Fact Sheet

Integrating Child Protection and Child Rights Governance in Education Programmes: A Strategic Review*

Background

Protecting children against different forms of violence, abuse and neglect is one of the three key breakthroughs that Save the Children (SC) trusts to achieve. Because of the contexts of extreme poverty, prolonged humanitarian crisis due to armed conflict and vulnerability to climatic and manmade shocks, child protection is of utmost priority in Somalia. SC has been exploring various mechanisms of integrating child protection (CP) and child rights governance (CRG) in other programmatic areas. Given the scale of the primary education portfolio, integrating CP and CRG in primary education is a priority for the organization to ensure quality and safe learning environment. There are many CP and CRG interventions that can be integrated in education programmes. However, it is often not obvious which of these interventions should be emphasized in limited resource settings. **This strategic review was initiated to identify the types of child protection issues that are more prevalent in schools, and to explore specific interventions that can be of strategic priority to integrate in schools mitigate these concerns.**

Data and methodology

Primary data was collected in 3 phases. Phase one involved data collection from 60 schools in four districts - Abudwak, Banadir, Garowe and Gardo - to take stock of types of CP and CRG interventions currently in place. The schools are categorised as – 'Norad' (18 schools supported by Norad), 'Other SC' (18 schools supported through other education projects), and 'Non-SC' (24 schools which are not directly supported by the organization). Using this data, 24 schools were selected for phase 2 of the study to represent schools with different levels of child protection interventions currently in place. A survey of 933 students (grade 4 to 8) was conducted from these schools to understand children's concerns about various abuses. Students participating in this survey were sampled randomly, and stratifying by grade and sex. Data from these two surveys were analysed to measure how specific CP-CRG interventions correlate with the concerns expressed by the children.[1] This provides us with direction on types of interventions that can possibly mitigate specific child protection concerns. In the third and last phase, we worked with Child Rights Clubs (CRC), school committee members and SC colleagues of CP and Education programmes to prioritize interventions based on impact potential and operational feasibility.

Findings

Corporal punishment by teachers and fights/altercations with fellow students are the most prevalent child protection concerns for the students in schools. About 85% of students reported witnessing a peer being physically punished at school in last one month. Common forms of corporal punishment are beating (58%), kneeling (39%), staying out in the sun (28%) and doing manual tasks (17%). In addition, 72% of students witnessed fights among peers.

Figure 1: Child Abuse Incidents Witnessed by Students in the Last One Month at School

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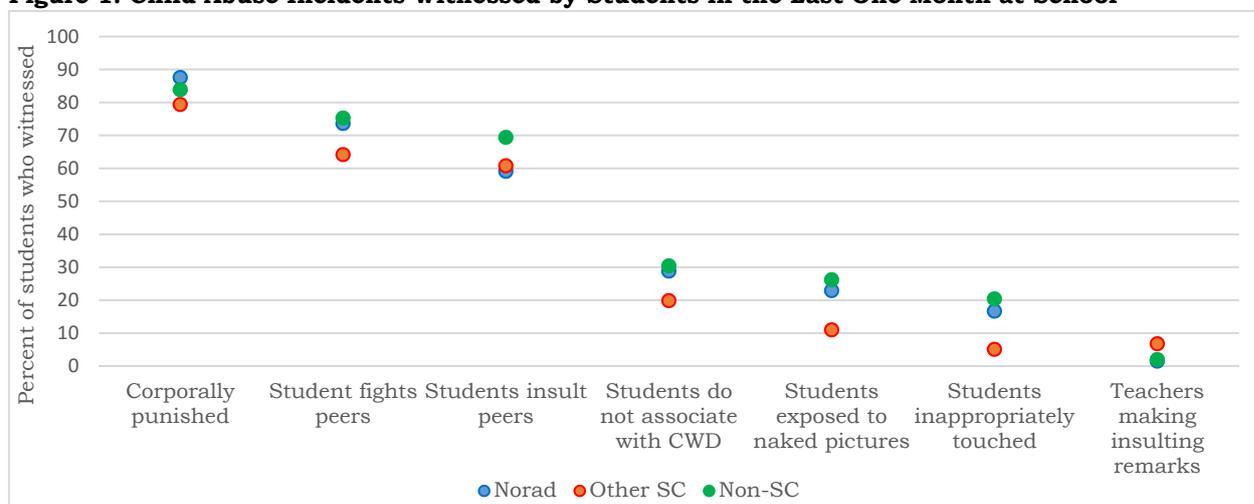
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[1] This is important to note that this correlation analysis does not necessarily mean that the interventions will cause a decline in the particular type of abuses. We rely on tacit and experiential knowledge of colleagues to triangulate the conclusion of 'impact potentials'.

