

The Participation of Children and Young People in Emergencies

A guide for relief agencies, based largely on experiences in the Asian tsunami response

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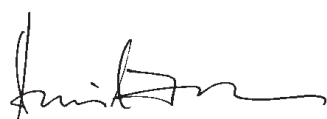
Preface

The Asian tsunami of December 2004 triggered one of the largest humanitarian relief efforts of recent times. Not only did the scale of the tsunami response break many records, it also led to innovations in delivering relief and in managing rehabilitation efforts.

The Participation of Children and Young People in Emergencies: A guide for relief agencies based largely on experiences in the Asian tsunami response has captured some of the most interesting and inspiring examples of children's involvement in the tsunami disaster response and recovery phases, as collected by UNICEF and a wide array of partners and UN agencies. The examples of children's participation in emergency response included in this guide show that their active involvement in relief and rehabilitation efforts are essential and should be a necessary and integral part of any humanitarian programme. Experiences with the participation of children and young people in emergency response, in rehabilitation and in reconstruction, demonstrate what they can contribute. These contributions have helped families and communities to survive and recover. They have ensured that relief and rehabilitation are more effective, and they have enabled young people to cope with the aftermath of the tsunami.

A large portion of the material in this guide refers to the December 2004 tsunami. But this was supplemented by examples of children's participation in emergencies drawn from elsewhere to show how their actions in the tsunami were not isolated. This guide has been written for staff and managers of relief agencies, UN organizations, children's and young people's agencies, and others who are involved in emergency response. It provides practical examples and guidance on supporting children's rights to expression and information and on the active engagement of young people in emergencies. The guide was produced through a collaboration among UNICEF offices in the East Asia and Pacific and the South Asia Region and UNICEF headquarters.

Humanitarian agencies continue to define the rights of people affected by emergencies and to expand and refine the standards and norms for emergency response. The tsunami has rekindled debates on the accountabilities of humanitarian agencies and the rights of children, women and men affected by disasters. Children's participation in emergency response has not featured high on the agendas of relief agencies. This document aims to increase awareness and understanding of the rights and capacity of children to be involved in disaster preparedness and response. This guide is a valuable resource for relief agencies and for informing the development of standards on the civil rights and active engagement of children and young people in emergency response.



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Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Preface	v
Acronyms and abbreviations	ix
Introduction	1
Children’s and young people’s participation rights in emergencies	3
Defining children and young people	6

Part One: Priority actions to support children’s participation in emergencies 7

Introduction: Children’s actions in emergencies	9
A. Harnessing the contributions and capacities of children and young people	11
B. Providing information for children	22
C. Involving children in assessments, planning and decision making	26
D. Feedback and complaint mechanisms for children	31
E. Children’s and young people’s associations in emergencies	35

Part Two: Guidance and resources for children’s participation in emergencies 41

Introduction	43
1. Building basic competencies of relief staff working with children	44
2. Developing the capacities of children	47
3. Working with children affected by disasters	49
4. Participatory disaster assessments with children	52
5. Supporting children as peer educators	54
6. Providing information for children	57
7. Consulting with children	60
8. Feedback and complaint mechanisms for children	61
9. Working with children’s organizations	63
10. Emergency preparedness and disaster-risk reduction with children	65
11. Standards to protect children who participate	68
12. Measuring and monitoring children’s participation	71
13. Dealing with the challenges and obstacles	74
General references	78
Resources and organizations	82

Boxes

Box 1:	Civil rights of disaster-affected people in international humanitarian standards	4
Box 2:	The Convention on the Rights of the Child	5
Box 3:	Children’s and young people’s capacities in emergencies	10
Box 4:	Rescuing other children	12
Box 5:	Taking younger children to safety	13
Box 6:	Learning and providing first aid	13
Box 7:	Performance as community support	15
Box 8:	Teaching younger children	16
Box 9:	Relevant skills through local curriculum	16
Box 10:	Girls and young women: Care, confidence and psychosocial support	17
Box 11:	Child rights training puts a community’s budget into the hands of a teenager	19
Box 12:	Resilience through heritage and identity	20
Box 13:	Overcoming grief through participation in relief efforts	20
Box 14:	Training other children in emergency preparedness	21
Box 15:	Protection through children’s involvement in preparedness planning	23
Box 16:	Health awareness in an emergency	24
Box 17:	Recording who is affected and identifying the sick	24
Box 18:	Protection through information	25
Box 19:	Consultation leads to education and appropriate clothing kits	27
Box 20:	Children’s vulnerability assessments improve communities	28
Box 21:	Consultations on housing and resource centres	28
Box 22:	Consultations on community spaces for children	29
Box 23:	Consultation for a children-friendly city	29
Box 24:	Clearing up, providing psychosocial support and care	33
Box 25:	Children’s Committees for evaluation and accountability	34
Box 26:	Children’s organization responding to slum fire	36
Box 27:	Children’s group works on emergency preparation	37
Box 28:	Forums for protection	37
Box 29:	Children’s and young people’s groups bring identity, social and political awareness	38
Box 30:	Young people setting up community radio and businesses and fighting to retain community land	39
Box 31:	Children aged 5-10 years working with younger siblings	56
Box 32:	How to produce children-friendly documents	59
Box 33:	Happy Sad Letter Box	62
Box 34:	Checklist for setting up a complaints and response system in emergencies	62
Box 35:	El Salvador: Children and youth at the centre of disaster-risk reduction	66
Box 36:	Standards for children’s participation	69
Box 37:	Children’s Parliament takes up issues for the community and children	73

Acronyms and abbreviations

CCF	Christian Children’s Fund
CDA	Collaborative for Development Action
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRF	Child Rights Foundation
CRIN	Child Rights Information Network
CWA	Child Workers in Asia
CWC	Concerned for Working Children
DRR	disaster-risk reduction
EAPRO	UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office
ECBP	Emergency Capacity Building Project
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IAWGCP	Inter-Agency Working Group on Children’s Participation
ICP	Innovations in Civic Participation
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Society
IDPs	Internally displaced persons
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
KE	stories and material collected by Karen Emmons
PRA	participatory rapid appraisal
ROSA	UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

Purpose and rationale

Children have made significant and valuable contributions in emergency situations. They have taken on roles and responsibilities and they have taken action – including life-saving decisions. They have responded spontaneously and taken part in planned relief and recovery action. This has included them in protecting lives, providing health care, distributing relief, caring for children and adults, and offering a hand in psychosocial support, health and hygiene education, reconstruction, planning and evaluating emergency relief work.

The activities and achievements of children in emergencies demonstrate why their participation is of value to them, their families and their communities as well as to relief and recovery work. Yet their efforts have been little recognized. This guide provides a short account of what children and young people have done and can do in emergencies. It shows why and suggests how relief agencies should engage with children before, during and after emergencies.

The main reasons for engaging with children and young people lie within the standards that relief agencies have set for themselves for the work they do. These standards aim for an accountability to communities that implicitly, at least, includes children and young people. The question, then, is how to actually implement them in practice for children and young people.

A better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of children in disasters is long overdue. Increased recognition among emergency specialists that “women and children are largely untapped resources in disaster response” (Florida, 2000) has led to an increased focus on gender issues in emergencies and particularly the impact on women’s lives. But the grouping of children together with women, with its implied emphasis on young children, has helped obscure children’s potential and actual participation. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines children as younger than 18; other definitions categorize adolescents as aged 10-19 and young people as aged 15-24. Within these age ranges, there are many mothers (and fathers). Although children and young people have less social (and often physical) power, their contributions in emergencies are significant and crucial to the survival of their families and communities.

This guide is part advocacy document to promote children’s participation and part programme guide. It is not a tool kit. Working with children and supporting their participation requires experience and adherence to certain principles and standards. Relief agencies planning to involve children in their work will require specialist support from other agencies and individuals who have practical experience working with children.

For relief agencies, the first step in fulfilling their obligations is understanding that children and young people can participate in disaster-related activities, recognizing the importance of their participation and then making a commitment to involve them: Part One of this guide provides examples of children’s participation and its effect. Following on from their commitment, relief agencies need to develop an ongoing practice of involving children: Part Two of this guide provides a starting point, with suggested areas for work.

Sources

The materials presented in this guide are drawn largely from the involvement of children and young people in the response to the Asian earthquake and tsunami of 26 December 2004 (referred to hereafter as the 2004 tsunami). There are a few principal sources for published and unpublished material documenting the activities of children and young people. These include Plan's *Children and the Tsunami* (Plan International, 2005), UNICEF's *Children and Young People Responding to the Tsunami: Report of the Forum and Fair* (Chen and Thompstone, 2005), and stories collected and documented by Karen Emmons for UNICEF, some of which form the basis for many of the boxes included here. These sources provide the main examples for children's and young people's contributions and involvement in disaster-related work. But they are not continuously cited, to keep the text reasonably uncluttered; they are noted at quotation points, however. In addition, material collected elsewhere regarding the tsunami disaster, including by the UNICEF ROSA office, has been used. Interviews with staff from Plan International, Save the Children and UNICEF, including UNICEF consultants, were conducted in October 2006 as additional background. Material from other emergencies, used to supplement the understanding of children's and young people's participation, is drawn from a variety of published sources and referenced. While the main material in this guide refers to the December 2004 tsunami, examples of children's participation in other types of emergencies taken from elsewhere reinforce that children's actions in the tsunami disaster response were not isolated.

Most of the documentation on children in emergencies focuses on children's survival and protection rather than on their participation and development. The dominant theme of the emergency literature emphasizes children's vulnerability rather than their strengths and resilience. In so doing, that focus fails to respect the fundamental importance of children's participation for their protection to be effective. And where children's participation has been documented, often little attention has been paid to childhood diversity, especially age and gender. The examples in this guide show children's involvement at a variety of ages and the actions of both girls and boys, even though there has been more documenting of older children's activities.

Children's response in emergencies illuminate the value and importance of their participation. These actions also highlight the need to include children and young people in emergency response planning to ensure that the work of relief agencies is effective, accountable and meets their own standards. The examples presented here illustrate how children's capacities and actions can be enhanced through both preparedness planning and involvement in participation projects.

Audience

This guide was written for staff and managers of relief agencies, United Nations organizations, children's and young people's agencies and others who are involved in emergency response. It provides guidance to initiate a process of looking at how to meet agreed commitments, standards and principles of working with and for children and young people.

Structure

The guide is segmented into three sections: an introductory section followed by a series of chapters divided into two main parts; the first highlights what children have done in emergencies and the other looks at ways of initiating children's participation.

In the opening section, the introduction is followed by an overview of key standards and principles agreed upon by humanitarian agencies in relation to the civil rights and participation of disaster-affected people. A chapter on defining children and young people completes this section.

Part One presents examples of what children have done in emergencies, especially in areas affected by the 2004 tsunami. Each of these five chapters presents examples and descriptions of children's participation, followed by guidance on ways in which relief agencies can involve children in their work.

Part Two presents initial guidance and resources on a set of core topics relevant to children's participation. Each of these chapters outlines practical guidelines, references and additional resources.

Children's and young people's participation rights in emergencies

Humanitarian agencies have established principles and standards to guide emergency work.¹ These documents define the obligations and commitments of humanitarian agencies in relation to the people affected by disasters. Some of these standards call for greater accountability of relief agencies in protecting and fulfilling the civil rights of people in emergencies. They include:

Recognizing and interacting with disaster victims as dignified humans – not treating them just as vulnerable and helpless objects of charity. Based on this, relief agencies have committed themselves to build on the capacities and strengthen the resilience of people affected by disasters. Relief agencies are called upon to harness community assets and contributions in emergency response and preparedness work (Code of Conduct, World Disaster Report 2004).

Recognizing the importance of information in disasters and the obligation of humanitarian agencies to ensure that the affected populations have access to vital information (*World Disaster Report 2005, Good Enough Guide*). This includes information about disaster risks and early warning systems, information about relief programmes and entitlements of affected population groups, and access to information technology for people affected by disasters (for example, using satellite phones and database systems to reunite families).

Consulting with communities affected by disasters and involving them in decisions about relief and reconstruction programmes, including planning, assessments, distribution and monitoring (Code of Conduct, *Good Enough Guide, IASC Operational Guidelines on Human Rights and Natural Disasters*).

Establishing mechanisms and systems for feedback and complaints for disaster-affected populations (*Good Enough Guide and IASC Operational Guidelines on Human Rights and Natural Disasters*).

Supporting people affected by disasters to join or form associations (*IASC Operational Guidelines on Human Rights and Natural Disasters*).

¹For example, The Sphere Project's Humanitarian Charter, the ICRC's Code of Conduct, *Do No Harm, IASC Operational Guidelines on Human Rights in Natural Disasters and Good Enough Guide*.

Box 1: Civil rights of disaster-affected people in international humanitarian standards

International Federation of the Red Cross (1994): The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief – Article 7. “Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid. Disaster response assistance should never be imposed upon the beneficiaries. Effective relief and lasting rehabilitation can best be achieved where the intended beneficiaries are involved in the design, management and implementation of the assistance programme. We will strive to achieve full community participation in our relief and rehabilitation programmes.”

The Sphere Project (2000): Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response: Common Standard 1: Participation (p28). “The disaster-affected population actively participates in the assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the assistance programme.

Key indicators:

- * Women and men of all ages from the disaster-affected and wider local populations, including vulnerable groups, receive information about the assistance programme and are given the opportunity to comment to the assistance agency during all stages of the project cycle;
- * Written assistance programme objectives and plans should reflect the needs, concerns and values of disaster-affected people, particularly those belonging to vulnerable groups and contribute to their protection;
- * Programming is designed to maximize the use of local skills and capacities.”

UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998): Participation of internally displaced persons (IDPs). “The authorities concerned shall endeavour to involve those affected, particularly women, in the planning and management of the relocation.” (Principle 7 (3) (d)) In the distribution of humanitarian assistance, “Special efforts should be made to ensure the full participation of women in the planning and distribution of these supplies.” (Principle 18 (3)) “Special efforts should be made to ensure the full participation of IDPs in the planning and management of their return or resettlement and reintegration.” (Principle 28 (2))

Involving programme beneficiaries in the management of aid not only respects the rights of affected people but it also legitimizes aid efforts, enhances the efficiency of aid and improves the knowledge base and sustainability of reconstruction efforts.

Source: Scheper B. Parakrama, A. and Patel, S. 2006. *Impact of the Tsunami Response on Local and National Capacities*. London: Tsunami Evaluation Coalition, page 42.

While children are rarely mentioned in regard to these humanitarian accountability standards, they are also not explicitly excluded. This programming guide argues for including children and young people in regard to these standards. It shows how this has been done and what relief agencies, governments and donors can and should do to ensure that the civil rights of children and young people in emergencies are respected and fulfilled.

Over the past decade, a growing body of experience has accumulated on the contributions children and young people have made in emergency response and in community development. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and an emerging social science interest in childhood studies have added normative, imperative and scientific clarity to a growing movement for and of children as social actors and as holders of rights, including civil rights. This is leading to a practical and theoretical shift away from treating children as helpless victims in need of protection and toward a recognition of the assets and resilience of children and young people.

Box 2: The Convention on the Rights of the Child

The CRC is the first human rights treaty to explicitly grant children certain civil and political rights:

Article 8: Preservation of identity: The State has an obligation to protect, and if necessary, re-establish basic aspects of the child's identity. This includes name, nationality and family ties.

Article 12: The child's opinion: The child has the right to express his or her opinion freely and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter or procedure affecting the child.

Article 13: Freedom of expression: The child has the right to express his or her views, obtain information and make ideas or information known, regardless of frontiers.

Article 14: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion: The State shall respect the child's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, subject to appropriate paternal guidance.

Article 15: Freedom of association: Children have a right to meet with others and to join or form associations.

Article 16: Protection of privacy: Children have the right to protection from interference with privacy, family, home and correspondence, and from libel or slander.

Article 17: Access to appropriate information: The State shall ensure the accessibility to children of information and material from a diversity of sources, and it shall encourage the mass media to disseminate information that is of social or cultural benefit to the child and take steps to protect him or her from harmful materials.

Why should relief agencies promote the participation and civil rights of children in emergencies?

Children are already making important contributions in all stages of emergency situations. As well, children and young people have demonstrated competency, and their participation improves the quality and reach of emergency work. Just as with women and men, children have a right to be supported in making these contributions.

Children have a right to information in humanitarian crises. Information for children has to be age-appropriate. Children and young people can be effective communicators in emergency situations.

Children have their own needs and concerns. Boys and girls of different ages have to be included in consultations to ensure that humanitarian agencies address their priorities.

Participation brings benefits to children, families and communities. It contributes to children's education and development. It helps children to protect themselves from abuse and exploitation.

Not involving children ignores their capacities. It also undermines them by sending the message to the adult community and decision makers that it is okay to exclude children from decision making, information, consultations and contributing – that children have no role in the public sphere. Children's participation in emergencies is not about evidence, efficiency and effectiveness. It is about rights. The same rights apply in emergencies as in other times.

Defining children and young people

Definitions

A child is anyone younger than 18 (CRC). Adolescence is the second decade of a person's life (aged 10-19); the term 'young people' is used for those aged 10-24 (WHO and UNICEF) and 'youth' refers to anyone aged 15-24 (UN, World Bank). Governments, international organizations and local groups use different terms and age ranges, depending on the issues and populations they are focusing on. The use of the term 'children' varies according to local contexts and is often applied only for young children. At the other end of the spectrum, 'youth' in some areas may extend well into the 30s.

The main focus of this guide is on children up to age 18. The document mainly uses 'children' and occasionally 'young people' for older children. The use of the phrase 'children and young people' is limited to avoid repetition.

Diversity and discrimination

All aspects of diversity need to be understood in emergencies if responses are to be effective and adequate. Diversity and difference can be a source of inequality, power and discrimination, such as discrimination against girls or against AIDS-affected children. One way of overcoming the problems of exclusion is through inclusive participatory work.

Childhood is not a homogenous state and has a range of dimensions, including age, gender, disability, ethnicity, sexuality, caste and class. Other aspects, such as rural or urban and migrant status (rural children in the city) are significant. The lives of a 16-year-old girl and a 9-year-old boy are vastly different, particularly because of social expectations and limitations. If, for example, rural and urban categories were added or if someone was disabled, the differences would become even more marked.

The child rights-based 18-year range of childhood is a period of significant physical, emotional and cognitive development and covers a very diverse spectrum of expected behaviours that vary by culture. Unless use of this age-related terminology is clear, there are consequences for children, particularly in emergencies. When 'children' means younger children in practice, the needs, rights and perspectives of older children are effectively ignored. Children's rights and concerns may be ignored for other reasons, in particular through the practice of categorizing women and children together. An understanding of gender issues in emergencies and responses by relief agencies has been much highlighted recently.² The participation of girls needs to be addressed in order to fully take up these issues.

