



EWBC STRATEGY TO REALISE
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S
RIGHTS, ESPECIALLY THEIR RIGHTS TO
PROTECTION AND EDUCATION
(2022 - 2027)





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ACRONYMS

CRBA: Child Rights-Based Approach

CHS: Core Humanitarian Standard

EWBC: Education and Well-Being of the Child

WASH: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

DRM: Disaster Risk Management

IASC: Inter-Agency Standing Committee

INEE: Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies

KCS: Keeping Children Safe

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

CSP: Child Safeguarding Policy

PFA: Psychological First Aid

DRR: Disaster Risk Reduction

FSL: Food Security and Livelihoods

CPMS: Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action

GBV: Gender-Based Violence

SGBV: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

INTRODUCTION

This document is SIF's **first global strategy** for the Education and Well-Being of the Child (EWBC). It gives the organisation a clear **mandate** to contribute to realising children's rights.

It aims to provide a **strategic vision until 2027 and a framework** for SIF's action to promote children's rights - in particular, their rights to protection and education - in conjunction with the organisation's other fields of work (especially Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)).¹ Although this strategy focuses on children, it also covers young people, to help ease their transition into adulthood.

This document specifies the necessary **guidelines and operational measures** to turn this vision into reality². These policies are, not however, rigid and prescriptive but leave sufficient flexibility for field offices (missions) to adapt their implementation to various local needs, capacities and contexts.

In addition to defining **SIF's programming priorities** to promote children's rights, this strategy provides guidance for field offices to develop quality programmes that pursue shared goals within a **coherent** framework, and to effectively implement them in any operational setting.

This strategy also shows the organisation's commitment, alongside its partners, to play its part in upholding the international Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** relating to children's rights.

I. METHODOLOGY

This strategy was developed using a participatory approach involving both head office staff and field teams. First, the current situation was assessed, by reviewing international literature, mapping SIF's programmes to promote children's rights and analysing these activities. Several awareness-raising and training sessions on the Child Rights-Based Approach (CRBA) were then organised for the NGO's personnel and executive committee members. This enabled them to better understand and assimilate the fundamental EWBC concepts and approaches, which facilitated the meaningful participation of all parties involved.

An initial version of the strategy was thus developed at head office by an inter-departmental working group (International Programmes and Operations, Communication and Development, Advocacy), then shared with all the field teams who added their contributions to the document. The strategy was then reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee in May 2022.

II. GLOBAL CONTEXT ANALYSIS: CURRENT STATUS OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS WORLDWIDE, TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

Positive momentum for the education and well-being of children in recent years...

Considerable progress has been made in children's education, with an increase in primary school attendance rates from 50% in the 1950s to 91% today.³ There has also been significant progress in the protection⁴ of children: increased birth registration, decline in child labour, reductions in child marriage and female genital mutilation.

.... halted by Covid-19 and threatened by climate change

Pandemics generally have a negative effect on children's overall environment, as well as on social services and employment. This may increase the risk of child marriage, child labour and multiple forms of violence. The Covid-19 pandemic disproportionately affected the most vulnerable populations, pushing no less than 150 million additional children into multidimensional poverty. It also drastically affected children's education: over 90% of schoolchildren worldwide were affected by school closures⁵. In addition, climate change increases the risk of natural disasters and their consequences, as well as fuelling the deterioration of food security and the emergence of new pandemics. These factors all threaten children's living conditions over the long term.

Upholding children's rights is crucial to address multiple challenges.

¹ End date for the SIF 2022-2027 global strategy cycle.

² Which will be accompanied by reference documents and a EWBC toolbox.

³ UNICEF. Every child learns. UNICEF Education Strategy 2019-2030. September 2019.

⁴ Child protection: see glossary.

⁵ UNICEF. Child Protection Strategy (2021-2030) Consultation draft. November 2020.

The reality is that there are still many violations of human rights and children’s rights, and Covid-19 has made things worse. The most vulnerable children, for example children that are disabled, displaced or marginalised, are disproportionately affected by these violations. This means that they do not have guaranteed access to their fundamental rights such as education, protection, healthcare, hygiene, water, healthy food or information. The United Nations and many NGOs have therefore made the realisation of children’s rights and the protection of children a global priority. The goal: for all children to live, thrive and grow up in a safe and healthy environment.

III. VISION

Our vision is a world where children’s rights are respected, where every child can survive, learn and develop normally, where all children live in a safe, sustainable environment, are protected from all forms of violence⁶, and can choose their own future.

⁶ Within the scope of this strategy, the generic term “violence” refers to “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.” (Art. 19 of the UNCRC and General Comment No. 13 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child).

SECTION 1

OVERALL FRAMEWORK



I. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

SIF is committed to respecting the fundamental principles of humanitarian action: impartiality, universality, neutrality, independence, responsibility and transparency.

Whatever the situation, SIF also ensures that both its own activities and those of its partners do not intentionally or inadvertently cause harm to children.⁷ SIF's activities also comply with the guiding principles of the UNCRC: non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to life, survival and development, and respect for the child's opinions.

Furthermore, SIF's programmes for children are based on international standards, including the SPHERE Handbook, the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), the Minimum Standards for Child Protection (CPMS), the Inter-Agency Network's minimum standards for Education in Emergencies (INEE) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's guidelines (IASC).

II. AN INTEGRATED, HOLISTIC APPROACH TO REALISE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The foundation for this strategy is the child rights-based approach, which draws on a socio-ecological model.

2.1 The socio-ecological model

The socio-ecological model provides a system-wide framework to analyse our interventions. It helps to determine the various ways in which the interconnected layers influence children's development and well-being. We therefore consider that:

- > Children actively contribute to realising their own rights, as well as the rights of their peers.
- > They are brought up by families or other caregivers, who are themselves members of communities, which in turn form society.
- > Each of these layers is also influenced by governments and institutions⁸ (formal systems: social, protection, education, WASH, health, food security) and, on a wider scale, by the international context.⁹

SIF will therefore take a holistic approach that factors in all the issues facing children and the causes behind these issues, as well as the potential solutions and capabilities available

within each layer. Using this approach, SIF will seek to develop and implement integrated programmes, in collaboration with children, families, communities and governments, to prevent and respond to violations of children's rights.

2.1.1 Children and young people with specific vulnerabilities and capabilities



Illustration: the socio-ecological model (SIF)

Children are the focal point of this strategy. SIF aligns with the UNCRC definition of a child as a human being under 18 years of age (UNCRC Art. 1). Based on its expertise, SIF will primarily target children from 6 years old¹⁰ and upwards, which generally coincides with the start of primary school and/or compulsory education.

However, SIF will also develop programmes for young people (15- to 25-year-olds), since the organisation believes that young adults over the age of 18 often need to be accompanied to help them to become fully capable of assuming their responsibilities and making informed decisions.

SIF will particularly focus on the most marginalised children and young people, whether this be due to their gender, disability, socio-economic status, or another form of diversity. SIF will therefore continue to expand its support for young orphans and "talibé" children and young people.¹¹

⁷ In accordance with its Child Safeguarding Policy and the Keeping Children Safe (KCS) standards.

⁸ This refers to State services (government and decentralised departments) and local authorities.

⁹ For more information on the socio-ecological model, please refer to CPMS Standard 14.

¹⁰ Focus on this age group but does not exclude younger people depending on the context.

¹¹ Talibé: see glossary.

2.1.2 Families, communities, societies and formal systems

Within the scope of this strategy, SIF will prioritise providing assistance for vulnerable families and communities, consolidating its support for formal systems (state and institutions) and strengthening the connections between families, communities and formal systems.

The organisation will provide support for families, parents and other caregivers since they play a decisive role in reinforcing the capabilities and resilience of children. The main purpose of this support will be to uphold children's rights.

2.2 Child rights-based approach

2.2.1 A conceptual framework to realise children's rights

SIF places the realisation of children's rights at the heart of its strategy, programmes and advocacy activities. The organisation uses a child rights-based approach. This conceptual framework aims to safeguard and promote these rights by mainstreaming them in every sector. This means that children's rights are both an objective and a programming principle.

SIF abides by human rights standards and principles, in particular the UNCRC, as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

SIF therefore recognises people under 18 years of age as fully-fledged subjects of law and holders of fundamental human rights, which are both mandatory and non-negotiable. Within the scope of this strategy, SIF will address the causes that hinder the realisation of children's rights, including the root causes. The organisation will take action against inequality and discrimination, and will work with the most vulnerable and marginalised children, to build a better future for all.

The priority will therefore be to strengthen the capacities of the following actors:

- > First, children, who have specific rights and need appropriate protection. They must receive support so that they can play an active role in their own development and assert their rights with responsible actors and duty bearers.
- > Responsible actors (family, community, civil society, private sector) and duty bearers (government), who must ensure that children's rights are respected, promoted and safeguarded, and who need support to fulfil these responsibilities.



Diagrams illustrating the Child rights-based approach¹²

¹² Save the Children. Child Rights Programming. How to Apply Rights-based Approaches to Programming, 2005, pages 35 & 37.

2.2.2 The guiding principles of the UNCRC

Life, survival and development

SIF will ensure that all its activities not only avoid causing harm to children but also make a positive contribution to children's rights to life and development.

Non-discrimination, equality and inclusion

Non-discrimination¹³ is a key principle for SIF; equality and inclusion are central to the organisation's programmes and advocacy activities in the EWBC field.

SIF will ensure that its interventions do not inadvertently exacerbate inequality and exclusion, but instead contribute to greater equality and inclusion, to make children less vulnerable and ensure that all of them can exercise their rights without discrimination.

To this end, SIF will adapt its programmes to the various needs and capabilities of children and young people, to ensure that they are protected, have access to opportunities and resources and can meaningfully participate in activities. In particular, SIF will seek to reduce gender inequalities, which have a major impact on the realisation of children's rights and significantly influence their experiences, opportunities and exposure to risks.¹⁴

Children with disabilities are often those that suffer the worst from discrimination. With this strategy, the organisation will lay the foundations to include these children more fully throughout its programmes, by taking better account of their specific needs and capabilities and developing activities to safeguard and promote their rights¹⁵.

Best interests of children

SIF will abide by the principle that the best interests of children – what is best for them, to safeguard their fundamental rights and well-being – must be a primary consideration in all decisions or actions that concern them.

This principle will underpin the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of all interventions. SIF will encourage children to actively participate in defining their own best interests.

Participation of children and respect for their views

Within the scope of this strategy, SIF will promote the participation of children and young people as a goal to fulfil human rights, as a rights-based programming principle and as the means to achieve projected outcomes.

The organisation will therefore seek to increase the participation of children and young people throughout the project cycle, to improve the relevance of its activities. SIF will also promote their active citizenship and help them to assert their rights.

Their participation will be planned as a process that is safe, transparent and informative, voluntary, respectful, relevant, child-friendly, inclusive, supported by training, and accountable.¹⁶ This will enable SIF to aim for the highest level of participation possible according to the context.

To enable children and young people to play a full part in this process, SIF will develop activities to strengthen their ability to exercise this right. Awareness raising activities will also be carried out within communities so that they more readily accept children's participation and take into account children's decisions.

2.2.3 An intersectoral approach

SIF will champion a coordinated, intersectoral approach, since children's rights are indivisible and interdependent, so the outcomes of our interventions must also be designed to be interdependent.¹⁷ This approach will enable the NGO to be more effective¹⁸ and maximise the impact and sustainability of its activities. Finally, implementing an intersectoral approach presents several comparative advantages for the organisation due to its expertise in child protection, education, WASH and FSL.

¹³ SIF ensures that no child suffers from discrimination as a result of his or her age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, nationality or for any other reason.

¹⁴ For example, girls may run a greater risk of early marriage, boys may be in danger of forced recruitment, and non-binary children may risk stigmatisation, violence or have difficulty accessing humanitarian assistance.

¹⁵ Disaggregated data on disabilities, taking disability into account when targeting children, inclusive learning environments, appropriate accommodation, identification and referral, etc.

¹⁶ Committee on the Rights of the Child. General Comment No. 12: The right of the child to be heard. 2009.

¹⁷ For example, child protection is essential to make progress in education and vice versa.

¹⁸ For example, if we consider schools as facilities to access other services that contribute to children's rights (e.g. food, health, protection) or through case management.

