



Photo: Save the Children Somalia

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE: DROUGHT#6

20th Nov, 2017: Food security needs are nearly double the five-year average in Somalia, with an estimated 2,444,000 people currently in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and 866,000 in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Widespread food insecurity is driven by three consecutive poor seasons that led to well below-average production and large-scale livestock losses, which have reduced household access to food and income (...) Data from the 2017 post-Gu assessment indicated that Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes persisted in many areas of Somalia in July/August. Since then, sustained assistance has prevented further deterioration in food security in many areas, though persistent drought threatens recovery. Although rainfall in October of this year has been slightly better than rainfall in October 2016, totals are still well below average. Furthermore, a below-average April to June 2018 Gu season is likely, and if this forecast comes to fruition it will mark the fifth consecutive poor season in Somalia (...) Even in a scenario of continued assistance at current levels, Famine (IPC Phase 5) is possible in worst affected areas. In a worst-case scenario, characterized by very poor Deyr rainfall through December and the extended absence of humanitarian assistance, Famine (IPC Phase 5) would be likely. (Somalia food security outlook Oct 2017-May 2018, FSNAU-FEWSNET).

THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Today is 20th Nov and the anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The CRC was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989. Since then most countries in the world has signed and ratified the CRC and in 2015, Somalia joined and became the 196th state to ratify the Convention. The CRC outlines specific rights for children, not only to keep them safe, but for all children to grow up in an environment where they can develop and reach their fullest potential – including through the right to Education. Children has the right to Education also during crisis and conflict and in such difficult times Education becomes even more important as a safe space for children and continuity of something familiar in a time when things around them is chaotic and often very scary. Ensuring that children stay in school during a crisis is also an opportunity to reach them with life-saving support as food and water during drought, and life-saving skills such as hygiene practices to avoid AWD/Cholera and other deadly diseases.

EDUCATION, DROUGHT & DISPLACEMENT

Currently it is estimated that more than 2.4M children of school going age is among the 6.2M people who are food-insecure (IPC 2-4) in Somalia. Children in the current drought crisis are not only affected in terms food security, but are also forced into displacement often under rough circumstances. It is estimated that since November 2016, 411,000 school aged children have been displaced from their homes. During displacement families are often separated and displacement often means that families end up in places without their usual safety nets and coping

mechanisms leaving them increasingly dependent on humanitarian aid.

Over the course of 2017, Education Cluster partners have supported more than 260,000 children to either start or stay in school in the area where they live and in the places where they have been displaced to due to drought and conflict. The education support varies depending on the needs in the specific location, but an increasing number of partners have provided emergency school feeding and water to the school children as a response to the deteriorating drought situation. Partners are reporting that the food and water provision increases the enrolment and attendance of children in the schools. During a crisis like the drought the most important is to ensure that children come to school on a regular basis and stay there so they are out of harms ways. Secondly it is important that children learn something while in school. The provision of food and water in the schools ensures that children are not hungry or worried about getting food that day and it prevents them for falling into the vicious cycle of malnutrition which many children in Somalia suffer from. This allows them to concentrate on learning new things and just be children together with their friends throughout the day.

Children who have been displaced often end up in urban IDP settlements with limited protection and access to basic services. Education Cluster partners are responding to the situation by setting up Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS) for children to access basic education. The TLS in most cases is a temporary structure with two classrooms, basic furniture and WASH facilities. The good thing about the TLS is that they are quick to set up and can

WHAT IS AT STAKE?

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

be located within the IDP settlement so children can easily access the learning space. TLS is meant to be a temporary solution when children for some reason cannot access the formal education system. In Somalia however, TLS in many cases becomes the only learning space available for children either because there are no formal and permanent schools in the area or because the schools are charging school fees which many families cannot afford – especially during a crisis. In Somalia, displaced families tend to stay in their new area for a long time. This means that for many children the TLS becomes their main access to education for years. The TLS is not really designed to cater for children's educational needs for years on end. To address this situation, the Education Cluster is therefore encouraging partners to support enrolment of IDP children into formal permanent schools whenever possible and appropriate. In these cases, distance between the IDP settlement and the school needs to be taken into consideration as well as an assessment of the capacity of the school to expand facilities to enroll more children. Enrolling displaced children into the formal education system ensures that they have a better opportunities to complete at least a full primary education and integrate into their new community.

EDUCATION DROUGHT RESPONSE

In 2017, the Education Cluster and partners were targeting 250,000 school children in immediate need of support to stay in school. This target has been met despite limited funding. It is however, important to note that for the support to be effective it needs to be continued and it needs to be comprehensive including a full package of support. In 2017, it has not been possible for all partners to implement a full package and the targets for each indicator have therefore not been met. Only 182,000 children have been reached with water and 85,600 children have been reached with food or food grants at some point over the course of 2017. School children need food and water every day and the teachers need incentives every month to stay in school and teach. It is currently estimated that in Puntland 70% of school children do not have access to safe drinking water and 80% do not have access to food provision. In Somaliland 41% of school children do not have access to safe water and 77% have no access to food provision. In Central and Southern regions, an estimated 90% of schools do not have access to safe drinking water.

With the latest projections indicating that the drought situation will not improve, continued support to school aged children to start and stay in school is essential. Somalia already has one of the lowest enrolment rates with just 30% of all school aged children going to school and cannot afford to have more children dropping out of school. In 2018, Education Cluster partners are

targeting 323,000 children with emergency assistance and need USD 40.5M to implement the support.

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

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

VULNERABILITIES OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Government of Somalia and the Ministry of Education are the ultimate duty bearers of ensuring children can access their right to education. In Somalia however, the decades of conflict and the recurrent natural disasters have left the education system in a state of emergency. At the moment, there is not yet a harmonized curriculum, there are no government supported teacher training institutes in Central South Somalia and only a very limited government supported teaching force. This means that there are a wide variety of actors offering education which is outside of the jurisdiction and control of the government. This situation leaves the education system vulnerable to extremist influences and over the course of 2017, an increasing number of schools have been forced to introduce a curriculum that communities are not comfortable with. The enforcement of this curriculum in certain areas of the country has led to intimidation of and threats against teachers, students and parents, as well as closure of schools leaving a great number of children without education opportunities. This development comes on top of the deteriorating drought situation which is already putting the education system under pressure. As education partners and humanitarian actors, we all have a responsibility to support the strengthening of the education system to ensure that the children of Somalia are equipped with the skills and qualifications needed to rebuild a better future for themselves and the country.

EDUCATION =

Keep children alive + Protection + Future