²For example, see the IASC gender handbook on emergencies, *Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different needs, equal opportunities* and other documents, available on the website www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/gender

Part One: Priority actions to support children's participation in emergencies

Introduction: Children's actions in emergencies

- A. Harnessing the contributions and capacities of children and young people
- B. Providing information for children
- C. Involving children in assessments, planning and decision making
- D. Feedback and complaint mechanisms for children
- E. Children's and young people's associations in emergencies

Introduction: Children's actions in emergencies

After the tsunami struck on 26 December 2004, a call went out in the Maldives – “Whoever can help, please come.” Each volunteer was given an age-appropriate task. Many adults stayed away. Many young people came forward. When a psychosocial counsellor was sent to concentrate on possible problems with young people, she couldn't find anyone. “They were all working,” she said. (KE)

Children all over the world take action when a disaster strikes their community. They have distinct perceptions of what needs to be done and can be done. Children are often portrayed as dependent and helpless victims in emergencies. But even in the urgency of the first few days, they are participating in relief work. They want to be part of the emergency response and want to contribute to relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts.

Participation and age: Evolving capacities

Age definitions are arbitrary and do not reflect children's evolving capacities, which vary from child to child. Competence in particular areas of life is not limited to adults nor is incompetence confined to children. Human capacities develop throughout life, at different rates. The idea of fixed-staged development in children is not particularly helpful itself and does not take account of culturally based diversity. Different cultures and societies have different ideas of the competence and expected behaviour of children, male and female, at different ages. In practice, younger children, older children and young people possess a range of different skills and knowledge, can work together and understand and support each other.

From the age of 9 in general, children take on responsibilities within their families and within the local community. By the age of 12, children are taking on significant responsibilities in teaching and caring for other children and working as part of task groups. Most activities listed in Box 3 represent children aged 12-17 years, underscoring the capacity of adolescence.

Young people aged 18 and older have been involved in a wide range of emergency activities. The few actions noted in Box 3 show their contributions to community renewal and reconstruction. Not only have they been involved in rescuing children, but they have taken on significant roles as organizers of entertainment, businesses and communications. Through their actions and with appropriate support, they have negotiated with outsiders on behalf of their community. They have shown enormous capacity. They have proven that when the world turns upside down in an emergency, they can respond to the needs and to opportunity and take on additional and important responsibilities.

The list in Box 3 indicates evolving capacities of children and fluidity across ages, with no fixed steps of progress. This certainly is not a complete list. Because of the limited attention so far to children's participation in emergencies, their contributions to health, protection, education, relief and reconstruction efforts have rarely been documented.

Box 3: Children's and young people's capacities in emergencies

What children and young people have done at different ages:

Children aged 5-10 years:

- Making toys for younger children

Children aged 9-12 years:

- Providing first aid
- Playing and supporting children who lost family members
- Talking with and supporting friends who were sad
- Collecting food and rations for old people
- Helping prepare food
- Helping to clean IDP camps
- Making representation to adults

Children aged 12 years:

- Teaching younger children
- Caring for younger children
- Working as part of emergency task group

Children aged 12-17 years:

- Rescuing and saving younger children
- Caring for younger children
- Teaching younger children and peers
- Treating wounds and caring for injured people
- Clearing up after an emergency
- Collecting bodies
- Helping to trace families
- Helping old people to collect food and rations
- Helping families with small children to collect food and rations
- Packing food for distribution
- Providing information about milk powder needs
- Cleaning camps
- Cleaning and painting buildings
- Developing businesses

Young people aged 18 and older:

- Rescuing and saving younger children
- Organizing entertainment
- Developing businesses
- Providing community communications
- Negotiating with outsiders on behalf of a community

(Drawn from several sources, especially Plan International, 2005)

In terms of supporting relief work, some children's actions preceded the arrival of aid agencies. In some emergencies, such as the 2004 tsunami, much of what was done by children was spontaneous. Some actions were made possible because of children's experience and their previous participation in children's associations and peer groups. In other emergencies, especially where disasters are a regular occurrence, children have started to participate in disaster preparedness and mitigation work and have been allocated particular roles and responsibilities to take up when an emergency occurs.

As the examples in this guide show, emergencies offer opportunities for children to reach beyond their traditional position in the family and community. They take on new roles partly because adults are too busy and need every hand available. Young people may have skills (foreign languages) that adults do not have or are more open to change and to trying new things.

After the 2004 tsunami, children made significant and concrete contributions to the relief efforts. Apart from saving others, providing emotional support and helping find food and shelter, children also led group prayers and joined adults on guard duty. Yet despite such effort in the early stages of the emergency response, children found themselves soon sidelined when troops and international aid agencies arrived and took control of the relief work. The lingering message: Children saw how the arrival of external agencies stifled local initiative.

The range of actions undertaken by children and young people, especially the variety evident after the 2004 tsunami, have included dealing with sickness, injury and death. By dealing with death and injuries, children also quickly came into contact with the emotional impact of the disaster and supported other children and their own parents in dealing with the effects. Although some children were unsure how they could help in an emergency, many found opportunities to take action. It is clear that involvement in participatory projects beforehand gave children some confidence and ideas.

Recognizing children's contributions is a first step in agencies' interaction with them and in fulfilling the standards of dignified treatment. Children's involvement through all stages of an emergency builds resilience and provides psychosocial support for themselves and for others, including parents and other adults. What children and young people demonstrated in the 2004 tsunami and other emergencies underscores how their participation fits with the standards of accountability developed and promoted by aid and emergency agencies.

A. Harnessing the contributions and capacities of children and young people

1. Why?

As the experience with the 2004 tsunami revealed, children and young people can make important contributions to the emergency response. During and after that particular disaster, they:

- Rescued others, saved lives and provided first aid;
- Concerned themselves with hygienic standards and keeping communal areas clean;
- Collected food and coordinated and distributed relief aid;
- Provided care and psychosocial support for younger children, peers and adults;
- Taught other children in formal and non-formal classes;
- Learned about emergency issues and response and took on roles and responsibilities;
- Promoted resilience through their participation in community activities and by organizing children's and young people's groups, thus providing their own psychosocial support;
- Set up businesses and took a lead in community renewal.

Children and young people want to be involved. Being part of the action helps them feel valued and is an antidote to depression, frustration and boredom. It gives them something useful to do. Children's participation in relief, recovery and rehabilitation is considered one of the best therapies for dealing with traumatic events.

Harnessing children's contributions helps better coordinate action and improves the reach and effectiveness of relief work. A major message from evaluations of relief and recovery work is that agencies need to more adequately identify local capacities available, to engage with them and to build on them. Understanding children's capacities is essential because their skills, knowledge and abilities to take action can enhance information delivery, assessment and consultation processes.

2. Health and survival: Rescuing others, saving lives and providing first aid

Saving lives: In the 2004 tsunami, children saved lives and rescued other people, often putting their life in jeopardy. Children ensured the safety of others, particularly by caring for younger children separated from their parents. Young people took other children to safety further inland and cared for them until parents or guardians found them and took over. These actions substantiate children's capacity to be responsible members of their community who thus are entitled to more respect than what is typically extended to them in these types of situations.

Box 4: Rescuing other children

When she heard shouting, 18-year-old Rosy Vergen ran outside her house in Tamil Nadu, India, only metres from the ocean. "People said the sea is taking away the boats," she recalled. The water was moving away from the shoreline, exposing rocks never seen before. From where she stood, it seemed as if "the sea was going inside the sea." Then the elders yelled to run away as the water reared up far in the distance. Some 20 young children, including two of her siblings, ran to Rosy, screaming and crying for help. "Sister, please save me! I can't see my mother! The sea is going to swallow me!" Because she was Chief Minister of the children's neighbourhood parliament, they knew her as a leader, someone to look up to, and in this case, someone to rely on. "If I wasn't in this parliament, it wouldn't have been possible to help so many children – they wouldn't have trusted me so much," she considered. "They probably would have died."

With most of the children clinging to her dress, shawl, arms and hands, she ran as best she could to a road and headed away from the ocean. About 6 km later, she flagged down a bus and herded the children on board. None of the passengers had heard of anything unusual happening. In the next town, Rosy and the children went to the police station so that she could find out precisely what was going on. When told of the tsunami and that it had destroyed her village, she then took the children to a nearby church and waited. For what, she wasn't sure, but her only concern was to keep the children safe. She found snacks and helped them to relax. "I couldn't leave the children," she said. It was only then that she first thought of her parents and began to worry about them.

Throughout the day, parents of the children found their way to the church and found them safe with Rosy. She asked each to look out for her parents and to let them know where she was. Around eight o'clock that evening, Rosy's parents appeared. She took the four unclaimed children with her to a shelter with her family. In the security of her family, Rosy let the magnitude of responsibility for those 20 children overwhelm her, and she slipped into seizures. She woke in hospital where she stayed for two weeks. After she was released, Rosy was quick to take on more responsibility by finding ways for her and fellow teenagers to contribute to the recovery process. [see Box 24]

Children's organizations: While children's rescue efforts are spontaneous, some of their actions are made possible through prior involvement in projects and organizations. As the story of 18-year-old Rosy from Tamil Nadu explains (Box 4), her experience and status as a member of the Children's Parliament prepared her to take decisive action during the 2004 tsunami disaster. Following a major landslide in the Philippines, children who were members of a children's organization helped military rescue teams locate where victims were buried and identify them.

Box 5: Taking younger children to safety

Raudhatul Mawaddah had read in a Japanese comic book that a tsunami usually follows an earthquake. So when the ground shook violently on the morning of 26 December 2004, she told this to her father. But he dismissed the possibility. "Don't be silly," he told her. When a short time later she cried, "The water is coming," he told her to stop being a panicky girl. After all, their house was 4 km from the shoreline, near the mountain. But 17-year-old Raudhatul could hear people running and shouting; behind them she also could hear a faint, odd sound. She felt something was wrong. She grabbed her 1 month-old stepbrother and 4 year-old stepsister and ran. At first she headed toward the town. Then she realized she was running into danger and turned back to the mountain. She had to climb over four barbed-wire fences. At the second one, she asked an adult for help to get the baby over it. He told her, "Take care of yourself, I have my own problem."

For the rest of that day and night, Raudhatul stayed with her siblings on the mountain. She worried she had been wrong to leave her father and stepmother. She feared they were gone. She found a nursing mother in the crowd of villagers who agreed to breastfeed Raudhatul's baby brother.

Raudhatul's house had been far enough from the shoreline to escape the raging torrent of destruction but not the flooding. When the water receded, a stranger's body remained on the family's kitchen floor. A suitcase stuck in their front yard contained important papers. Raudhatul and her father searched a week for the owner, eventually finding his widow and giving her the documents.

Raudhatul's quick thinking changed the way her father thinks of her and treats her. He now includes her in family decision making, even asking her colour preference when they repainted their house. He respects her judgement and allows the young Muslim girl more opportunity to spend time away from home, with friends and attending meetings. (KE)

Providing first aid and medical care: Children between the ages of 9 and 12 in Sri Lanka and older children in Aceh, Indonesia administered first aid by cleaning and dressing wounds (Plan International, 2005).

Where emergencies occur frequently and where they are prepared, children have taken on significant medical duties following a disaster. In Bangladesh, their allocated role in the preparedness plans is to distribute first aid and oral rehydration kits. They also identify the sick and help get them to medical care.

Box 6: Learning and providing first aid

In Aceh, Indonesia, 16-year-old Sit Mardhiah Hanum volunteered to bandage injured people in a makeshift triage tent in the early chaos of the 2004 tsunami disaster. "I followed a friend and watched her for a day to gain confidence. After that, I was responsible for cleaning the wounds of about 50 people a day. On the fifth day, a doctor finally came. Before the tsunami I had never done any volunteer work or belonged to any group. But I thought it was wasting time to stay at home. When I saw many victims and no one to help them, I wanted to help." (KE)

3. Sanitation: Ensuring hygiene and cleaning up

Cleaning up: Following the 2004 tsunami, children gathered and burned debris and cleaned toilets in displaced-persons camps and other communal areas. Some even helped pick up bodies and construct coffins. Not all children were comfortable handling the dead, and as one child noted during a workshop on participation in emergency situations, those who didn't should not feel bad because there were many other demands that needed their hands. Such as in the Maldives, where Boy Scouts and Girl Guides swept away debris. (KE)

Cleaning up involved not only tsunami-affected children but also children from neighbouring, unaffected areas who wanted to help. In Tamil Nadu, India, for example, children whose homes were a safe distance from the scene of destruction came each day to help clean displaced-persons' camp toilets and grounds. In Orissa, India following the super cyclone in 1999, they cleared village roads and collected and burned rubbish to control mosquitoes. (Palakudiyil and Todd, 2003: 78)

4. Collecting, distributing and coordinating relief aid

Collecting food: In the immediate aftermath of the 2004 tsunami, children helped their parents to collect food. Once relief aid arrived, children went to distribution points to receive food and clothes rations. They stood in line to receive relief supplies and thus free up their parents who were busy with other tasks. (Plan International, 2005) This is a much more onerous task than it sounds and makes a significant contribution to the well-being of the family and community.

Distributing aid: In Tamil Nadu, India and in the Maldives, children participated in the distribution of aid supplies. Boy Scouts and Girl Guides also in the Maldives collected and packaged donated food, clothing and water in service centres for distribution in the relief camps.

Being prepared: In Bangladesh, children are recruited and trained as peer educators in preparation for emergencies, such as floods. They are given duties for planning and administrative oversight. In addition to carrying out particular relief tasks, children have an active role in organizing the immediate disaster response. Some peer educators serve on committees that coordinate different aspects of emergency response, such as ensuring that goods are purchased and packaged and that health care needs are assessed. Children also participate in the selection of safe delivery sites for relief materials and in ensuring that these are agreed upon with law enforcement agencies and local communities. (Chen and Thompstone, 2005)

5. Protection, care and psychosocial support

The changes in lives and circumstances following a disaster mean that children as well as adults need to make sense of the differences in relationships, environment, expectations and the future. Children are often portrayed as victims in need after a disaster. But evidence from the 2004 tsunami experience shows how children provided care and support to younger children and to adults.

Children as care givers: During the early post-disaster phase following the 2004 tsunami, many adolescent girls had to care for siblings and elders so that their parents could help with emergency relief and other pressing tasks. Some daughters whose mothers had died found themselves having to take on their mother's role – although in more difficult circumstances.

Caring for younger children: In Aceh, Indonesia, humanitarian agencies established play areas in the displaced-persons' camps where older children played with younger children. The older ones were first trained in understanding feelings and what was called 'basic counselling'. In the Maldives, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides played with small children. These activities provided attention and support for younger children and gave adolescents something useful to do.

Peer support: Peers often provide a main source of strength for each other, especially because adults and parents are not always available to help them or are not particularly supportive and understanding. Even at very young ages, children recognize the importance of friendships and talking as a form of emotional support. (Plan International, 2005) It is not uncommon to hear from children younger than 12 about their talking with friends who are sad to help them feel better.

Providing support for adults: Children's emotional awareness goes beyond their peers and younger children. As parents in tsunami-affected areas discovered, children played a significant part in providing psychosocial support to them and particularly to older people. (Plan International, 2005) These typically are situations in which children recognized how their actions contributed to their family's well-being; on their own initiative, they wanted to cheer up their parents "so they won't be too depressed." (Plan International, 2005)

Box 7: Performance as community support

In India soon after the 2004 tsunami, a local aid agency organized a cultural programme with children's performances that lasted much of the night. "The children were happy to perform and the adults loved to see their children perform in front of so many people. The programme went on till early morning, until the people realized that the sea was calm and quiet. The children were elated afterwards." (Humabon, 2006:13)

Protection and resilience through participation: Talking about children's participation in emergency situations does not mean to downplay the always-remaining concern for their protection. Children separated from family and the turmoil of disasters can increase the risks of abuse and exploitation. But in providing psychosocial support and promoting resilience, participation of children in emergency situations can enhance their self-protection. And it can galvanize their sense as protectors of others.

Children have been involved in protection and education initiatives in various ways during emergency times, and their participation has been important for their own recovery and development. Evaluations and reviews have identified that recognizing all people's capacity for resilience and the need for 'bouncing back' as crucial objectives in the development of effective emergency responses.

6. Preparedness and protection through education

Children as teachers: Children have participated in continuing education and related activities in various ways following emergencies. In some instances, children have taught younger children.

Box 8: Teaching younger children

In Bihar, India, floods come every July. Schools are used to storing relief material and closing for the duration of a water disaster. In many districts now, children have roles in the post-flood period. These include caring for and teaching other children. Teenage children look after younger children and children without parents or those whose parents are working away from home. Makeshift schools are created in flood shelters and teaching times are adjusted to accommodate children who have to work, such as those who are responsible for grazing cattle. Children of 12 years teach others about social issues such as child marriage and child labour. (Ghosh, 2006)

Preparedness education: Involving children in emergency preparedness planning, workshops and drills contributes to their protection. In particular, allocating roles and responsibilities to children helps strengthen their resilience. Learning about emergencies is an important aspect of disaster preparedness. Environmental learning is a part of this – understanding potential hazards and better managing of environments to prevent certain disasters. For example, in Kenya, the dangers of soil erosion are part of primary school education. (Wisner, 2006: 21)

Box 9: Relevant skills through local curriculum

In Thailand following the 2004 tsunami, children wanted to learn more about the natural environment, particularly because they saw links to their protection. For instance, the mangroves had protected them by diffusing the force of the waves and they wanted to increase their future security by building up the natural environment around them. In suggesting ways they could contribute to community restoration, children wanted to learn about mangrove conservation and natural resource management. They also wanted to learn other relevant skills, such as swimming. Education officials responded with local curricula that reflected their interests and concerns. (KE)

7. Community renewal and development

Young people as social entrepreneurs: Children's participation and their efforts in various activities during relief and recovery work after the 2004 tsunami benefited their communities as well as themselves, as illustrated by groups of young Moken in Phang Na province in southern Thailand. Some enterprising young people set up small local businesses while others with second-language skills took on roles of negotiating with outsiders on behalf of their community. These activities earned them respect from adults and thus gained them a place in community meetings. Where adults were also trained in children's rights, young people were offered opportunities. In a tsunami-affected area of Thailand, for example, a teenage girl became the accountant for a community housing group (see Box 11).

Box 10: Girls and young women: Care, confidence and psychosocial support

From a conversation with Nongnoot (N), 19, and Apinya (A), 18, both Muslim girls living in Ban Nai Rai village in southern Thailand who are members of a young people's activity group that is writing and performing plays, about how the 2004 tsunami disaster changed their world and them:

N: "Adults think boys are smarter than girls and that girls should stay at home or work. They think boys should have more chance to learn. Since the tsunami, some of those attitudes have changed. Now they see it's harder for us to work if we don't have an education. Before my parents wouldn't let me go out to a meeting or a workshop – or even hang out with friends near the house."