III. « NEXUS » APPROACH

SIF takes an approach that responds to short, medium and long-term challenges – by meeting emergency needs and at the same time addressing the underlying causes of unrealised rights. This approach is aligned with the humanitarian-development-peace nexus which links “relief” and “development” interventions within the same timeframe and geographical area, while also taking into consideration peace-building issues.¹⁹

SIF will therefore make sure that its programmes targeting children respect the “Do no harm” principle and do not exacerbate rights violations that could trigger social tensions or conflict. Instead, it will ensure that these programmes contribute to preventing such violations, in particular through more conflict-sensitive programming.²⁰

Using this approach, SIF also aims to improve crisis prevention, consolidate emergency preparedness capacities and strengthen the resilience of children, communities and systems.

¹⁹ URD. Linking relief, rehabilitation and development (Nexus). Available here: <https://www.urd.org/en/theme/linking-relief-rehabilitation-development/>

²⁰ Conflict sensitivity: see glossary

SECTION 2

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



This strategic framework provides a common agenda for SIF's activities to promote children's rights, and emphasises the interdependence of its various fields of work, for which there is no hierarchy or order of priority. Although field programmes shall be developed according to the guidelines in this strategic framework, they must also be adapted to local contexts and national priorities.

Impact: Contribute to the realisation of all children's and young people's rights, starting with the most vulnerable and marginalised

This intended impact entails developing preventive activities and responses so that:

- > children live in protective environments that encourage the realisation of their rights
- > children whose rights are not respected receive adequate support and assistance.

In keeping with its previous interventions, SIF will aim to achieve long-term results in four interdependent areas relating to children's rights, plus an additional fifth result relating to the environment.

We will thus seek to achieve the following impacts so that all children and young people:

- 1) are protected against violence and abuse, exploitation, neglect and harmful practices

- 2) have access to quality learning opportunities and can acquire the necessary skills to build their future
- 3) have access to livelihoods and adequate, healthy food
- 4) have safe and equitable access to water, sanitation and hygiene
- 5) live in a safe and sustainable environment.

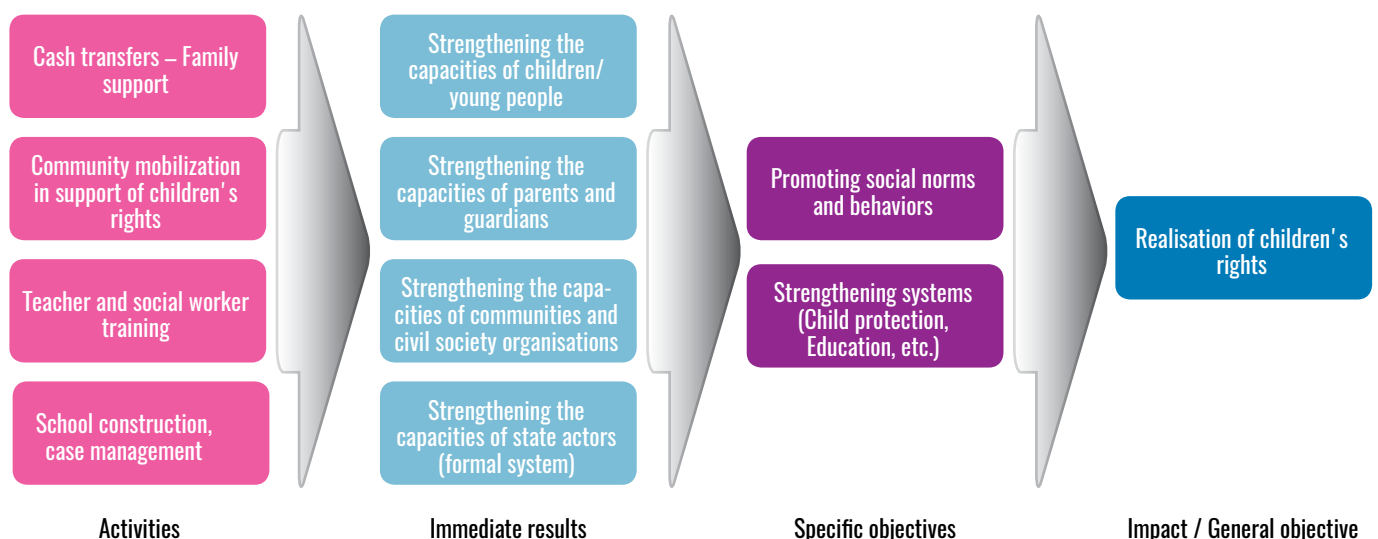
By pursuing these goals, SIF will contribute to achieving SDG 4, 5, 8 and 16.

To create a favourable climate for the sustainable realisation of these rights, SIF will catalyse change by targeting the following specific outcomes (OC):

- > **OC1:** Promote social and gender norms and behaviours that contribute to children's rights.
- > **OC2:** Support inclusive, effective systems (child protection, education, etc.) to implement preventive activities and broader measures (more favourable laws, policies, budgetary allowances and governmental services for children's rights).
- > **OC3:** Prevent and effectively respond to violations of children's rights, especially in crisis contexts.

A series of outputs (OP) will need to be achieved in order to attain these outcomes. This will involve strengthening the capabilities of children, young people and all individuals to help them realise their rights, both in their immediate and wider environment.

Strategic framework diagram



OC1. Promote social and gender norms and behaviours that contribute to children's rights

SIF will prioritise programmes that influence social and gender norms, and the behaviours they cause, in order to support non-discrimination, inclusion and gender equality and thus promote children's rights.

Our activities will cover the various aspects of this strategy, and will focus on countering norms and practices that:

- > encourage violence towards children, including sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)
- > are not favourable to girls' education
- > do not encourage the inclusive and active participation and decision-making of children.

To achieve this, SIF will strengthen the capacities and support the involvement of children and young people, as well as families and community actors, so that they can prevent and respond to violations of children's rights.

3.1.1 OP1. The capacities of children and young people are strengthened

Since children and young people are a powerful force for social change, SIF will strengthen their capabilities so that they can speak up for themselves, participate in realising their own rights and become more resilient. This will include:

- > child-friendly communication campaigns so that they are better informed about human rights, children's rights and gender norms
- > strengthening their ability to protect themselves from violence
- > interventions to improve their psychosocial well-being and mental health
- > equal access to quality education and support to acquire the skills they need for their future
- > supporting groups of children that are engaged in activities that promote their rights
- > supporting young people to achieve socio-economic integration.

SIF will also strengthen the broader capabilities of children and young people by facilitating their participation in its programmes. SIF also intends to build up its expertise so as to develop other activities in the future:

- > support for youth activist organisations committed to making their voice heard
- > advocacy activities so that children's and young people's views are taken into account and better reflected in policies that affect their rights.

3.1.2 OP2. The capacities of parents and other caregivers are strengthened

SIF will also strengthen "caregiving environments"²¹, primarily families, so that they can carry out their responsibilities and play their part in realising children's rights. This will include:

- > social support for families
- > support to strengthen their livelihoods and meet children's basic needs, including access to food and health
- > strengthening caregivers' psychosocial well-being and mental health
- > strengthening parenting skills and promoting positive education²²
- > assistance to ensure that children have access to quality education
- > strengthening social ties between parents/caregivers and other members of the community so that they can receive appropriate, local support over the long-term.

3.1.3 OP3. The capacities of community actors and civil society organisations are strengthened

Since communities also play a very important role in the lives of children and young people, SIF will support community actors and organisations, as well as civil society organisations, to help them fulfil their collective responsibility towards children. More specifically, this will include:

- > building protective environments for children and young people
- > supporting positive social and gender norms and practices that encourage the realisation of children's rights, and countering harmful social norms
- > meeting children's basic needs, especially their protection, psychosocial well-being and education needs.

²¹ A caregiving environment "includes both formal, legal arrangements and informal arrangements in which the caregiver does not have legal responsibility" (CPMS). With respect to support programmes for talibé children and young people, this environment could therefore include Koranic teachers.

²² Children's rights, positive parenting, child protection, education, monitoring learning and involvement in schooling, health, nutrition and hygiene, etc.

- > strengthening links between children and their peers, families, formal and informal systems, including referral mechanisms to access support services (e.g. social services, healthcare, education, etc.)
- > engaging in advocacy towards duty bearers, if necessary, with the support of local authorities and other influential community members
- > ensuring preparedness, with the necessary capacity to respond to disaster and emergency situations.

Community-based approaches²³ will also be necessary to reinforce the participation and mobilisation of community actors and organisations, and thus enable them to prevent and respond to violations of children’s rights and any form of discrimination. More specifically, this will involve:

- > Training and communication activities, especially on measures to prevent and respond to rights violations
- > Strengthening community support networks
- > Assistance to develop community-based organisations and mechanisms
- > Assistance to set up discussion and consultation forums within the community
- > Support for the development and implementation of community initiatives that promote the rights and participation of children
- > Assistance to develop and implement communication strategies to transform social and gender norms and address community practices that negatively affect children’s rights
- > Assistance to develop support services for children and community-based referral mechanisms, especially for protection and education (e.g. child-friendly spaces).

SIF will make sure that capacity-building interventions for community actors are inclusive (i.e. comprise diverse community representatives) and culture-sensitive.

OC2. Support inclusive, effective systems (child protection, education, etc.) that enable large-scale preventive measures and responses

SIF recognises the need to provide a continuum of accessible services for children and young people. The organisation will therefore take action to reinforce formal systems - especially child protection and education systems - in order to achieve positive outcomes for children in the long term. Within these systems, SIF will support the inclusion of the most vulnerable and marginalised children and young people: talibé children and young people, children with disabilities, etc.

The organisation will prioritise the following actions: influencing legislation and public policies that support children’s rights; improving service delivery; enhancing dialogue and collaboration between communities, state actors and local authorities.

1. Through these actions, SIF will help strengthen child protection systems by:

- > Developing minimum quality standards and protocols for protection
- > Strengthening services for children at all levels, especially services to prevent, identify and respond to violence inflicted upon children (social services, education). This will involve developing skills among the social service workforce²⁴ and facilitating their connections with the protection, healthcare and education systems
- > Advocacy for legislation, public policies and funding that guarantee protection for all children and provide them with unfettered access to quality services.

2. SIF will also support capacity building and the integration of child protection within **education systems** to provide children and young people with better, long-term access to quality education that is safe, equitable and inclusive. In doing so, the organisation will promote a learner-orientated approach and prioritise appropriate training and skills, including life skills. This will include:

- > Advocacy for legislation, public policies and funding that foster equitable access to quality education and training opportunities, in particular by supporting the most disadvantaged and marginalised children and young people
- > Support for safe learning environments that stimulate children, promote their well-being, and encourage the involvement of families and communities
- > Capacity building for education staff and services, covering topics such as child-centred, participatory teaching methods and child protection
- > Assessment of learning outcomes, especially fundamental skills
- > Developing transition pathways between non-formal educational alternatives (outside formal schools) and the formal education system, including for professional training.

Strengthening these systems will require close coordination and cooperation with governments, as well as with other organisations and civil society actors.

²³ See section 5.

²⁴ The social service workforce includes different types of professionals and paraprofessionals who work on behalf of vulnerable children and families. Government and civil society social service actors at local, national and regional levels play significant roles in the care and protection of children. They are a core component of formal child protection systems. A “paraprofessional social worker” is a staff person or volunteer – often community-based – who is not formally qualified but has some of the competencies required to serve the needs of children and their families. (CPMS).

With its intersectoral approach, SIF will also work on strengthening collaboration and coordination between various sectors. The organisation will also seek to close the gap between informal and formal systems, by bringing children and their caregivers closer to service providers.

OC3. Prevent and effectively respond to violations of children's rights, especially in crisis contexts

SIF does not view emergency humanitarian action in isolation, but instead as an integral part of interventions to bring about more fundamental transformations. SIF will therefore seek to implement timely, child-centred, high-quality humanitarian programmes, not only to help save children's lives and dignity but also to develop systems that are more resilient and make a lasting contribution to their rights.

During humanitarian crises, and especially during recurrent or protracted crises, SIF will thus seek to strengthen the capacities of institutions and communities to make them more inclusive, child-centred and resilient, so that they can play a more prominent role in protecting children.

SIF will also bolster the resilience of children and their caregivers, by supporting their social and emotional well-being so that they can effectively cope with crisis situations.

In addition, SIF will help enhance peaceful co-existence by ensuring equitable, inclusive access to basic services (child protection, education, WASH, etc.), by encouraging the meaningful participation of children and young people in decisions that affect them, or by taking action to promote social cohesion.

To effectively prevent and respond to violations of children's rights, SIF will either intervene directly in the field, or support community, civil society or state actors, according to local capacities and the prevailing context.

