

# Ethiopia National Refugee Child Protection Strategy 2017-2019



The national Refugee Child Protection (CP) Strategy for the Ethiopia Refugee Operation 2017-2019 is based on the *UNHCR Framework for the Protection of Children (2012)* and was developed following a Strategy Review Workshop held in Addis Ababa in May 2017. The workshop was attended by 46 UNHCR and partner staff from a total of 16 agencies, namely Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA), Save the Children International (SCI), Plan International Ethiopia (PIE), Innovative Humanitarian Solutions (HIS), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), International Rescue Committee (IRC), International Medical Corps (IMC), Rehabilitation and Development Organization (RaDo), Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (DICAC), Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), African Humanitarian Action (AHA), Partnership for Pastoralists Development Association (PAPDA), UN Women, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Staff who participated in the two day review workshop are working in the area of Child Protection, SGBV, Education, Disability or general Protection across all six refugee operations in Ethiopia.

Child Protection goals, strategic intervention areas as well as priority outcomes are outlined from page 6 and were developed following a stocktaking exercise ('where are we now') which is summarized in the Annexe of this Strategy.

## CHILD PROTECTION FOCUS

### Population Statistics Overview

Ethiopia is hosting 838,722 refugees in six refugee operations in Shire/Afar, Jijiga, Melkadida, Gambella, Assosa and Addis Ababa/Kenya Borena as of 1 June 2017. The majority of refugees seeking asylum in Ethiopia are from South Sudan (45.1%), followed by Somalis (29.8%), Eritreans (19.2%), Sudanese (5%) and Yemenis (0.2%). Other nationalities, such as refugees from the Great Lakes Region, Kenya Borena and others constitute 0.7% of the overall Ethiopia refugee population.<sup>1</sup>

### General Overview: Child Protection Ethiopia

With **57.1%**, the majority of Ethiopia's refugee population are children.<sup>2</sup> Children have distinct protection needs which are different from adults. They are generally at greater risk of violence, abuse and exploitation including trafficking or forced recruitment into armed forces or armed groups. Particularly girls face increased gender-related protection risks in the context of conflict and displacement.

The experience of conflict and violence in their country of origin or during displacement has a profound effect on children. Many children and youth find it difficult to adapt to a new environment in the country of asylum where their safety, their psychosocial wellbeing, education and social opportunities as well as future prospects to be productive members in the society may be negatively impacted. Many refugee children arriving in Ethiopia also find themselves separated from their families and caregivers. Social community support networks and access to education – which are stabilizing factors for children – are often times disrupted in the context of displacement.

While refugee children and their families have had until now limited prospects for local integration due to reservations in the Ethiopia Refugee Proclamation to refugees' right to work and the encampment policy applicable for most refugees, significant commitments were made by the Government of Ethiopia at the Leaders' Summit on Refugees in New York in September 2016. The Government of Ethiopia announced its intention to expand its support for refugees and facilitate their local integration. Concretely, **the nine pledges** made by the Government of Ethiopia propose to expand the out of camp policy and to grant refugees to access the formal labour market in order for them to become more self-sufficient. For refugee children of particular significance / direction impact are the pledges made in connection to *access to civil documentation* (birth certificates issued by the civil registration authority), the *increased enrolment of students at all levels of education*, *local integration of 13,000 refugees who have been in Ethiopia for over 20 years* and the *overall enhancement of basic and essential social services for refugees*. These commitments made by the Government of Ethiopia constitute great opportunities to increase refugee children's protection, wellbeing and development in this country of asylum.

These Pledges were announced a day after the adoption of the New York Declaration and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). The CRRF represents an unprecedented opportunity through which 193 States committed to strengthen their response to the refugee situations in a comprehensive manner. This encompasses not only the delivery of services and support to host populations from the onset of an emergency, but also the involvement of a broader array of stakeholders to prepare for and facilitate durable solutions in a more effective and prompt manner.

In February 2017, alongside other countries in the continent, Ethiopia became a CRRF focus country. In Ethiopia the CRRF is regarded as a vehicle to accompany the implementation of the nine pledges. This positive development provides refugees a valuable opportunity to become more self-reliant which is believed to reduce coping mechanisms that negatively impact children, such as having children engage in informal work, school drop-out due to a need to support the family or onward

<sup>1</sup> UNHCR Population Update 30 May 2017

<sup>2</sup> The Convention on the Rights of the Child CRC (1989) Art. 1 defines a 'child' as a person below the age of 18

movement of children and youth due to limited education opportunities and future job prospects in the country of asylum. Additionally, the pledges' implementation that will be facilitated through CRRF encourages alignment of national services provided to locals and those provided to refugees. Therefore looking at the social services and local integration pledges, it is expected that greater attention will be given to access to justice as well as health services for refugee children in contact with the law and for survivors of SGBV.

In light of the CRRF, UNHCR will also engage a wider group of actors including the Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to consider alignment of national programmes related to Child Protection and eventual incorporation of refugee children within those programmes.