A: "Now we can stand up for ourselves, we can express our opinions, especially with outsiders, and we've become more involved within our community in a positive way."

N: "Before, our parents wouldn't let us go far because they're afraid we'll shame the family. Now they see we can be leaders in the community."

A: "Before, we had no one supporting us in an activity. We didn't have a 'stage', no chances. Since the tsunami, organizations have come in and we have opportunities now. Before we didn't have a role or a chance to be leaders or give our opinion because adults would regard us as kids. Adults don't understand or want to know children's problems, such as psychological or emotional needs."

"Our community wasn't clean. And there was no sports equipment. If we asked the adults for help with these things, they wouldn't pay attention. The problem is there was a lot of garbage around. We were trying to pick it up, but adults would keep throwing stuff down but think it's the kids making the mess. If we don't pick it up, others wouldn't pick it up. It was making the environment look bad."

N: "We wanted to go to community meetings and talk about our issues, we wanted to participate but we weren't supported."

A: "Just after the tsunami, it was chaotic and we couldn't do much. Our houses were destroyed and people had moved to different places. After a while, we saw problems and wanted to be leaders."

"A temporary shelter was set up nearby. I was looking at the younger children and could see they needed help. But I couldn't tell anyone until Save the Children came. Behaviours were changing, kids were afraid to be on their land and afraid of another wave. There was depression, aggressiveness among children who typically were quiet. Some were isolating themselves. When adults talked to them, they would yell at them and hit other children. There was pressure in the families – they had totally nothing. All toys were gone. In the beginning with art activities, children were drawing only waves and houses."

"Parents were busy reconstructing and had a lot on their mind. They wanted to clean things up before talking. In the temporary shelter, we formed a brotherhood/sisterhood group. We then were asking the younger children, 'Can we help you in any way? Do you want to talk?' Students came from Chiang Mai University to do some counselling and we helped."

"Then we went on our own to a few community meetings. These typically were with outside organizations or meetings about our land problems, the environment, and loaning money."

Box 10: Continued

N: "We felt discouraged at the beginning because they didn't let us talk and ignored our ideas. The first two or three times the adults wouldn't listen to us, but after a while they started paying more attention. They could see our interest because we kept coming back and thought maybe we had something to say. We raised the issue that a lot of help was being offered to adults and household stuff and schools and books, but no one was paying attention to psychological problems of children.

"We've just started with our performance work, so there's not much impact. The biggest difference in the community so far is the changes in adult's minds – people don't see the importance of our religion. There are lots of arguments. The plays reflect problems in the community that adults don't see.

"Also, the younger children have more confidence now. They have a role in the community now. They're participating more in our activities and are helping pick up trash. We're teaching them how to recycle."

A: "In my family, my parents were very strict and wouldn't allow us children to go out."

N: "We've been taught to marry and raise a family."

A: "In some families, the girl can't choose who she marries. And you can't be with a boyfriend too long without marrying. Before the tsunami, girls would work two or three years after finishing school and then marry, usually around age 15 or 16."

N: "Since I was young, I really wanted a higher education and I didn't want to marry young. My parents wanted me to marry, but they didn't force me. I saw problems among my friends who married young and I didn't want that."

A: "Now they won't shut down the new opportunities we've found. They see what their children can do, like children in Bangkok."

N: "We have more confidence in ourselves. People see women as weak but we can show that they're not. Before we had to keep our opinions silent, but now we can express them. Parents have changed a lot – they allow us to be in activities with the boys."

A: "The best thing to come out of the tsunami is the opportunity for us to express our ideas, to start acting and to do things for our community." (KE)

Community centres as catalysts for change: In some areas, development agencies established children's centres after the 2004 tsunami. These centres were intended to provide psychosocial support through sport and recreational activities. Older children took over the management and operation of some centres. And when they did, they changed some of the activities and identified issues to take up, such as the protection of children from cigarette smoke and smoking, which they realized was also a challenge for adults. Such opportunities for raising issues and taking action have been particularly important for children who wanted to contribute to community development and renewal. The participation opportunities provided through the centres stimulated some children to question their circumstances. After they looked at the process of relief and recovery, they wanted to find ways to help themselves and to teach others in the activities and skills they had learned at the centres. The new experiences and opportunities for engagement with social issues gave them inspiration. They wished to take over from those who had come to the tsunami areas from outside to provide relief and recovery.

Box 11: Child rights training puts a community's budget into the hands of a teenager

Salinee Punnarungsee's family lived in a village in southern Thailand that was completely wiped out by the 2004 tsunami. Many families who lived there but did not own property have been struggling to obtain new permanent housing. Salinee's family was one of them. She left school after the tsunami (though she now goes to non-formal education classes) to help her parents save money. She has joined the Duang Prateep puppet theatre and earns 200 baht (US\$5) a day performing shows in schools and helping to train teachers on how to make puppets and performances. Her father has organized 49 other families without access to permanent housing; he wrote a project proposal and received funding from the Swedish Government to buy land and create a community from scratch. Part of the project includes involving children in all decisions. Sixteen-year-old Salinee works as the accountant for the group, with an adult reviewing her budgets. "My father and the others think we will take over the next generation of leadership of the community and that we need to be prepared," she explained. In the group, children were given voting rights along with the adults in selecting the leader of the new community (Salinee's father was elected). The young people asked for a youth centre "to spend time in a good way" and to design it themselves. Salinee says her father is resourceful and more educated than many of their neighbours, but she says the child rights training from the Duang Prateep Foundation heavily influenced his attitude toward involving young people in the organizing and designing of their new community. (KE)

8. Resilience and social change through theatre

In many tsunami-affected communities, children lived in temporary accommodation, had nothing much to do and were frustrated and bored. Their views were not being heard, and nobody took much notice of them. During the rehabilitation phase, some agencies facilitated theatre workshops for children. The aims of these workshops were to promote self-expression and self-esteem and to provide a safe space to raise issues. Theatre workshops provided psychosocial support, enabled young people to express their opinions to communicate pressing social issues and to further develop their identity. Through this forum, young people developed and performed dramas for their community. These performances focused on life in the communities before the disaster, pointing out aspects that could be changed. They saw the changes that were coming in the rebuilding after the disaster as an opportunity to make life better.

Participation contributes to greater resilience and provides psychosocial support. As one reviewer stated two months after the tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia, "Simply having the opportunity to support rebuilding efforts is the best therapy we can offer [children and young people] in dealing with the feelings of helplessness that disasters of this magnitude create." (Rosati, 2006: 269).

Box 12: Resilience through heritage and identity

Thailand's ethnic Moken live in water-based and seafaring communities. Some were at sea during the earthquake. Due to the passing down of traditional wisdom, they knew a tsunami would follow whereas hardly any other Thais or anyone for that matter along the sea that day were aware. When this fact was recognized beyond the Moken community, it inspired within them a cultural pride they had not felt before. Following the 2004 tsunami, Moken children began to value their heritage more. When given the opportunity to participate in performance and community action, they wanted to tap into their cultural identity and express their heritage values more strongly and positively. They also recognized they did not want to lose their ethnic language and other aspects of Moken identity, which they previously had disregarded in order to 'fit in' among the non-ethnic Thai neighbours. They suddenly thought their identity was in danger of being lost.

Some of that new-found pride in and renewal of Moken identity came about through the participation work that was intended to provide them psychosocial support, such as the theatre workshops. The renewal of Moken heritage is an example of finding identity and meaning among the disruption and change that enhances the recovery and rehabilitation processes. Psychosocial and resilience support concern self-esteem and self-confidence and are partially rooted in a strong identity. These processes from the theatre workshops, plus the renewal of identity and confidence combined with dual-language speaking skills brought other benefits. Children were able to assert themselves in negotiations with outsiders on behalf of their community. (KE)

Box 13: Overcoming grief through participation in relief efforts

One way of dealing with emotional changes and support needs is to be involved. Many young people kept busy during the relief period even, for example, in Aceh, Indonesia, the worst-affected area of the 2004 tsunami disaster. After staying at home because he hurt too much, Sukmi, a 17-year-old who lost his parents in the calamity, decided one day to get out of his house, of himself and his misery. He went to school and joined up with ten other members of their Youth Red Cross group. "We went directly to the subdistrict office to offer help," he recalled. "We helped evacuate the injured and delivered medicine where it was needed." (KE)

9. What can relief agencies do to harness children's capacities and contributions?

Before an emergency

Prepare and educate children to contribute to emergency response:

- Educate children in emergency preparedness, response and first aid.
- Establish community-based disaster-risk reduction and emergency response mechanisms that involve children (Scouts, Red Cross). Involving children in preparedness activities before an emergency helps children survive and help others.
- Involve children in participatory, community-level planning and action. This builds their skills and confidence and prepares them to contribute in disaster situations.
- Develop training materials for children and young people.

Box 14: Training other children in emergency preparedness

Durga Prasag from East Godavari, India, dropped out of school but is engaged in many welfare activities, including training more children to be prepared for disasters:

“I’m 12 and I work with my father who is a fisherman. In 2006 there was flooding in East Godavari and we lost our livelihood assets. That’s when a local organization called Action started working on disaster preparedness to protect our assets. Fifty people in a task force group (consisting of a children’s group and an adult group) now look after disaster preparedness. Twenty of these people are children. As part of this programme with Action, we are very confident about facing future calamities and of handling future disasters. As part of the programme, we also learn how to rescue ourselves and others. There is now a cyclone shelter in the village and a map of village resources.

“This [pointing] is a map of all the houses where there are widows or handicapped and old people. Before, others would look down on children, but as part of this programme we can now sit and undergo training together with adults. There are five groups in the task force. There’s a warning group who warn the community of an oncoming disaster. There’s a rescue group who, based on the map, get together and take people to safer places – to higher ground. There’s a relief shelter group who manage the shelter area and try to get rations for people living there. There’s also a second rescue group who rescues people from drowning and from collapsed houses. The last group gives first aid to people who have snake bites and who have injuries after a disaster.”

From a children’s panel in a seminar on children’s participation in response to natural disasters, Chennai, 13 December 2006. Save the Children, 2006.

Build capacities to work with children:

- Train staff in methods of working with children and young people; build capacity of staff to understand and recognize the potential and participation of children in emergency relief and recovery.
- Develop training and materials to explain reasons and benefits for children’s participation.
- Train staff to recognize and make use of children’s roles in providing psychosocial support, in partnership with children and young people.
- Maintain roster of staff experienced at working with groups of children.
- Prepare updated lists of agencies who work with children (in emergencies).

During emergency response

Support children’s existing actions, projects and groups:

- Seek out existing children’s groups and youth organizations.
- Find out what children and young people are already involved in and who is working with them.
- Consult with children and learn from them about local issues and about children’s concerns.
- Through consultation between agencies and children, allocate roles and responsibilities to children.
- Provide information to children in age-appropriate formats.
- Set up mechanisms for children to provide feedback to relief agencies.

Develop capacities of children:

- Support older children to teach younger children.
- Build capacities of children to provide psychosocial support and care to younger children.

Create safe spaces for children: Provide safe spaces for children to meet and plan activities for themselves. Support children to run their own community centres and activities.

Child protection: Throughout all emergency work, ensure that effective child protection policies, procedures and mechanisms are in place and that all staff are trained in this.

Recruit staff with experience in working with children: Recruit competent staff who want to seek out, strengthen the capacity of and engage with children.

Partner with agencies who work with children: This can be more efficient than trying to build up the capacities of other agencies' staff during an emergency. Partner with local agencies that have experience in and capacity for working with children at the community level. Be careful not to undermine the capacity or agendas of local agencies.

See Part Two for additional guidance

B. Providing information for children

1. Why?

Children have shown their capacities in learning, using, providing, disseminating and working together on information before and after emergencies. Children have:

- Disseminated news of events in emergencies;
- Traced people;
- Interviewed people;
- Made and disseminated newsletters;
- Created radio stations and transmitted news and warnings;
- Spread health and hygiene information;
- Been informed and prepared for emergencies through classes and manuals;
- Researched and analysed information about local hazards.

Access to information during emergencies can be vital for saving lives and for understanding how agencies and communities are responding. Information provides the building blocks for assessments, consultations, relief and reconstruction. Children need and have information, can find and provide information, and can widely disseminate information.

Children need information to be prepared for what to do in an emergency, to know how to protect themselves and for basic health care and first aid. Children can find and identify local hazards. They also have information about their local community and the lives of their peers and can provide information that is essential for emergency work, for example in locating people and identifying peers and younger children. Children are the best communicators of information to their peers and young children, and some groups of children are more effective than adults at reaching and finding marginalized peers.

Children need to know what agencies are doing in emergencies so that they can understand, fit in, make suggestions and help and support others. Information provided to children helps them think and have a say about their future.

The 2004 tsunami experience showed how children can collect information and provide it to others. They are, perhaps, better at disseminating news and information in an emergency situation than agencies, certainly those without good local connections. The extensive work of children in Bangladesh following the annual floods demonstrates how children's spontaneous actions in participating in rescue and relief can be developed further through their involvement in preparation and planning activities for emergencies. Where children are prepared and allocated responsibilities, their roles in information provision and communication can be very effective. Preparation work provides children and young people with information on hazards and what to expect, and they can participate in generating such information. But they need to be kept up to date with the latest news during disasters and relief work.

2. Information for children: What children need in emergencies

Informed preparation: Children have learned about emergencies through school. This learning has contributed toward the mitigation of hazards and has provided a basis for their participation in emergency preparation and planning. In Argentina and Cuba, for example, natural hazards are part of the national curriculum in all schools. In Nicaragua, risk management has become part of the national curriculum.

Learning about hazards and emergency preparation has also been provided outside of school. In Armenia, a women's development group promotes disaster-risk education through the mass media as well as in schools. They focus on mothers and teachers to provide seismic protection skills to children. (Wisner, 2006)

Box 15: Protection through children's involvement in preparedness planning

In Bolivia and Costa Rica, school teaching about hazards and safety is integrated into environmental studies. Costa Rican teachers develop lessons based on local hazards and vulnerability. Students participate in their learning by collecting local information and mapping hazards. The decentralized curriculum in Costa Rica and in other countries helps children to develop an understanding of local hazards, which then enables them to participate in preparation and planning for emergencies.

In El Salvador, Peru and Nicaragua, children participate in school brigades that are effectively part of the civil defence structure for emergencies. In El Salvador, these 'solidarity brigades' are part of a broader involvement of children in emergency preparation that includes simulations and risk mapping. Child-to-child teaching is also used in El Salvador. A Nicaraguan manual on disaster prevention and response emphasizes coordination with adolescents and youth groups for building up emotional support and helping young people recuperate. (Wisner, 2006)

3. Information disseminated by children

Spreading health information and education: Children have been recruited and prepared for spreading information about health and hygiene in an emergency. Their work is especially important for good sanitation conditions. In Bangladesh following the seasonal floods, some children and young people worked as peer educators. They raised awareness on the importance of water purification, hand washing and the use of latrines. (Chen and Thompstone, 2005)

Box 16: Health awareness in an emergency

In Orissa, India in 1999, health campaigns were organized using groups of older adolescent girls. The groups dispersed information about sanitation and hygiene in the community. They also participated in the setting up of non-formal education centres in villages where there were no schools. (Palakudyil and Todd, 2003: 78)

4. Information found and produced by children in emergencies

Tracing and recording people: From the outset, children disseminated news of changing situations in the wake of the 2004 tsunami. Their contribution helped others to know where people were and who had survived. Because some older children had taken others to safety, they needed to pass on information regarding their whereabouts and find parents or relatives who had survived. Children and young people also became involved in tracing people. (Plan International, 2005) In some places, children kept track of who was staying in shelters. In other places, they found and identified those who were sick and passed on information to health services.

Box 17: Recording who is affected and identifying the sick

In the Maldives, children and young people from the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides became extensively involved in relief work activities after the 2004 tsunami. Some of their work included maintaining the records of affected people who were staying in temporary shelters. (UNICEF, 2005: 13)

In Bangladesh, during and immediately after a flood emergency, children now go around their communities to identify who is sick, particularly sick children, and provide that information to health services. They also help get people to clinics. (Chen and Thompstone, 2005)

Transmitting news and information: Children and young people who took over the management of children's centres that were set up after the 2004 tsunami also focused on the importance of communication. They requested skills training and began disseminating information, for example, through newsletters.

After the 2004 tsunami, Moken teenagers in Thailand created and now manage a local radio station that they use to transmit news, music and feature stories on local wisdom. The radio system is now regarded as a warning station to alert the community of any emergency.

Box 18: Protection through information

In Viet Nam, children have been involved in emergency preparation work in what is called a 'Safe Village' model. The aim is for children to have basic knowledge on responding to disasters likely to affect their community as well as their general protection. The Red Cross in Viet Nam has drafted a disaster preparedness manual for children aged 9-12 years. (Jabry, 2005: 41-42)

5. How can relief agencies provide information for children?

Before an emergency

Build capacities of staff:

- Train relevant staff in working with and communicating with children.
- Train teachers and school staff about emergency preparedness, local hazards and methods for training children in identifying hazards and responding to emergencies.
- Train and work with community leaders to understand the importance of information for children and involving them in disaster-preparedness processes.

Prepare children for emergencies:

- Facilitate and support the development of appropriate local curricula on relevant hazards.
- Work with children on identifying hazards: Facilitate and support children to research information about local hazards.
- Involve children in preparedness planning and providing information to community members.
- Develop and provide training materials about emergencies and what to do in partnership with children.
- Train children to provide and spread accurate information and knowledge about health and hygiene issues.

Develop information for children:

- Produce and disseminate training materials for children.
- Produce age-appropriate information for children on hazards, agencies, emergencies and roles of different people.

During emergency response

Have trained staff available:

- Communication staff who can talk and work with children should be available to explain agency activities.
- Staff who are competent in working with children should be available to run information-dissemination workshops and involve children in tracing, identifying and documenting work.

Provide information about emergency responses:

- Develop information for children in appropriate forms, using language and pictures that they can understand and follow.
- Provide information to children on what the different agencies are doing.
- Provide information about hygiene and health.
- Provide information to children about their protection.

Involve children in information activities:

- Involve children in tracing and documenting work, especially because they know about the lives of other children and young people.
- Provide training for children in disseminating information.
- Learn from children about problems and issues they have identified.
- Make use of the information that children have gathered.
- Develop the means for children to gather and disseminate information and news and support them in doing this.

Child protection: Ensure that all children involved in gathering and spreading information will be safe when carrying out these tasks.

See Part Two for additional guidance

C. Involving children in assessments, planning and decision making

1. Why?

Children and young people should be first involved as respondents who are asked questions during any assessment. But at the same time, they can be involved in making any assessment. In emergencies, children have:

- Been consulted in relief assessments;
- Conducted emergency or risk assessments;
- Identified roles and responsibilities for themselves;
- Advised on housing designs;
- Advised on school and resource centre designs for children;
- Defined aims and functions of children's resource centres;
- Contributed to community reconstruction plans.