SECTION 3

FOCUS AREAS



This section describes the focus areas that SIF will prioritise to support the realisation of children's rights. These focus areas will help to guide programmes targeting child protection and education outcomes, as well as FSL, WASH or environmental objectives.

Field missions will adapt programmes, programme approaches and partnerships to each specific context. Operational decisions regarding the implementation of this strategy will therefore be based on:

- 1) Identification of existing rights violations and the causes behind them, as well as local needs and capacities
- 2) Analysis of other stakeholders and complementary interventions
- 3) SIF's comparative advantage.

I. RIGHT TO PROTECTION AGAINST VIOLENCE

Within the scope of this strategy, SIF will contribute to protecting children and young people against violence and abuse, exploitation, neglect and harmful practices.

To achieve this objective, SIF will:

- > prioritise preventive activities against any form of violence so that children and young people can live in a safe and protective environment
- > enhance responses to violence against children, by strengthening structures and services that provide support and care for children who are victims of violence.

Programming strategies will first seek to address the root causes of this violence, including any social, cultural and economic factors. Assistance will also be provided to strengthen child protection systems, especially informal ones. SIF will initially leverage these existing formal and informal systems and mechanisms²⁵, as well as working to strengthen their capacity and harness synergies.

Since family environments play a central role in child protection, SIF will prioritise enhancing and strengthening practices and services that allow children to remain and thrive within their own family (or in another family environment). The organisation will also foster other child-friendly environments, for example schools (including non-formal establishments). This assistance will aim to provide children with a caring, protective environment that supports their healthy development.

1.1 Prevent the separation of children from family and strengthen family environments

As a priority, SIF will seek to prevent the separation of children from their families and strengthen their family environments, so that all children can thrive, including disabled children. In particular, the organisation will support the most vulnerable caregivers to enable them to meet children's needs.

This is a key objective of its sponsorship programme for orphaned children.

Priorities and **key actions:**

- > Support at-risk families by providing holistic assistance to meet their basic needs, including economic support
- > Raise awareness among families about the importance of birth registration²⁶ and help them carry out the necessary procedures to register their children
- > Support families through activities to promote psychosocial well-being
- > Train caregivers in positive education²⁷, in particular to help build positive relationships and strengthen family bonds between caregivers and children.

If children do not live with their parents, SIF can also help tighten family bonds (identifying parents, awareness raising, facilitation of regular meetings/interactions, etc.).

²⁵ Including parenting practices.

²⁶ Or other registration processes if relevant (e.g. to obtain refugee status).

²⁷ Refer to the guidance note on positive education and parenting skills for more details.

1.2 Protect children and young people from violence, including gender-based violence (GBV)

SIF's priority is to protect children and young people from physical and psychological maltreatment.²⁸ The organisation will develop its actions to protect children from sexual and gender-based violence²⁹, and will strengthen its interventions to facilitate birth registration (or obtain identity documents) and help reduce child labour.

This will include the following actions:

- > **Prevention:** promoting and protecting children's - and especially girls' - fundamental rights, and addressing the root causes of violence, including GBV (e.g. early marriage)³⁰
- > **Response:** ensuring that children and young people have timely access to quality multisectoral services that are adapted to their gender, age, disabilities and to the context.

To protect children and young people against GBV, SIF will particularly focus all forms of gender-based inequality, stigma and discrimination to help transform the norms, roles and unequal power relationships that undermine gender equality. The organisation may also seek to support children and young people in accessing services for child and youth survivors³¹.

Strategic priorities:

Based on the INSPIRE strategies³² and SIF's comparative advantages, the organisation will contribute to protecting children by focusing on the following areas:

(1) Promoting social and gender norms that support the protection of children:

- > Transforming restrictive or harmful social and gender norms
- > Community mobilisation programmes and awareness raising on child protection and education.

(2) Supporting education and practical knowledge:

- > Increasing school attendance rates
- > Setting up a safe school environment that encourages learning
- > Improving children's knowledge about the risk of violence and how they can protect themselves
- > Training on practical/life skills and social skills
- > Programmes to prevent any form of violence, including intimate partner violence among adolescents.

(3) Support for parents and other caregivers:

- > Home visits
- > Creating groups within communities
- > Comprehensive programmes (capacity building, positive parenting³³, psychosocial support, peer support, etc.).

(4) Support for income-generating activities and economic empowerment (with FSL):

- > Cash transfers (particularly grants within the sponsorship programme)
- > Vocational training
- > Microfinance, combined with training on gender norms
- > Group savings and lending, combined with training on gender equality.

To a lesser degree, SIF may also contribute to the following actions:

(5) Responding to incidences of violence, including the provision of appropriate services according to the child's gender, age, disabilities and the context:

- > Identifying child protection cases/needs and other actions, including referral for support
- > Mental health and psychosocial support / counselling and therapeutic approaches.

(6) Supporting and strengthening the enforcement of laws and the implementation of policies that guarantee the protection of children, in particular through advocacy (e.g. publicising laws that prohibit the corporal punishment of children by parents, teachers or other caregivers).

²⁸ Maltreatment: see glossary.

²⁹ SGBV: see glossary.

³⁰ Refer to the guidance note on "protecting children from violence" for more information on the various factors behind the many forms of violence, at the individual, family, community and society level

³¹ Child survivor: see glossary.

³² INSPIRE. Seven Strategies for Ending Violence Against Children. World Health Organisation. 2017.

³³ Positive parenting : see glossary.

This will require the development of integrated, multisectoral programmes, bringing together protection, education and FSL.

Children and young people must be the focal point of protection systems, both as active participants and change agents. SIF will seek to empower children to play a part in their own protection, according to their capabilities, by supporting them to understand and identify risks of violence and influencing the attitudes and behaviours of adults and their peers.

To this end, SIF will:

- > Raise the awareness of children and young people about their right to protection and existing services, encourage them to share their experiences and concerns, and support them in asserting their rights.
- > Promote positive peer learning and support to ensure that children and young people behave in a non-violent and supportive manner.

Prime responsibility for protecting children does however remain with adults, especially parents and caregivers, families and the community. SIF will therefore provide them with support, to help them fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

This will entail developing the capacity of families and other caregivers:

- > to understand the causes and consequences of violence against children
- > on positive parenting
- > to prevent, identify, report and respond to any incidences of violence both within and outside their household.

SIF will also strengthen the capacity of community actors and organisations, including children's and youth organisations, so that they can:

- > understand and promote children's right to protection, through communication campaigns and community mobilisation
- > prevent, identify, report and respond to any incidences of violence against children
- > take collective action against discriminatory behaviour or harmful practices towards certain children
- > advocate for child protection with duty bearers and service providers.

For key actions and activities to prevent and respond to physical and psychological maltreatment, neglect, exploitation and violence: see the guidance note in the annex

Special attention will be paid to protecting children and young people when they are using the online digital environment. To counteract the risks associated with using digital technology, SIF will work with children, young people, parents and other caregivers. This will mainly involve making sure that children and young people:

- > are protected against the improper collection, use and storage of data, especially their personal data
- > are aware of the risks associated with the digital technologies that they use and therefore better protected against online intimidation, harassment, exploitation and sexual abuse.

It is however important to make sure that the right to online protection does not conflict with children's other rights, including their rights to privacy, participation, freedom of expression, and access to information.

Key actions:

- > Raising awareness/training children and young people to objectively assess information and exercise critical judgement when using the internet and social media
- > Raising awareness among parents and other caregivers about the opportunities and risks of digital technologies.

1.3 Ensure civil registration and legal identity

SIF will seek to promote and support the civil registration of children, especially birth registration.

Birth registration is essential to give children a legal identity and nationality and to facilitate access to basic services (health, education). It also offers children better protection, for example against exploitation and statelessness.

SIF's priority will be to raise awareness among parents and caregivers on the importance of registration³⁴ and acquisition of relevant documentation, and if necessary, provide them with support to access registration services.

Key actions:

- > **Raising awareness** among parents/guardians about the importance of birth registration and the procedures for registering children's births with designated authorities
- > Providing support for parents/guardians with more complex cases (e.g. expiry of the legal time limit or validity date) so that they can obtain assistance, such as **legal aid**
- > **Advocacy** for universal access to birth registration or for easier access to other registration processes or identity documents that offer protection (e.g. registration of refugees and internally displaced persons).

1.4 Protect children from child labour

SIF will work to protect children from child labour³⁵, and especially from the worst forms of child labour. This objective will apply to children and young people that are at the greatest risk of child labour, in particular disadvantaged children and young people such as young orphans and "talibés".

SIF will take action to reduce the following risk factors: food insecurity and insufficient livelihoods; lack of access to basic services and education; socio-cultural norms that perpetuate child labour.

Key actions:

- > Providing children, families/caregivers and communities with context-specific information
- > Supporting families/caregivers to meet their basic needs, especially through economic empowerment programmes
- > Ensuring that children, especially those at risk, have access to education and vocational training
- > Opening up pathways to decent work³⁶ for young people of legal working age
- > Facilitating access to protection services and psychosocial support for children that are already working.

1.5 Promote psychosocial well-being and mental health

SIF will seek to improve the psychosocial well-being of children, young people and their caregivers, and prevent mental health conditions³⁷.

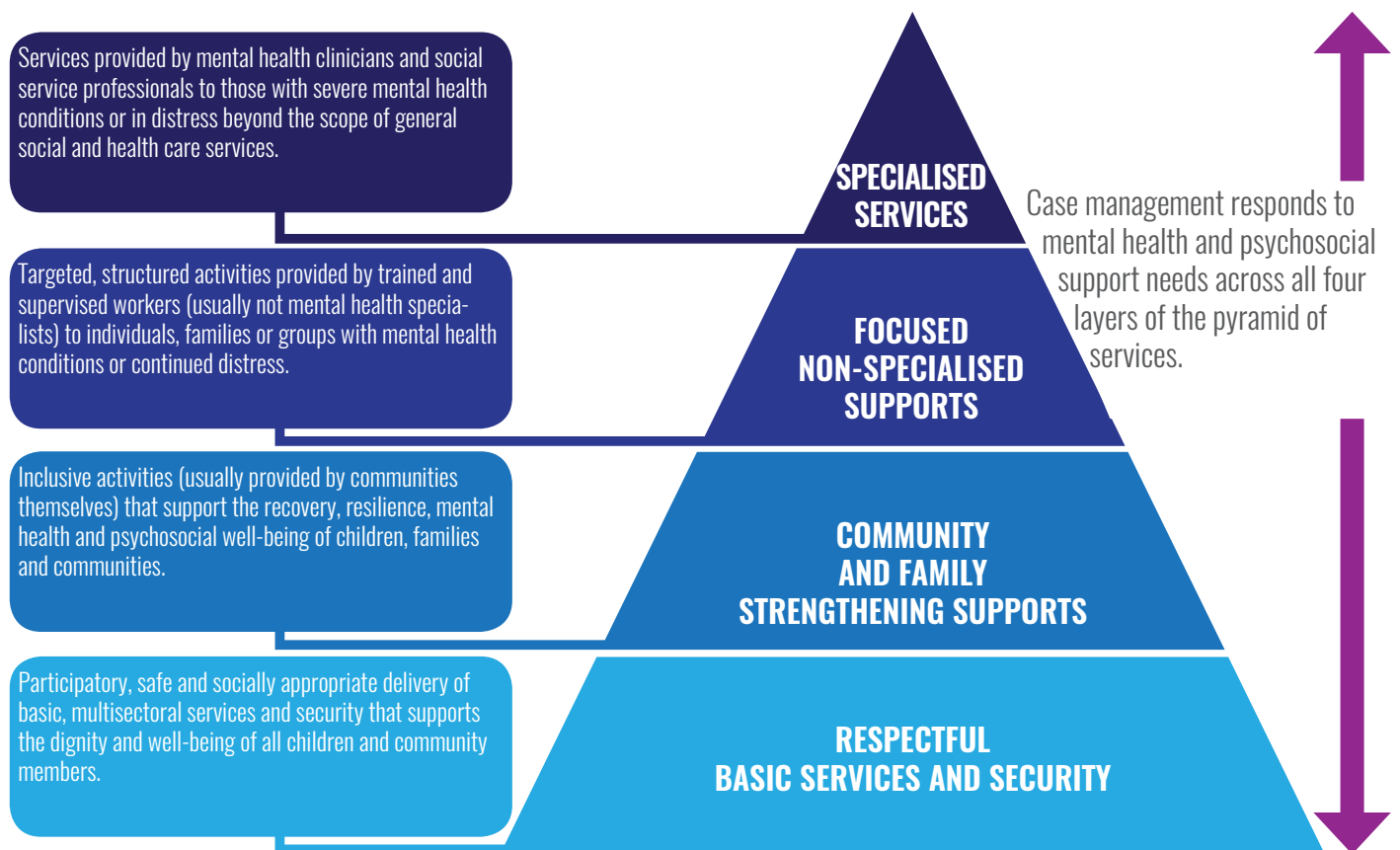
SIF will prioritise interventions where the needs of children, young people and their parents/caregivers can be met by community-based psychosocial and mental health support services, using a coordinated, multisectoral approach. The organisation will also facilitate their access to the other levels of the pyramid of services.

