STANDARD 19

[1] Economic recovery and child protection

[2] Economic action – such as vocational skills training, provision of cash transfers and vouchers, enterprise development and microfinance initiatives – can stabilise and increase the income of populations affected by emergencies. [3] Effective programmes are based on the SeeP Network’s Minimum Economic Recovery Standards, and often have protective effects on children, particularly when mothers benefit directly, when they are used to provide livelihood opportunities for older adolescents, and when action builds on existing strategies to protect people’s livelihoods.

[4] However, even when programmes are effective at the household level, they can increase the risk of harm to children, including the risk of having to leave school or being exploited due to an economic intervention. [5] Where a caregiver has to work in order to access economic recovery interventions, this may lead to a reduced level of care for children, including children being moved out of the home altogether. [6] Some children themselves are caregivers, either for siblings (for example, in child-headed households) or for elderly or sick adults. [7] These children are likely to require direct livelihood support.

Note to Reviewers

This draft is an updated version of the 2012 standards in the CPMS. The text in blue represents the changes from the 2012 text. (To see what has been deleted kindly check the current version of the standards.)

Please keep in the mind that the CPMS are standards. They are not guidance on how to do programming. The standards give the essential on what as a minimum needs to be achieved in a specific area of humanitarian child protection work. Practitioners should refer to guidance documents listed in the reference section for further information on how to achieve the standards.

Please note that this version might need to be edited down in length to keep the standards at their current total size.

When reading through this document, please consider: is this useful for practitioners? Is the language clear and easy to understand? Does it reflect best practice and evidence? What points are non-essential and can be deleted? Are they developed in the form of standards or leaning more towards guidance?

How to provide feedback on this draft: Please use the accompanying feedback back form that can be found here.

Thank you for your contribution to improving the CPMS!
Tailored action is required to ensure that economic recovery interventions reach those households where child protection concerns are most pressing, and that they maximise children’s chances of remaining with their families, accessing education, and keeping out of hazardous labour or other situations of exploitation.

Economic intervention, with a focus on addressing economic vulnerabilities only, may be unable to address broader child protection concerns that either arise as unintended consequences of an intervention, or are systemic. Evidence shows that addressing economic vulnerabilities contributes to parental ability to care for children. However, economic interventions do not always tackle the effects of economic vulnerability within households and even less the causes of economic vulnerabilities. E.g., if a household economic security improves, children may still remain out of school as the increase in household income may be short-lived. To tackle these problems, one needs to understand the effects of a particular crisis on children in a given context, as well as their causes. Then it is important to understand how economic recovery programmes can alleviate them, either alone or in combination with a broader package of interventions designed to address the multiple economic and social dimensions of challenges faced by children and their caregivers.

An integrated sector approach is a model based on inclusion, coordination and complementarity, valid for all sectors, and should be systematically applied.

**Standard**

Child protection concerns are reflected in the assessment, design, monitoring and evaluation of economic recovery programmes. Working-age boys and girls and their caregivers will have access to adequate support to strengthen their livelihoods in a safe manner and without undermining children’s ability to attend school.

**Key actions**

**KEY ACTIONS FOR CHILD PROTECTION ACTORS**

19.1. map existing social protection systems relevant for children and economic recovery;

19.2. present assessment information on child protection to those working on economic recovery, and ensure time is taken to discuss the implications of this information for economic recovery;

19.3. agree with economic recovery actors which of the indicators suggested in this standard should be used to track progress;

19.4. incorporate questions about economic recovery into discussions with caregivers,
community members and children, and invite economic recovery workers to attend these discussions. Discuss the situation of children in different care arrangements (for example children in residential care, child heads of households, children on the street, and children with disabilities);

19.5. coordinate with local communities and organisations to get up-to-date information on children or households that may be in need of economic recovery interventions;

19.6. meet with Economic Recovery staff to agree on common goals, common strategy, joint work plan, and to establish a multi-sector referral system for vulnerable households that supports their access to tailored economic recovery assistance as well as other service where necessary;

19.7. where appropriate, include information on economic recovery in child protection messaging;

19.8. include economic-recovery personnel in training on child protection;

19.9. identify which pre-existing forums, coordination groups, government ministries or development programs (are most useful for regular reviews of information on child protection and on economic recovery;

19.10. continuously monitor to ensure an iterative learning process / feedback, including children’s accounts, to demonstrate the positive effects of high quality economic recovery interventions on children’s safety and wellbeing; and

19.11. advocate for the link between economic recovery and child protection outcomes to be explored in evaluations and resource allocation processes such as the Post Disaster Needs Analysis or the Post Conflict Needs Analysis.

