Terms of Reference

Study on how child protection systems mitigate the impact of disasters in emergency response

Background

UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children’s rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children. UNICEF’s Child Protection Strategy\(^1\) identifies the strengthening of child protection systems as a key to securing and operationalizing a protective environment\(^2\) in non-emergency as well as in emergency contexts. No child should be exposed to violence, abuse or exploitation. The Strategy, which adopts a two pronged approach to child protection, seeks to promote and protect children through strengthening child protection systems and bringing about changes in social norms that may expose them to child protection related risks.

The aim of a child protection system is to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, and exploitation. Such systems are composed of components similar to other systems, such as health and education systems, including human resources, finances, laws and policies, governance, monitoring and data. There are also elements specific to child protection such as the continuum of care, the process of care, and the type of services that are offered. The system includes the more and less formal elements, recognising that less formal elements may have differing degrees and forms of formality, including state recognition. The system should reach all "levels" of a country, from the village through districts to the national level, and may need to be coordinated across borders, particularly when dealing with issues such as migration and refugees. How a country chooses to define those structures, capacities and functions will be as unique as the context in which it operates.\(^3\)

While the government plays a prominent role, other actors, and less formal aspects of the system are also recognised as integral to a child protection system. Mapping and assessment toolkits have been developed to assist in describing how a system is operationalised,\(^4\) including its identification, its specific goals, components, and processes. The process of assessing a system can result in a mobilisation of the actors around the identified goals and priorities.

A system exists during stable and emergency contexts. What may differ are some of the priorities, the need for some areas of the system to expand or contract in order to respond effectively, and there may be some different actors. A system, at its base, is one that the population knows and can access. To the extent possible, where systems are weak, child protection actors responding to humanitarian emergencies strive to strengthen systems to improve the protective environment for all children.

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\(^1\) The Strategy can be accessed at the following link: [http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/08-5Rev1-child_protection-20_May_08-final_changes(3).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/08-5Rev1-child_protection-20_May_08-final_changes(3).pdf)


Recent examples of natural disasters include the Japanese earthquake/tsunami in March 2011 in which some 16,000 people died and 1,600 children were bereaved or orphaned. The volcanic eruption in Chile in 2011 displaced the surrounding population and impacted on neighbouring Argentina. Floods in Pakistan in August 2010 affected more than 18 million people, 3.9 million being children. Haiti was hit by an earthquake in January 2010 with over 200,000 deaths and 750,000 children directly affected. There are also recurring disasters, such as the flooding in Bangladesh, and landslides in urban areas of Brazil.

In economic crises, there has been some reflection on the impact of having a system or recognisable institutional structure being able to respond to an economic crisis. Economic crises, particularly when they result in high unemployment, can expose structural issues related to social protection. Responses to economic crisis require systems that have the capacity to absorb funds and deliver services. Where a system has a low capacity, the initial response is to build capacity, and hence results in delayed delivery of services to those in need. Indeed, a lesson learned from UNICEF’s emergency responses over the years is the importance of utilising the existing system through strengthening the capacity of actors with the responsibility to address the protection challenges encountered during emergencies. This may involve supporting social welfare, education, health, law enforcement and justice sectors. Not only does the system provide an anchor for emergency response, but the response itself also offers opportunities to “build back better” a system that existed prior to the emergency.

Hypothesis/Assumption

Child protection systems are able to mitigate child protection risks and facilitate responses to risks of violence, abuse and exploitation that arise, or may arise, during and in the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster.

Purpose

The purpose of the assignment is to explore the veracity of the hypothesis based on a literature review and specific country case studies. It is expected to answer such questions as:

- What aspects of a Child Protection system are critical to mitigating the impact of a disaster?
- What aspects of emergency responses are best served through a Child Protection system?
- What aspects of a Child Protection system should be better prepared to mitigate the emergency and support disaster preparedness measures?
- What aspects of a Child Protection system lend themselves to being strengthened during or in the immediate aftermath of a disaster?
- Which aspects of a Child Protection system are particularly vulnerable to disruption or collapse during or in the immediate aftermath of a disaster?

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6 UNICEF (2011) Children in Pakistan: One year after the floods – Turning towards a brighter future, UNICEF.
7 UNICEF (2011) Children in Haiti: One year after – The long road from relief to recovery, UNICEF.
While a child protection system does intersect with other areas such as health and education, and can positively support these areas, this assignment is looking specifically at child protection. The intention of the assignment is not to assess the emergency response, rather to review how the existence of a system prior to the emergency impacted the ability to respond to child protection issues as well as the actual results for children. This could include, for example, the ability to deliver a service, or the knowledge of the population as to where to go for assistance, or the capacity of governments to absorb resources. It should also consider all children (e.g. children with disabilities, minority groups, majority groups, all ages, etc.). It may consider the historical and geographic placement of the population and their migration (e.g. location of care facilities, where economically poorer populations live and their services, historical connections with other population groups). It should also consider disaster preparedness measures, such as evacuation routes and shelters (e.g. knowledge and use of these by the population, the inclusiveness of these measures and barriers/facilitators to their use).