³⁴ Births, deaths, refugee status, etc.

³⁵ Child labour: see glossary.

³⁶ Decent work: see glossary.

³⁷ For more details, see the guidance note on the promotion of psychosocial well-being and mental health.



Mental health and psychosocial support: Pyramid of services (source: CPMS)

Key actions:

- > Build capacity/train local and community actors, including children and young people, on mental health and psychosocial support (e.g. psychological first aid³⁸, signs of distress and mental health conditions, referral pathways to appropriate support services).
- > Collaborate with various actors (formal and informal) to make sure that referral mechanisms exist to access a continuum of psychosocial and mental health support services (or support stakeholders to formalise such systems if they do not exist).
- > Support the implementation of psychosocial support activities for children, young people and parents/caregivers that are adapted to the context³⁹ and their needs and capacities.
- > Community-level psychosocial support interventions to prevent and counter stigma and discrimination, and promote social cohesion (raise awareness within the community about children's well-being and protection needs, strengthen usual community support mechanisms for children and families, develop referral mechanisms between sectors and levels of support) (see guidance note in the annex for more details).

- > Provide support to children and caregivers who have more severe or complex mental health conditions and/or show severe signs of distress or serious and persistent signs of stress⁴⁰ so that they can access specialised services (including external psychological support)⁴¹.

1.6 Protect children during emergencies

In emergency situations, SIF will adhere to the CPMS and will particularly focus on:

- > Meeting children's essential needs, which includes protecting them against separation from family, physical or emotional maltreatment, sexual or gender-based violence, child labour and psychosocial distress
- > Developing appropriate intervention strategies that are mainly based on informal child protection systems: setting up group activities that support children's well-being, strengthening family and caregiving environments, community-based approaches
- > Ensuring that children and young people participate in activities, to develop their ability to protect themselves and mitigate the impact of the crisis
- > Integrating child protection into SIF's interventions in other sectors: Education, WASH, FSL, Shelter

³⁸ Psychological first aid: see glossary.

³⁹ For example: during an epidemic, support activities in homes rather than group activities; during armed conflict, activities to respond to chronic stress.

⁴⁰ For example: prolonged distress, self-harm, suicide attempts, severe behavioural problems, difficulty completing basic daily tasks.

⁴¹ If specialised services are not available, a referral should be made to child protection actors that provide alternative interventions based on family-strengthening support and community-level support (UNICEF. Operational Guidelines – Community-based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Humanitarian Settings: Three-tiered Support for Children and Families [Field Test Version] 2018).

- > Safeguarding children
- > Advocacy within humanitarian coordination circles to make protection a high priority for aid organisations and government authorities.

Child protection and the right to shelter⁴²

In emergency situations and post-crisis transitions, SIF may also take action to uphold children's rights to adequate shelter and settlement in order to protect them, provide them with safe living conditions, reduce the spread of disease, and contribute to their stability and psychosocial well-being.

Key actions:

- > Install/construct shelters in appropriate areas, taking account of potential physical dangers, as well as land and property rights, to safeguard families from injuries, violence, exploitation, or forced eviction
- > Design accessible shelters that provide physical safety and reduce the risks of family separation. These shelters must be well lit, context-appropriate, and adapted to the specific needs of children and young people.

II. RIGHT TO EDUCATION AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES TO FACILITATE SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Within the scope of this strategy, SIF will take action to ensure that children and young people not only have access to quality learning opportunities but can also acquire the necessary skills to build their future, and integrate and thrive within society.

SIF will prioritise support for **basic education** for all children (of compulsory school age.), particularly **formal primary education**.

In certain contexts, such as during humanitarian crises, SIF will also provide support for **non-formal education** and **alternative education models** (accelerated learning, catch-up classes, apprenticeship, etc.), which are essential to offer learning opportunities for the most disadvantaged and marginalised children and young people. SIF will seek to support them to participate in national exams, promote the recognition of skills acquired outside the formal school system, help develop **transition pathways** between non-formal educational alternatives and formal systems, and develop appropriate models to integrate non-formal schools into the formal system.

SIF will support state actors to fulfil their role of effectively guaranteeing the universal right to education and free access to basic education. SIF will **prioritise** support for the **public education system and the provision of free schooling**, especially primary education. The organisation nevertheless recognises that private education brings not only new risks, but also new possibilities to realise the right of all children to an education. SIF may therefore provide support for **private non-profit schools** and public-private partnerships. This may involve strengthening regulatory frameworks, reinforcing the application of minimum quality standards, or improving learning environments, particularly in community schools and Koranic schools. In so doing, SIF will make sure it takes into account the **Abidjan Principles on the right to education**⁴³.

These actions to promote the right to education will primarily focus on the most vulnerable and marginalised children and young people, in order to promote inclusive education⁴⁴ that offers equal opportunities to children with disabilities and special learning needs.

SIF will therefore promote: the education of girls; mainstreaming of gender equality in education, according to the local context⁴⁵; and the transformation of gender-based norms and roles within education systems (for example by promoting gender-sensitive curricula and specific teaching approaches).

⁴² "Shelter" refers to the household living space, including the items necessary for daily activities. "Settlement" refers to the wider locations where people and communities live (CPMS).

⁴³ Abidjan Principles on the right to education. Guiding principles on the human rights obligations of States to provide public education and to regulate private involvement in education. 2019.

⁴⁴ Inclusive education: education that allows all children to learn together and that meets their individual needs.

⁴⁵ This may focus either on girls or boys, according to the context.

The organisation will also work on adaptable, sustainable innovations, for example by promoting learning methods and pathways that are adapted to the specific needs of the most vulnerable children and young people (e.g., talibé children and young people). SIF may therefore take action to increase access to digital learning, for example by developing the skills of educational staff and by publishing digital content (online and offline), provided that these activities are context appropriate.

2.1 Ensure equal access to education and learning opportunities

SIF's priority is to ensure equal access to education and quality learning opportunities for all children and young people, with a special focus on the most disadvantaged and marginalised among them⁴⁶. This will involve promoting a wide variety of learning pathways, to cater for the diverse interests and learning needs of children and young people, either in a formal or non-formal education setting.

Key actions to ensure equal access:

- Support **social protection** for the most vulnerable children and their families, with a particular focus on:
 - Direct **cash transfers** to help children access basic services, especially education (e.g. grants for orphaned children).
 - Interventions to support **employment and livelihoods**, to ensure that families have sufficient income and that children are cared for properly. This may also involve actions to improve the employability of young people.
 - **Increasing awareness** among families about existing social services, and facilitating their access to social insurance and/or welfare benefits (e.g. for children with disabilities).
- Provision of appropriate educational equipment and resources: school supplies, uniforms and learning materials for pupils; supply of menstrual hygiene products.
- Interventions to encourage positive social change and influence social and gender norms that hinder children's education—especially for girls, children of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, children with disabilities, etc. This may involve organising community dialogue and communication campaigns.
- Support for school enrolment/back-to-school programmes, including social mobilisation activities.

- Facilitate access for children and young people to various learning pathways and appropriate, inclusive formal and non-formal education options. This includes support for primary and secondary-level education, vocational training and apprenticeships, accelerated learning/catch-up programmes and everyday life skills. This will involve establishing relevant transitions between various learning pathways, between non-formal and formal education, and supporting vocational guidance.
- Actions to improve security for children on the way to and from school and to ensure that school environments are safe and promote learning.
- Ensure physical accessibility to schools, including for children with disabilities, and provide appropriate equipment.
- Advocate for access to education for more vulnerable groups, including girls, children with disabilities and children that are refugees. To help strengthen systems, carry out advocacy activities with state actors to improve educational strategies and increase the national education budget, prioritising the early stages of education⁴⁷ and targeting the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children.

2.2 Ensure education and skills acquisition for all

SIF will develop its actions to ensure that all children can learn and acquire the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in their personal, academic and professional lives. This should take place in safe, stimulating learning environments that support their well-being and encourage the involvement of their families and communities. The organisation will pay particular attention to education for the most disadvantaged pupils, who have specific learning needs.

To help alleviate the learning crisis⁴⁸, SIF will prioritise:

- (1) the acquisition of fundamental skills (literacy and numeracy), which are essential to continue learning, to be more productive at work and to play a more active role in society.
- (2) the acquisition of practical/transferable skills (managing emotions, participation, communication, social negotiation, leadership, critical thinking, problem solving, environmental awareness, etc. These everyday life skills enable children to learn, adapt and meet personal, social, academic, professional and environmental challenges).

⁴⁶ Inequalities due to their geographical location, social and economic situation, gender, disabilities, ethnic origin, status as a refugee or displaced person, etc.

⁴⁷ See the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity's recommendations to adopt "progressive universalism" in education.

⁴⁸ The learning crisis refers to the large numbers of children that attend school but do not attain the required minimum level of knowledge.

The organisation will also take action to support marginalised young people to acquire vocational/technical skills and prepare themselves for work in specific fields or professions.

According to the context, SIF may also support children and young people to develop digital skills, so that they can safely use technology, communicate and manage information, and exercise their critical judgement when doing so. This also involves preparing them to cope with the negative aspects of social media, for example by raising their awareness about online abuse.

Key actions to ensure education and skills acquisition:

1. Children, households and communities:

- > Develop a safe, stimulating family environment from a very early age (meeting basic needs, education on parenting, encouraging enrolment in preschool education, support for children as they learn, including at home)
- > Support for children with learning difficulties, in particular through tutoring
- > Social support for parents through parents' associations, support groups, community-based activities, etc.
- > Encourage parents⁴⁹ and other members of the community to get involved in schools
- > Support community organisations that provide support for schools (management, monitoring access and learning outcomes⁵⁰, etc.)

2. Schools and other learning environments:

- > Construction/rehabilitation of facilities and provision of equipment to ensure that learning spaces are safe, inclusive and support children's well-being
- > Provision of teaching resources and materials
- > Capacity building:
 - Training for teaching staff (professional and paraprofessional) on child-centred teaching methods⁵¹
 - Training for teaching staff, children and young people on Social and Emotional Learning⁵² and practical skills → post-training monitoring and constructive teaching supervision
 - Awareness raising for teaching staff and children on children's rights, social and gender norms; violence at school, including GBV; bullying and stigma towards children with disabilities
 - Civic education: rights and duties of children, citizens, governance institutions, etc.
 - Environmental education

- According to the context, health education activities may also be carried out (hygiene, sexual and reproductive health, menstrual hygiene) as well as health-at-school schemes (road safety, fighting substance abuse, etc.)
- > Assistance to measure learning outcomes and accountability for these outcomes.

3. Education system:

- > Contribute to defining norms and standards
- > Ensure that education programmes are appropriate to the context (inclusive, comprise everyday life skills, adapted to the job market)
- > Strengthen the technical and material capacities of decentralised education departments to enable them to fulfil their monitoring and control duties
- > Raise the awareness of formal system actors on transition pathways from and to non formal educational alternatives.

All these actions, which seek to improve the quality of education according to international standards, will be carried out with respect for the educational traditions of the communities involved.

2.3 Support vocational training and socio-economic integration for young people

SIF will also reinforce its action to support vocational training and socio-economic integration for young people, particularly the most disadvantaged among them.

The organisation will support young people to access opportunities and resources, by providing support for learning and employment. SIF will seek to improve the employability of the most vulnerable and marginalised young people and increase their chances of finding decent work and formal employment⁵³. In particular, SIF will provide support for orphaned and talibé young people.

The organisation will support young people to define their professional goals, accompany them during their vocational training and set up partnerships to provide them with continuous support.

During this process, SIF will take into account stereotypes regarding the appropriateness of certain types of work for a given gender or group. In doing so, the organisation aims to break down cultural and gender barriers that girls and other at-risk groups often face.

⁴⁹ E.g. Election of parent representatives, participation in educational decisions.

⁵⁰ Evidence shows that community-based monitoring can be one of the most cost-effective practices to increase access and learning outcomes (UNICEF).

⁵¹ Learner-centred pedagogy: teaching methods that take into account the child's capabilities and engage children on the basis of their capabilities and learning levels.

