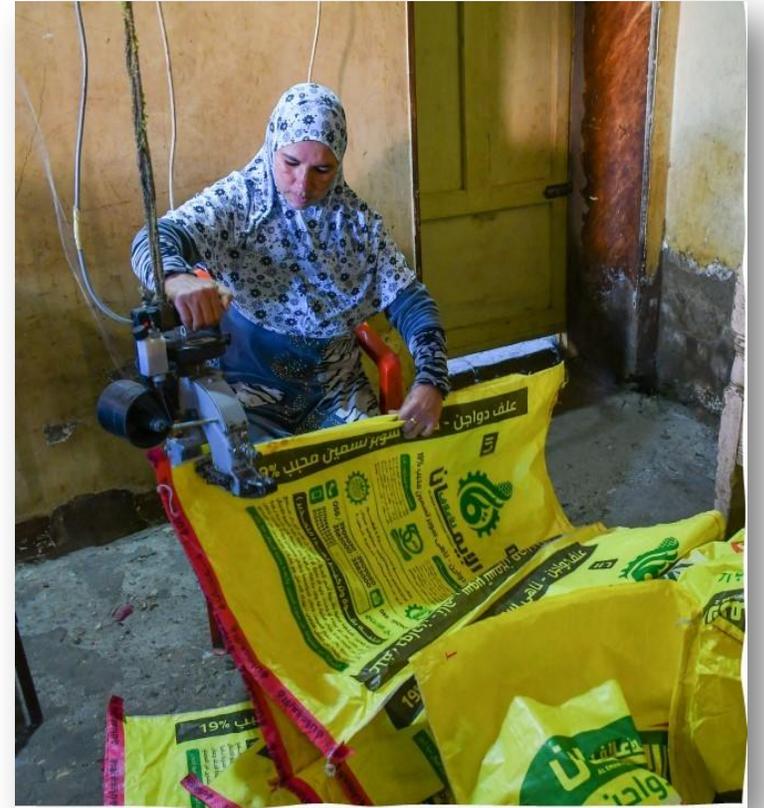
School Feeding: Cash-Based Transfers

Monthly CBT is transferred to 34,000 families of community school students to help protect them against economic shocks. Originally, this assistance is conditional to 80% school attendance and restricted to a food basket at local retail shops. Due to COVID, this is not currently applied.

Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) on Child Protection

Having the technological and physical upgrades, a community school represents a hub that provides services and awareness to the wider community, addressing issues of concern, early marriage, child labour, FGM...etc





Women Livelihoods and Economic Empowerment

Mothers of children receive capacity building and micro-loans to start income generation activities. As a result, household incomes increased with positive impact on child protection and education. Because the loans are revolving, partner NGOs can reach more women in need.



“I used to borrow money in order to be able to meet my family’s needs. But now I have my own business and instead of borrowing money, I can earn my own money,” – Sayeda Kenawi Ahmed, kiosk owner.



“I plan to expand my own small business even further to increase my income so I can continue to educate my daughter. The project helped me increase my confidence, and now I know that just because I am a woman, that does not mean I am weak! – Sumiya Abdel-Alim, Soaper.



“With the microloans and trainings I learned to make perfumes and today I am the first woman to produce perfumes in my community. With my business I can make sure that my children go to school and have more opportunities than I did,” – Fatma Ali, perfumer.

Strengthen National Capacities on Child protection

- Training on child protection rights and case management to local Child Protection Committees
- Coordination between local actors on referrals to address children at risk cases
- Development of child labour monitoring system within labour inspection systems



Partners

ILO and UNICEF

Government of Egypt; primarily, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Solidarity, National Council for Childhood and Motherhood



Thank you!



Thank you!