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Ethiopia 2016-2020 (UNDAF) is the key programming instrument of the Delivering as One (DaO) process in Ethiopia. It aims to ensure coherent, efficient and effective UN system operations in full alignment with national development priorities and ensuring the United Nations System is supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and sustainable development overall. UNHCR Ethiopia will engage proactively in the alignment of humanitarian protection responses with the UNDAF at national level, including in the area of social protection and join in ongoing efforts in strengthening national child protection systems.

Given the specific protection needs as well as risks refugee girls and boys face in Ethiopia, UNHCR is working with eight implementing and operational child protection partners as well as with the refugee community, throughout the six refugee operations in Ethiopia to provide quality child protection prevention and response services. This includes strengthening child participation, recognizing children and adolescents as right-holders, to build their capacity and resilience to allow them to further their own protection.

Following key child protection issues are of particular concern in the Ethiopia refugee operation;

#### **Access to national birth registration system**

Currently, an estimated 70,000 refugee children who were born in Ethiopia over the last 10 years were not registered at birth in a civil registration system and were subsequently not issued birth certificates by the Ethiopian Government. Lack of legal documentation can cause statelessness and impede children's access to basic rights and services such as education, healthcare and social security. To advocate for refugee's children's access to the national birth registration system has therefore been strategic priority for UNHCR and partners in past years. To "issue birth certificates to all children of refugees born in Ethiopia" is one of the ground breaking pledges made by the Government of Ethiopia at the Leaders' Summit on Refugees in New York in September 2016. The commitment made presents a major opportunity to develop an inclusive system that ensures the birth registration of refugee children in the country.

Ethiopia's legal framework will be revised through amended Proclamation 760/2012 on Vital Events Registration to expand refugees' access to national civil registration vital statistics (CRVS) system.<sup>3</sup> The amended Proclamation has been endorsed by the Council of Ministers in June 2017 and is expected to be promulgated by Parliament in the coming months.

#### **Protection of unaccompanied and separated children and alternative care**

UNHCR and partners recognize that the family is the fundamental element of society and the natural environment for the growth, wellbeing and protection of children and therefore promote family-based care for unaccompanied and separated refugee children over institutional care or other forms of alternative care. Every child and young person should live in a supportive, protective and caring environment that promotes his/her full potential. Children with inadequate or no

---

<sup>3</sup> Includes registrations of all vital events such as birth, death, marriage, divorce and adoption

parental care are at higher risk. In Gambella 22,743 children are registered as separated and 4,396 as unaccompanied as of 1 June 2017. Considering the high number of unaccompanied and separated children, monitoring of the care arrangement of these children and provision of quality case management is posing a challenge. In northern Ethiopia the majority of children who are unaccompanied (around 65%) are living in semi-institutional care referred to as “community care” due to limited options for family-based care. Placement of children in family-based alternative care has also proven to be difficult in urban Addis Ababa where living costs are high and refugees find it difficult to cater for foster children. Studies conducted in the northern Shire refugee operation have shown children living in family-based care are 20% less likely to move onward from the camp.

#### **Identification and response to other vulnerable children (OVC)**

UNHCR and partners acknowledge the need to strengthen the identification and response to other vulnerable children/children at risk apart from the caseload of unaccompanied and separated children across the entire Ethiopia operation. This includes – amongst others - children with disabilities, child survivors of SGBV, children in conflict with the law, children at risk and engaged in worst forms of child labor (WFCL), Children associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAAFAG), children at risk of trafficking/smuggling and out of school children. Mainstreaming of child protection in all sectors, strengthened identification of children at risk at reception sites, during registration as well as through an effective referral system is enhancing identification and response to other vulnerable children.

#### **Addressing and changing harmful traditional practices in the refugee communities**

Amongst other groups, the refugee girls in the Somali region are at the most heightened risk of being subjected to sexual and gender-based violence in the form of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Early marriage is another harmful traditional practice which is dominant among the refugee population in Ethiopia. Focus Group Discussions held with refugees in the Somali region suggest that early marriages have increased amongst refugees as parents tend to marry off their daughters earlier for economic reasons (i.e., dowries as well as “one less mouth to feed”). To address and change these deep rooted harmful traditional practices which are prevalent and long-standing in many refugee communities is challenging and require the engagement and advocacy from within the community, e.g. through women’s groups or traditional leadership structures to bring gradual change and reduce children’s exposure to harmful traditional practices. Collaboration with existing national systems and programmes addressing similar harmful traditional practices within host communities must be strengthened in order to reinforce the criminalization of FGM and early marriage as it stands under Ethiopian law. Specifically, collaboration shall be sought with national systems including law enforcement and the overall justice sector as well as local networks comprising of activists, community leaders, educators and health care providers that have decade long experience in analysing, addressing and combatting FGM in Ethiopia. To make joint efforts to change perception and to address root cause that lead to the perception that the actual practice is beneficial.

#### **Getting children back into school**

In Ethiopia 49% of the school-age refugee children are out of school. Children out of school are at heightened risk of abuse and exploitation, such as engagement in child labour and early marriage. Out of school children are also more likely to adopt negative coping mechanisms, with lack of education also gravely limiting their future livelihood prospects and resilience capacities. Refugee children and youth are the most vital members of refugee society and must be supported in its educational opportunities as agents of positive change, especially as children are the most motivating factor for society to better itself.