⁵² Social and emotional learning (SEL) is an array of teaching tools that aim to develop psychosocial skills. <https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/>

⁵³ Or at least stable, long-term jobs.

SIF will also develop specific actions to empower girls and help them to become independent. Giving girls better access to and control over intellectual, material and financial resources enables them to play a more active role in decision-making.

Key actions:

- > Support discussion forums with community actors on issues surrounding the employability of young people, especially girls
- > Local advocacy: support to set up, coordinate and/or participate in consultation frameworks with local authorities on the inclusion and socio-economic integration of marginalised young people
- > Capacity building for private sector actors, with a particular focus on workshops to support young people
- > Support vocational training for young people in various promising sectors and fields
- > Training for employment (vocational guidance, job-seeking, etc.)
- > Support young people to identify and carry out practical work placements
- > Support young entrepreneurs, especially young women:
 - Support young people to develop and implement a life project and a business plan, taking into account gender-related and cultural factors, as well as local economic opportunities
 - Facilitate mentorship opportunities for young people, with a special focus on female mentors
 - Support young people to form economic empowerment groups (for women, men or both sexes)
 - Guidance for young people on promotional activities (trade fairs, exhibitions, etc.).

Activities to empower young women will not only include support for their training (literacy, vocational training, entrepreneurial training) and employment but will also entail developing their life skills (e.g. self-confidence) and supporting women's groups to increase their group empowerment.

2.4 Develop intersectoral approaches

For education, the intersectoral approach involves recognising schools as places where children's needs can be identified and where they can access other integrated services (protection, psychosocial support, food, WASH⁵⁴, health, etc.). Likewise, interventions in other fields (child protection, FSL, WASH, shelter) can help remove or reduce the obstacles that prevent children attending school and lift barriers to learning. Within the scope of this strategy, SIF will develop integrated programmes to promote education and child protection.

Education and child protection

SIF will promote access to quality, inclusive, formal and non-formal education, in protective, stimulating, safe environments, in order to:

- promote gender equality and the participation of all children
- strengthen relationships between learners and teaching staff
- include social and emotional learning, as well as practical know-how (life skills) to bolster the protection of children.

Key actions:

- > Support to set up, construct or rehabilitate safe learning environments (that are disaster-resilient, accessible for all children, and fitted with quality equipment)
- > In partnership with teaching staff and pupils, support to set up codes of conduct, feedback mechanisms and safe reporting channels that are adapted to children
- > Development of multisectoral referral pathways to meet children's diverse needs
- > Capacity building for teaching staff (professional and paraprofessional) on child protection, to ensure children's safety, prevent abuse and respond to all types of violence
- > Support for teaching staff's well-being: peer support, information on available psychosocial/mental health support services, etc.
- > Capacity building for children and young people to help them protect themselves against all types of violence, including peer violence, harassment and sexual abuse
- > Awareness raising on child protection for teachers' and/or parents' associations and other community actors
- > Advocacy with public authorities to improve the integration of protection into education strategies.

2.5 Ensure education during emergencies

During humanitarian crises, SIF's actions will be guided by the INEE minimum standards and will prioritise:

- safe access, for all children, to relevant, quality educational opportunities
- continuous, quality learning in safe, inclusive environments that support children's well-being.

The organisation will also seek to strengthen the resilience of both children and education services.

⁵⁴ See Section 3. IV on WASH

Key actions:

1. Prevention

SIF will prioritise community resilience to cope with crises, including the resilience of children and teaching staff. This will be achieved by factoring various types of risks and disasters into programming, including climate-related disasters. This may include:

- > Strengthening disaster risk reduction and management (DRR/DRM)⁵⁵ capacities among children, parents, teaching staff and other community actors
- > Advocacy with public authorities to develop disaster prevention and preparedness plans, to build a resilient education system that can maintain educational continuity during a crisis
- > Promoting educational programmes that address the underlying causes of violence (raising awareness on human rights, developing practical skills such as conflict resolution, promoting respect, tolerance and inclusion, etc.).

2. Response

When intervening during emergencies and protracted crises, SIF will prioritise the protection of children and young people (safety, psychosocial support, etc.).

To ensure that all children have access to education, SIF will provide priority support for children who are not enrolled or have dropped out of school. This will include proposing and supporting the establishment of various formal and non-formal learning pathways, facilitating children's enrolment, re-enrolment and continued attendance within learning programmes, and easing transitions between various education systems⁵⁶.

The organisation will also provide the most vulnerable families with cash transfers to improve school access and attendance, and meet children's other basic needs, for example through its sponsorship programme for orphaned children.

SIF may also take action to:

- > set up safe learning environments, to help protect children and teaching staff and support their psychosocial well-being
- > promote the education of girls, and the protection of children against violence, especially sexual and gender-based violence at school
- > support children who are likely to abandon/drop out of school, including via remedial programmes.

In certain situations, SIF may support the development of alternative educational programmes and teaching methods, especially during epidemics and school closures: educational programmes on the television or radio, autonomous learning programmes with discussions between teachers and students via social media or by phone, assistance for parents to help them monitor learning, home visits in accordance with health guidelines, etc.

SIF may also carry out advocacy to make education a priority, while seeking to mobilise funds for humanitarian aid.

III. RIGHT TO FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS (FSL)

In conjunction with its FSL programmes, SIF will help ensure food security for children and young people and safeguard their livelihoods.

3.1 Ensure food security for children and young people

SIF will take action to safeguard children's right to food security, which is a key factor not only for their health, but also reinforces their protection, well-being and access to education.

The goal is to ensure that children have access to sufficient, healthy, nutritious food to meet their daily energy requirements.

Key actions:

- > Give priority to the most vulnerable, at-risk households and children in all food security interventions, including food distributions during seasonal projects (Aqiqa, Ramadan, etc.).
- > Contribute to providing meals in schools and other learning environments (e.g. school canteens during emergency situations)
- > Promote the creation of vegetable gardens, especially in schools
- > Conduct food education and awareness sessions with children and young people, as well as their caregivers.

⁵⁵ Please refer to Section 3.V on the right to live in a healthy and sustainable environment.

⁵⁶ Catch-up programme, accelerated education programme, bridging programme.

3.2 Strengthen livelihoods

SIF will help strengthen the livelihoods of caregivers so that they can meet their children's basic needs (food, health, education, etc.) and create a protective environment that supports children's well-being and development (reducing the risks of neglect, child labour, child marriage, etc.). The organisation will also develop programmes to support young people's autonomy and economic security.

Key actions:

- > SIF's first priority will be to increase the income and economic resources of families/caregivers:
 - Cash transfers to meet children's basic needs, including via the sponsorship programme
 - Assistance to develop income generating activities and support professional integration
- > SIF may take specific action to advance women's independence and empowerment, which is a key factor in realising children's rights. Improving women's access to and control over resources can help them play a more active role in decision-making, invest more money in children's health and education, and contribute to preventing maltreatment, exploitation and neglect.
- > To maximise the positive impact of this economic support on children's protection, well-being and development, SIF will combine it with actions to enhance parenting skills and promote positive education.
- > SIF will also consolidate support for young people to help them access opportunities and resources⁵⁷.

IV. RIGHT TO WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

In conjunction with its WASH programmes, SIF will take action to uphold the rights of children and young people to safe, equitable and sustainable access to water, sanitation and hygiene services. This includes strengthening WASH systems in schools.

4.1 Ensure safe, equitable and sustainable access to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene

SIF will take action to develop the WASH-related capacities of children, young people and caregivers, and to improve their everyday practices, with a particular focus on girls.

Key actions:

- > Communicate key messages and guidance using child and youth-friendly approaches (managing and consuming drinking water, using latrines, handwashing, personal hygiene, menstrual hygiene, waste management, etc.)
- > Provide appropriate WASH products (kits, cash, vouchers), especially for water disinfection, hand hygiene, body hygiene and menstrual hygiene⁵⁸
- > Waste management and recycling, involving children and young people.

Where possible, SIF will integrate these actions into educational and recreational activities (e.g. theatre, games) to encourage behavioural change.

SIF will also carry out other WASH activities targeting households and communities that can help realise children's WASH rights⁵⁹.

4.2 Strengthen WASH systems and services, especially in schools

SIF will build and rehabilitate age and gender specific WASH facilities that are adapted to the local context, and will make sure that they are safe⁶⁰, accessible and adapted to all children, including children with disabilities.

Within the scope of this strategy, SIF will take action to improve access to WASH installations in schools, including in non-formal learning environments such as Koranic schools.

Key actions in schools:

- > Construction/rehabilitation of gender specific, child-friendly WASH facilities and support for waste management (drinking water supplies, handwashing facilities, toilets, waste disposal devices)
- > Capacity building (e.g. training, materials) and empowerment for local actors, including children and youth, (e.g. parents' associations, school hygiene committees) to sustainably manage and maintain installations.

Depending on the context, SIF may also develop ecological sanitation in certain schools.

⁵⁷ See Section 3. II.2.3 on supporting socio-economic integration for young people.

These actions to consolidate WASH facilities will be combined with activities to improve everyday WASH practices:

- > Communication of context-appropriate key messages and practical exercises for children and school staff
- > Implementation of specific WASH-related educational activities, for example managing, sorting and recycling waste.

V. RIGHT TO LIVE IN A HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

SIF will help uphold the right of children and young people to live in a healthy environment, with a favourable climate.

This will involve interventions to strengthen the resilience of children and young people, as well as their ability to adapt to climate change, environmental degradation and natural disasters, and to protect the environment and reduce the risks of disasters.

5.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptability to climate change, environmental degradation and natural disasters

SIF will take action to increase protection and strengthen the resilience of children and young people - especially the most vulnerable among them - to cope with climate change, environmental degradation (air pollution, dangerous waste, etc.) and natural disasters.

This will include improving their ability to adapt to the consequences of climate change and working towards disaster risk reduction and management (DRR/DRM).

SIF will therefore support community actors, including children and young people, to find context-appropriate solutions that will enable them to overcome vulnerabilities due to environmental degradation and climate change. Special attention will be paid to girls.

Within the scope of this strategy, SIF will prioritise resilience building within the education system, by focusing on safe learning environments, support for risk reduction and management in schools and context-appropriate educational activities.

A few **Key actions** at community level and in schools:

- > Community assessment of climate related and environmental degradation risks
- > Actions to adapt school facilities and make them more robust (WASH installations, sustainable energy sources, etc.)
- > Training children, families, school staff and other community actors on DRR/DRM
- > Support to form community DRR/DRM committees and DRR clubs in schools, with the participation of children⁶¹
- > Support to prepare a school safety plan, risk management plan, and contingency plan, as well as simulation exercises
- > Support to create early warning systems through in-depth analysis of local vulnerabilities and capabilities
- > DRR/DRM awareness raising campaigns, especially through DRR clubs
- > Material support and prepositioning of contingency stocks to set up safe areas for children
- > Psychosocial support programme.

5.2 Combat climate change and protect the environment

SIF will seek to combat climate change and protect the environment, by reducing pollution and conserving natural resources, as this can reduce the risk of natural disasters.

The organisation will prioritise actions that seek to influence social norms and behaviours in order to promote sustainable development. First, it will encourage existing local practices and initiatives that contribute to protecting the environment and combating climate change. It will also promote the participation of girls, who are particularly affected by these changes, in decision-making and in the design and implementation of responses.

The organisation will strive to support children and young people to become genuine change agents for environmental and climate action. This will require an integrated approach, which will involve developing their capacities and giving them the tools to share their concerns, defend their opinions, identify solutions and promote more sustainable, environmentally friendly lifestyles that are adapted to the local context.

SIF will prioritise interventions in schools and other learning environments.

⁵⁸ Menstruation kits can be provided for girls over the age of 8, depending on local culture and traditions.

⁵⁹ Please refer to the SIF WASH strategy.

⁶⁰ For example: facilities are visible, in safe locations and close to houses or other community areas (for public facilities); they are secure, robust and well lit; doors can be locked; facilities are separate for men/boys and women/girls.

Key actions:

- > Train teachers and provide them with tools on sustainable development and environmental issues, according to the local challenges and socio-cultural context
- > Support to organise awareness raising sessions and educational workshops with children: planting trees, creating vegetable gardens, waste management, recycling, etc.
- > Environmental education to help young people develop “green skills” (water, pollution, climate change, recycling, etc.).
- > Assistance to design and implement projects that help protect the environment and fight climate change.

SIF may also support the following actions:

- > Community awareness raising sessions on environmental concerns, prepared and carried out with children.
- > Advocacy to protect the environment and fight climate change, led by children and young people.