**KEY ACTIONS FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACTORS**

19.12. map government recovery plans, social protection schemes as well as wider recovery strategies, and who they target. Those not targeted but considered at risk could be enrolled via complementary programs or advocated to be included in the existing schemes;

19.13. ensure that those in economic recovery have signed up to and been trained in a code of conduct or other policy which covers child safeguarding;

19.14. ensure beneficiaries of interventions include children who are particularly at risk of violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect, taking age, gender, and disability considerations into account. This may include those in residential care, children who have lost one or more caregiver, child caregivers and child heads of households, children living on the street, and children with disabilities;

19.15. work with CP and protection actors to understand access barriers to economic recovery programs;

19.16. consider the safety of the affected population and potential negative impacts on girls and boys specifically as a sub-objective of each intervention;

19.17. ensure economic recovery actors are fully briefed on the laws governing work for children and workplace hazards;
19.18. [38] Review all planned activities to check for any potential-push factors for children to move out of appropriate care (such as family-based care). [39] These push factors may include interventions that benefit children in residential care homes disproportionately, the creation of employment opportunities for children away from the home, or incentivising parents to work instead of caring for children in order to access to economic recovery;

19.19. [40] Beware of implementing any “for work” programmes without a coexisting system to deliver benefits to caregivers and children who face access barriers to labour-based programs;

19.20. [41] Provide, or help families, access cash grants and other emergency social-protection measures for those who cannot work; build on existing / pre-crisis social protection systems relevant for children and recovery, i.e. child grants, education grants, disability benefits, widow’s pensions, multiple-dependent schemes or poverty schemes;

19.21. [42] When possible, design strategies that are flexible and which can accommodate new children and families as well as adjustments in methodology and targets;

19.22. [43] Work with child protection workers to strengthen existing referral systems so that children and families who may be in need of economic recovery interventions can quickly access support;

19.23. [44] Ensure economic recovery staff are familiar with multi-sector CP and GBV referral pathways and mechanisms in order to better identify and safely refer children and families who are participating in economic recovery interventions and have additional protection concerns;

19.24. [45] Where appropriate, collaborate with Child Protection and Education actors to incorporate life skills, literacy, numeracy, and other important skills along with household management of resources discussions with adolescents and families to promote more holistic programming;

19.25. [46] Together with child protection workers, collect information, including case studies, to ensure continuous monitoring and accountability for your intervention on children’s safety and wellbeing; and

19.26. [47] Include child protection personnel in training on Economic Recovery with emphasis on child labour and how to monitor abuses, or any other retreats or workshops where you think their perspective and information may enhance the outcome.

Measurement

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME INDICATOR</th>
<th>OUTCOME TARGET</th>
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<tr>
<td>19.1. [48] Percentage of economic recovery projects where child safety and wellbeing, including family unity, are reflected in design, monitoring and evaluation</td>
<td>100%</td>
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| OUTPUT INDICATOR | OUTPUT TARGET |
19.2. [49] Percentage of economic recovery projects that included child protection specialists in their design phase  
90%

19.3. [50] Existence and proven use of a referral system to enable excluded children or households, or children at risk, to access economic recovery support  
Yes

19.4. [51] Percentage of economic recovery personnel trained on child protection issues  
90%

19.5. [52] Percentage of economic-recovery projects with child protection aspects which are regularly reviewed with child protection workers  
90%

**Guidance notes**

19.1. [53] Structural barriers

[54] The barriers created in economic recovery programmes need to be understood. [55] A variety of barriers may exist regardless of economic recovery programmes. [56] They may be heightened if a Do No Harm analysis is neglected, protection not mainstreamed, etc. [57] There should be a recognition of the limitations of economic recovery programmes to improve the future of children as vulnerabilities go beyond economic ones. [58] Questions of agency and structural barriers should systematically be included in programmes to strengthen the economy.

19.2. [59] Girls and women

[60] In some contexts, women are more likely than men to prioritise the needs of children in their care (or family needs). [61] Women and girls are also more vulnerable to many risks, including HIV and gender-based violence (GBV), but are in many cases left out in spite of the protective benefits of economic programming. [62] Reasons why female caregivers may be left out of ER programmes may vary per context, including child caring arrangement, gendered division of labour, unsuitable/undesirable form of ER offered to women, long commute, overnight out of home, lack of secure dorm arrangements, capacity and knowledge, lack of financial literacy, etc. [63] To hold discussions at the household or community level with programme designers may help develop solutions that address these access barriers.