Reasons for refugee children not attending school vary between the different refugee communities as well as regions. While the importance of education is not valued equally in all refugee communities an overall challenge is also the quality of education. Only 50% of the schools in camps

meet safe learning environment standards. Classrooms are mostly overcrowded and lack of qualified teachers and limited training opportunities for teachers are major challenges in the education sector. While elementary education is accessible in all refugee camps, secondary education is only offered in some of the camps. Limited access to secondary education poses another challenge. The enrolment rate of refugees in secondary education in the 2016/17 school year is only 9.6% leaving many children and youth idle and unable to further invest in their education.<sup>4</sup>

### **Responding to Mental Health and Psychosocial Needs**

Many refugee children and youth have experienced and witnessed disturbing events in their countries of origin or during displacement. Violence, persecution and in many cases loss or separation of family members often lead to children being affected by different forms of psychosocial distress. Focus Group Discussions with children and youth across different refugee operations in Ethiopia have shown that many children and youth find it difficult to adapt to a new environment in displacement while coping with the loss of their home, family members and friends. Psychosocial support and mental health interventions are however very limited across the Ethiopia refugee operation. While Child Protection partners provide basic counselling services to children who show signs of distress, child protection staff have generally limited identification and response capacity as well as expertise and resources to provide targeted psychosocial support. Specialized services for children are available in Shire camps but not available in most other refugee operations.

### **Providing alternatives to onward movement**

It was found that Eritrean refugees in the Shire camps are the group most likely to irregularly migrate onwards from Ethiopia. Other population groups intending to leave towards third countries include Somali refugees in the Jijiga camps, where one-third intend to migrate irregularly and Congolese refugees in the Assosa area camps, where one quarter intend to move onward, according to a study conducted on onward movement by Danish Refugee Council in 2016.<sup>5</sup>

Unaccompanied children and youth are at particular high risk of irregular onward movement, which exposes them to risks of smuggling, trafficking and SGBV. In northern Shire, onward movement of unaccompanied and separated children to urban centers and third countries is substantial, with up to 60% of UASC leaving the camps within a given year.<sup>6</sup> A general feeling of hopelessness, lack of access to work and livelihoods as well as inadequate or insufficient education opportunities were named as motivations of refugees for irregular migration.

### **Reversing the neglect of youth in refugee programming**

Of the overall refugee population 19%<sup>7</sup> are between the ages of 15-24<sup>8</sup> and classified as “youth”. While refugee youth play a significant role in the protection and development of their communities as well as those hosting them, refugee youth are often overlooked in the programmatic responses of UN, NGOs and other organizations working in the humanitarian refugee response.

Recognizing their protection needs as well as the importance of their community engagement, including in peaceful coexistence interventions, strategic interventions as outlined in this national Refugee Child Protection Strategy shall also apply to refugee youth. Child Protection partners are encouraged to expand programmes to refugee youth and create synergies (e.g. integrated Child Friendly Spaces / Youth Centers) and to build expertise in youth programming, particularly in the area of life-skills. Targeting youth for livelihood interventions as well as gender appropriate

---

<sup>4</sup> UNHCR Education Factsheet. May 2017

<sup>5</sup> Study on the onward movement of refugees and asylum-seekers from Ethiopia. Danish Refugee Council (DRC) (2016).

<sup>6</sup> Child Protection Briefing Note. UNHCR Shire refugee operation. 31 December 2016.

<sup>7</sup> As of 1 June 2017

<sup>8</sup> There is no universally agreed definition of youth. The UN defines youth as persons between age 15-24

vocational training is expected to strengthen refugee youth’s self-reliance, resilience and enhance their capacity to meaningfully contribute to the life in refugee camps and host communities. Furthermore, provision of vocational training which is linked to feasible income generating opportunities also works as a protection tool for adolescent boys and girls who are expected to face less protection risks and adapt less negative coping mechanisms while being engaged in structured activities which provides them with future prospects and opportunities.

**WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE IN 3 YEARS?**

| Goal  | Intervention areas  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Goal 1:</b><br/>Girls and boys are safe where they live, learn and play</p> | <div data-bbox="424 501 1366 734" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p><b>Priority Outcome / Result:</b><br/>All children at heightened risk of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect - including but not limited to UASC - are identified and supported through multi-sector prevention and response services involving effective coordination with Education, Health, SGBV, Youth and Livelihood programmes (child protection mainstreaming)</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinctly from UASC, better <b>identification and response to other children at risk</b></li> <li>• Ensure <b>mainstreaming of child protection</b> across other sectors including SGBV, Education, WASH, Health, Nutrition, Energy, and Livelihoods to ensure children at risk benefit from multi-sector prevention and response</li> <li>• <b>Harmful traditional practices</b> – including FGM and early marriages – are effectively combatted through strengthened collaboration with Government counterparts, including justice and law enforcement entities, as well as strengthened community-based protection response</li> <li>• Effective <b>child protection coordination</b> at Sub Office level through coordination group chaired by ARRA/co-chaired by UNHCR</li> <li>• Close <b>collaboration with Education partners to address root causes of low enrolment and school drop-out</b> and increase retention of refugee students, especially girls, in primary, secondary and tertiary education and ensure a safe learning environment for refugee children is ascertained and in the integration process within the national education system, to ensure that the specific needs of refugee children are addressed.</li> <li>• <b>Promotion of alternative learning programmes</b> including accelerated learning and literacy programmes</li> <li>• Risks and consequences of child abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation are mitigated, and resilience of the children, families and community strengthened through <b>community based protection approaches</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Child Friendly Spaces</b> are places where children access recreation and children at risk are being identified, and their needs responded to. Based on agreed standards, CFS and the overall environment within which they function are regularly monitored and effectively promote access to children with specific needs.</li> <li>• <b>Coordination and collaboration with SGBV partners</b> to prevent and respond to SGBV amongst boys and girls is enhanced—particularly working on root causes of gender inequality.</li> <li>• <b>Advocacy and fundraising for Youth programming</b> and expansion of CP programmes to make it relevant for youth</li> <li>• <b>Multi-sector CP and Youth Programming capacity building activities and trainings</b>, targeting primarily SGBV, education, livelihoods, health and nutrition sector</li> <li>• Strengthen collaboration with MOWCA / BOWCA and explore <b>stronger inclusion and linkages with Government services and institutions</b> e.g. CCC/CRCs (Community Care Coalitions/Child Rights Committees), promote child friendly justice system by facilitating access to GoE child protection units (CPU) in police stations and child friendly benches (CFBs) in court as well as better accessibility through ‘mobile courts’. Also strengthen access to GoE one-stop centres for survivors of violence for life-saving medical, psychosocial and legal support.</li> </ul> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Goal 2:</b><br/>Children's participation and capacity are integral to their protection</p> | <p><b>Priority Outcome / Result:</b><br/>Boys and girls benefit from interventions which effectively build children's skills, capacities and contribute to their empowerment by ensuring meaningful child participation; seeking children to actively participate in all decisions affecting their lives and contribute to their own protection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen <b>community-based forums for children</b> (e.g. child led-clubs, child parliaments) to empower children and youth and to engage them in community mobilization from the first stages of life</li> <li>• <b>Community-based structures empowered to manage their own programmes</b> as protection partners/stakeholders with budgets and resources, including the RCC, Child Protection Committees and most importantly Youth and Children's groups</li> <li>• Ensure and strengthen <b>linkages</b> amongst community-based forums for children, other community-based structures (e.g. leaders) and service providers at all levels. This is to extend to the CRRF-related refugee and host community relationships</li> <li>• Functional <b>Child friendly feedback / compliant mechanisms</b> e.g. through satisfaction surveys or feedback discussions, structurally included in the Programme Cycle</li> <li>• Incorporate <b>life skills and leadership training/initiatives</b> in CP programming (incl. peacebuilding), highlighting the age-gender-diversity approach and gender equality</li> <li>• Connect children and youth with <b>vocational/business skills and livelihood</b> interventions, as direct beneficiaries or indirect through their families</li> <li>• <b>Humanitarian actors are trained</b> on the importance of child participation and how to promote children and youth's empowerment</li> <li>• Refugee children play an active role in <b>case management cycle</b> as well in processes related to their integration into national systems, including their access to justice</li> <li>• Continuous &amp; regular awareness raising activities and advocacy with all stakeholders, on prevention of violence, child protection risks and child participation</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Goal 3:</b><br/>Girls and boys have access to child friendly procedures</p>                | <p><b>Priority Outcome / Result:</b><br/>Children can easily and urgently access appropriate protection assistance by being promptly referred to service providers who undertake appropriate and timely interventions guided by CP SOPs in all locations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functional <b>child protection case management system</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CP SOPs are in place to ensure children can easily and urgently access protection assistance</li> <li>- <b>The Best Interests procedure</b> is established and well-functioning in all operations and initiated as soon as possible during/after registration and integrated into proGres.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Strengthen <b>referral system</b> – updated CP referral pathways and vulnerability criteria in place and refugee community is actively involved in making child protection referrals</li> <li>• Staff (incl. Health, Nutrition, Registration, teachers, refugee incentive workers) are trained on <b>child friendly communication</b></li> <li>• Reception and Registration areas have <b>CP focal points or Protection Help Desks</b> and child protection staff are embedded in the Registration process identifying and referring children at risk for immediate attention</li> <li>• <b>Infrastructure</b> (interview rooms, CFS, communication materials) are child-friendly</li> <li>• <b>Advocacy</b> and collaboration with partners to ensure children of concern have access and to child friendly procedures within the <b>national justice system</b></li> <li>• <b>Capacity building</b> on Child Protection provided to key stakeholders in formal and informal justice system</li> </ul>   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Goal 4:</b><br/>Girls and boys obtain legal documentation</p>                   | <p><b>Priority Outcome / Result:</b><br/>Coordination with national child protection systems is enhanced with the long-term objective of increased access of refugee children to national systems including birth registration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Capacity building</b> of local authorities and other relevant stakeholders on refugee protection and importance of birth registration for refugee children</li> <li>• <b>Strategic engagement</b> with VERA, ARRA and other relevant Government counterparts to implement amended VERA Proclamation 760/2012 once it has been promulgated to ensure refugee children benefit from easy and non-discriminatory access to birth registration</li> <li>• <b>Strengthening of partnerships and coordination</b> with partners and donors working on refugee's access to legal documentation, including legal identity documents issued for children by Government counterparts as per the 2004 Proclamation.</li> <li>• <b>Identification, analysis and response to challenges and obstacles</b> pertaining children's access to legal documentation</li> <li>• <b>Promote inclusive, innovative and practical approaches</b> for refugee children in camps and urban centres to access birth registration</li> <li>• Legal documentation, as well as the procedures to acquire them, are understood and prioritized by the refugee community (<b>awareness raising</b>)</li> <li>• <b>Advocacy</b> for continuous registration of refugees and issuance of proof of registration and/or refugee ID cards</li> <li>• <b>Resource mobilization</b> (funding, human resources) jointly with UNICEF</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Goal 5:</b><br/>Girls and boys with specific needs receive targeted support</p> | <p><b>Priority Outcome / Result:</b><br/>Children with specific needs – including survivors of SGBV, children with disabilities, UASC - benefit from high quality case management services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced <b>identification and response to other vulnerable children (OVC)</b></li> <li>• Strengthened engagement of <b>community-based protection structures</b> to identify and respond to needs of children with specific needs</li> <li>• Strengthen and formalize <b>collaboration with SGBV partners</b> to ensure children receive age-appropriate, confidential services and with <b>Education partners</b> to respond to specific needs of out of school children</li> <li>• Strengthen overall <b>case management process</b> (including referral system and case planning)</li> <li>• Functional <b>information management system for case management</b> using proGres</li> <li>• <b>Family Reunification:</b> UASC are identified and supported with family tracing and reunification immediately upon identification (cross border and inter-camp FTR)</li> <li>• <b>Alternative care arrangements:</b> Support for safe alternative care arrangements utilizing innovative support systems including cash-based assistance (as well as other forms) for kinship and foster caregivers for UASC</li> <li>• <b>Mental Health and Psychosocial support (MHPSS)</b> for victims of trafficking, and survivors of SGBV as well as other vulnerable children and their families/caregivers in need of additional support.</li> <li>• <b>BIA/BID process is enhanced</b> and guided by vulnerability criteria – to ensure children with specific needs receive timely support and follow up</li> <li>• <b>Advocacy</b> for more specialized CP services including on MHPSS, alternative care, disability, youth programming</li> <li>• <b>Strengthen linkages with national CP stakeholders and systems</b> for children with specific needs to access services (e.g. mental health services, legal aid etc.), establishing a roadmap for the appropriate integration into national CP systems</li> </ul> |