⁶¹ Ensuring gender and age diversity.

SECTION 4

APPLYING THE STRATEGY TO SPECIFIC PROGRAMMES



One of SIF's priorities is to contribute to realising the fundamental rights of the most vulnerable children and young people, especially orphans (I.) and talibé children (II.).

I. SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMME TO REALISE THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF ORPHANED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Through its sponsorship programme, SIF will contribute to realising the rights of orphaned children and young people, in particular their rights to protection and education.

The centre point of this programme is a grant to ensure that sponsored children can access their fundamental rights, which primarily means ensuring their education and meeting the other essential needs of these children and their families (food, health, etc.). Another central component of the sponsorship programme is social support provided by social workers, which may be complemented by various activities that contribute to the child's protection, well-being and development.

Outcome 1: Uphold the right of young orphans to protection against violence.

SIF will make sure that orphaned children live with their relatives/family and are protected from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. The organisation will also make sure that children without parental care are receiving appropriate interim care and protection⁶².

SIF will specifically aim to:

- > Avoid family separation and placements in orphanages⁶³
- > Protect young orphans against all types of violence (physical and psychological maltreatment, SGBV, child labour, etc.)
- > Promote their psychosocial well-being and mental health.

Outcome 2: Ensure the right of young orphans to education, quality learning opportunities and support for socio-economic integration

SIF will specifically aim to:

- > Ensure equal access for orphaned children and young people to education and quality learning opportunities

- > Make sure that all these children can learn and acquire the skills they need, starting with
- > fundamental skills and practical/transferable skills
- > Promote the acquisition of vocational/technical skills by young people
- > Enhance the employability of young people, widen their professional horizons and facilitate their access to decent work.

Outcome 3: Ensure the right of young orphans to live a healthy life, in a clean environment, and enjoy an adequate standard of living.

SIF will continue to support parents/caregivers to enable them to meet children's basic needs (food, health, etc.).

- For more details, please refer to the following document: *Sponsorship programme strategy*.

II. PROGRAMME TO REALISE THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF TALIBÉ CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Through this programme, SIF will contribute to realising the fundamental rights of talibé children and young people in traditional, non-formal Koranic schools, and promote their inclusion in society.

Outcome 1: Safeguard the right of talibé children and young people to protection against violence, maltreatment, exploitation, neglect and harmful practices

SIF will specifically aim to:

- > Facilitate the civil registration of talibé children
- > Protect children and young people against violence, by supporting existing positive social norms and traditional practices that serve children's rights and protection, and promoting alternatives to harmful practices (begging and corporal punishment⁶⁴)
- > Promote the psychosocial well-being of talibé children and young people
- > Promote tighter bonds between children and their family⁶⁵ (identifying and raising awareness of parents, facilitating regular meetings/interactions, etc.)

Outcome 2: Uphold the right of talibé children and young people to education, quality learning opportunities and socio-professional integration

⁶² Care in a family-based environment rather than placement in an institution/orphanage.

⁶³ High-quality foster care for orphaned children helps protect them from the negative impacts of institutionalisation on brain function, cognitive development and social-emotional well-being; reduces the risks of maltreatment; supports their development and psychosocial well-being and offers them better prospects for the future (INSPIRE 151).

⁶⁴ SIF does not consider the absence of such practices as a prerequisite for working with a Koranic school, but as an objective to be achieved within the scope of the intervention.

⁶⁵ However the aim is not to promote family reunification, the definitive return of the child to his/her family.

SIF will specifically aim to:

- > Increase access to education and quality learning opportunities for children and young people
- > Ensure education, acquisition of fundamental and professional skills, as well as transferable/practical skills
- > Develop transition pathways towards the formal education system (especially from primary to secondary level) and graduation/certification opportunities
- > Support young people to achieve socio-professional integration.

Outcome 3: Safeguard the right of talibé children and young people to live a healthy life, in a clean environment, and enjoy an adequate standard of living.

This will involve improving their living conditions and meeting their basic needs (food, WASH, registration for health-care services)

Outcome 4: Improve awareness about talibé children and promote their inclusion in public policies; support the integration of non-formal Koranic schools into the formal system.

This will mainly involve support to:

- > Research and develop expertise in this field, at the national and regional level
- > Develop national and local-level public policies, as well as strategies to integrate schools into the formal system
- > Consolidate the Koranic teachers' organisations, to move towards institutionalising schools in a legitimate, acceptable manner.

Community participation and an institutional framework are therefore two key aspects of this programme.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ For more information on talibé children, please refer to the report: "Inclusion of Talibé Children in Mali and Senegal. Challenges and recommendations." SIF, Analysis and Advocacy, November 2020.

5

PROGRAMMING PRINCIPLES AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES



This section describes the programming principles and intervention strategies that SIF will use to implement the strategy and progress more rapidly towards the realisation of children’s rights. Implementation will be carried out according to each specific context.

I. RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

To achieve the outcomes defined in this strategy, SIF will reinforce results-based management at all levels. This will mainly involve strengthening situation analysis and needs assessment, planning, monitoring and evaluation, as well as transparency and accountability on progress towards outcomes.

- This will require action planning, so that all actors can directly or indirectly contribute to achieving defined outputs, which will first be determined with their participation based on analysis, identification of priorities and definition of theories of change.
- SIF will also reinforce the monitoring and evaluation system for its projects and programmes to promote children’s rights.
 - The aim will be to improve monitoring for each intervention, by continuously collecting and analysing data to evaluate progress towards desired outputs and determine whether corrective measures or adjustments must be made.
 - Project evaluations will be carried out to precisely assess progress on children’s rights, identify best practices and provide recommendations for future interventions. These evaluations must be performed with the requisite expertise and independence, if necessary, by calling in external resources. This will enhance organisational learning and develop evidence-based programming.
 - All actions should be monitored and evaluated on the basis of SMART indicators.
- Within the scope of this strategy, SIF will also improve accountability⁶⁷ based on the IASC “Accountability to Affected Populations” operational framework⁶⁸.

This will include:

- Participation: involving communities, especially children, and other local partners in situation analysis, programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.⁶⁹

- Feedback: working with children and other stakeholders to create and monitor feedback and complaints mechanisms that are safe, accessible and child friendly. These mechanisms will not only convey relevant feedback on programmes but will also report child safeguarding concerns and provide adequate responses to them.
- Information: informing communities, including children, and other stakeholders about the organisation’s programmes, evaluation results, perspectives, etc.

The promotion of transparency and accountability will also involve regular reporting on activities, results and lessons learned. SIF will share the conclusions and lessons learned from programme monitoring, feedback and evaluations with all stakeholders, including children and families.

By using results-based management to implement this strategy, it will be easier for SIF to communicate on the results achieved (using SMART performance indicators) with its partners, donors and the general public.

II. STRENGTHENING COORDINATION AND COOPERATION BETWEEN SIF INTERVENTION SECTORS

SIF will employ a cross-sectoral approach, but inter-sector cooperation – in particular between its four main sectors of activity (EWBC, WASH, FSL, Shelter) – may take several forms according to the context⁷⁰.

- SIF will prioritise an integrated approach. To achieve this, the organisation will carry out a comprehensive assessment of children’s rights and all the factors affecting their realisation (see socio-ecological model), in order to develop effective interventions within its various sectors of activity and, if necessary, to seek support through partnerships. These various sectors will then work together to achieve shared goals that support children’s rights. This type of programming will prioritise a collective approach over a sectoral approach with regard to planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It will target the same children, young people and families, in the same areas, and will seek to develop and leverage inter-sector synergies. This will also enhance the long- term impact of interventions.

⁶⁷ Accountability: see glossary.

⁶⁸ https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/legacy_files/AAP%20Operational%20Framework%20Final%20Revision.pdf

⁶⁹ This can be achieved by electing beneficiary representatives within communities and setting up monitoring committees with all relevant stakeholders to facilitate integration, ownership, adjustments, collective problem solving and sustainability. Please refer to Section 5.V for more details on participation.

⁷⁰ The approach will be chosen according to several factors: situation (crisis, stable context), access, available resources, existing local systems, funding mechanisms.

- > If an integrated approach is not appropriate to the context, SIF will prioritise joint programming involving several sectors. In this case, each sector will work on its own objectives, but will also implement certain joint activities with other sectors to help realise children's rights.
- > In all other cases, SIF will ensure that children's rights—especially protection—are mainstreamed throughout its programmes and target outcomes.

This may include:

- Enabling children to participate in every stage of the project cycle, especially in decision-making processes that concern them directly
- Multisectoral situation analysis (taking into account protection and education issues) that specifically focuses on the most vulnerable children
- Designing safe programmes that can be accessed by all children and that take into account their various needs, depending on their gender, age, disabilities and the context
- Joint identification of households and children at risk, so that they can be given priority during interventions
- Setting up multisectoral referral mechanisms that are adapted to children
- Training actors in various sectors on child safeguarding, children's rights and child protection, to enable them to identify children with specific needs (protection, education, etc.) and refer them to appropriate support services
- Integrating child-friendly versions of messages on children's rights and child protection into programmes
- Working with children and other stakeholders to set up feedback and complaints mechanisms that are safe, accessible and adapted to children.

III. PROGRAMMING TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY

SIF considers gender equality as an overarching principle and a strategy for change.

To make a meaningful contribution to the realisation of children's rights, especially for the most disadvantaged and marginalised children, SIF will take action to reduce gender inequality, one of the root causes of poverty and exclusion.

To achieve this, SIF will focus on:

- > Fighting harmful gender norms and promoting positive norms, including education on parenting practices that respect gender equality
- > Protecting children from sexual and gender-based violence
- > Reinforcing education for girls, taking into account the specific vulnerabilities of the most disadvantaged and marginalised girls
- > Empowering young women and helping them to gain their independence.

The organisation will engage with communities and involve boys and men in these activities, so that they become supporters and active participants in progress towards gender equality.

Moreover, to make programming more gender-sensitive, SIF aims to mainstream gender in all its actions (situation analysis, programme design and implementation, partnerships, communication, etc.). Using risk analysis, SIF will make sure that its interventions do not exacerbate unequal power relationships or gender-based discrimination. The organisation will ensure that it meets children's specific needs, and in particular boy's and girl's distinct needs.

This means that SIF must also take gender into consideration within its human resources⁷¹.

⁷¹ Please refer to Section 6.II on human resources.

IV. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

During the implementation of this strategy, SIF will make sure that its actions do not damage the environment and develop activities to protect natural resources⁷².

SIF recognises that its activities may have a direct or indirect impact on the environment. The organisation will therefore carry out risk assessments⁷³ and take action to mitigate the environmental impact of its programmes. SIF seeks to minimise its impact on the environment due to transport, procurement, site selection and materials (e.g. by prioritising local, recycled and recyclable materials).

V. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND MOBILISATION, WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

To implement this strategy, SIF will prioritise community-based approaches, especially when seeking to influence social norms and practices. These approaches require an in-depth analysis of the context⁷⁴, priority needs and existing community capacities⁷⁵ that can contribute to realising children's rights. This analysis will provide a basis to determine the most appropriate ways to support positive social norms and practices, as well as to constructively influence negative social norms that are detrimental to children's rights. Community members, especially children and young people, will be invited to define their most pressing concerns, suggest solutions and mobilise resources. In particular, SIF will help community members to develop and implement processes that enhance community ownership and lead to more effective, sustainable outcomes.

SIF will work with children and local actors to set up accessible mechanisms that allow children and young people to express their views and opinions, as well as to safely share their concerns. According to the context, children and young people may be asked to participate in person or via digital tools.

VI. DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS TO COORDINATE ACTIONS AT ALL LEVELS

To implement this strategy, which promotes a multi-sectoral approach, it will be essential to form relevant partnerships with various civil society actors (including community organisations), as well as with public and private stakeholders. These partnerships will not only enable us to mobilise funding and expertise, but also to expand our influence and make a more meaningful, sustainable contribution to progress on children's rights.

SIF's main partners to implement this strategy:

- > Coordination structures and networks (humanitarian coordination, NGO networks, etc.)
- > Civil society organisations and community organisations
- > Governments, including local authorities
- > United Nations agencies, in particular UNICEF

Other potential partners:

- > Academic community
- > Private sector

SIF may also consider new partnerships in the research and digital sectors to encourage innovation and reduce the digital divide.

Partners will be identified according to the local context and needs, the actors present in the region and SIF's comparative advantage (presence in the field, technical expertise, operational capacity, etc.).