19.3. [64] Assessment and monitoring

[65] Livelihood assessments should involve those with an interest – including women, older boys and girls, parents with disabilities and caregivers of children most at risk – so that they can help identify any negative coping mechanisms that may be appearing due to loss of household assets and income. [66] These may include hazardous labour, transactional sex, or leaving school. [67] Assessments should also identify any protection risks for girls and boys that may arise as unintended consequences of an intervention. [68] The root causes of the vulnerability, available economic assets, local demand for labour and goods and services, and value chain (ongoing) opportunities should first be analysed.
19.4. [69] Cash transfers

[70] Depending on context analysis, including protection and gender, feasibility analysis cash transfers might be a suitable response option to help vulnerable households to recover. [71] It is however important to make sure they do not further marginalise any groups. [72] Direct cash transfers may e.g. be preferable for households where all household members have disabilities, where there are n caregivers for children (child-headed households), where one or more caregiver has been lost, or where children are working. [73] However, whether cash transfer is the most suitable depends on the context, on persons with disabilities’ lived experiences and on other socio-economic factors and specific barriers to access. [74] i.e. if all household members have a physical disability but no possibility to move, no assisted devices and no or limited social network or support, then cash is not a long term solution and protection actors should be involved in finding durable solutions. [76] Similar aspects should be considered for other vulnerable groups. [76] Clear information should be provided by those taking part about the expected duration, amount, intended purpose, follow-ups, ground rules of entitlements, targeting criteria, feedback and complaint mechanisms of the cash transfer, including what to report or other forms of assistance available. [77] Cash transfers does not have to be a stand-alone solution but can be implemented in combination with other activities ("cash+") such as referral mechanisms, child protection activities, vocational training, etc.

19.5. [78] Monitoring and evaluation:

[79] Livelihood and economic-recovery strategies might not result in easily measurable outcomes for children in the short term. [80] As a result, where available, separate indicators should be used for males and females (such as meals consumed, school attendance, and child-health data).

[81] Throughout implementation, ensure that monitoring systems capture information on the expected and the unexpected impact of the intervention on children’s safety and wellbeing. [82] It is advised to analyse any correlation between access to education, rates of child labour, early marriage, recruitment and access to economic recovery interventions. [83] Any information should be shared and work coordinated sought to avoid duplication efforts.

19.6. [84] Complementary expertise:

[85] Since many child protection agencies lack the expertise to deliver effective, market-based economic programming and agencies specialised in this kind of programming may lack expertise in child protection, agencies should focus on delivering what they do best and build partnerships to deliver the rest.

19.7. [88] Programme design:

[87] Child protection organisations should, as far as possible, aim to influence the design and to inform what criteria, factors contribute to vulnerability (Protection, Age, Gender, Diversity dynamics) and how best economic recovery programs can be tailored to address them. [88] They should also identify the families who were excluded and connect them with help. [89] While most programmes target adults, older adolescents may also benefit directly from skills training, savings schemes, apprenticeships and other activities. [90] The design of economic-recovery programmes for children must respect national laws on minimum age for work and vocational training, and completion of
compulsory schooling. [91]If international standards on minimum age, schooling, etc are higher than the national standards humanitarian workers are bound by the higher standard.

19.8. [92]Stereotyping:

[93]Stereotyping is not only about men and women but a range of other age, gender and diversity aspects, i.e. stereotyping about the type of work that can be performed by persons with sensory or physical impairments, albinos, or those born within certain caste groups. i.e. pottery-making, leather work or metal work is closely associated with certain sub-groups in some contexts. [94]Beneficiaries should have the choice of what kind of work they prefer to do or which skills to learn, and should be offered an opportunity to choose to pursue a livelihood in fields traditionally not accessible to them. [95]There is a tendency of involving girls in low-paying, home-based activities such as sewing or knitting, and training boys in skills with greater economic potential such as mechanics or carpentry. [96]Especially where there is no adult family provider, girls and boys have wqual need to get involved in economically promising activities. [97]Labour market analyses, including customary attitudes and norms, are crucial to identifying durable economic options and should form the basis of the options available.

References

- The Cash Learning Partnership, Save the Children, Women’s Refugee Commission (2012). What Cash Transfer Programming can do to protect children from violence, abuse and exploitation
- www.ovcsupport.net
- www.seepnetwork.org
- www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc
- The Cash Learning Partnership (CALP) Cash Based Assistance – Programme Quality Toolbox: http://pttoolbox.cashlearning.org/