|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Goal 6:</b><br/>Girls and boys achieve durable solutions in their best interests</p>   | <p><b>Priority Outcome / Result:</b><br/>Girls and boys have awareness and access to solutions in their best interests</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNHCR and partners to engage with GoE and development partners to increase <b>access for refugees to national CP systems</b> and services which increase and facilitate local integration opportunities (GoE pledges made on increased access to education for refugees, out of camp policy, access to employment for parents)</li> <li>• <b>Best interests procedures</b> are established, effective and continuously strengthened e.g. through capacity building to afford children broader opportunities for solutions</li> <li>• Strengthened collaboration with ICRC/ERCs to <b>facilitate FTR for children with cross-border tracing needs and between operations (e.g. camp to urban reunification)</b></li> <li>• <b>Advocacy with embassies of third countries</b> for <b>resettlement</b> and <b>family reunification as an alternative legal pathway</b> and durable solution for unaccompanied and separated children.</li> </ul> |  |

UNHCR and partners will design and implement their Child Protection programmes to go in line with the above-mentioned six goals. Nevertheless, based on the results from the participatory assessments, consultations at the field and national levels, the following goals have been selected as the three strategic priorities which UNHCR together with all stakeholders will strive to achieve over the coming three years:

- (a) **Girls and boys including youth are safe where they live, learn and play**  
**Priority outcome: Child Protection is mainstreamed across sectors**  
**Indicator:** % of CP referrals made by non-CP partners (Education, SGBV, PSN, WASH, Health, Nutrition, Energy, and Livelihoods sectors)
  
- (b) **Girls and boys obtain legal documentation**  
**Priority outcome: Refugee children are registered at birth**  
**Indicator:** % of children under 12 months old who have been issued birth certificates by the authorities
  
- (c) **Girls and boys including youth with specific needs receive targeted support**  
**Priority outcome: children at heightened risk or victims of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect are benefitting from quality case management – they are identified and assisted, and their situation is monitored**  
**Indicator:** % of children with specific needs are receiving specialised child protection services

**LINKAGES BETWEEN THE CP FRAMEWORK AND THE EDUCATION AND SGBV STRATEGY**

Significant considerations were made when the three national strategies on SGBV, Child Protection and Education were developed in 2014. For the revision of the strategies Child Protection, SGBV and Education actors worked together to update the National Refugee SGBV and CP strategies in May 2017. The main rationale behind bringing different actors together was to ensure that linkages are created through the different expertise of each partner and UNHCR staff and that a strategic comprehensive protection response is envisioned.