One of the better evaluation reports on the 2004 tsunami relief and recovery work focused on assessments. The need for new approaches to assessment, in line with involving and responding to the ideas of local communities, was highlighted because too many assessments had been tokenistic rather than part of relief planning.

Consultation and assessment involving children recognizes their capacities, their views and their unique position within the community. Children are the experts on the lives of children in their communities and have their own perspectives and needs. They know the protection issues and circumstances in their area and what is affecting their peers: Children in particular groups know

best the needs of their peers in that grouping; for example, adolescent girls know the issues and perspectives of female adolescence.

Children have been involved in distributing aid, collecting food and water – they know what needs to be done and have suggestions for efficiency and fairness. Children can take part in planning and reconstruction – they know what they need, and they can lead assessments and consultations with their peers.

Children have been consulted for a variety of reasons during emergency situations, not all of which are described in this section. As noted elsewhere, they have advised on relief-goods distribution, identified sick people and have offered their concerns and issues when consulted. This section highlights a few other examples of consultation and assessment experiences.

2. Relief assessments

Consultations on needs: Children have participated in assessments by being consulted and by conducting surveys. They have been part of relief assessments conducted immediately after a disaster and later. Consultations with children have been important, such as in determining the content of relief aid and other benefits to the community.

Box 19: Consultation leads to education and appropriate clothing kits

Following the Kashmir earthquake in 2005, Save the Children found that “children engaging in assessments in many villages provided us quick and unbiased knowledge on the situation of their families, villages and schools.” From talking with children in one village, the agency decided to set up emergency education provision. In addition and based on assessments with participation from children, “We were helped to understand their specific needs, like warm clothing of the right size, need for emergency schools and education and recreational material that suited their needs.” The family kits designed by Save the Children included components for children, such as *phirans* (gowns) of different sizes and other warm clothes. (Save the Children, 2006)

3. Assessments and preparation for emergencies

Risk assessments: Children have been involved in and led risk assessments during preparedness work for emergencies. Their specialist knowledge is important in disaster preparation and assessments afterwards. For instance, through preparation work in Viet Nam, children were found to be especially knowledgeable about water flow routes.

Box 20: Children's vulnerability assessments improve communities

In Viet Nam, children have led assessments looking at disaster risks and mitigation. In a disaster training project in seven provinces, preparation and response plans were developed to identify threats and means of mitigating them. The training programme looked at different disaster risks and especially at how children are affected. Assessments were conducted in communities to identify resources as well as vulnerabilities. Survey members included children, and some assessments were led by children. Assessments by children "have resulted in improved school roads, clean water and toilets, swimming lessons, ready supplies of life jackets, safe play areas and public address systems". (Chen and Thompstone, 2005: 42) In addition, both adults and children felt transformed by the process. Children reported being more confident about themselves and their abilities to handle potential disasters. Adults reported having greater respect for children's capabilities. (Chen and Thompstone, 2005)

Prepared to survey after disasters: Where there has been disaster-preparedness planning, children's views along with their capacities in undertaking consultations have been more readily recognized. Prepared peer educators now help with the needs assessments of communities and families in Bangladesh after a flooding emergency. This includes surveying the need for equipment, such as mosquito nets and cooking gear, and mapping exercises with other children on locations for latrines and wells. (Chen and Thompstone, 2005)

4. Reconstruction

Shelter consultation: While assessments are often associated with the early stages of relief work, children have been consulted during the later reconstruction phases of an emergency. Sometimes this has been on specific areas of reconstruction, such as houses and resource centres, where children have particular experience and interest. But they have occasionally been part of broader consultations concerning community reconstruction, including plans for more children-friendly town planning.

Box 21: Consultations on housing and resource centres

After the 2004 tsunami in Sri Lanka, children were consulted on models for houses. Although the Government had already provided designs, modifications were made. This process revealed the different perceptions and concerns of children and young people to those of their parents. Adults wanted "all the characteristics of the house to be bigger, children were more concerned about the layout, the environment and privacy." (Chen and Thompstone, 2005: 39)

After the tsunami in Tamil Nadu, India, children participated in the design and development of resource centres. This involved children observing, describing and analysing their communities through maps, focus groups and interviews. They defined the aims and functions of the proposed children's resource centre. They also suggested designs that were presented to the broader community. Children's participation continued into developing activities for the centres. The facilitating agencies observed that through this process, adults in the community began to view the children with respect. (Chen and Thompstone, 2005)

Box 22: Consultations on community spaces for children

Following the earthquake in Western Turkey in 1999, children were involved in planning and designing new environments in Marmara. Children were consulted on how they lived before the earthquake. As a result, the reconstruction plans included special spaces for use by children, teenagers and women. This children-friendly space was to include indoor and outdoor areas, resources (such as books, computers) and health and education services. Children and young people helped select the site for the space. They were trained to read maps and take photographs before walking around to make a selection. (Chen and Thompstone, 2005)

Box 23: Consultation for a children-friendly city

Four months after the 2003 earthquake in Bam, Iran, work began on designing a model for a children-friendly city. However, companies based elsewhere in the country were drawing up plans without making any regular visits. Youth groups and other community groups mobilized, with the support of UNICEF, to promote a children-friendly city. They persuaded the Government that it is a viable concept. Their concept aimed to encourage children's participation, be non-discriminatory and look to the needs of disadvantaged children. And it hoped to ensure access to services for children. Their envisaged city was a safe, healthy urban environment for children of all ages. Children and parents were involved in assessments of how they lived. They identified priorities for children and young people, which included architectural styles, street life, play spaces and the proximity of school and home. Discussions during the assessments revealed significant gender differences, particularly that the scope of the social world for girls was more limited than that for boys.

In response to the assessments, play and recreation areas for girls were proposed as well as the distribution of shops that girls and women could use easily. The results of the consultations included an early childcare development centre, a primary school, a teachers' resource centre, 30 children-friendly schoolyards and five children-friendly community playgrounds. (Chen and Thompstone, 2005)

Following up consultations: Some consultations and assessments involving children and young people, especially those which they conducted themselves, have led to further action. Children's more intensive involvement enables them to fulfil their aims of following up issues. The complexities involved can be illustrated by children's action in the northern Philippines following floods and a landslide in 2004, which were brought on by extensive logging. Local communities found they needed to regain their well-being, "a sense of livelihood and safety from disaster." (Chen and Thompstone, 2005: 22) Children were consulted and subsequently participated in a range of activities based on local customs. Children were involved in assessments, looking at community strengths. They established theatre arts workshops and produced performances. They aimed to use the performances "to show the effects of irresponsible logging practices and to persuade politicians and local businesses to preserve the forests." (Chen and Thompstone, 2005)

5. Children's critiques of assessments

Identifying what should have happened: Children know what they and their communities want and need and the importance of an assessment. In Sri Lanka after the 2004 tsunami, they reported that "no one asked us or even our parents what we wanted. They just brought loads of stuff and gave it out ... They could have made a list of what people needed before bringing the stuff." (Plan International, 2005: 20)

Being asked the same questions: Children and young people understand the process of assessment and many have negative views about it. Following the 2004 tsunami in Thailand, children reported that "people very frequently asked children the same questions. These people were many and came from many organizations." (Plan International, 2005: 11) The children said they were bored but felt they had to answer for the reputation of their school. If there had been full participation of children beyond only 'assessing' them, this problem would have been picked up and addressed.

Avoid token consultations: Involving children in assessments is seen as a basic form of participation by many agencies. Plan International has noted that children's participation in emergencies is often limited to "assessing needs rather than entrusting children with any degree of involvement in or control over the programme planning." (2005: 10) Certainly children have been involved in specific agencies' immediate relief work but not necessarily in their work programmes.

6. How relief agencies can involve children in assessments, planning and decision making

Before an emergency

Prepare staff:

- Train staff in methods of assessment with children.
- Train staff in a range of appropriate consultation methods with children.
- Develop a list of personnel available for and competent in working with children.

Prepare methods of work:

- Prepare methods of decision making that will include children.
- Prepare methods for planning rehabilitation and reconstruction that will involve children.
- Work with children in preparing assessment methods and their roles during an emergency.

During emergency response

Staffing and agency response:

- Have competent staff available for research, assessment and consultation with children and young people.
- Consult with children about relief agency work.

Learn about local life and issues from children and young people:

- Incoming agencies in emergencies can learn about local culture and community dynamics from children and use this as a starting point for engagement, providing a sense of continuity and a future.
- Use mechanisms such as theatre, art workshops, research workshops, forums and other creative activities for children to identify concerns and issues.

Involve children in assessments and surveys:

- Ensure that children are consulted in assessments and surveys, including post-recovery reconstruction in all its forms.
- Ensure that assessments and consultations cover a diversity of children and young people, paying attention to age, gender, ethnicity and disability.
- Ensure that marginalized groups are included, such as migrants and street children.
- Include children and young people in consultations, decision making and action in programme responses.
- Facilitate assessments and surveys that are led by children.
- Provide training for children to conduct assessments and surveys.
- Work in partnership with children and involve their contributions in designing houses, schools and other facilities they use.

Recognize the value and importance of the process of involving children in an assessment:

- Recognize that communicating ideas and being listened to is an important part of the recovery process.
- Follow up on problems and issues, in partnership with children.

Child protection: Ensure that children are safe when they are involved in any consultation or assessment.

See Part Two for additional guidance

D. Feedback and complaint mechanisms for children

1. Why?

Feedback and complaint mechanisms are important for agency accountability and to provide channels where children can express their views, raise problems and seek support after an emergency. Children have been involved in managing and facilitating feedback in emergencies.

They have:

- Conducted surveys and presented findings;
- Sat on evaluation and monitoring committees;
- Sat on emergency preparation and supervision committees;
- Identified people left out of emergency plans.

The development of standards and principles for action is part of the recognition that relief agencies have duties to the beneficiaries with whom they work. To fulfil their role, it is important that mechanisms exist for feedback on their work with local people, including children. A system for making complaints and raising issues that enables responses from children is needed to ensure agency accountability.

Children may be marginalized or abused in emergencies and need mechanisms for alerting relevant people to help them or make protection issues and other problems known. Children know or can find out who among their peers is not receiving aid. Children can identify peers and others left out of planning, and they have perspective on where agencies are missing people and issues.

In addition to being consulted on the needs of communities and groups for relief and plans for future reconstruction, children have been involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of agencies in emergencies. Their involvement has covered many sectors of work, particularly distribution and protection, but also in analysing vulnerabilities and overall assessments.

2. Raising problems

Child abuse can happen in 'normal' times and after disasters. During the disruption of emergencies, children need methods and channels for alerting someone about problems of abuse. In Sri Lanka after the 2004 tsunami, Plan International set up a Happy Sad Letter Box to promote the mental health of affected school children. Unexpected results included the discovery of sexual abuse of a number of girls and a boy, which was found through the reporting by adults and other children via the box and subsequently addressed. In an evaluation of the project, children said the box was a means of reporting and gaining protection from sexual and physical abuse. (Fund for Relief and Development, 2005) In Zimbabwe, the Children's Committee set up by Save the Children to collect feedback on food aid also provided a mechanism for children to mention cases of abuse. (McIvor, 2004)

3. Monitoring relief

Learning by monitoring: In monitoring relief and recovery work, children have their own observations and bring unique perspectives on needs. Through their actions and taking on responsibilities in relief, children also observe and analyse the processes and problems of adult interaction, methods of relief and any inequities that occur. They observe how needs are being met, where and how aid is distributed. They are often concerned about justice and equity and have been disturbed and unhappy when operations transpired unfairly. Children and young people cannot be shielded from what is happening but can be and have been successfully involved in monitoring after disasters.

Surveying: In Tamil Nadu, India just after the 2004 tsunami, Plan International involved children in a monitoring task to ensure that vulnerable groups were not left out of relief work. Children were trained in survey methods, the taking and use of digital photographs, analysing results and presenting findings. They surveyed more than 700 people, drew conclusions and summarized their findings.

Box 24: Clearing up, providing psychosocial support and care

When 18-year-old Rosy Vergen was released from the hospital two weeks after the tsunami in Tamil Nadu, India, she called together fellow members of the Children's Parliament. "In the Children's Parliament we talked of our experiences and that helped me to come out of my fears. Long before the tsunami, we had been training in community preparedness and arts activities. So I organized these activities thinking it would be a great help for us. We did dancing, singing, making skits and painting."

Working with the Community Mobilization Team (CMT) that typically oversees the Children's Parliament, Rosy also helped organize other child members in relief work. Because there was no system in place, the children distributed food, water and clothes when they were delivered. Along with the CMT, members of the Children's Parliament cleaned toilets and the grounds within the displaced-persons camps. "I think the cleaning helped prevent a lot of sickness," Rosy said when describing the events of that time.

While living in the camp, Rosy noticed parents' lack of attention to their children. "They were weeping and moody, not taking care of their children. I took these children – about 50, aged 6 to 10 – and played with them or fed them."

When school re-opened on 10 February 2005, many children didn't want to go. Rosy again came to their aid. "Through the parliament, we gave them information about the tsunami and told them it won't come again. We took individual care of them and by June all were back in school. No one else would have bothered with them." (KE)

4. Identifying gaps and problems

Children on committees: NGOs in Bangladesh have developed peer educators among young people who sit on monitoring committees, where their role and knowledge was enhanced because they were also involved in relief work, such as in taking action on health and hygiene issues. Associated with the annual floods is the problem of increased vulnerability of many children to human trafficking, which they have raised as an issue. In response, children have organized forums for educating others about human trafficking possibilities.

Identifying people missing out: The particular knowledge and perspectives of children can mean they identify elements that adults have missed during preparation or relief work. For example, in the Philippines, children spoke up during a village meeting and identified a group of poor people who had been forgotten and left out during an emergency-planning process. Children's knowledge has been important in Zimbabwe, where committees of children have been set up specifically for monitoring and feedback. Through the committee, children have alerted authorities that peers and younger children were missing out on aid and reported other problems. These activities demonstrate the importance of properly involving all sectors of a community, including children, when providing information and conducting consultations and, in particular, feedback and monitoring work.

Box 25: Children's Committees for evaluation and accountability

A 2003 survey on the distribution of food aid in Zimbabwe's 'hungry season', from November to April, revealed that children whose parents had died or were absent often were not included during the registration process. Many child-headed households did not know of their entitlements. Complaints were not made for fear that food aid might be terminated.

In response, Save the Children established a Children's Committee to collect feedback, complaints and suggestions for improvement. By April 2004, seven committees were established in seven communities. Children raised issues on the allocation of food, including within households, and the marginalizing of orphans by caregivers. They also reported cases of child abuse. Child representatives on the committees had been trained in information-gathering skills, accountability and documentation. Parents and community leaders were also involved in the setting-up phase in detailed discussions to gain their permission and agreement with the process.

The mechanism was considered a success. The local management board "generally believes that this intervention has provided information of a nature and quality that may not have been possible through the normal post-distribution monitoring visits conducted by international NGOs." (Mclvor, 2004: 3)

However, it also threatened some established interests. "As one councillor remarked, it is a short step from promoting the accountability of food aid deliveries to demands for greater accountability among elected office holders." (Mclvor, 2004: 4)

The process provided important learning points for methods of children's participation in emergency accountability. Above all, it showed how power inequalities are too easy to pass by and the importance of involving children to counter that reality. (Mclvor, 2004 and Mclvor and Myllenen, 2005)

5. How relief agencies can provide feedback and complaints mechanisms for children

Before an emergency

In preparation:

- Involve children in the planning for emergencies so that they understand what needs to be monitored.
- Provide and train children in operational standards for relief agencies.
- Involve children in the planning of monitoring tasks and feedback and complaint mechanisms.
- Work with children to allocate appropriate roles and responsibilities in case of an emergency and provide relevant training for this.
- Train staff in involving children in monitoring tasks.

During emergency response

Staffing:

- Have competent staff designated to listen to and work with children.

Develop feedback and complaints mechanisms for children:

- Establish feedback and complaint mechanisms aimed at including children.
- Identify staff whom children can approach and who will seek out and listen to children.
- Publicize the location (or person) of feedback and complaint mechanisms to children.

Involve children and young people in monitoring the distribution of aid:

- Involve children in monitoring relief distribution, through consultation and making assessments.
- Organize groups of children to coordinate and check the distribution of aid and other supplies.
- Seek out children to make use of their specialist knowledge and networks for the coordination and distribution of relief goods.

Involve children in monitoring the work of the agency:

- Provide training for children on operational standards and methods for monitoring.
- Use different mechanisms, such as children's committees, councils or groups to involve them in evaluation and ensure accountability.
- Encourage places for them on local committees and in other bodies.

Child protection: Ensure that feedback and complaints mechanisms are established to particularly look out for child protection issues and enable children to raise concerns confidentially and easily.

See Part Two for additional guidance

E. Children's and young people's associations in emergencies

1. Why?

Children's organizations, both those run by adults and those run by children, have played a part – even a major role – in emergency responses. Many children are members of organizations, ranging from sports clubs to cultural associations and unions. The contributions and actions of groups and associations of children have been important and significant, particularly during relief and rehabilitation phases. In emergencies, groups and organizations of children have:

- Identified and communicated issues and problems;
- Provided information and facilitated forums and events to protect children;
- Organized rescue and tracing work;
- Been involved in health care and food distribution;
- Set up and run their own organizations;
- Set up businesses and radio stations;
- Negotiated with outsiders on behalf of their community.

Children's associations can be involved in all aspects of emergency work and help agencies fulfil their obligations and meet their standards: They are especially useful in understanding and reaching out to other children but also can contribute to relief and recovery for adults through their activities.

Children's associations can provide and disseminate information, organize aid distribution and provide coordinated responses to various needs. They can reach other children more easily than adults, and they can provide psychosocial support to peers.

Children's associations are involved in their self-protection by developing individual resilience, raising issues, training others and saving lives. These important humanitarian contributions challenge the general perception that children in emergencies are victims only.

2. Engaging children's associations

Finding and initiating associations: During emergencies, groups of children may come together on their own, be brought together as part of the work of a relief agency or they may have been part of an existing organization for children. Building local capacity involves paying attention to these associations and the possibility of facilitating and supporting new or existing groups. Emergency preparation and mitigation strategies may involve the use of groups, or even initiating groups, which are important in education as well as building local capacity (and for supporting resilience and gathering/disseminating information).

Associations run by children: The number of children's organizations around the world is increasing, particularly in South Asia, South America and Africa. Many of these take up issues and problems of children. In Nepal, many children's clubs have been established that feed opinions into community decision making and that have developed good evaluation practices. This involves children aged 8-16 assessing their activities and mapping their villages to determine if any children were excluded from any activities.

3. Children's associations involved in relief

Existing groups organized by adults: Existing organizations for children and young people include the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides and some Red Cross units. The Scouts and Guides were significantly mobilized in places such as the Maldives after the 2004 tsunami.

