



Photo: Save the Children Somalia

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE: DROUGHT#4

9th April 2017: The latest findings from a countrywide seasonal assessment conducted in December 2016 indicate that over 2.9 million people face Crisis and Emergency (IPC Phases 3 and 4) across Somalia through June 2017. This represents more than two-fold increase compared to six months ago. Additionally, more than 3.3 million people are classified as Stressed (IPC Phase 2), bringing the total number of people facing acute food insecurity across Somalia to over 6.2 million. In a worst-case scenario where the April-June Gu season performs even poorer than currently forecast, purchasing power declines to levels seen in 2010/2011, and humanitarian assistance is unable to reach populations in need, Famine (IPC Phase 5) would be expected. Urgent humanitarian assistance is needed to support over 2.9 million people who face acute food security Crisis and Emergency (IPC Phases 3 & 4). Scaling up life-saving humanitarian assistance urgently and providing livelihood protection support are equally important in slowing the tide of drought/hunger related displacement (FSNAU, 2nd February 2017).

EDUCATION SITUATION

Currently more than 379,000 children are enrolled in schools in drought affected areas. At least 30% of these children are in immediate risk of dropping out. In addition, it is estimated that up to 50,400 school going children will be displaced due to the drought if the situation deteriorates to 2011 levels.

Student absenteeism is increasing in schools in areas affected by drought, as families rely on negative coping strategies including enlisting children to search for **water resources**. Rising food and water prices have cut into the incentives for teachers provided by parents and communities, resulting in teachers not showing up in schools, thus further jeopardizing children's education. 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.

EDUCATION RESPONSE STRATEGY

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.

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. In addition to the life-saving assistance (food, water, AWD/Cholera prevention), establishment of temporary learning spaces, and provision of teaching/learning materials are required to ensure continued access to education, protection and survival.

EDUCATION =

Keep children alive + Protection + Future

WHAT IS AT STAKE?

Failure to respond to the prevention of famine will put the lives of tens of thousands of children at risk. Failure to ensure children can stay in school and support those who are currently out of school will not only jeopardize their lives, but also their future. 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. Conversely, a well-planned, adequately funded, effectively coordinated education response to prevention of famine will contribute to the realization of the right to life, education and a future.

ON-GOING EDUCATION RESPONSE

Education Cluster partners are already responding to the situation with priority 1 and 2 activities. The cluster is utilizing schools as a community-level entry point to reach the most vulnerable children to save lives, protect those at risk, and ensure their well-being.

An estimated **379,000 school children** are in need of humanitarian assistance. The Education Cluster is **targeting 220,000 school children** who are in immediate risk of dropping out of school and have to date reached **38,000 school children with safe drinking water**.

GAP IN EDUCATION RESPONSE

The Education Cluster has 70 national and international partners ready to respond all across Somalia. The main barrier for an effective response is insufficient funding and lack of donor prioritization of education in emergency.

The Education Cluster is estimating that **USD 30 million is needed to reach 220,000 school children in immediate risk**.

Through CERF and SHF funding Education cluster partners have received USD 3.2 mill. This is less than 1% of the total amount received for the response so far.

CALL FOR ACTION!

The Education Cluster strongly encourages donors and partners to take this opportunity to save the lives of thousands of school children and give them a chance for a better future by:

- Funding Education partners to enable a prompt response in prevention of famine
- Prioritizing an integrated response across clusters and include schools and school children as a specific target group in WASH, Health, Food Security, and Nutrition response projects
- Allow partners to reprogram development funding to address the critical needs of school children and protect development gains already made
- Include retention of children in schools as a conditionality in cash transfer projects encouraging families to let their children stay in school throughout the crisis

EMERGING EDUCATION SECTOR CHALLENGES

As the academic year is coming to an end a number of additional challenges are emerging in the context of the worsening drought conditions.

Waiver of exam fees: In Puntland and the Central and Southern regions children are required to pay a fee to sit for their final exams. Many families will not be able to cover this cost as their livelihood is so severely constrained due to the drought situation. This means that children who have managed to stay in school during the crisis will however not be able to finalize their examinations. The Education Cluster is strongly encouraging a waiver of exam fees to allow school children to take their exams.

Schools as recreational and safe spaces during the school break: The well-being and safety of school children during the school break is causing severe concerns and the Education Cluster is strongly encouraging prioritization of remedial classes for children who have missed parts of the school year due to the drought, child protection and recreational activities, as well as continued provision of food and water at school facilities during the months of June and July. This will not only protect children and keep them alive, but also increase the likelihood of children continuing their education after the school break.