**The first goal of the national Refugee CP strategy focuses on children being safe** – including at school where school children spend a considerable amount of time of their daily lives to learn. A safe learning environment is considered crucial, to reduce children’s exposure to child protection risks and negative coping mechanisms as well as to redress the traumas of displacement. Education

in itself is a tool for Protection. This is reflected both in the national Refugee Child Protection as well as the national Refugee Education strategy. The strong emphasis on a multi-sectorial response to refugee children which is outlined in this strategy also aims at strengthening coordination between different sectors, particularly between Child Protection, Education and SGBV. **The second goal of this strategy, which aims to enhance children’s participation and capacity also includes the component of girl’s empowerment** which capacitates adolescent girls and addresses one of the root causes of SGBV, gender inequality.

**One of the six goals in the national Refugee SGBV Strategy is the goal on access to justice and protecting children from harmful traditional practices.** It is thoroughly interlinked with Child Protection and both sectors will have to work together to increase the protection of children from SGBV and address the systematic violation of the girls’ right to physical integrity and the enduring prevalence of impunity through activating legal instruments and services.

**One of the six goals in the national Refugee SGBV Strategy is the goal on access to justice and protecting children from harmful traditional practices.** It is thoroughly interlinked with Child Protection and both sectors will have to work together to increase the protection of children from SGBV and address the systematic violence of girls’ right to physical integrity and the enduring prevalence of impunity through activating legal instruments and services.

#### **LOCATIONS/SUB-OFFICES’ SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A.** The implementation period of the national Refugee Child Protection Strategy will be **3 years (2017-2019)**
- B.** All offices within the Ethiopia operation will, with the Protection Units, take the lead in close collaboration with the Programme units. The **responsibility will be to ensure that field related activities are first in-line with the contextualised and national strategies.**
- C.** Each office will be responsible for ensuring that **the partner agreements are in-line with the contextualised and national strategies.**
- D.** **Each office will provide a mid-year report and an end-of-year report per location which will include quantitative information as per the set performance indicators incorporated in their contextualised strategies,** as well as qualitative information on impact, achievements and challenges.
- E.** Each Field office will have the responsibility **to conduct a reflection exercise on the strategy** through conducting a workshop in close collaboration with all stakeholders after one year, **around September 2018.** One output of the workshop will be a completed “reflection exercise” as per template in the annexe of this Strategy which shall be shared with the UNHCR Branch Office in October 2018.

**ANNEXE 1**

| <b>'REFLECTION EXCERSISE '- to be done end of August / early September 2018</b> |                                   |                         |                       |   |  |                         |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---|--|-------------------------|
| <b>Goal</b>   | <b>Outcome/operational result</b> | <b>Key achievements</b> | <b>Key challenges</b> | <b>Key opportunities for the future</b> | <b>Design and Implement Activities</b> |                         |
|   |                                   |                         |                       |   | <b>Activity</b>                        | <b>By whom/ by when</b> |
| Goal 1  |                                   |                         |                       |   |  |                         |
| Goal 2  |                                   |                         |                       |   |  |                         |
| Goal 3  |                                   |                         |                       |   |  |                         |
| Goal 4  |                                   |                         |                       |   |  |                         |
| Goal 5  |                                   |                         |                       |   |  |                         |
| Goal 6  |                                   |                         |                       |   |  |                         |