Existing groups organized and run by children: Associations run by children and young people have played important roles in disasters. For example, the Child Brigade in Dhaka, Bangladesh organized the rescue of children during a slum fire. Representatives from other children's and young people's organizations, such as a Children's Parliament, have saved others partly because of their status as well as the confidence and skills gained through their membership and activities. The Children's Parliament in Tamil Nadu, India and the Children's Councils in Nepal had significant impact during recent emergencies.

Box 26: Children's organization responding to slum fire

A fire in a Dhaka slum in 2004 affected an estimated 10,000 people – 4,000 of them children. Child Brigade, a local children-run organization (primarily of street and working children) responded to the blaze and realized there were children locked in or fleeing and not knowing where to go. Child Brigade organized a meeting place and members found children and brought them there. They went on to provide medical care, distribute food, locate families, make needs assessments and liaise with non-government and other organizations. (Nikku, Sah, Karkara, Ahmed, 2006)

4. Children's associations and emergency preparation

Children gain skills and resilience: Organizations and forums that are run by children have helped mitigate the impact of emergencies. Through their participation in these organizations, children gain skills and confidence that enables them to better protect and support themselves and others during and after an emergency.

Box 27: Children's group works on emergency preparation

Mithun Das, from Diglipur, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, North Andaman, speaks about his involvement in disaster-risk reduction activities that he and peers have embarked on, without adult support:

"We are working in a group on disaster-risk reduction. We give information on how children can take part in disaster-risk reduction preparations through their clubs. Before, we didn't know what to do in a disaster but now we have mapped out the community. Achievements are that we know how to save our lives and those of other community members. There is a children's club through which we express our likes and dislikes and what our problems are and what still needs doing. There are a lot of challenges in this work, which has now been going on for two months. The parents restrict us and the teachers are against these groups because they think our education is affected. The community is also discouraging because they say the children will forget their learning after a few months. But now we know how to develop our risk reduction and how to develop our tribes. Through this programme, we can now make our voices heard. For example, it's hard when the water comes up from the sea as it's hard to cross the creeks and we need bridges to cross. So we will now advocate on this and make the issue heard among our families."

From a children's panel in a seminar on children's participation in response to natural disasters, Chennai, 13 December 2006. Save the Children, 2006.

Forums: Children's forums have been a means to identify issues and can be undertaken by young people or organized by adults. A forum in Aceh, Indonesia in November 2006, nearly two years after the tsunami disaster, has turned into a regular meeting of children and young people to discuss issues.

Box 28: Forums for protection

To reduce the impact of regular flooding in Bangladesh, young people run children's rights forums. The floods bring an increase in risk of human trafficking and exploitation of children. The floods reshape river courses and dispose of land. Families who lose their homes and land in the floods have to find alternative work. An estimated 25 per cent of children working on the streets in Bangladesh come from flood regions. Also, because borders are less secure in times of flood, girls are vulnerable to being trafficked to India for sexual exploitation.

With help from an NGO, the children have organized a rights forums for marginalized and vulnerable groups to raise awareness of these problems. They conduct campaigns on the protection of children and the provision of relief to vulnerable communities (which reduces risks). Children have been involved in fundraising, distributing aid, lobbying and in capacity building and training. (Chen and Thompstone, 2005)

5. Children's associations following emergencies

Newly established associations: Groups of children and young people that came together after the 2004 tsunami have had a profound effect on some communities. They include young Moken people in Thailand who not only established their own radio station and set up small businesses, but took on crucial negotiations with outsiders who wanted to take over their land. The Children's Committee in Zimbabwe that plays an important feedback role on the work of relief agencies was initiated through an international non-government agency. But the local theatre groups established in places after the tsunami had considerable effect on children's lives and led to longer-lasting groups.

Identifying and responding to change: Following the 2004 tsunami, children identified, raised and communicated issues they were concerned about to the general community when there were means available. They particularly focused on change and problems arising from the emergency. For example, children noticed increases in risky behaviours, including among young people. Some young people associated these increases with the effect of psychosocial distress as well as the incoming aid money. Reported increases in the use of illicit drugs and unsafe sex meant a need for AIDS awareness. Opportunities to publicize issues came through drama and theatre groups, children's centres, newsletters and forums. Theatre workshops have been used to communicate awareness on other significant problems, such as human trafficking, which sometimes also emerges as a threat following a disaster.

Box 29: Children's and young people's groups bring identity, social and political awareness

Children's and young people's participation following the 2004 tsunami not only developed their self-confidence and other skills but also increased their social and political awareness. Through their actions and the changed perceptions and reactions of adults, young people have taken on new roles within their family and community.

For example, Moken young people in Thailand have represented their community in discussions with outside agencies. When external developers wanted to take Moken-owned property after the tsunami, young people took on an important role in the struggle against their land grabbing. Older girls involved themselves in that struggle and gained a degree of empowerment from it that they had not experienced before. The process also raised awareness of their ethnic heritage and traditions, and they have a renewed sense of identity and pride as well as self-confidence and self-esteem because of it.

Box 30: Young people setting up community radio and businesses and fighting to retain community land

With support from university students and an NGO, a Moken youth group in southern Thailand set up a juice stall (using skills they learned when previously employed at restaurants in the nearby resort area of Khao Lak) and a crafts business. With training in sustainable business practices, they were able to contribute to their family income, which has given them a sense of pride and responsibility again.

Moken children did not traditionally participate in community decisions. Since the development of the small businesses, there has been much outside interest in their efforts. They have since been invited to community meetings and now represent the village in many dealings with 'outsiders', such as donors and local authorities.

Following the tsunami disaster, the young Moken played a key role in a struggle with resort developers over property. As well, they felt threatened as government agencies came into the area with a presence they never had had before. The young people set up their own community radio to voice their concerns, talk about their rights and pass along general information. The older Moken still feel exploited by Thai authorities but the young people now feel stronger and willing to assert themselves.

The community radio originated when an NGO worker, Nong, helping Moken young people bounce back, suggested it. She had a friend working in a radio station in Bangkok who was willing to help teach the young people how to run their own station. The Moken, all girls at that time, were hesitant at first.

"We were saying that in our community we don't have a way of hearing the news. We wanted a way to announce the news," recalled Nuan, 19. "At first we thought it was too big an idea for us. We were afraid and thought it was an adult thing."

"Nong said, 'Even kids can do it. Let's try.' She started by buying equipment and asked her friend to come and help set it up."

Added Nuan, "There's a big different between now and before the tsunami. Now the Moken people are more involved in the community and the adults are more open to young people being involved. The adults understand our feelings more, they allow us to attend workshops."

"A few of us went to a fair selling our batik in Bangkok. We saw some Hmong people wearing their own traditional clothing and speaking their own language. We said, 'Hey, what about us? We're forgetting our own traditions and we shouldn't.'"

Explained Nok, "Adults like the radio – we use it as a warning station. Sometimes people go running and everyone wonders what's going on and this way we can let them know if there is an emergency."

"By nature we're quiet people but all these activities have made us more involved," said Nok, one of the older people in the group. Though 21, she said she is considered a 'kid'. "They're developing us to have our own opinion, to speak up and be responsible. And the adults listen to us more and respect us."

"What have we gained from the tsunami?," repeated Nuan. "It has reunited the Moken. We're proud to be Moken and we want to teach our history, our culture, our language. Without the tsunami we'd still be trying to be more Thai." (KE)

6. How relief agencies can work with children's associations in emergencies

Before an emergency

Prepare staff:

- Identify local organizations run by and for children.
- Train staff in working with and facilitating groups and organizations of children and young people.

Work with children's groups in preparation:

- Involve children's and young people's organizations in planning and preparing for emergencies.
- Initiate and support the development of children's and young people's organizations.

Capacity building for children's groups:

- Provide training and awareness raising on rights and vulnerability and training of trainers for children.
- Support, train and encourage children and young people in negotiating and organizational skills and in public speaking.

During emergency response

Find, support and develop children's associations:

- Have competent staff available to liaise with children's and young people's organizations.
- Seek out children's organizations and work with their existing structures and capacities.
- Provide support for groups and organizations of children.

Take advice from children's organizations:

- Consult with children's organizations about local community and children's issues and problems.
- Find out what children's organizations perceive as important needs and what they can do about them.

Take actions in collaboration with children's organizations:

- Work with and use children's and young people's organizations to mobilize and reach other children rapidly in emergencies.
- Involve children's organizations at all stages.
- Involve children's organizations in all aspects – capacity building, information gathering and disseminating, consultation, feedback and complaints.
- Delegate supported roles to children's organizations.

See Part Two for additional guidance

Part Two: Guidance and resources for children's participation in emergencies

Introduction

1. Building basic competencies of relief staff working with children
2. Developing the capacities of children
3. Working with children affected by disasters
4. Participatory disaster assessments with children
5. Supporting children as peer educators
6. Providing information for children
7. Consulting with children
8. Feedback and complaint mechanisms for children
9. Working with children's organizations
10. Emergency preparedness and disaster-risk reduction with children
11. Standards to protect children who participate
12. Measuring and monitoring children's participation
13. Dealing with the challenges and obstacles

Introduction

The following sections are suggestions for areas of work that can be developed to include children's participation in emergency responses, from preparation through relief and recovery. Although they are listed separately, there are many links across the areas. For example, to conduct assessments or consultations or form partnerships with children's organizations, relief agency staff need to have developed competence in working with children. That competence will be informed by their understanding the methods for measuring and monitoring children's participation. Because the areas of work are separated into sections, some themes that are of underlying importance are reinforced throughout Part Two.

These sections do not provide detailed guidance: That is beyond the scope and size of this document. Part Two provides suggestions, a starting point and directions for following up further. Agencies have their own areas of expertise and specialisms that need to incorporate children's participation; they need to devise their own strategies, depending on their organizational strengths and the initial possibilities that can be built up.

One fundamental need to initiate participation is for relief agencies to identify staff responsible for working with children and ensuring that they are engaged and involved throughout all phases of emergency work.

A basic resource with links to others is the UNICEF resource guide:

UNICEF, 2006. *Child and Youth Participation Resource Guide*. Bangkok: UNICEF EAPRO. www.unicef.org/ceecis/Child_Youth_Resource_Guide.pdf

Protection

Participation should be twinned with the protection of children as a basic response for emergencies (and interventions in other circumstances). This guide does not provide detailed guidance for the protection of children in emergencies: Separate guides are available (for example, published by ECPAT and by Save the Children in 2006). It is important to pay attention also to issues of diversity and the role of participation in protecting children, particularly the different problems and perspectives that arise at different ages for each gender and for children who are disabled. These basic points are referred to in the following sections.

Basic guides on the protection of children in emergencies include:

Delaney, S., 2006. *Protecting Children From Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Violence in Disasters and Emergency Situations: A guide for local and community-based organizations*. Bangkok: ECPAT, www.ecpat.net/eng/pdf/Protecting_children_from_CSEC_in_Disasters.pdf

Save the Children, 2006. *Child Protection in Emergencies*. Stockholm: Save the Children Sweden and the International Save the Children Alliance, www.aidworkers.net/files/childprotectionemergenciessweden.pdf

1. Building basic competencies of relief staff working with children

Adults, especially field staff of relief agencies, need to engage with and talk to children, facilitate groups and respond to individuals before, during and after emergencies. Many adults are uncertain and feel insecure about how to do this. Relief workers need to be trained to ensure they have the capacity to respond to and involve children.

a) What do staff need to know and be able to do to work with children?

Protection and agreed standards and principles for emergencies: Staff need an understanding of standards, particularly those relevant to children's and young people's lives, protection and participation. These should include agency protection policies and what to do if cases of abuse are raised or observed.

Children's rights: The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the most ratified United Nations treaty and provides an international benchmark for responding to the lives of children younger than 18. An understanding of the CRC and child-rights programming provides a basis for implementing relief, recovery and planning work. Other international instruments provide rights for children and young people and are included in rights-based programming.

Forms of participation: Staff need to understand what constitutes different forms of participation, their respective benefits and the variety of settings for children's participation. They should also understand the links between participation, resilience and psychosocial support.

Diversity: An appreciation of diversity is an essential starting point along with participation competence. Understanding and responding to differences in age, gender, disability, ethnicity, class, caste and so on is necessary to make appropriate provisions for children. This is why children's own analysis of their needs and circumstances is important. Children and young people have different reactions to their experiences as well as different needs and relationships.

Resilience and psychosocial support: Staff need to recognize and respond to the feelings of children. They should understand resilience and means of providing psychosocial support. They will need skills of listening and talking with children.

Ethics and best interests: Running throughout the understanding of standards, rights and participation and responding to protection issues is the importance of ethical approaches, particularly those that act in the best interests of the child.

b) How can staff capacity be built?

Basic competence: Competence involves knowledge, skills and attitudes or values. Basic knowledge and skills should enable staff to identify and respond to children's spontaneous action and incorporate them in relief and recovery work. The knowledge required includes understanding children's evolving capacities, diversity, local perceptions of childhood, children's rights and

methods of participation along with child protection. The skills of communication, facilitating groups and listening to and working with individuals would also enable staff to facilitate and initiate action with and by children. For example, these skills should form the basis of making assessments and consulting with children, and with conducting research, monitoring and evaluations with them. Basic values are crucial, such as belief in the worth of children and having real respect for their capabilities; knowledge and skills are useless without this attitude.

Training on protection, rights and standards: Training in these areas can be desk or classroom based. Training in protection must incorporate local reporting rules and structures and what to do in a variety of different cases and circumstances.

Training on participation: Practical introduction courses on participation should include the development of facilitating skills, some understanding of diversity, children's rights and the skills of listening to, observing and interviewing children. The best introduction courses are experiential, in which participants practise their skills in a real project involving children, with a mentor and coach.

Approaches to working with children: Basic skills on work with children involve:

- Group work – facilitating skills. These may make use of vehicles such as theatre and art;
- Individual work with children – listening and supporting.

Facilitating skills: These can be developed as part of participation training. Some practical ideas and methods on facilitation are found in resources aimed at training for work in health, with vulnerable children and other groups. The basic processes involved can be adapted for different settings and groups of children. The key to facilitating is the ability to adapt, which is why an awareness of and ability to respond to differences and diversity among children is necessary.

Individual work: Personal listening skills can be developed as part of basic person-centred counselling training. The approach of person-centred counselling, which is listening and reflecting, provides a basis for empathic responses to children. Counselling should not be a first resort but a method for possible adoption following participatory group work and other activities. Training for individual work would include taking account of diversity – particularly age and gender. Training for individual work also would include how to talk with and respond to troubled children. And it includes other more creative forms of communications, such as art, drama, role playing and storytelling.

Creative communication: During the recovery and rehabilitation phases, relief agencies may bring in individuals and groups with particular skills in facilitating drama and art workshops with children – as a vehicle for consultation, recovery and support. Theatre and art workshops can be means of engaging children and young people and initiating their broader participation. Methods such as theatre for development can also be used to discuss issues and support emotional rebuilding.

Ethics: Competence among staff is a key element in an ethical approach to working with children – staff should be confident and able. Attitudes toward children and their participation are a fundamental element of competence. When staff do not believe children have views or capacity to make decisions or take action, they will act as a block and obstruct relief efforts. Experiential training in participation can overcome this.

Commitment: Staff need to understand and be committed to participation work with children and young people – otherwise the work will not succeed. They may also have to deal with objections and obstacles others make regarding children’s participation. Staff need to be confident in raising awareness of children’s competence in emergencies and how their participation benefits emergency work and communities.

Documentation: A fundamental part of participation work and particularly in responding to troubled children is developing skills and methods for documenting children’s viewpoints.

c) Where to find more information and materials

Beers, H. van with Trimmer, C. 2006. *Adults First! An organizational training for adults on children’s participation*. Bangkok: Save the Children Sweden, www.scswedenseap.org

Beers, H. van, Chau, V.P., Ennew, J., Khan, P.Q., Long, T.T., Milne, B., Nguyete, T.T.A., Son, V.T., 2006. *Creating an Enabling Environment: Capacity building in children’s participation*, Save the Children Sweden, Viet Nam, 2000-2004; Bangkok: Save the Children Sweden, www.scswedenseap.org/

Hart, J., Newman, J., Ackermann, L., with Feeny, .T., 2004. *Children Changing Their World: Understanding and evaluating children’s participation in development*. Woking: Plan International. Resources for understanding participation, www.plan-uk.org/newsroom/publications/childrenchangingtheirworld

Hart, Roger A., 2001. *The Theory and Practice of Involving Young Citizens in Community Development and Environmental Care*. London: Earthscan

Hodgkin, R. and P. Newell, 2002. *Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. (revised edition) New York: UNICEF. On children’s rights

Hyder, T. and O’Kane, C., 2006. *Tools for Exploring Diverse Childhoods*. London: Save the Children. On diversity

International HIV/AIDS Alliance, 2004. *A Parrot on Your Shoulder: A guide for people starting to work with orphans and vulnerable children*. Brighton: International HIV/AIDS Alliance, www.aidsalliance.org/sw7467.asp

McCrum, S. and L. Hughes, 1998 (second edition). *Interviewing Children: A guide for journalists and others*. London: Save the Children. Ideas on listening to children and young people, www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/54.htm

Methods for looking at diversity with children, young people and adults are provided in:

Miller, J., 2003. *Never Too Young: How young people can take responsibility and make decisions*. London: Save the Children, www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/54.htm

O’Kane, C., 2003. *Children and Young People as Citizens: Partners for social change*. Kathmandu: Save the Children South & Central Asia Region, www.savethechildren.net/nepal/citizens.html or www.savethechildren.net/alliance/resources/child_part/child_citizens

Plan Philippines, 2001. *Facilitators Guide for the Promotion of Children’s Rights and Responsibilities and Their Participation in Social Development*. Philippines: Plan International. This is a practical introductory resource.

UNICEF 2006. *Child and Youth Participation Resource Guide*. Bangkok: UNICEF EAPRO. (book and CD-ROM). A section on mainstreaming participation in agencies and many other resources are listed, www.unicef.org/ceecis/Child_Youth_Resource_Guide.pdf

Ward, L., 1997. *Seen and Heard: Involving disabled children and young people in research and development projects*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop

Youth Peer Education Electronic Resource, 2003. *Peer Education Training of Trainers Manual*. New York: UN Interagency Group on Young People’s Health Development and Protection in Europe and Central Asia, Subcommittee on peer education, www.youthpeer.org/upload/resources/155_ResFile_manual.pdf

2. Developing the capacities of children

a) What do children need to know and be able to do to work with relief agencies?

What happens in emergencies: Children need to know what an emergency is and what happens to affected people. They need to understand the roles of different institutions, such as national and local government departments and officials, police and army, schools and teachers, hospital, clinics, doctors and nurses, and both local and international non-government organizations.