In certain cases, SIF will continue to take direct action in the field (e.g., sponsorship programme), however the organisation will also operate through local actors and organisations that can make an effective, sustainable contribution to children's rights. As part of the aid localisation process, SIF will provide them with support, which can take the form of capacity building, funding, assistance to structure and recognise the legitimacy of their organisation, or support to run coordination mechanisms.

Whatever the circumstances, SIF will make sure that its actions are coordinated with other stakeholders, so as to effectively advance and realise children's rights without leaving any children behind. Since the organisation also welcomes opportunities to pool resources and expertise, it will also participate in joint initiatives as part of a consortium.

⁷² Please refer to the section on environmental rights, and to SIF's environmental policy and charter.

⁷³ This assessment should be carried out at the design stage of the project and regularly updated, in close cooperation with stakeholders.

⁷⁴ The context includes the behaviours, norms and belief systems that influence the way communities perceive and address childhood, child well-being and child protection (CPMS).

⁷⁵ These local capacities include initiatives, structures, processes and networks that are led and organised by community members, including children.

In France, SIF will continue its activities within Groupe Enfance⁷⁶ and Coalition Education⁷⁷, two networks of civil society organisations that are committed to defending children's rights globally. SIF will provide technical expertise, with a particular focus on capacity-building activities for international humanitarian actors and advocacy.

In the various countries where it works, SIF will also engage with coordination structures, working groups and networks of civil society organisations that are fully mobilised for children's rights.

Whatever the context, SIF is committed to actively collaborating with coordination mechanisms, and in particular with humanitarian coordination structures, to avoid duplicating activities. The NGO's interventions should therefore be integrated into national/humanitarian action plans, comply with existing standards and contribute data for coordination-level indicators.

VII. ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION TO PROMOTE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

SIF will continue its advocacy activities and develop communication campaigns to help achieve far-reaching, lasting transformations that support children's rights. Children and young people will be encouraged to participate in these activities, which will be based on feedback and evidence from the field. Their input can help improve quality and make communications more convincing. All these activities will be carried out with respect for the child's dignity, safety and best interests.

7.1 Advocacy to promote children's rights

This will mainly involve urging political decision-makers to adopt laws, policies and budgets that support children's rights - especially to education and protection - and holding them accountable for the results achieved, since this can lead to major social and behavioural changes that benefit children. In the process, SIF can help voice the concerns of children and young people from marginalised groups.

SIF will use various methods to carry out and increase the impact of its advocacy activities: lobbying (political dialogue with duty bearers); sharing its expertise (publication of studies, position papers, etc.); communication and public mobilisation (media, events, influencing campaigns, etc.); developing the advocacy capabilities of local civil society actors; forming partnerships; participating in networks of organisations.

In France, SIF's advocacy activities aim to influence the government's international policy to promote children's rights, by presenting the NGO's positions based on its field expertise. Our advocacy will also be backed up by collective actions, in particular those led by Groupe Enfance and Coalition Education.

SIF will also intensify its advocacy activities in certain countries where it works, to increase the impact of its programmes to promote children's rights. In these countries, the organisation will carry out specific advocacy to influence local policies, according to the context. For example, in Mali and Senegal, SIF's advocacy will aim to improve the inclusion of talibé children and young people in public policies as well as local, regional and national strategies. This will also involve developing the advocacy capabilities of local civil society actors and organisations⁷⁸. Advocacy will be based on evidence from field programmes, and will also influence donor funding priorities, sector prioritisation, etc.

7.2 Communication to promote children's rights

To increase public awareness on children's rights and gain more support, SIF will conduct communication campaigns and use digital media to increase the visibility of the SIF brand internationally and build trust in the organisation.

In France, SIF may carry out communication campaigns on children's rights, as well as campaigns on specific themes to raise awareness that funding must be allocated to defend these rights, (e.g. "Chaque enfant a droit à un avenir" - Every child has the right to a future⁷⁹).

In the countries where we work, SIF may carry out communication and awareness campaigns, for example to help transform social and gender norms and practices in support of children's rights. This should be done in close collaboration with stakeholders, including communities and children.

⁷⁶ A Coordination Humanitaire Développement (CHD) Group <https://www.groupe-enfance.org/>

⁷⁷ <http://www.coalition-education.fr/>

⁷⁸ Please refer to the report "Inclusion of Talibé Children in Mali and Senegal. Challenges and recommendations." 2020.

⁷⁹ <https://www.secours-islamique.org/enfance-sif-2021>

VIII. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT TO PROMOTE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

SIF will develop its research and evaluation activities and will seek to improve knowledge management to ensure that data and evidence are used to enhance the quality and impact of its actions to promote children's rights.

In particular, SIF will work to:

- > produce data and evidence, by systematically carrying out situation analyses and programme evaluations and by conducting research and studies in areas where there are gaps in the evidence base
- > circulate data and evidence through appropriate channels and using it effectively to guide strategies, programmes and advocacy activities and achieve desired outcomes.

These activities, which enable us to capitalise on lessons learned and promising techniques, are essential to guide our interventions, develop our expertise and contribute to the knowledge base in our sectors of activity, including internationally. This will also strengthen the organisation's ability to influence and mobilise duty bearers and responsible actors to take action based on evidence. Within the scope of this strategy, SIF will continue to develop its expertise on the inclusion of talibé children and young people.

To achieve improvements in knowledge management, SIF will need to make substantial investments, develop skills and implement a monitoring-evaluation plan for all research, evaluation and knowledge capitalisation activities throughout the organisation.

SIF will make sure that all data is managed in compliance with international child protection principles and the GDPR.⁸⁰

IX. ENCOURAGING INNOVATION

The main aim of SIF's innovation activities will be to seek solutions to effectively respond to the most urgent problems facing children and young people, which obstruct their access to fundamental human rights. Special attention will be given to innovations relating to the environment. This may include innovative approaches, processes, methods, tools, products, etc. SIF will also increase its investment in digital tools to improve the efficiency and impact of its programmes to promote children's rights, with due consideration for the opportunities and risks that these technologies pose for children. To achieve this, SIF will explore potential partnerships with the private sector, universities and companies.

SIF will involve potential users and other key actors in the search for innovative solutions. This process will be carried out in keeping with certain principles: the "do no harm" principle; due consideration for the context; feasibility, adaptability, cost⁸¹ and sustainability; production of data and evidence.

⁸⁰ Data management must also comply with SIF's internal policies, including its Child Safeguarding Policy and Data Protection policy.

⁸¹ Including added value, profitability, opportunity cost and ownership.

SECTION 6

MOBILISING FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES



This section defines the financial (I) and human resources (II) that SIF will mobilise to implement this strategy.

I. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

To carry out this strategy, SIF aims to increase its resources to support children, and in particular their right to education and protection.

This will involve developing predictable sources of funding over the long term, and also achieving a certain level of flexibility so that the NGO can take action more quickly and effectively.

The organisation will therefore continue to optimise contributions from individuals, through one-off donations and regular donations, as is the case for the sponsorship programme. Campaigns on specific themes will be used to stimulate these donations. Mobilising funds from private donors may lead to the development of innovative approaches or the production of additional field evidence, which may in turn help secure commitments from institutional donors to support children's rights.

Sponsorship programme

To help realise the rights of the most vulnerable orphaned children, SIF will continue to raise funds through child sponsorship (one sponsor - one child) and will also develop community sponsorship (several sponsors - several children and their community). Community sponsorship will not only help to realise the rights of several young orphans, but will also improve living conditions and access to human rights for the other members of their community. In addition to grants for these children to cover their school expenses and other basic needs, SIF will also develop holistic projects to support other children, in line with the organisation's target outputs (e.g. rehabilitation of schools and WASH facilities, psychosocial support programmes, environmental protection). These comprehensive projects may also be funded from other sources, such as institutional donors.

SIF will also seek to increase funding for children's rights from institutional donors, including governments, bilateral partners and multilateral partners, in order to carry out larger-scale interventions.

The NGO will also explore fundraising from private foundations that may be inclined to support initiatives to promote children's rights.

II. HUMAN RESOURCES

SIF recognises that achieving progress towards children's rights will mainly depend on its human resources (since only minimal investments need to be made in infrastructure and equipment). The organisation will therefore aim to:

- > Increase the number of staff working on children's rights, especially on protection and education (including advocacy)
- > Develop staff capabilities, in particular technical expertise on these issues.

These investments will be essential to improve programme quality, and to enhance the organisation's credibility and ability to influence decisions.

One EWBC focal point will be designated within each mission to support the implementation of the strategy in the field. SIF will make sure that all staff working on programmes for children comply with the organisation's fundamental principles, Child Safeguarding Policy and code of conduct. No misconduct of any kind will be tolerated.

SIF will pay careful attention to gender issues. The priority will be to constitute gender-balanced teams. The organisation may also decide to take into account the commitment of candidates to gender equality during recruitment or promote gender equality through awareness-raising sessions. This may not only help to reduce the risks of SGBV, including towards children, but also give children more opportunity to choose the gender of the person that will listen to and support them.

The move towards an intersectoral, child rights-based approach will require investments to cultivate skills and abilities.

This will entail developing the necessary technical expertise and specific skills in the following fields: child rights-based approach, child participation, family strengthening and social support, child protection, psychosocial support and psychological first aid, education for marginalised children and young people, socio-professional integration, environment and climate change, advocacy, and communication for social change.

To bolster such expertise, SIF will need to recruit candidates with the necessary skills and expertise, as well as implementing a capacity-building plan for staff working on programmes for children.

Recruitment plan for EWBC staff at head office and in the field

By 2024, all SIF's missions with EWBC activities should have one advisor who will be the Focal Point for this sector on the mission :

Number of EWBC projects per mission:	1 project with a EWBC component	At least 1 project with a general objective related to EWBC	3 EWBC projects or more
HR required for the mission	1 member of the project team has proven expertise in EWBC and acts as EWBC focal point for the mission.	At least 1 EWBC project leader has proven expertise in EWBC. Either the project leader or another person with proven expertise in EWBC acts as EWBC focal point for the mission.	At least 1 coordinator has proven expertise in EWBC and 1 or several project manager have proven expertise in EWBC. Possibility of also having a technical advisor with proven expertise in EWBC. The coordinator or the technical advisor will act as EWBC focal point.
The EWBC Focal Point ensures the implementation of SIF's EWBC strategy in the field. This person may be a Child Safeguarding Focal Point.			

Missions with projects that comprise an EWBC advocacy component should also include one person with appropriate expertise in this field.

At the head office in France, the team will comprise a Technical Advisor and an EWBC/Child Safeguarding officer, who will be in charge of implementing this strategy and the Child Safeguarding Policy (for the whole organisation).

By 2023, the head office team will be consolidated with an additional roving EWBC/CS advisor, who will provide support if positions are vacant or if there is a sharp increase in activity. He or she will also carry out specific short or medium-term assignments (for example capacity building) to guarantee the quality of our EWBC projects and strengthen the implementation of our CSP in the field.

SIF will develop training opportunities both internally (head office and missions staff) and externally (face-to-face training or e-learning, supervision and guidance). The organisation will also promote skills transfers from one SIF mission to another by encouraging mobility and international missions for EWBC technical staff.

To facilitate the implementation of this strategy, SIF will also develop networking between staff involved in programmes to promote children's rights. The main aim will be to establish a dynamic community of practice that encourages interaction between colleagues, collaboration and learning based on field experience.⁸²

To improve the efficacy of technical staff, SIF will focus on results- and skills-based performance reviews, including an appraisal of technical skills linked to the implementation of this strategy.

Finally, SIF will pay particular attention to its staff's well-being, especially for staff in contact with children (sufficient rest, access to psychosocial support, supervision to monitor signs of stress or unhappiness, etc.).

⁸² Including inter-mission workshops.

SECTION 7

RISK MANAGEMENT



Several risks have been identified that could disrupt the implementation of this strategy and prevent results from being achieved, as well as appropriate mitigation measures.