## ANNEXE 2

| WHERE ARE WE NOW? Assessing the Child Protection Systems  |  |
|---|--|
| <p><i>This section was developed in form of a group exercise during the National Strategy Review Workshop. The analysis of opportunities and challenges of existing child protection systems in Ethiopia provided the basis for the development of the actual Child Protection Strategy.</i></p>  |  |
| Opportunities   | Challenges   |
| <p><i>Legal &amp; Policy framework:</i><br/>The legal framework governing protection of refugee children in Ethiopia includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethiopia is signatory to 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and 1969 Protocol, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (14/05/91) – the Convention is domesticated under Proclamation No. 10/1992 the OAU Convention (10/11/1969)</li> <li>• The Constitution of Ethiopia (FDRE) grants that any international treaty signed by the State is integrated into the law. The Constitution also incorporates the Best Interests Principle of the Child</li> <li>• The Refugee Proclamation No. 409/2004 is domestic law. The Proclamation is currently being revised and will incorporate legal provisions which will benefit refugee’s local integration as formulated by the GoE during pledges made at the New York Summit 2016</li> <li>• Ethiopia is party to regional child protection instruments such as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990) and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) (2001)</li> <li>• The Government of Ethiopia made nine pledges at Leader’s Summit on Refugees in New York in 2016 to expand rights and opportunities to refugees which shall facilitate their local integration</li> </ul> | <p><i>Legal &amp; Policy framework:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak law enforcement – of both ratified treaties as well as domestic law</li> <li>• Lack of rights-based culture in many refugee communities</li> <li>• Limited awareness of international and national legal and policy framework of refugees and humanitarian actors at the camp-level</li> <li>• Government of Ethiopia (GoE) justice system is not child friendly (limited child-friendly procedures and mechanisms for child victims and child offenders)</li> <li>• Reservation to the refugees right to work but <b>opportunity</b> for change and greater refugee inclusion in national system based on pledges made by the Government of Ethiopia to provide work permits, and facilitate access to land for livelihoods</li> <li>• Encampment policy for most refugees / restricted movement. <b>Opportunity</b> given pledges made by the Government of Ethiopia to expand the Out of Camp policy.</li> <li>• Registration of Vital Events Proclamation does not include the documentation rights of refugees and asylum-seekers and is explicitly limited to persons of Ethiopian origin. <b>Opportunity</b> considering pledges made by Government of Ethiopia. Ministry of Justice and Vital Events Registration Agency (VERA) amended Proclamation 760/2012 which includes vital events registration of refugees and foreigners – the draft law is expected to be submitted to the House of People’s Representative for promulgation in 2017.</li> </ul> |
| <p><i>Knowledge &amp; Data:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participatory assessment are regularly conducted in all operations, including on Child Protection to obtain up to date information on protection risks of children and gaps in the response</li> <li>• Collaboration with community (community-based protection mechanisms) can be strengthened to obtain information on CP concerns and trends</li> <li>• Level 2 Registration (continuous) happening in most operations and verification exercises in some operations which allow to identify / verify children at risk</li> </ul>   | <p><i>Knowledge &amp; Data:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participatory assessments are not conducted in a regular and consistent way across all operations – PA exercise lacks planning and adequate (human) resource allocation in many field operations</li> <li>• CP data collected by UNHCR and partners is often not analysed in a systematic way</li> <li>• Not all operations have information available translating into a good and updated understanding of the overall CP situation (trends, new and emerging risks) which informs programming</li> </ul>  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No child protection standardized data management tool available in most operations (Agency CPIMS vs. Excel vs. inter-agency CPIMS)</li> <li>• Protection is often not adequately embedded in Registration activities and children at risk not identified and followed up</li> <li>• Poor data flow between partners &amp; UNHCR (entries in proGres)</li> <li>• Limited staffing capacity on data management and analysis and insufficient capacity building for staff</li> <li>• Underreporting of SGBV as well as other protection incidents</li> </ul>  |
| <p><i>Coordination:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of CP coordination mechanisms in most operations</li> <li>• Stronger mainstreaming and inter-sectorial approach (incl. Education, Livelihoods, Environment &amp; Energy, PSN/Disability, SGBV, Health, Nutrition, WASH) can be promoted</li> <li>• Possible creation of MHPSS coordination group co-chaired by Health and Protection</li> <li>• Strengthen linkages between different levels of Child Protection coordination mechanisms (Country / Field and camp-level)</li> </ul>  | <p><i>Coordination:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint CP/SGBV coordination meetings are not taking place in all operations</li> <li>• Not all CP coordination mechanisms in the operation are fully functioning</li> <li>• No/limited involvement of children/ community in coordination/planning of interventions</li> </ul>  |
| <p><i>Human and Financial Capacity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging refugees including teachers and refugee social workers more in protection response (strengthen community-based protection approach)</li> <li>• <b>Opportunity</b> to professionalize the refugee workforce given the limited capacity and limited continuous empowerment/training of refugee social workers</li> </ul>   | <p><i>Human and Financial Capacity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial constraints – Child Protection is underfunded</li> <li>• Limited CP expertise within UNHCR– most Protection staff cover various protection issues, including legal protection, SGBV, CP</li> <li>• Capacity building of staff is a gap in many operations</li> <li>• CP Staffing constraints in some operations incl. high turnover – resulting in lack of institutional memory</li> </ul>   |
| <p><i>Prevention &amp; Response:</i></p> <p><b><u>Goal 1: Girls and boys are safe where they live, learn and play</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen coordination amongst partners and ensure CP mainstreaming</li> <li>• Expand CP programmes and ensure coverage of services for other vulnerable children (OVC) including enhanced access to CP services for children with disabilities</li> <li>• Enhanced community involvement – for refugees (incl. children) to play an active part in their own protection</li> <li>• Build on existing traditional community-based child protection mechanisms to strengthen CP response</li> <li>• Stronger engagement with GoE (national CP systems) in the area of law enforcement</li> <li>• Collaboration with Education sector on joint advocacy for more secondary / higher education opportunities</li> </ul> | <p><i>Prevention &amp; Response:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited rights-based culture</li> <li>• Stigma and discrimination prevalent against children from minority groups and children with specific needs e.g. disabilities</li> <li>• Limited inter-linkages between CP, SGBV, EDU partners – and limited CP mainstreaming in other sectors</li> <li>• Prevalence of harmful practices, including corporal punishment, FGM, early marriage</li> <li>• Weak law enforcement</li> <li>• Community involvement in child protection response is insufficient in many operations (incl. of children themselves)</li> <li>• Coordination and referrals between partners: not in all operations functional – e.g. availability of CP referral pathways and trained partners (incl. teachers, health staff) on referral pathway.</li> <li>• Limited family-based care esp. in Shire and Addis Ababa for UASC</li> <li>• Out of school children</li> </ul> |

- More strategically align youth in CP programming e.g. as mentors for other children and youth
- Advocate for increase in livelihood opportunities for youth