Data indicates an example of the popular phrase – "violence begets violence". In schools where corporal punishment is more common, incidences of altercations among students are also higher. These schools, in turn, also show higher absenteeism. However, **students perceive corporal punishment to be less of a threat than fights with fellow students.** While 57% of students think that teachers beating a student posed a threat to student safety, 77% students thought peer-fights was a threat to their safety. There is also widespread acceptance of corporal punishments at home since about half of the students see nothing wrong with a parent beating children. Awareness of possible incidences of sexually abusing students is reported by about 15% students. Although this is less common than corporal punishment, the severity of such abuse is more lasting.

In terms of ongoing interventions, most schools have adopted multiple initiatives to mitigate child abuse. However, the main challenge is proper implementation of these initiatives and functionality of the mitigation mechanisms. For example, 'teacher code of conduct' is available in almost all schools, but there is large variation in its operationalization and monitoring. Therefore, **many of the strategic priorities involve strengthening implementation instead of layering new interventions**.

Table 1: Priority Matrix for Integrating Interventions

		Impact potential	
		Low	High
Operational feasibility	High	**MODERATE** strategic priority - Response mechanisms for schools compliant or suggestion boxes - Teachers to monitor playground activities - Teacher and student life-skill training - Teacher training on positive parenting - Monitoring mechanism for Teacher Code of Conduct - Teachers inducted on the basics pedagogy and classroom management - Initiatives to raise child rights awareness	**HIGH** strategic priority - Publicizing school CP policy and actions - Monitor implementation of child abuse reporting in school - Conflict resolution and problem solving training for students - Training teachers on positive disciplining - Strengthen informal child-to-child support groups - Initiate student peace champions - Involve students in defining acceptable school behaviour - Deworming tablet distribution
	Low	**LOW** strategic priority - Teacher training on professional competency - Parent support groups - Psychosocial support for students - Teacher conducting students' home visits	**MODERATE** strategic priority - Teacher training on DRR - Pre and in-service teacher training on CP - School wall boundaries and walls - Establish and equip Girl Friendly Space - Health service for the students in school

In the above Table, we classified interventions having high impact potential if they have strong negative correlation with CP concerns. Additionally, the potential effects on student absenteeism and learning (through a simple competency test) are also considered. Operational feasibility depended on ease of implementation and additional resources requirements. Most of the initiatives in high strategic priority group are about strengthening utilization of existing platforms. Given the high prevalence of corporal punishment, training teachers on positive disciplining is a high priority. Deworming tablet distribution has been identified as a high priority due to its health effects, strong correlation with students' test scores and low costs.

Training teachers on disaster risk reduction (DRR), pre and in-service training, construction of boundary walls for schools, establishment of Girl Friendly Space (GFS) and health service for students are likely to make large impacts on both child safety and learning. However, since these initiatives will require additional resources, they can be considered in new project designs. Response mechanisms for suggest boxes or efforts to improve child rights are relatively low cost interventions. Although there is not enough evidence to expect high impacts from these interventions, we suggest them to be of moderate priority due to operational feasibility. Finally, the items in low priority interventions can be reconsidered if there is strong external evidence on their potential effectiveness. On knowledge front, **we also recommend generating rigorous evidence on the effectiveness of training teachers on 'positive disciplining' and 'positive parenting'.**