What relief agencies do and forming partnerships: If children are going to work with relief agencies, they need to understand what these agencies do, how they function and the roles of different personnel. They also need to understand ideas and practices of working in partnership.

Rights and participation: For children to understand their potential roles with relief agencies, they need to know about their rights and especially about participation. They need to understand that they have knowledge and opinions that are valued and taken seriously by the agency and its staff and that they have capabilities that are of use.

Basic health care, first aid and survival skills: Children have identified knowledge and skills of basic health care and first aid as important to them, which would also enhance their capacities to work with relief agencies. Children have also identified useful skills, such as swimming and climbing trees. Children can teach these skills to other children.

Skills: Children can work with relief agencies in a variety of ways. They may need training in some skills, for example in survey work, making assessments and documenting and understanding how committees function. They may also want coaching or support in public speaking.

b) How can these capacities be built?

Preparation by staff: A basic competence for staff and agencies in participation and working with children and young people underpins the work to develop and support their capacities (see the previous section). Organizations should prepare staff capable of training and working with children.

Diversity and a positive environment: During preparations for disasters and especially during emergency responses, agencies need to be mindful of the diversity of children. Older children can be involved in relief work as much as adults, given the minimal age differences; their non-involvement is more to do with attitudes they feel do not value their capacities. Relief agencies need to demonstrate that they value children's contributions and ensure that children are included. Building children's capacities requires a positive environment in which they and their contributions are taken seriously.

Partnership approaches to involving children and young people: These include allocating roles and responsibilities and deciding appropriate training and capacity building. The nature of partnerships will vary according to whether there has been emergency preparation work in the location or if the agency has just arrived.

Preparation: In places where disaster emergencies occur regularly, part of the planning process should include building children's capacities to collaborate with agencies on relief work. Preparation work might include initiating and supporting children's associations and building partnerships with children beforehand. The nature of training and capacity building programmes with children is part of the planning for emergency and partnership processes.

Deciding roles and training: Part of the emergency response and engaging children and building partnerships with them must be to explain what agencies can and will do and how children can be involved. The allocating of roles and responsibilities is done jointly by adults and children and with everyone's consent and recognition of each person's capacities to ensure there is no overburdening or exploitation. An important part of allocating roles and responsibilities is deciding and providing appropriate training and capacity building. This is to enable children to take action, fulfil roles and responsibilities and to strengthen their own self-protection and confidence.

Workshops to engage with children, to consult them on what they want to be involved with and subsequent skills training are fundamental parts of providing relief and recovery. Engaging with children in this way will benefit and help them, and children will be able to undertake a range of tasks more efficiently than external workers. Investment in children's capacities at the outset is worthwhile over the longer term.

Training packages and information for children on what happens in emergencies and what relief agencies do can be prepared in various formats. Basic training materials and methods in health care, first aid and other key areas (such as surveying) can also be prepared beforehand.

Participatory training methods will support the processes for longer-term participation. Other methods for disseminating accurate information, knowledge and understanding include peer education, child-to-child work and the development of children's groups. Taking on roles and responsibilities is a means of educating and protecting children.

Training children as trainers will also help them in acting as teachers for younger children.

c) Where to find more information and materials

Driskell, D., 2002. *Creating Better Cities with Children and Youth: A manual for participation*. London: Earthscan, UNESCO in collaboration with members of the Growing Up in Cities Project

Dynamix Ltd, 2003. *Participation Spice It Up! Practical tools for engaging children and young people in planning and consultation*. London: Save the Children, dynamix@seriousfun.demon.co.uk

Gibbs, S., Mann, G., Mathers, N., 2002. *Child-to-Child: A practical guide*. Empowering children as active citizens. London: Health Action Zone Groundwork Southwark, www.child-to-child.org/guide/

International HIV/AIDS Alliance, 2004. *A Parrot on Your Shoulder: A guide for people starting to work with orphans and vulnerable children*. Brighton: International HIV/AIDS Alliance, www.aidsalliance.org/sw7467.asp

Miller, J., 2003. *Never Too Young: How young people can take responsibility and make decisions*. London: Save the Children, www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/54.htm

Plan Philippines, 2001. *Facilitators Guide for the Promotion of Children's Rights and Responsibilities and Their Participation in Social Development*. Philippines: Plan International

UNICEF, 2006. *Child and Youth Participation Resource Guide*. Bangkok: UNICEF EAPRO. Basic resource guide, www.unicef.org/ceecis/Child_Youth_Resource_Guide.pdf

Youth Peer Education Electronic Resource, 2003. *Peer Education Training of Trainers Manual*. New York: UN Interagency Group on Young People's Health Development and Protection in Europe and Central Asia, Subcommittee on peer education. General tools for working with children and young people, www.youthpeer.org/upload/resources/155_ResFile_manual.pdf

3. Working with children affected by disasters

a) Which issues have to be considered when working with disaster-affected children?

Stress and protection: Two main concerns to be considered are stress and protection. But participation plays an important role in dealing with both. A major issue includes responding to children's experiences and reactions to disaster, especially dealing with trauma and any bereavement. At the same time, the disruption to regular routine is exploited by some adults to remove or traffic children, rape or abuse them in other ways. Stress following emergencies affects different adults

and children in different ways (from alcohol abuse and violence to feelings of hopelessness, physical problems and other effects on behaviour). These reactions mean that protecting of children along with responding to trauma have to be at the top of the agenda, along with participation.

Diversity: A major part of considering any response to protection and stress is understanding the local diversity of childhood and the different expectations placed on children and the approved reactions of different ages, gender and other differences.

Separation and alternative care: In an emergency, children may become separated from families and a number of issues need to be considered, from family tracing to the provision of alternative care. The problems of large-scale institutional care have become increasingly well known, especially issues around child protection. Other provisions, such as foster care, need also to consider protection.

Education: The disruption to normal life for children usually means their home and family life have changed and their education frequently stops, particularly when schools are used for other community relief purposes.

b) How to work with disaster-affected children?

Protection: The work of child protection in and after emergencies is receiving increasing attention. Child protection mechanisms must be established as a matter of urgency. These include all agency staff and staff of partner organizations. Information materials on protection for children and adults should be available, along with clearly identified responsible staff who will deal with problems and work with children.

Staff training

Diversity: Training in diversity provides a background for understanding that different children and young people have different reactions to traumatic events and that other issues such as age, gender, ethnicity, caste, disability, social exclusion or marginalization also have an impact.

Protection: All staff need to be aware of protection issues and know to whom to report concerns, problems, observed issues and any other matter on the protection of children.

Participation: Enabling participation, building resilience and responding to troubled children are linked – they are not separate issues or approaches. Participation through being included, listened to and being taken seriously helps promote resilience and provide psychosocial support. Participation includes creating a supporting environment for children to report protection issues and problems.

Regular routines and education: Providing and ensuring daily regular routines helps return a sense of normality. Education is promoted as a means of recovery so that classes can bring regular activity, plus social support and learning. Older children can teach younger children.

People and space to listen: Apart from working with children in groups, some individual work in terms of listening and paying attention is useful. But the greatest resource is other children who can support each other, identify those who are in particular need and suggest who might require

outside help. Part of the role of building capacities is to facilitate, strengthen and support these skills and abilities of children and identify those who can, will and want to take on roles of supporting and helping others. Centres for children may provide a space for inclusion, activities and peer support.

c) Where to find more information and materials

Beers, H. van with Trimmer, C., 2006. *Adults First! An organizational training for adults on children's participation*. Bangkok: Save the Children Sweden, www.scswedenseap.org

Beers, H. van, Chau, V.P., Ennew, J., Khan, P.Q., Long, T.T., Milne, B., Nguyete, T.T.A., Son, V.T., 2006. *Creating an Enabling Environment: Capacity building in children's participation*. Save the Children Sweden, Viet Nam, 2000-2004 Bangkok: Save the Children Sweden, www.scswedenseap.org/

Better Care Network website for materials on working with separated children in emergencies and on working with troubled children and protection, www.bettercarenetwork.org

Boyden, J., 2003. *Children Under Fire: Challenging assumptions about children's resilience*. Children, Youth and Environments, Vol 13, No.1, www.colorado.edu/journals/cye/13_1/

De Castro, E.P., 2006. 'Draft strategic framework for psychosocial support'. UNICEF EAPRO

Delaney, S., 2006. *Protecting Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Violence in Disasters and Emergency Situations: A guide for local and community-based organizations*. Bangkok: ECPAT, www.ecpat.net/eng/pdf/Protecting_children_from_CSEC_in_Disasters.pdf

Duncan, J. and Arnston, L., 2004. *Children in Crisis: Good practice in evaluating psychosocial programming*. Save the Children Federation and International Psychosocial Evaluation Committee, www.savethechildren.org/publications/technical-resources/emergencies-protection_Good_Practices_in_Evaluating_Psychosocial_Programming.pdf

Hart, J., 2004. *Children's Participation in Humanitarian Action: Learning from zones of armed conflict*. Document prepared for the Canadian International Development Agency Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford, www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/PDFs/Childrens_Participation_Synthesis_Feb_2004.pdf

Soudiere, M. de la, Williamson, J. and Botte, J., 2007. *The Lost Ones: Emergency care and family tracing for separated children from birth to five years*. UNICEF, <http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/children-and-young-people/children-and-conflict/child-refugees>

Newman, J., 2005. *Protection Through Participation: Young people affected by forced migration and political crisis*. Oxford: Refugee Studies Centre Working Paper No.20, www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/PDFs/conferencepaper20041.pdf

Nicolai, S. and Triplehorn, C., 2003. *The Role of Education in Protecting Children in Conflict*. Humanitarian Practice Network Paper 42, London: ODI, www.savethechildren.org/publications/technical-resources/emergencies-protection/ODIEducationProtection.pdf

Save the Children, 2006. *Child Protection in Emergencies*: Stockholm Save the Children Sweden and the International Save the Children Alliance, www.aidworkers.net/files/childprotectionemergenciessweden.pdf

Simonsen, L.F. and Reyes, G. *Community-Based Psychological Support Training Manual*. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, www.ifrc.org/docs/pubs/health/psycholog/pspmanual

UNHCR, 2006. *Guidelines on the Formal Determination of the Best Interests of the Child*, www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/tehis/vtx/home/opendoc.pdf?tbl=RSDLEGAL&id=447d5bf24

Ward, L., 1997. *Seen and Heard: Involving disabled children and young people in research and development projects*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop

West, A., 2005. "First of AllThe Social Part of Psycho-Social Support: Psycho-social support, participation, protection and social activities for orphans and children affected by HIV/AIDS." Paper presented at the National AIDS Orphans Psychological Care Training, Shanxi, China, March 2005 Save the Children China, beijingoffice@savethechildren.org.cn, www.crin.org/docs/FIRST%20OF%20ALL%20fin4%20psychosocial%20support%20children.pdf

WHO. *Mental Health and Psychosocial Care for Children Affected by Natural Disasters*. World Health Organization Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900SID/LHON-698DDF?OpenDocument

4. Participatory disaster assessments with children

a) What are common topics and questions for disaster assessments with children?

Current and previous circumstances: Basic questions concern children's daily life: family, school, work and community, neighbourhoods and the quality of life both before and after the disaster. These questions include:

- Who were children living with beforehand, and where are they living now?
- Were children attending school before the disaster and where? Is the school operating now and are teachers still there? What was the quality of the school and teaching previously?
- Were children working before the disaster? Where? Are they still working or intending to return to work? If they were (and are) working, what were they doing and what were the conditions of employment?
- What was daily life like before? What happens now? What issues and problems have arisen?

Child protection and separated children: Assessments will also cover children who are separated from parents or orphaned and involve family tracing. Child protection issues also need to be discussed – but raised in a careful and sensitive manner.

Relief and needs: Children have current needs and have perspectives on how relief can be and is being organized and distributed – including who is missing out.

The future: Relief work leads into rebuilding communities and structures that children will use now and when they are adults. Assessments need to consider children’s perspectives on their communities from the outset. Communities are not locked in time and will not be reconstructed the same as they were before: Change needs to be recognized and built in, and children can adapt quickly with support.

b) What methods to use for disaster assessments with children?

- PRA techniques
- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Forums
- Workshops

There are several methods and techniques for rapid assessments with children and young people. Options will depend on the aims of the work. Rapid assessments in relief phases can make use of a collection of techniques known as participatory rapid appraisal (PRA). Longer assessments and consultations in recovery and rehabilitation phases and those in preparedness and mitigation stages may draw on methodologies of research with and by children.

c) How to involve children in data collection and analysis?

Recognize diversity: Ensure that assessments are conducted in places where children are living and working, and involve children from across the spectrum of local diversity.

Staff skills: Staff involved in conducting assessments need to have skills of facilitating discussions with children, listening to and responding to them, in addition to understanding methodologies for the chosen methods.

Adult-led and children-led methods: Some methods might be facilitated by adults, such as interviews, focus groups, workshops and PRA work, and involve groups of children. It is difficult to have children and adults in the same groups; rather, groups should be of children of similar ages and, in some cases, of the same gender. Children can lead assessments, collect data by conducting surveys and having discussions; adults or older children might facilitate initial sessions to set up the process and the reporting back.

Assessment following preparation: Emergency preparedness planning and training can include how groups of children can conduct assessments. Children can be trained in assessment methods, including surveys and facilitating a PRA. Children can also plan how to conduct assessments following a disaster and allocate roles and responsibilities in preparation.

Checklist:

Who is responsible for ensuring children are included in assessments?

Who is responsible for ensuring children are included in planning?

- Ensure that assessment teams include children as well as women and men;
- Ensure that children are consulted – there are focus groups of different ages of children; individual interviews include a diversity of children and young people;
- Ensure that children and young people are included in research teams and are interviewed.

d) Where to find more information and materials

Boyden, J. and Ennew, J. (eds). *Children in Focus – A manual for participatory research with children*. Stockholm: Radda Barnen - Save the Children Sweden, www.childrightsbookshop.org

Ennew, J. and Plateau, D.P., 2004. *How to Research the Physical and Emotional Punishment of Children*. Bangkok: Save the Children Sweden, www.scswedenseap.org

Gibbs, S., Mann, G., Mathers, N., 2002. *Child-to-Child: A practical guide*. Empowering children as active citizens. London: Health Action Zone Groundwork Southwark, www.child-to-child.org/guide/guide.pdf

McCrum, S. and L. Hughes, 1998 (second edition). *Interviewing Children: A guide for journalists and others*. London: Save the Children, www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/54.htm

Pretty, J., Guijt, I., Thompson, J. and Scoones, I., 1996. *Participatory Learning and Action: A trainers guide*. London: International Institute for Environment and Development

Save the Children, 1995. *Toolkits: A practical guide to assessment, monitoring, review and evaluation*. London: Save the Children, www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/54.htm

Slim, H. and Mitchell, J. *The Application of RAP And PRA Techniques in Emergency Relief Programmes*, www.unu.edu/unupress/food2/UIN18E/Uin08eOr.

5. Supporting children as peer educators

a) What is peer education and what can it be used for?

Peer education is basically a group of children gaining accurate information and understanding about a particular topic and then communicating this to other children. In this case, the term 'peers' tends to involve children of the same age or status and younger children, but peer educators have also taught or provided information to parents and to other adults, at home or in public presentations to the community.

Methods: Peer education has been used in individual and group methodologies. The key to both has been an initial set of children who have been trained by adults in a specific content, for example, HIV prevention, and in ways of making clear explanations to others. Individual methods of peer education involve children communicating information informally to peers, either one on one or in very small groups. This might be done during ordinary conversation rather than setting up special meetings. The practice of group communication is generally more formal, involving a few peer educators putting on a performance (including role playing) and/or presentation and questions to their peers. Some of these group communications are done in schools. Another range of methods includes public communication through radio, loudspeakers and the use of roadside stalls.

Child to child is an approach to health promotion that is led by children and has extended into broader community development. The term is usually used to relate to a specific set of approaches led by children, whereas peer education is a generic term that might involve more direct adult involvement and facilitation (for example, where the term has been used to describe children-led classes in schools for peers, under the remit of adult teachers). In emergency settings, the useful forms of peer education are those that children lead.

Areas of use: Peer education and child-to-child approaches in emergencies are used for promoting health, sanitation and water-use information, food distribution, protection, explaining emergency processes and other areas – there are no limitations and the process is useful for communicating accurate information quickly. In addition, children have been involved in peer education that consists of teaching classes for younger children in school, following the basic curriculum.

b) How can child peer educators be supported?

Accurate information: Peer educators need accurate and up-to-date information about the selected topics, knowledge of common myths and how to challenge them.

Methods of communication: Although the benefits of peer education include children being able to pass on information informally, they may also need to practise how to do this and ways of making explanations. If peer education is formally established, this might include setting up stalls for children to hand out information or having discussions with peers and with adults.

Materials: Peer educators can be supplied with materials, such as information leaflets and comics, or equipment for public communication.

Box 31: Children aged 5-10 years working with younger siblings

Promoting play through the child-to-child process in an Afghan refugee camp in Pakistan: This example concerns the participation of 5- to 10-year-old children, their involvement in the play and development of younger siblings and their work with parents and grandparents. The example is taken from a conflict setting but could easily be applied to camps and other situations of disaster recovery and rehabilitation.

Step 1: Understanding the issue

The community worker in the refugee camp noticed how very young children in the camp were not being stimulated at all. In a weekly group session with children (aged 5-10), she discussed through a story the importance of talking to and playing with babies for the child's development.

Step 2: Finding out more

The older children went back to their younger siblings in their families and observed what makes them smile. They learned that young children like clapping, singing, poems and stories. They also noticed that there were not many toys or books in the camp for the very young children.

Step 3: Discussing findings and planning action

The children discussed what they had observed and planned what action they could take to support the babies and toddlers in the camp. They decided to make toys for the younger children and collect materials that do not cost anything or may even have been thrown away, such as seeds, grass, bottle tops, cotton reels, string, rags and paper as well as old newspapers and magazines.

Step 4: Taking action

The children collected the material with the help of family members and had a special toy-making event for all the children in the camp. With the help of the community workers, they made mobiles of shiny things and rattles for babies, shaped sorters, pictures and books for the very young children, pull-along toys and puppets for toddlers. They then gave these to babies and toddlers in the camp.

Step 5: Evaluating action

The children discussed among themselves about changes they had seen in the camp and how much the toys were being enjoyed and shared or exchanged. They also noticed how some toys were not very safe for babies as they put everything into their mouths.

Step 6: Doing it better

The children continued these activities, using all opportunities, individually and as a group. They also encouraged parents to use the toys to play with the children and asked grandparents to share with them and the younger children traditional games and stories.

