



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 community and cultural context by conducting needs and context assessments along with comprehensive monitoring and evaluation to inform locally led and 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.

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

To ensure an intrinsic and deliberate locally led approach, and to maximize national ownership of programs, 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 in early childhood, primary and secondary education
- Prioritize cross-cutting 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 SEL Programs

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 USAID-Elimu ni Jibu ("Education is the Answer"), FHI 360 implements tiered interventions addressing fluctuating crisis contexts that integrate SEL into formal and nonformal education activities and teacher training.

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 **RWANDA**, FHI 360 is leading a group of local and national stakeholders to develop a nationwide SEL program through the USAID-Tunozu Gusoma (Schools and Systems) activity. In 2022, the Ministry of Education approved a national SEL framework linked to the Rwandan Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) that will guide the implementation of SEL activities at the pre-primary and lower primary level.

Across **LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**, FHI 360 supports school-based interventions supporting the SEL skills and wellbeing of students and teachers. Through the multi-country USAID-Avanza (Advance) project, FHI 360 has designed modules to train pre-service teachers to support their own and their students' social-emotional well-being, contextualized for the Dominican Republic and Guatemala, where evaluations showed positive impacts on teacher SEL skills and attitudes. In Jamaica, FHI 360 is supporting university-wide psychosocial support programming for students from disadvantaged and marginalized groups. In El Salvador, FHI 360, funded by the Millennium Challenge Corporation, implemented SEL and wellbeing activities for teachers in schools affected by gang violence, developing tools to measure teacher wellbeing and the linkage between well-being and classroom climate.

In **NORTHEAST NIGERIA**, FHI 360 implemented a range of contextualized SEL interventions to address the effects of toxic stress while building resilience for displaced and conflict-affected children and youth through the USAID-funded Addressing Education in Northeast Nigeria (AENN) activity. The intervention included SEL lessons and activities for learners in schools and nonformal learning centers, building government capacity to incorporate SEL into national curricula, and activities to support the wellbeing of educators and caregivers. FHI 360 also led research on SEL, including an RCT that found that integrating SEL into accelerated education classes had positive effects on literacy and math outcomes.

In **IRAQ**, FHI 360 supported local, youth-serving organizations developing contextualized and conflict-sensitive tools and curriculum through SEL and life skills training under the UNICEF Life Skills and Citizenship Education Initiative.

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
- INEE/Harvard EASEL Lab PSS-SEL Toolbox anchor organization
- 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
Sinhorn 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