While not evaluating the response, it should note the impact of the system on the international and government response (e.g. funding flows of external donors and NGOs, how the existing system was used by the international actors and any distinctions between them). The results of the study will inform and contribute to future programme development, including disaster risk reduction programmes.

The focus of the country case studies will be on natural disasters. The assignment will review the child protection system that was in place prior to the disaster (using methodologies such as literature review, interviews with key stakeholders). While this may include emergency preparedness plans, the focus would be on the broader child protection system. It will then examine the relationship of this system to the ability to mitigate child protection risks in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, with a focus on the first 3-6 months (using methodologies including in-country research).

**Duties and Responsibilities**

1. Conduct a literature review of the current evidence of the mitigating influences of systems in an emergency through prevention, mitigation and preparedness. This would review all types of emergencies – e.g. economic, disaster, armed conflict; and all types of systems – e.g. child protection, social protection, health, education. It should include academic and grey literature.

2. Develop a detailed methodology for testing whether child protection systems mitigate child protection risks during an emergency. The methodology will include the investigation and description of the system before an emergency as well as during and immediately following the disaster. It should be feasible to carry out the same methodology in 2 (or 3) distinct countries.

3. Implementation of the methodology and complete documentation of the results. Resulting recommendations will consider the above noted questions, and be based on the evidence garnered through the research and the literature review.
Deliverables:

A report which will be comprised of:

1. Literature review of the current evidence on the mitigating influences of systems in an emergency.
2. A defined methodology for the testing of the hypothesis. This will define the research methodology, and scope of desk and field reviews. It would elaborate on the methodology that was submitted in the application for the assignment, considering the literature review and knowledge of the countries to be included in the assignment. The methodology will be reviewed by the UNICEF HQ Senior Advisors and Chiefs of Child Protection in the respective country offices, prior to the field visits.
3. Documentation of case studies in emergency contexts of the mitigating impact of the child protection system, with particular attention to the above questions posed. It will include recommendations that may be applied in other disaster contexts (e.g. middle-income, high-income, low-income countries; situations of fragility, etc.)

Contract Arrangements

The assignment is estimated for a period of 100 person working days over a period of 4.5 months, beginning in June 2012. The consultant can work from a location of her/his choosing, but would be expected to travel to 2 (possibly 3) countries, with recent experience of disaster to develop the case studies. The countries will be selected by UNICEF in consultation with the selected consultant. Ongoing and additional consultations would be expected to be undertaken remotely.

Drafts of the report will be reviewed in stages, notably, the draft literature review, the methodology prior to the field visits, the findings of each field visit, etc. The full report will be reviewed in draft, with comments received and considered for the report finalisation.

Some of the necessary project documents and reports will be provided to the selected consultant at the beginning of the assignment by UNICEF HQ, and by the UNICEF offices included in the country case studies. It is expected, however, that the team will conduct its own literature review. It is expected that the initial literature review would take approximately one-fifth of the consultancy time (20 person days).

It is expected that the resulting paper will contribute to a conference on child protection systems during the second half of 2012, and will contribute to broader learning within the child protection community. The contents of the report, and the initial drafts, will be the exclusive property of UNICEF, for sharing and distribution as determined.

Travel arrangements will be made by UNICEF HQ, in coordination with the country offices and the consultant. In country per diem will be provided by UNICEF according to its rate. In country spoken interpretation will be provided if necessary. It is expected that each visit in country would last 2-3 person weeks (14-21 person days), determined by the methodology chosen.

The consultant(s) will work with counterparts in government, civil society and the private sector in each country, as appropriate. The consultant(s) will also interact with other relevant “global” stakeholders in the child protection system discussion as required and identified by UNICEF.
Key skills, technical background, and experience required:

Essential:

- Understanding of UNICEF’s child protection system approach, including familiarity with child protection system theories and child protection mapping and assessment toolkits
- Experience with
  - social science analysis, and particularly systems theory
  - social services
  - economics and political science
  - child protection
- Experience working in natural disaster and development contexts
- At least 8 years of experience in a related field
- Must be willing to work in a challenging environment,
- Excellent written and spoken English. Fluency in another UN language desirable, as well as other languages relevant to areas of recent disasters.
- Proven ability to work in another culture

Applications

Qualified candidates are requested to submit a cover letter, CV and signed P11 form (which can be retrieved at http://www.unicef.org/about/employ/index_53129.html), an outline of the methodology to be used, and an example of a piece of research produced by the candidate, to pdconsultants@unicef.org with subject line “Child protection systems study in disasters”. Please indicate your ability, availability and fee requirements to undertake the terms of reference above. Applications submitted without a daily rate will not be considered.

Note that a similar terms of reference has also been released as a request for proposals for Institutions.

Deadline for applications is 16 May 2012.