Source: Kassam-Khamis, 2005: 48-49

c) Where to find more information and materials

Adamchak, Susan E., 2007. *Youth Peer Education in Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS: Progress, process, and programming for the future*. Youth Issues Paper No. 7. YouthNet, www.fhi.org/NRreonlyresem7o6gq65ntn3p5cdtq2g3pqt5rxhs7afnrnu64vmmva36aydt65naap6vaxyezz42bvaeuohof6a/YI7.pdf

Child-to-Child Trust - www.child-to-child.org

Gibbs, S., Mann, G., Mathers, N., 2002. *Child-to-Child: A practical guide, Empowering children as active citizens*. London: Health Action Zone Groundwork Southwark, www.child-to-child.org/guide/guide.pdf

Kassam-Khamis, T., 2005. 'Child-to-Child: Helping children in emergencies and affected by conflict' pp 47-50 in Moreno and van Dongen (eds), *Responses to Young Children in Post-Emergency Situations*, Early Childhood Matters 104, July 2005. The Hague: Bernard van Leer Foundation, www.bernardvanleer.org/publication_store/publication_store_publications/early_childhood_matters_104/file

Youth Peer Education Electronic Resource, 2003. *Peer Education Training of Trainers Manual*. New York: UN Interagency Group on Young People's Health Development and Protection in Europe and Central Asia, Subcommittee on peer education, www.youthpeer.org/upload/resources/155_ResFile_Manual.pdf

6. Providing information for children

In emergencies, children need, can provide and can disseminate information. This section focuses on those capacities.

a) What information do children need in emergencies?

Local hazards and what to do:

- What local hazards exist and what can happen;
- Where to go in an emergency;
- Who to link up with in emergency.

Basic survival:

- Basic health care, water and sanitation care;
- How to protect themselves;
- Basic first aid;
- Who to talk to about problems or concerns.

What happens in an emergency:

- What organizations do;
- What will happen to school;
- What their family will do;
- What the relief agencies are doing.

What children can do:

- Where children can go to help;
- How children can be involved in relief and recovery efforts;
- What relief agencies will work with them on;
- Where and when assessments will take place;
- Who to meet and talk to about helping.

b) How can vital information be communicated to children?

Diversity and communication: The form and content of information must be diversified to meet the needs of children of different ages and capacities, including disabled children. The places and methods of communication also need diversification to reach young children, teenagers and young people.

Visual forms: Written and picture forms include setting up public notice boards, putting notices up at formal and informal meeting and gathering places, leaflets and comics. Information needs to be disseminated – at meetings, walking around and handing out printed material, or walking around with signs. In some places, it might be possible to project films in the open at night, using a screen cloth.

Spoken forms: Spoken forms include public loudspeakers, community radio and walking or driving around with bullhorns.

Personal forms: Person-to-person forms include speech, written material or performance. They include peer education, meetings, theatre, street performances and training workshops.

c) How can children be involved in disseminating information in emergencies?

Information production: Children can assess and approve information being developed for children. Children can be involved in producing information to ensure it is reader-friendly to them. To distribute the written material, children can deliver or hand it out. If children are trained beforehand, they can also highlight and discuss the content of information.

Communicating with other children: Children can make announcements and give talks to other children and young people. Children can simply pass on information, such as the schedule for activities. If trained beforehand, they can also discuss the content and respond to questions. Children can act as a communication channel, passing out information and relaying responses back.

Peer education: Children learn about a subject or an issue and pass the knowledge on to other children, individually or in groups.

Diversity: Children, especially those from marginalized groups, can find excluded and marginalized children and pass on information. Children can act as a communication channel in providing information to other children and gathering their responses. Agencies need to provide information and do so in a way that reaches the local diversity of children, including those who are marginalized. Agencies need to ensure that information provided can also be disseminated. Children learn quickly and can pass on information to adults as well as peers. Children can also gather information very quickly and identify issues and people in need.

d) Where to find more information and materials

Veitch, Helen (Ed.), 2007. *Minimum Standards for Consulting with Children*. Inter-Agency Group on Children's Participation, Bangkok,
http://seap.savethechildren.se/South_East_Asia/Publications/Child-participation/
www.advocatesforyouth.com

Box 32: How to produce children-friendly documents

Establish why the document is relevant to children and try to make sure that this is kept in mind throughout the process: WHY is this particular document being produced for children? And HOW can this be expressed?

Be clear about the age group you are targeting and state this early in the document. Know your target group; it is important to find out about the children and young people who will eventually read the document you are trying to produce. It may be useful to find out: age range, education, language, gender, rural/urban, disability. Read a few children's books for the age group you are writing for; this should help you get into the mindset of that age group.

Ask: What do children need to know about the subject? Ask yourself what is relevant to children reading this and what would they want to know and expect to read about in the children-friendly document.

Use simple language and try to keep the document as short as possible. Use the present tense if possible and keep sentences short. Write as though you are speaking to the child (don't be afraid to use 'you'). Don't use metaphors; some of them are not so obvious, such as 'voicing your views' or 'sign post'. Spell out any abbreviations and don't use e.g. or etc. Explain any jargon, any difficult words or concepts.

Use visual images to support the words. Images should help explain difficult concepts and should be relevant to the issue outlined (or you might end up confusing children with different messages in the visual images to those in the words). You may want to specifically commission photographs, drawings, paintings or cartoons or use other graphics.

Use photographs carefully. Be sure that any people pictured in photographs have given their consent for the photo to be used. Photos should: show children adequately clothed and not in sexually suggestive poses; respect children's dignity and not highlight them as victims; be culturally appropriate.

Protect children's identity: If the children depicted are victims of violence (and not actors), even more care needs to be used to hide the real identity of the children. Use false names for any children shown (state that these are false names). Do not identify their precise location; use general geography only. Use images of children that are in profile, darkened, from the back or that obscure part of the face. If it is a full-faced shot, there should be a thick dark line or dappling across the eyes.

Text should look 'interesting': Use a font size that is at least 12 points; sans serif fonts are generally seen as more children-friendly because they are clearer to read. Break up long sentences or paragraphs with bullet points or numbering. Break up large blocks of text, use headings and subheadings, boxes and illustrations. Highlight key words – use bold, a different colour, italics or a different font. Try not to use too many graphic tricks; for instance, limit the fonts or text colours used to three (except in colour illustrations).

Source: *Minimum Standards and Operations Manual for Consulting with Children, 2007*

7. Consulting with children

a) Which issues should children be consulted on during emergencies?

Planning for reconstruction: Children live in and use the buildings and spaces in communities and neighbourhoods. They can provide information on how children of different ages use those buildings, particularly homes (houses, flats and so on) and schools and other community structures. They may have a more intimate view of the layout of neighbourhoods, villages and towns and any pitfalls. Reconstruction provides opportunities to eradicate past problems and particularly improve child protection and education by ensuring that places and spaces are appropriate for children.

Planning services: Children use services such as health and education. They can be involved in plans to restart education, in the timing and schedule of classes, access to schools and opening of health provision. Children may also plan to take up roles in those areas; for example, older children can teach younger children and those who have been trained in health care and first aid can take on responsibilities.

Agency work: Children should be consulted on the work plans and proposals of relief agencies.

b) How to consult with children?

Diversity: Understanding local diversity is central to consulting with children, which must be done to ensure that all groups are represented, including boys and girls of all ages, disabled children, marginalized groups, children of different ethnicities, children affected by HIV or AIDS and so on.

Presenting children – friendly activities: All consultation methods need to be positioned to appeal to and encourage children to be involved. Taking children seriously is one aspect of a children-friendly approach; the other is making activities fun and including games and play in the schedule. This framing needs to take account of diversity, particularly of age, given the differences in interests and views of a 17-year-old and a 7-year-old.

Children doing surveys and research: To reach a wide group of children and particularly those who are marginalized, children can conduct surveys and research. These approaches have been increasingly adopted around the world because of the benefits to the quality of consultation and research when children identify key concerns and issues, design questions, conduct surveys and analyse and present the findings. There are different levels of children's involvement. In some processes, children are involved throughout in partnership with adults, from selecting issues to disseminating results. In other processes, the children's role might focus on finding and gathering information from other children and using question forms that have been jointly designed with adults.

Workshops: Half-day or day-long workshops with children might involve adults or older children facilitating a series of groups to discuss particular questions, plans and issues.

Focus groups: Shorter meetings with groups of children can be facilitated by adults or older children (or peers) looking at plans, particular ideas or proposals for work.

Forums: Meetings of children coming together to share experiences, ideas and views and then identifying and agreeing on the key points or messages they wish to make can be done in a day or two. Although these might at first be facilitated by adults, increasingly children can manage these events and report to adults afterwards.

Child protection: In all forms of consultation, child protection issues must be considered and planned for. These might involve adults being delegated to be available if required by children running a forum or some other meeting.

c) Where to find more information and materials

Dickens, M., 2004. *Starting with Choice: Inclusive strategies for consulting young children*. London: Save the Children UK, www.savethechildren.org.uk

Dynamix Ltd, 2003. *Participation Spice It Up! Practical Tools for engaging children and young people in planning and consultation*. London: Save the Children, dynamix@seriousfun.demon.co.uk

Save the Children, 2003. *So You Want to Consult with Children: A toolkit of good practice*. London: Save the Children Alliance, http://www.savethechildren.net/alliance/resources/childconsult_toolkit_final.pdf

8. Feedback and complaint mechanisms for children

a) What kinds of feedback and complaint mechanisms do children need in emergencies?

Protection and evaluation: Feedback and complaint mechanisms are an important method of preventing and stopping child abuse and exploitation and for children to gain support. In addition, they may provide opportunity for people to comment on the quality and extent of relief agency work and identify problems and gaps.

Confidentiality and confidence: Children need to raise protection issues in safety to avoid recriminations by abusers or exploiters who often have positions of power over them. In addition, children need to know that action will be taken so that the risks they take when identifying protection issues are mirrored by a response against perpetrators that ensures their safety. They need to have a justified confidence in the process.

Worthwhile: Where children are identifying gaps and problems in services, they need to be satisfied that their efforts in raising issues are worthwhile, that they will be listened to and responsive action will be taken.

Availability and accessibility: Mechanisms need to not only be available but also accessible. If an influential person is charged with receiving responsibility for feedback but is too remote or important for children to feel they can approach him or her, the system will not function.

Box 33: Happy Sad Letter Box

This project was piloted in 68 schools in a district in Sri Lanka after the 2004 tsunami. A large letter box provided a point where children could leave any communication. The initial aim of the project was a means of providing psychosocial support. An evaluation after one year revealed that the project should be continued as a general support tool and not be limited to trauma following the natural disaster. Because of that box idea, specific incidence of child abuse (against several girls and a boy) were identified and dealt with.

Source: FRD, 2006

Box 34: Checklist for setting up a complaints and response system in emergencies³

1. Tell people how to complain and that it is their right to do so:
 - Use staff and notice boards to give information about complaints processes.
 - Be clear about the types of complaints you can and can't deal with.
 - Know your agency's procedures on abuse or exploitation of beneficiaries.
 - Explain details of the appeals process.
2. Make access to the complaints process as easy and safe as possible. Consider:
 - How beneficiaries in remote locations will be able to make complaints.
 - Having both verbal and written complaints.
 - Permitting complaints made on behalf of somebody else (who might be illiterate, frightened, unable to travel or lack the capacity to do it themselves).
3. Describe how complaints will be handled:
 - Develop a standard complaints format.
 - Give the complainant a receipt, preferably a copy of a signed form.
 - Enable an investigation to be tracked and keep statistics on complaints and responses.
 - Keep all documentation confidential, and de-link from the identity of the complainant.
 - Know your agency's procedures for dealing with complaints against staff.
4. Give beneficiaries a response to their complaint:
 - Make sure each complainant receives a response and appropriate action.
 - Be consistent; ensure that similar complaints receive a similar response.
 - Maintain oversight of complaints processes and have an appeals process.
5. Learning from complaints and mistakes:
 - Collect statistics and track any trends.
 - Feed learning into decision making and project activities.

³Based on *Impact Measurement and Accountability In Emergencies, The Good Enough Guide*. Emergency capacity-Building Project. Oxfam Publications 2007, p49-50, http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/resources/downloads/Good_Enough_Guide.pdf

b) How can feedback and complaint mechanisms for children be established?

The mechanisms need to have points or methods for collecting verbal and written communications wherever children are. This requires that collection points be set up in schools, orphanages, neighbourhoods, in or near workplaces and anywhere children gather. These points must be available and accessible but maintain the balance between visibility and confidentiality. Plan's Happy Sad Letter Box project, piloted in Sri Lanka after the 2004 tsunami, used a large box placed in schools in which notes could be dropped.

c) Where to find more information and materials

Dynamix Ltd, 2003. *Participation Spice It Up! Practical tools for engaging children and young people in planning and consultation*. London: Save the Children, dynamix@seriousfun.demon.co.uk

Emergency Capacity Building Project (ECBP), 2007. *The Good Enough Guide – Impact measurement and accountability in emergencies*. Oxford: Oxfam GB, www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/aid/2007/0209goodenough.pdf

Fund for Relief and Development (FRD), 2006. *Final Report: Evaluation of Plan Sri Lanka's Happy Sad Letter Box Project*. FRD: Colombo, Sri Lanka, www.plan-lanka.lk/html/publications_research.htm

McIvor, C. and Myllenen, K., 2005. *Children's Feedback Committees in Zimbabwe: An experiment in humanitarian accountability*. Harare: Save the Children UK, www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0001151/P1270Children_Feedback_Zimbabwe_Jan2005.pdf; <http://www.reliefweb.org> from www.odi.org.uk

Plan Sri Lanka and Fund for Relief and Development, (no date). *Happy Sad Letter Box User's Guide*. Tsunami Disaster Response Programme, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Save the Children, 1995. *Toolkits: A practical guide to assessment, monitoring, review and evaluation*. London: Save the Children, www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/54.htm

9. Working with children's organizations

a) What are children-led organizations?

A variety of formal and informal associations of children exist around the world. These range from groups of unmarried boys/young men and girls/young women in rural Myanmar to organizations such as the Scouts. Most associations are voluntary, although there are countries where compulsory service is required of young people in some civil or quasi-military group.

These associations may be established for community volunteering, children’s development, recreation, sports, special interests and self-help (including unions).

Adults manage many of the children’s organizations, although increasingly, children and young people are taking the lead of them. Some children-led organizations were initially facilitated by adults and may continue to receive material and advocacy support from an NGO but are run and sustained by a turnover of children. These include self-help groups such as children’s unions in India. Other associations of children are time-bound, such as some self-help groups established and run by a few children that may cease to exist after a few years when the children involved become adults and no longer need it.

A simple continuum of children’s organizations might be:

Adult run			Children run
Organizations run by adults for children who are told what to do.	Organizations facilitated by adults, with children involved and consulted.	Children-led organizations, with adult support and consultation.	Children-led and run organizations; adults may provide material support on request, by application.

b) How to find and work with children-led organizations?

Basics

Basic skills in working with children will assist in facilitating groups and liaising with existing associations. Partnership approaches in all areas are fundamental because these organizations can play a large part in all aspects of emergency work.

A liaison officer for children’s organizations should be identified by the agency to:

- Identify and contact existing children’s organizations in the community;
- Work with children’s organizations to delegate roles and responsibilities;
- Ensure that children’s organizations are represented and involved in planning, coordinating and distributing goods during the relief, recovery and rehabilitation stages;
- Look at facilitating children’s groups and organizations in emergency preparedness work.

Partnerships

In seeking partnerships with children’s groups, relief agencies will need to set their aims for the work against the structure and experience of a particular group. For example, if the agency wants to reach marginalized or excluded children for assessment and consultation, then a children’s organization with members from those groups would be a useful partner.

Relief agencies’ work might include:

- Assessment or consultation
- Relief work – distribution or monitoring
- Preparation – identifying hazards, planning roles and responsibilities
- Reaching marginalized groups.

Criteria for agencies to consider when looking for children’s organizations might include:

- Membership: Age, gender and other aspects of diversity; reach of children through them, and which children’s communities are they most knowledgeable about.
- Location: Which children and adults – what communities – do they serve, have information about and can they reach.
- Aims and activities: What they do, who they work with, what expertise they have.
- Capacity: This might be divided into history and potential. History would include the experience of the group in dealing with problems and issues. Potential would include the scope of the group’s reach and how additional support (including training and other capacity building as well as material support, advocacy and networking) would affect the quality of work.

c) Where to find more information and materials

Child Workers in Asia Foundation:

www.cwa.tnet.co.th/cwa-network.html

Concerned for Working Children:

www.workingchild.org

Feinstein, C. and O’Kane, C., 2005. *A Self-Assessment and Planning Tool for Child-Led Initiatives and Organizations*. Vol. 1. Lessons Learnt from the Spider Tool, Vol. 2. The Spider Tool and Vol. 3. The Facilitators Guide to the Spider Tool. London: The Save the Children Alliance, info@savethechildren.org.np

Save the Children, 2004. *From Strength to Strength: Children’s initiatives and organizations in South and Central Asia*. Kathmandu: Save the Children.

10. Emergency preparedness and disaster-risk reduction with children

a) What are emergency preparedness and disaster-risk reduction?

The number of emergencies around the world increased at the end of the twentieth century. There have been corresponding shifts in understanding emergencies; now there is considerable recognition of the effect of human involvement in natural disasters and how disasters have a greater impact on some people because of their greater vulnerability. Awareness of the need for reducing the risk of disasters has increased considerably since the 2004 tsunami and is linked to emergency preparedness. Together, these strategies aim to support and save human lives by reducing or removing hazards that constitute risks and through the planning of roles, responsibilities and action in case a disaster happens.

Emergency preparedness developed largely in places that experience disasters regularly, as in the case of annual flooding in Bangladesh. Preparedness should be integral to any long-term planning in communities for dealing with disasters that affect the lives of every person living there. Children's participation is necessary because they will be affected, and they need to know what to do. Emergency preparedness is spreading beyond places where disasters occur regularly because of the general increased frequency of disasters around the world.

Disaster-risk reduction involves identifying local hazards that may be the cause of disasters and taking action to mitigate the impact and effect of possible disasters. Reducing the risk may involve changing environmental management practices, such as agricultural or husbandry techniques. The campaign Disaster-Risk Reduction Begins at School, launched by the UN Interagency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, highlights the importance of children's and young people's participation.

b) How can children be involved in emergency preparedness and disaster-risk reduction?

Because these phases of mitigation and preparation are longer term, there is more time and scope for involving children. Because they grow into adults, their participation contributes to long-term viability of the community.

Children's organizations and schools

For emergency preparedness and disaster-risk reduction, children can be most easily reached through schools and children's organizations (including those run by children and those organized by adults for children). In these settings they can:

- Learn about emergencies and what happens in a disaster;
- Identify local hazards and what might be done to reduce risks;
- Take action to reduce risks;
- Learn first aid and health care;
- Learn about protection;
- Plan what to do in case of an emergency;
- Participate in local community planning and preparation for emergency;
- Identify roles and responsibilities they will take;
- Develop communication networks among children.