**Goal 2: Children’s participation and capacity are integral to their protection**

- Strengthen the existing community-based child protection structures by actively engaging children and adolescent
- Build the capacity of community and religious leaders so that they understand importance of child participation and actively promote it
- Embed Life skills interventions strategically in CP programme to strengthen children’s capacities and confidence esp. girl child
- Allocate small grant for children/youth to design their own project – example Shire
- Increase peer-to-peer activities
- Strategically link youth with agencies providing vocational training & livelihood programmes
- Set up of CP feedback/complaint mechanism

**Goal 3: Girls and boys have access to child-friendly procedures**

- CP mainstreaming in WASH, Health, Nutrition, Education, SGBV, Livelihoods, PSN/Disability Environment & Energy) can be promoted
- Training for UNHCR staff and partners on how to communicate with children, including child friendly interviewing techniques

**Goal 4: Girls and boys obtain legal documentation**

- GoE pledged for refugee children to obtain access to civil documentation enabling their access to services
- Increased engagement with VERA and other authorities at Woreda level (BOLSA, BOWCA) to support national child protection systems in particular the national birth registration e.g. through mobile birth registration
- Intensified awareness raising on importance to give birth in clinics and procedures how to obtain birth notification if delivery was outside clinic
- Strengthen engagement with VERA both on national and regional level

- Weak identification and response to children with specific needs (apart UASC) in many operations. OVC often lack specialized services and focus by CP agencies
- Idleness given limited youth engagement programming

- Girls and boys often do not participate equally in community life
- Children are often not consulted by partners to discuss their needs, concerns and suggestions
- Child protection structures (child right clubs, child parliament) are weak in many operations and do not succeed to fully engage children. Limited number of children benefit from the structures
- Youth idleness – due to limited youth programming, opportunities and economic prospects
- Only small number of children benefit from community-based CP structures (e.g. Child Parliaments, Child rights groups etc.)

- Information disseminated is often in a way that often is not understood by children
- Low creativity or initiative to share and disseminate information in a child friendly manner
- Staff of partners and UNHCR are insufficiently trained on how to communicate with children, including child friendly interview techniques and disability inclusion
- Health centres, primary schools, ECCD centres and agency establishments (offices, interview/registrations rooms etc.) are not sufficiently child friendly
- Limited child-friendly procedures and mechanisms for child victims and child offenders

- Refugee children are as of now not issued birth certificates by Ethiopian Government
- Limited awareness on importance of legal documentation
- In some operations many mothers giving birth outside camp health facilities are not able to obtain birth notification
- Not all children (and adults) receive proof of registration or identity cards

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b><u>Goal 5: Girls and Boys with specific needs receive targeted support</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger engagement of community-based protection mechanisms to identify and respond to protection needs of children at risk</li> <li>• Stronger linkages with national CP system for children with specific needs to access services (e.g. mental health services, legal aid etc.)</li> <li>• Strengthened collaboration with ICRC/ERCS to assess tracing needs of UASC and make FTR/RFL services available</li> <li>• Mobile courts (as introduced in some operations) improve overall access to justice and are cost-effective for both refugees and host communities</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Goal 6: Girls and boys achieve durable solutions in their best interests</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family Reunification as alternative legal pathway and durable solution for unaccompanied and separated children</li> <li>• Increased local integration opportunities considering GoE pledges made</li> <li>• Community-based care arrangements as solutions for unaccompanied and separated children</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Friendly Spaces in the operation do largely not address the specific needs of children with disabilities</li> <li>• Limited specialized services available especially MHPSS and services for children with disabilities</li> <li>• Response of UNHCR and partners largely focuses on UASC and there is limited identification of other children at risk</li> <li>• Limited options for family-based care (esp. Shire and Addis) and weak mechanisms to enhance quality of foster care and ensure adequate monitoring and follow up</li> <li>• Case management system is not effective in many operations – with large backlog and low quality of BIA/BIDs – especially for OVC</li> <li>• Limited resettlement opportunities for refugees</li> <li>• Continued influxes in many operations due to ongoing conflict, instability and draught in countries of origin</li> <li>• Return is not an option for most refugees due to ongoing conflict and insecurity in CoO</li> <li>• Local integration is limited due to GoE policies of encampment, reservations to refugee’s right to work</li> </ul> |
| <p><b><i>Advocacy &amp; awareness raising:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pledges as overall advocacy opportunity to expand GoE services for refugee children</li> <li>• Awareness raising activities are taking place in camps and could be diversified</li> <li>• Advocacy messages / awareness raising in the camps could be more strategic and cross-sectorial</li> <li>• Strategic advocacy through CP Factsheet prepared by Country Office outlining challenges &amp; gaps – addressed to donors and partners</li> </ul>   | <p><b><i>Advocacy &amp; awareness raising:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No CP advocacy strategy in place</li> <li>• Limited access to other GoE Agencies apart from ARRA – limited access to national CP systems</li> <li>• Awareness raising alone may not have the intended impact to mitigate onward movement without viable alternative options</li> <li>• Awareness raising alone may not have the intended impact to mitigate harmful traditional practices</li> </ul>   |