



Photo: AENN, FHI 360

# Social Emotional Learning in Emergencies

## Approaches to Social-Emotional Learning at FHI 360

FHI 360's Education in Emergencies unit provides conflict-sensitive interventions that focus on the holistic wellbeing of learners, teachers, and their communities. Global evidence shows that social-emotional learning (SEL) is essential to improving both learning and psychosocial outcomes. This approach includes establishing safe education and classroom environments, supporting school leaders and teachers with comprehensive professional development, and providing SEL and psychosocial support (PSS) resources and activities for learners, teachers, school personnel and caregivers. These activities and resources include SEL as standalone classes and integrated into academic programming in formal and nonformal settings, afterschool programs, and trainings for teachers and caregivers. For youth, FHI 360 contextualizes interventions to respond to the bespoke needs of learners and their communities, integrating SEL into life skills, career readiness, and peacebuilding education. Together, those practices are contextualized and developed through SEL360, a new, data-based, and innovative approach to localize SEL and PSS for sustained ownership by local education stakeholders.

## Why Social Emotional Learning?

Social-emotional learning encompasses all the skills, attitudes, and mindsets that people of all ages use to advance their inner psychological and outer social wellbeing, such as managing stress, solving problems and maintaining healthy relationships. SEL programming provides an explicit pathway for education to address the skills that enable children and youth to succeed not only as learners, but also as family members, friends, workers and citizens. FHI 360's approach recognizes that emotional needs and interests evolve over the stages of human development and are highly dependent on cultural context by conducting needs and context assessments along with comprehensive monitoring and evaluation to inform contextualized SEL interventions.

The short and long-term outcomes associated with SEL interventions include improvements in enrollment and attendance, increased academic achievement, positive social behaviors and long-term physical and mental health, along with decreases in aggression and substance abuse. SEL interventions in emergency contexts have been proven to reduce and reverse the harmful effects of exposure to prolonged violence, abuse and neglect.

## EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

FHI 360 works side by side with ministries, communities, schools, teachers and families to create education systems that respond to the complex, dynamic and diverse needs of the people they serve. Our programs:

- Utilize evidence-based approaches to develop and support formal and nonformal education
- Prioritize gender equity and social inclusion
- Build capacity and resilience of communities and education systems
- Provide quality contextualized teaching and learning materials
- Ensure education quality through teacher training and continuous professional development
- Respond to fluctuating emergencies like COVID-19 with flexible, tiered interventions

## FHI 360 education in emergencies SEL programs

In **NORTHEAST NIGERIA**, FHI 360 implemented a range of contextualized SEL activities to address the effects of toxic stress while building resilience for displaced and conflict-affected children and youth. At the nonformal basic literacy level, a randomized control trial studied the impact of two SEL delivery modalities – one with SEL as a standalone class and the second with SEL integrated into academic classes – on reading, numeracy, and SEL outcomes. During the COVID-19 crisis, FHI 360 pivoted its SEL activities to support caregivers and communities to conduct home-based SEL and psychosocial support integrated into distance learning. FHI 360 also built government capacity to incorporate SEL into national curricula.

In post-conflict southern **SENEGAL**, programs address children's social-emotional needs through a comprehensive school climate package that specifically targets school-related gender-based violence. SEL is integrated at all levels of the school community, including SEL-informed classroom games and youth leadership clubs to promote awareness of SEL principles and protection-related topics.

In the **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC)**, FHI 360 supports SEL, PSS and life skills activities to develop children and youth's resilience and leadership in the face of persistent conflict and crisis. Through tiered interventions addressing fluctuation crisis contexts, SEL is integrated into formal and nonformal education activities and teacher training.

In **IRAQ**, FHI 360 supported local, youth-serving organizations develop contextualized and conflict-sensitive tools and curriculum through SEL and life skills training.

In **GUATEMALA**, FHI 360 designed modules to train pre-service teachers to support their own and their students' social-emotional well-being and, in response to Covid-19, adapted the modules into an online platform for teachers and the Ministry of Education.

In **EL SALVADOR**, FHI 360 implemented a workshop series for 3,000 teachers in schools affected by gang violence improve their SEL competencies and overall well-being. Forthcoming studies will measure teachers' well-being improvement and the linkage between well-being and classroom climate.

All FHI 360 SEL interventions include regular rolling assessments and rigorous experimental studies to inform scenario-based implementation needs and measure program impacts for scale.

**About FHI 360:** FHI 360 is a nonprofit human development organization dedicated to improving lives in lasting ways by advancing integrated, locally driven solutions. Our staff includes experts in health, education, nutrition, environment, economic development, civil society, gender, youth, research, technology, communication and social marketing—creating a unique mix of capabilities to address today's interrelated development challenges. FHI 360 serves more than 60 countries and all U.S. states and territories.



### FHI 360 IS A GLOBAL THOUGHT LEADER IN SEL:

Member of/contributor to:

- Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) PSS/ SEL collaborative
- Basic Education Coalition's (BEC) Crisis Working Group.
- Landscape Review of Teacher Well-being in Low Resource, Crisis, and Conflict-affected Settings
- Background Paper on Humanitarian-Development Coherence in Education: Working together in crisis contexts
- USAID Paper on Effective SEL/Soft Skills Interventions in Distance Learning
- How-to Note: Social Emotional Learning in USAID Basic Education Programs

#### WASHINGTON DC OFFICE

1825 Connecticut Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20009 USA  
T 1.202.884.8000  
F 1.202.884.8400

#### FHI 360 HEADQUARTERS

359 Blackwell Street, Suite 200  
Durham, NC 27701 USA  
T 1.919.544.7040  
F 1.919.544.7261

#### ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL OFFICE

19th Floor, Tower 3  
Sindhorn Building  
130-132 Wireless Road  
Kwaeng Lumpini, Khet Phatumwan  
Bangkok 10330 Thailand  
T 66.2.263.2300  
F 66.2.263.2114

#### EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL OFFICE

333 Grosvenor Street  
Hatfield Gardens, Block B  
Hatfield, Pretoria 0083 South Africa  
T 27.12.762.4000  
F 27.12.762.4001

[WWW.FHI360.ORG](http://WWW.FHI360.ORG)