

Child protection

About half the people globally affected by armed conflict and violence are children whose rights to protection and development are severely compromised.

The impact of emergencies on children

- **Neglect:** due to loss of parents and other caregivers, reduced attention from adults and inability to access basic services.
- **Dangers and Injuries:** through road traffic accidents, drowning, burning, contact with explosive remnants of war and gunfire.
- **Physical violence and other harmful practices:** pressure can increase violence within the family and contribute to child marriage, self-harming, etc.
- **Sexual violence:** increases in emergencies, exposing children to abuse, injury, trafficking, sexually transmitted diseases or HIV, early pregnancy and death.
- **Psychosocial and mental disorders:** crises induce severe stress: toxic stress causes significant physical, emotional and developmental damage to children.
- **Child labour:** children at increased risk of forced conscription, child labour, prostitution, begging, child trafficking and sexual exploitation.
- **Justice for children:** detention rates may increase and boys and girls in detention are at high risk of torture, sexual abuse and other forms of violence.

Interventions to support child protection and development

- **Advocate:** with governments, donors, other NGOs, community groups about child protection concerns such as the use of orphanages and international adoption, as girls and boys are generally safer and better cared for in a family environment in their own communities.
- **Raise awareness:** of protection concerns such as child trafficking, child labour etc., through public awareness campaigns.
- **Develop life skills and promote behavioural change:** to build resilience and better prevent and respond to child protection concerns e.g. through positive parenting programmes and alternatives to violence.
- **Build capacity:** for service providers and key staff on child protection issues, e.g. training for local community liaison staff and social workers to provide supportive care to children and their caregivers.
- **Develop, support and monitor alternative or interim care:** for separated, unaccompanied or orphaned children and those needing alternative arrangements for their safety, including children released from armed forces or groups, or from detention.
- **Lead case management:** so vulnerable children are identified and referred for essential services (medical support, interim care, psychosocial support, legal assistance, safety and security, etc.) accompanied by trained caseworkers.
- **Provide structured social activities for children:** facilitated by communities e.g. child friendly spaces, recreation, leisure and learning opportunities. Other psychosocial support including mass communication about positive coping methods, activation of social networks, youth clubs, psychological first aid.



Engaging with children in preparedness and response

Engage with children from the start

Mainstream child protection in all humanitarian action

Inform children about emergencies, their impact, and the issues they may face

Involve a diverse range of children in planning and decision making

Develop children's skills, capacities and ideas. Guide them on how to participate in responding to emergencies, e.g.:

- ✓ Organising games and entertainment
- ✓ Supporting and caring for young children, the elderly or those with disabilities
- ✓ Helping with food preparation and collecting or distributing food and other items
- ✓ Cleaning up and repairs

Additional resources on All In Diary website

A Matter of Life and Death, CPWG 2015
Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, CPWG 2012

Web links for further information

Child Protection Working Group - <http://cpwg.net/>
Save the Children: <http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/>