Main risks	Mitigation measures
Sudden global crisis including a pandemic, which increases vulnerability and restricts access to children	Develop aid localisation and strengthen preparedness and risk management capabilities, including rapid response capacities
Insufficient commitments from governments for children's rights, with limited funding provided	Advocacy with political decision-makers and via communication campaigns targeting the general public and local organisations, to urge decision-makers to take action for children's rights and to be accountable for these actions
Insufficient coordination between actors, affecting the effectiveness and efficiency of programmes	Invest more effort in coordination, develop partnerships and opportunities for joint programmes
Insufficient staff with appropriate expertise relating to children's rights	Increase investment in technical expertise: recruitment and training
Insufficient financial resources to implement activities that support children's rights, in particular child protection. Situation exacerbated by long-term economic recession	Advocacy to call attention to these issues and mobilise the necessary funding. Diversify sources of funds and seek unrestricted/non- earmarked funding Increase communication on results achieved
Children harmed by our staff or partners	Implementation of our Child Safeguarding Policy and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse measures

Since SIF is fully aware that humanitarian action can involve specific risks for children, the organisation implemented a Child Safeguarding Policy in 2020, and nominated Focal Points at its head office and missions. Safeguarding children is a priority for the organisation. The aim is to ensure that our actions, and those of our partners, do not endanger children (risks to their safety, maltreatment, abuse, exploitation)⁸³, which would threaten their rights and jeopardise our organisation's strategic objectives and credibility. This policy applies to every person working for or representing SIF (including consultants, partners and visitors) and encompasses all our activities in every sector.

During the implementation of this strategy, we will therefore enforce our CSP and make sure that we: evaluate the inherent risks of our programmes and take action to mitigate them; prevent risks by selecting, training and managing staff and partners; protect children's personal data; implement safe, accessible feedback and alert mechanisms to enable children, staff, partners and other stakeholders to report child safeguarding concerns; respond to incidents appropriately; monitor, evaluate and learn lessons from our interventions. Finally, our programmes to promote children's rights adhere to the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse principles.

⁸³ Child safeguarding must be distinguished from SIF's child protection programmes as described in this strategy.

SECTION 8

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE STRATEGY



The strategy performance framework will comprise several levels:

- > Results indicators based on SIF's focus areas. These outputs can be directly attributed to SIF's actions. These indicators, which are partially derived from the corresponding SDG indicators, aim to evaluate the impact of these actions on the realisation of children's rights.

Data will be collected for these indicators once a year.⁸⁴

A menu of specific indicators, for each focus area, will also help improve monitoring and evaluation.

All indicators about children should be disaggregated at least by sex, age, and disability, as well as by other relevant diversity and risk factors (e.g. refugee children, talibé children). This is essential to determine and respond to vulnerabilities and priority needs⁸⁵.

- > Process and resource indicators. These indicators monitor the main intervention strategies to achieve the outputs mentioned above.

Data will be collected for these indicators once a year.

An implementation plan and a monitoring and evaluation plan will be drawn up for this strategy.

The EWBC/CS advisor will report on the progress and implementation of this strategy in an annual report.

SIF will carry out a mid-term review and a final evaluation of this strategy; these documents will both be summative and instructive. Project, programme and subject-specific evaluations will feed into the monitoring, evaluation and learning cycle. This may also enable a mid-term update to the strategy.

⁸⁴ Please refer to the document in the annex for data collection methods for indicators.

⁸⁵ Data collection must be balanced with safety and protection concerns surrounding sensitive data and the data minimisation principle.

ANNEXES



GLOSSARY

Accelerated Education Programme (AEP): (Replaces Accelerated Learning Programme [ALP] and other terminology as the standard descriptive term.) A flexible, age-appropriate programme, run in an accelerated timeframe, which aims to provide access to education for disadvantaged, over-age, out-of-school children and youth. This may include those who missed out on, or had their education interrupted, due to poverty, marginalisation, conflict and crisis. The goal of Accelerated Education Programmes is to provide learners with equivalent, certified competencies for basic education using effective teaching and learning approaches that match their level of cognitive maturity. (INEE)

Accelerated learning: Approaches to teaching and learning, informed by research in the cognitive and neurosciences, which provide more engaged, proficient and faster development of learned knowledge and basic skills. (INEE)

Accountability: the process of using power responsibly, taking account of, and being held accountable by, different stakeholders, and primarily those who are affected by the exercise of such power. (CHS)

Best interests of the child: one of the four guiding principles of the UNCRC (Article 3), which guarantees that the child's fundamental rights shall be respected. This means that the best interests of the child, i.e. what is best for his or her well-being, shall be a primary consideration in all decisions that concern him or her.

Bridging programme: A short-term targeted preparation course that supports students' success taking various forms such as language acquisition and/or other existing differences between home and host education curricula and systems for entry into a different type of certified education. (INEE)

Caregiving environment: Includes both formal, legal arrangements and informal arrangements in which the caregiver does not have legal responsibility. (CPMS)

Case management: Approach to address the needs of an individual child who is at risk of harm or has been harmed. The child and their family are supported by a caseworker in a systematic and timely manner through direct support and

referrals. Case management provides individualised, coordinated, holistic, multisectoral support for complex and often connected child protection concerns. (CPMS)

Catch-up programme: A short-term transitional education programme for children and youth who had been actively attending school prior to an educational disruption, which provides students with the opportunity to learn content missed because of the disruption and supports their re-entry to the formal system. (INEE)

Child: Every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. (UNCRC)

Child labour: any work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity. Child labour is work that interferes with children's education and negatively affects their emotional, developmental and physical well-being. Many child labourers are engaged in the worst forms of child labour (WFCL), including forced labour, recruitment into armed groups, trafficking for exploitation, sexual exploitation, illicit work or hazardous work. (CPMS)

Child protection: The prevention of and response to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children.

Child survivors: Children that have experienced sexual and gender-based violence, including harmful practices (e.g. child marriage or female genital mutilation/cutting). (CPMS)

Community: The concept of community includes two key ideas: a structural dimension and a functional dimension. The notion of structure refers to a defined geographical area, and the functional idea appears in the social and psychological connections between members of the group. For the purposes of this document, community is defined as a group of people living in a particular geographical area, such as a village or urban area (e.g. children and their families, education staff, health staff, religious and/or traditional leaders, members of groups or associations, etc.).

Conflict sensitivity: the ability of an organisation to understand the context in which a programme takes place; analyse the two-way interaction between the context and the programme; and act to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts of programming on conflict. (INEE)

Decent work: It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organise and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men. (ILO)

Disabilities: Children with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, psychosocial, intellectual or sensory (visual and hearing) impairments. (CPMS)

Duty bearers: Actors with obligations towards rights holders. The State is the duty bearer under the CRC. Thus, the State has the obligation to respect rights (not to commit violations), to protect rights (to prevent violations and provide a response) and to promote rights (launch initiatives for the proper exercise of rights). (CRBA checklist)

Employability: Portable competencies and qualifications that enhance an individual's capacity to make use of the education and training opportunities available in order to secure and retain decent work, progress within the enterprise and between jobs and cope with changing technology and labour market conditions. (ILO, 2004, para. 1.2 d)

Empowerment of young women: Process that enables young women to gain power and control over their own lives. It involves transitioning from a situation where their powers were limited due to gender discrimination and inequality to a situation where they have the same powers and opportunities as men.

Food security: Exists when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. (CPMS)

Formal education: Education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned through public organisations and recognised private bodies and, in their totality, make up the formal education system of a country. Formal education programmes are thus recognised as such by the relevant national educational authorities or equivalent, e.g. any other institution in co-operation with the national or sub-national educational authorities. (UNESCO)

Gender: Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours, roles and opportunities associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. Gender interacts with but is different from sex, which refers to biological and physiological characteristics.

Gender-Based Violence: Any form of violence directed at an individual or that disproportionately affects that individual, as a result of their actual or presumed gender. GBV includes any act that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. (UN Women)

Gender equality: This refers to the equal rights, opportunities, resources and compensation of women, men, girls and boys (whatever their age, sexual orientation and gender identity). Equality does not mean that women, men, girls and boys will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

Gender norms: Gender norms are informal, deeply entrenched and widely held beliefs about gender roles, power relations, standards or expectations that govern human behaviours and practices in a particular social context and at a particular time. They are ideas or 'rules' about how girls and boys and women and men are expected to be and to act. (UNICEF)

Harmful practices: Traditional and non-traditional practices which inflict pain, cause physical or psychological harm and 'disfigurement' of children. Harmful practices perpetrated primarily against girls, like female genital mutilation and child marriage, are also forms of gender-based violence. (CPMS)

Inclusive education: Education that allows all children to learn together and that meets their individual needs.

Learner-centred pedagogy: Teaching methods that take into account the child's capabilities and engage children on the basis of their capabilities and learning levels (e.g. activity-based learning, personalised and adaptive learning, teaching at the right level).

Learning: The process of developing and acquiring skills, subject knowledge and values. (UNICEF)

Life skills: Skills and abilities for positive behaviour that enable individuals to adapt to and deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. This includes: (1) cognitive and emotional capabilities, such as concentration, self-control, critical thinking and problem solving; (2) interpersonal and social skills, which are a subset of life skills. Social skills refer to the way that people interact and build relationships with others. (Inspire)

Livelihoods: The capabilities, assets, opportunities and activities required to be able to make one's living. Assets include financial, natural, physical, social and human resources, for example: stores, land and access to markets or transport systems. A household's livelihood is sustainable or secure when it can cope with and recover from shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and productive assets. (Sphere)

Maltreatment: Child maltreatment is the abuse and neglect that occurs to children under 18 years of age. It includes all types of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. (WHO)

Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM): MHM examines the strategies that women and adolescent girls use during their periods. MHM includes the way in which women and girls practice good hygiene and personal care during menstruation and how they purchase, use and dispose of products that absorb menstrual blood.

Mental health: A state of well-being in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. (WHO)

Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS):

Any type of local or outside support that aims to protect or promote psychosocial well-being and prevent or treat mental health conditions. MHPSS programmes aim to

- (1) reduce and prevent harm,
- (2) strengthen resilience to recover from adversity,
- (3) improve the care conditions that enable children and families to survive and thrive. (CPMS)

Neglect: The intentional or unintentional failure of a caregiver - individual, community, or institution (including the State) with clear responsibility by custom or law for the well-being of the child - to (a) protect a child from actual or potential harm to the child's safety, well-being, dignity and development or (b) fulfil that child's rights to survival, development, and well-being, ... when they have the capacity, ability, and resources to do so. (CPMS)

Non-formal education: Education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned by an education provider. The defining characteristic of non-formal education is that it is an addition, alternative and/or a complement to formal education within the process of the lifelong learning of individuals. It is often provided to guarantee the right of access to education for all. Non-formal education mostly leads to qualifications that are not recognised as formal qualifications (or equivalent) by the relevant national educational authorities or to no qualifications at all. Non-formal education can cover programmes contributing to adult and youth literacy and education for out-of-school children, as well as programmes on life skills or work skills. (UNESCO)

Positive parenting: Focuses on creating safe family environments and establishing strong, supportive relationships with children through affection, spending quality time with children, encouragement, and healthy approaches to difficult behaviour and discipline.

Psychological First Aid (PFA): A supportive first response suitable for children and adults in crisis. It helps individuals to feel safe, connected, calm and hopeful; access social, physical and emotional support; feel able to help themselves and their communities. It supports long-term recovery and psychosocial well-being. Psychological first aid can be learned and provided by all children, community members and humanitarians. (CPMS)

Quality education: Education that is available, accessible, acceptable, adaptable and responsive to diversity. (INEE and CPMS)

Remedial program: Additional targeted support, concurrent with regular classes, for students who require short-term content or skill support to succeed in regular formal programming. (INEE)

Responsible actors: All non-state actors responsible for the realisation of rights (families, communities, civil society, private sector, religious actors, etc.). (CRBA Checklist)

Sexual violence against children: any form of sexual activity with a child by an adult or by another child who has power over the child. Sexual violence includes both activities that involve body contact and those without body contact. (CPMS)

Shelter: Household living space, including the items necessary for daily activities, whereas “settlement” refers to the wider locations where people and communities live (CPMS).

Social norms: Social norms are the perceived informal, mostly unwritten rules that define acceptable and appropriate actions within a given group or community, thus guiding human behaviour. (UNICEF)

Talibé: The term “Talibé” is derived from the Arabic word “tâlib”. This word is used in West Africa to mean “person who seeks knowledge” or “student”. A talibé is a student

at a Koranic school. (Briefing note and key terms. Inclusion programme for talibé children and young people in Mali and Senegal)

Violence: In this strategy, the generic term “violence” refers to “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.” (Art. 19 of the UNCRC and General Comment No. 13 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child)

Vulnerability: for child protection, vulnerability refers to individual, family, community and societal characteristics that reduce children’s ability to withstand adverse impact from violations of and threats to their rights. Vulnerability is specific to each person and each situation. (CPMS)

Young person: for this strategy, a person between 15 and 25 years old.

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Secours Islamique France
10 rue Galvani 91300 Massy
Tel: 01 60 14 14 14
www.secours-islamique.org

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