Box 35: El Salvador: Children and youth at the centre of disaster-risk reduction

Children represent more than a third of disaster victims, yet the humanitarian sector generally restricts their role in disasters to that of passive victims. Involving children directly in disaster-risk reduction activities enables them to develop skills to be prepared for any threat. The emphasis on rights-based approaches to humanitarian work brings forward the right of children and youth to be protected from hazards and vulnerabilities through their participation in disaster-related decisions and efforts. For example, Plan International has mobilized children and youth in El Salvador to play a significant role in environmental resources management and disaster-risk reduction. The children and youth have worked with their communities in developing risk maps, designing community emergency plans, setting up early warning systems and implementing response, mitigation and risk-reduction plans, among other activities. Plan International's experience in El Salvador has already been replicated in other Central American countries.

Source: ISDR, 2007a

By being involved in learning about disasters, risks and preparation, children can also come up with solutions and ideas of their own. They may put these into practice themselves or present them to local agencies or governments.

Preparation work through schools is particularly developed in countries in South America, making use of manuals for education along with children's involvement in risk assessments. Children's involvement in preparedness efforts can also develop roles of groups traditionally having less power, such as girls. In Egypt, emergency management is integrated into a partnership between women's health and environment management. Through this integration, girls are trained as 'environmental promoters' and given knowledge and skills in environmental health.

Environmental work: Children can be involved in environmental projects, particularly through local children's organizations, to learn about disasters and their management, get involved in reducing risk by taking environmental action and participate in emergency planning and preparation. Mitigation work carried out by some agencies has included working with children on environmental sustainability. Children have been involved in environmental projects to learn about hazards and emergencies and their management. Children's work on a variety of projects around the world that focus on the local environment contributes to disaster-risk reduction. Projects include monitoring water quality, recycling and community gardening, which are important because many emergencies are caused in part by bad land-use practice and location decisions. (Wisner, 2006: 25) After the 2004 tsunami calamity, children in one Thai village decided on their own to replant mangroves along the coastline to act as a barrier to large waves.

c) Where to find more information and materials

Hernandez H, V.I., Zavada, V.S., and de Rosa, A.S. n.d. *Manual on Disaster Prevention and Response for Children and Adolescents*. Nicaragua: Save the Children Sweden, Civil Defence Department, Nicaraguan Federation of NGOs working with Children and Adolescents, CODEM.

International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), 2007a. "El Salvador: Children and Youth at the Centre of Disaster-risk reduction" pp 12-16 in *Building Disaster Resilient Communities: Good practices and lessons learned*. Geneva: ISDR and UNDP, www.unisdr.org/eng/about_isdr/isdr-publications/06-ngos-good-practices/ngos-good-practices.pdf

International Strategy for Disaster Reduction website:
www.unisdr.org

ISDR, 2007b. "Kyrgyzstan: Rural School 'Disaster Teams' to Boost Preparedness" pp 33-35 in *Building Disaster Resilient Communities: Good practices and lessons learned*. Geneva: ISDR and UNDP, www.unisdr.org/eng/about_isdr/isdr-publications/06-ngos-good-practices/ngos-good-practices.pdf

Wisner, B., 2006. *Let Our Children Teach Us: A review of the role of education and knowledge in disaster risk reduction*.
www.unisdr.org/knowledge-education

Bangalore: Books for Change,
www.booksforchange.net

11. Standards to protect children who participate

a) Which standards have to be followed when working with children?

Humanitarian principles and standards: The general principles and standards developed by humanitarian agencies are designed for the population experiencing disasters, and these apply to children. Although children may not be explicitly mentioned, this does not mean they are excluded. While specific sectors of the population are usually not highlighted, this does not mean that they are not to be covered by these standards. For example, where particular groups such as women or children or older people are mentioned, or where specific standards have been developed, this is because those sectors are frequently ignored and left out of consideration. They are more vulnerable because of local power structures and discrimination and need specific standards applied until those structures and cultures change. But the standards still apply to men, although they are not mentioned. In addition to the basic general standards and agreed guidance for other areas of work developed by particular agencies, there are standards proposed for information work. General standards and principles are included in *The Sphere Project's Humanitarian Charter*, the ICRC's *Code of Conduct, Do No Harm*, *IASC Operational Guidelines on Human Rights in Natural Disasters* and the *Good Enough Guide*.

Specific standards for children: Three areas where particular standards for children have been or are being developed are child protection, children's participation and education.

Protection: There are multi-agency standards for child protection that aim to cover both emergency and non-emergency situations by requiring organizations to develop child-protection policies and procedures. For example, the Draft UN Guidelines for the Appropriate Use and Conditions of Alternative Care were published in June 2007.

Participation: Participation is a main element of the major principles and standards agreed upon by humanitarian and relief agencies for humanitarian action in emergencies. Agency staff will have an understanding of these standards as the basis of their work and will need to consider how to include children. There are specific standards for children's participation that are widely used and that have been the basis for the development of more detailed standards for aspects of participation, such as children's involvement in consultations.

Education: Recognition of the importance of education in emergencies for providing routine psychosocial support and protection has led to the development of standards for education in emergencies.

Box 36: Standards for children's participation

1) An ethical approach – transparency, honesty and accountability: Adult groups, organizations and workers are committed to ethical participatory practice and to the primacy of children's best interests.

2) Children's participation is relevant and voluntary: Children participate in processes and address issues that affect them and have the choice as to whether to participate or not.

3) A children-friendly, enabling environment: A safe, welcoming and encouraging environment is established for children's participation.

4) Equality of opportunity: Child participation work encourages those groups of children who typically suffer discrimination and who are often excluded from activities to be involved in participatory processes.

5) Staff are effective and confident: Adult staff and managers involved in supporting/facilitating children's participation are trained and supported to do their jobs to a high standard.

6) Participation promotes the safety and protection of children: Child-protection policies are essential for participatory work.

7) Ensuring follow up and evaluation: Providing feedback and evaluating the quality/impact of children's participation is essential.

Source: Save the Children, 2005

b) How can standards be applied and used?

Many of the standards provide guidance. Each agency should have a child-protection policy and clear procedural guidelines. Interagency agreements mean that a common set of procedures with identified staff for reporting and intervention can be set up. Protection and participation go hand in hand.

Participation standards for children and young people: Applying participation standards involves having trained, competent staff available who are allocated responsibility and time to develop children's participation. The work needs to be monitored and measured. Children's participation should be evaluated when relief agencies finish their work and withdraw or at the end phases.

Checklist for participation ethics and standards:

- Are child protection policies and procedures in place?
- Are agency staff aware of child protection policies and procedures?
- Which staff have been trained in child protection issues?
- Who is responsible for ensuring child protection?
- Who responds to child protection issues and concerns?
- Which children have been consulted and involved in child protection planning?
- Are agency staff aware of standards for children's participation?
- Which staff have been trained in children's participation and working with them?
- Who is monitoring children's participation?

- Who is checking diversity and ensuring all groups of local children and young people are involved?
- Who is responsible for facilitating children's participation?
- Who is responsible for taking a lead in responding to children's issues, views and opinions?

c) Where to find more information and materials

Article 19, 2005. *Humanitarian Disasters and Information Rights: Legal and ethical standards on freedom of expression in the context of disaster response*. London: Article XIX, www.article19.org/pdfs/publications/freedom-of-information-humanitarian-disasters.pdf

Delaney, S., 2006. *Protecting Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Violence in Disasters and Emergency Situations: A guide for local and community-based organizations*. Bangkok: ECPAT, [www.ecpat.net/eng/pdf/Protecting children from CSEC in Disasters.pdf](http://www.ecpat.net/eng/pdf/Protecting_children_from_CSEC_in_Disasters.pdf)

Delap, E., Kasozi, F. and Onoisa, D., 2006. *Protecting Children During Emergencies in Nigeria: A kit for trainers*. Kaduna, Save the Children, www.europeanchildrensnetwork.org/BCN/results.asp?keywords=suggested - 9k

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12. Measuring and monitoring children's participation

a) What should be monitored and measured?

The different areas and aspects of relief agency work where children's participation should be monitored and measured are linked. For example, protection and diversity would be a part of every area – not just standing alone.

Diversity: Which children and which children's associations are involved in partnership with relief agencies? Are girls and boys of all ages included? Are disabled children and children of different local ethnic groups involved? Some understanding of local childhood diversity is necessary to know the range of children who should participate.

Time: Measuring participation in emergencies needs to take account of different phases, levels of participation, which children can be and are involved and the relief or other agencies concerned. Children can participate throughout all emergency phases, so their involvement must be beyond a one-off project or event. Are structures for participation being established that will continue?

Different aspects of relief and recovery: Are children and children's associations involved in different aspects of relief and recovery work? How is this done and to what extent are they participating? The areas include relief efforts, protection, health care, education, planning for agency work, planning for reconstruction, building design, feedback and complaint mechanisms.

b) How can children’s participation be monitored and measured?

Basic information for measuring children’s participation will include information from all the previous sections; for example:

- Are children involved in assessment teams – which children?
- Have children been consulted – which children?
- Are children and young people recruited as volunteers – which children and young people?
- What roles have been allocated to children?
- What training has been provided to children?
- Who is responsible for facilitating children’s participation?
- Are standards for child protection in place?
- Are staff trained in child protection?
- Are staff trained in working with children and young people and their participation?

Record keeping: A key element in monitoring and measuring children’s participation is keeping records of activities. Children can be involved in this task.

Benchmarking: Monitoring and measuring children’s participation requires knowing what should be in place to enable children to be involved and taking account of the different forms and levels of participation. For each area of work and activity, a simple four-level continuum can be deployed to express the differences:

Children not involved			Children fully involved
Adults make decisions and take action and tell children what to do.	Adults take the lead in deciding what to do but inform children and involve children in action.	Children contribute to or lead in setting the agenda and are involved in action.	Children take the lead in deciding what is to be done, what roles they will take and what others need to do.

This simple continuum needs to be checked against the diversity of children – which children are involved in each case. Checklists such as the following should be used:

Checklist for monitoring children’s participation

- Are standards, policy and guidelines for child protection in place?
- Who is responsible for monitoring and implementing child protection?
- Are standards, policy and guidelines for children’s participation in place?
- Who is responsible for monitoring children’s participation?
- What are children doing and contributing?
- Which children are involved?
- Which children are not involved?
- What roles and responsibilities have been allocated to children and young people?
- How are children and young people:
 - Sharing power and responsibilities for decision making?
 - Involved in decision-making processes?
- Who is supporting children in expressing their views?
- When, who and how are children being listened to?
- Who is responsible for and how are children’s views taken into account?
- Who keeps records of consultations with children?

Where agencies manage emergency response using a framework of phases, then each phase should have the checklist. Where work is divided into different sectors, then each sector would need a checklist.

Agency checklist

- Have staff been trained in child protection – which staff?
- Have staff been trained in children’s participation – which staff?
- Are standards, policy and guidelines for child protection in place?
- Are standards, policy and guidelines for children’s participation in place?
- Who is responsible for monitoring and implementing child protection?
- Who is responsible for monitoring children’s and young people’s participation?
- Are these provisions included in policy and guidelines; when will these activities be done, and who will take the lead?
 - How will children share power and responsibilities for decision making?
 - How will children be involved in decision-making processes?
 - How will children’s views be taken into account?
 - How will children be supported in expressing their views?
 - How will children be listened to?
- Are there records of consultations with children and have the consultations influenced decision making?

Box 37: Children’s Parliament takes up issues for the community and children

The Children’s Parliament in Tamil Nadu, India provides an example of an organization known for its work and respected locally. This provided a basis for children’s trust in Rosy Vergen when she took 20 children to safety during the 2004 tsunami calamity. The Children’s Parliament also provided the organizational base for recreational activities and cleaning up in the relief period.

Rosy explained that before the tsunami the parliamentarians were respected because of their work on improving the safety and well-being of communities. “In our place, there are many adults who can’t read or write and we’re teaching them. To eliminate evil practices like dowry, we have prepared awareness songs and street plays.” Rosy and some parliament members once went back and forth between a father and a brick maker to rescue a girl sent to work. The father had taken his daughter out of school to work for the brick maker in order to pay off a debt. Rosy and her fellow parliamentarians eventually got the girl back into school.

Being in the parliament, said Rosy, has taught them to be resourceful. “Even if there are no jobs available, we can do something for ourselves, such as making detergent to sell. We can do it large scale. We know how to approach government authorities and ask for things.” It has also given them authority. After a man was killed in a car accident in front of their school, the young parliamentarians wrote a letter to the local government asking for speed bumps. They were installed a week later. Another time, the parliamentarians petitioned for street lighting, and six weeks later their nights were brightened with lights throughout the community. “What others can’t do, we can do,” said Rosy, “In my opinion, the whole world must have Children’s Parliaments. We get a lot of self-confidence that we can do wonderful things.” (KE)

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13. Dealing with the challenges and obstacles

[Adapted from Lansdown, 2001]

Overcoming obstacles and objections

Many objections and obstacles are raised to children's participation in emergencies. The objectors do not know or take account of the benefits of participation, and objections are usually founded on views that children are dependent and incapable. Obstacles derive from perceived external barriers, such as time available and the ability of adults to facilitate and respond to children.

Objections

"Children lack competence." Children have demonstrated their competence in all phases of emergency work and at other times. Many children and young people generally act as carers for their family – including parents and siblings – all over the world. They make important decisions about their households. Many children and young people work to support their families. The perception of children's competence is linked to the social context and culture and especially to how much they are permitted to make decisions and take action and how much notice (consultation) is taken of them. Children's competence varies individually (just as it does among adults) and varies in accordance with different aspects of their lives. Very small children can participate, especially with support, as illustrated by the example of 5- to 10-year-olds in an Afghan refugee camp.

“Children should learn responsibilities first.” Participation is an effective means for children to take, accept, learn and understand responsibility. Participation is not the opposite of responsibility but a fundamental part of it. Listening to children and taking them seriously is an important aspect of giving responsibility and creating an environment of learning to respect and understand others. Children making decisions and taking action together develops accountability to each other. Learning responsibilities as children and as young people helps prepare them for adulthood; many adults have not had experiences in childhood that prepared them for adult forms of citizenship.

“Children’s participation is too complicated and too expensive.” Above all, facilitating and developing children’s participation requires openness on the part of relief agencies. It does also require competence on behalf of the adults and organizations involved – but so, too, do the processes of providing food, accommodation and health care in emergencies and other settings. It is only because children’s participation is considered an ‘optional extra’ that limitations and prohibitions based on complexity and cost arise. The reality is that participation benefits children, families and communities, therefore suggesting that it is an ‘optional extra’ or an additional burden is unhelpful, unrealistic and not properly responding to children’s circumstances, protection and development, especially in emergencies.

“Children will lose their childhood and not respect parents.” Participation is a voluntary process and should not be burdensome. The notion of children ‘losing their childhood’ rests on a perception of children as being entirely dependent. But children make decisions and take action every day; for example, in their communications and relationships with family, peers, schoolteachers and other adults in their community. Some children who are carers for parents or who are working make life-surviving decisions every day – and not only for themselves. The processes of participation only enhance and improve the quality and capabilities of what is already there.

“Participation is not part of ‘traditional’ culture.” Although children’s participation is not part of most traditional cultures, they are spontaneously taking action in emergencies. Just as tradition does not justify continuing harmful practices, it also changes in response to new standards of behaviour. Societies, cultures and environments are not static but dynamic; they change over time. Changes in the position of women in many societies have demonstrated shifts in values, beliefs and practice, for example, with greater recognition of women’s rights to protection from domestic violence. Children’s rights to protection are also increasingly recognized.

“There is no time to develop children’s participation in emergencies.” The supposed obstacle of ‘no time’ is really an objection and may be linked to the idea of participation not being part of local ‘tradition’ – that is, children’s participation is not part of the ‘relief’ tradition. Many children are participating during emergencies and in the immediate relief stage. As the need for urgency diminishes and more time is available in later stages, there is even more time for children’s participation to be planned for and taken up.

“Children’s participation puts them at risk.” In general, children’s participation serves to enhance their protection by gaining a better understanding of their circumstances, by enabling environments in which they can speak out about problems and because participation promotes resilience. There are occasions, perhaps media events and public conferences, where children’s best interests are not served through them speaking out or being identified because of later repercussions. But participation that is not in children’s best interests is not what is meant by participation. Hence, the development and use of practice standards to ensure participation processes are in children’s best interests, that they are protected and that they are not manipulated.

Obstacles

Lack of competence of adults. A major obstacle is the lack of competence – skills, knowledge and values – of many adults in working with children. Adult attitudes, in particular disbelief in children’s abilities and potential, act as a major obstacle to their participation. In addition, adults may be unsure of what to do and how to work with children. These problems can be overcome by recruiting appropriate staff or by training staff who will be involved in emergencies beforehand. But it has also been overcome by agencies taking on older children to work with their peers and younger children.

Agency structures work against participation of children. The work of agencies can be an obstacle to children’s participation. A number of relief agencies, local and international NGOs and government departments may divide up responsibilities. Even within larger agencies, work may be divided into sectors. This compartmentalization too easily works against participation of the community in general and particularly against marginalized or less powerful groups. Children may be seen as the responsibility of a particular agency that has divided its work into sectors, and so children’s participation becomes excluded. Older children are unlikely to be the prerogative of a particular agency and so their needs and rights are also less likely to be considered and their participation also excluded. The compartmentalization into sectors and areas of responsibility means that the participation of children needs to be prioritized if their circumstances are to be understood and addressed. One elementary obstacle is that children will not speak up if they are not listened to.

These problems can be overcome with a will to take action and follow up on the action. Agencies need to know and understand the benefits of participation for children, families and communities and disseminate this to their staff and partners. Agencies need to include children as active participants in relief and recovery efforts and in planning for emergencies. These changes would usually be in line with the aims of an agency in being an effective relief and recovery organization. Children cannot be separated out from the community, nor their actions, needs and rights ignored on the basis that local adults can take care of them. Children are a part of the community, and their participation will just as much benefit adults.

Children and young people are not representative; some become ‘professionalized’ speakers; there is no sustainability. These obstacles are often connected. There are dangers of some children becoming repeatedly chosen and used by organizations as speakers. This can be linked to issues of ‘sustaining’ participation because only a small or select group of children are continually involved. These are not difficult problems to overcome but require conscious attention to the renewal and the involvement of broader and diverse groups of children. The problems are frequently due to adults and their failure to engage with renewal issues and their reliance on some articulate children and thus restricting opportunities for others.

Problems of representation affect adult events but are not questioned in the same way nor used as a reason for there not to be participation. As with many adult ‘representatives’, children can often only speak from their own experiences. The problem can be overcome through transparency and ensuring children have legitimacy through their experiences and through open selection by others and where it is clear whose views are being raised. Particular attention needs to be given to diversity and ensuring that the most vulnerable and marginalized are involved and their views and ideas made known. It is important to think beyond child and youth ‘leaders’ and to involve others.

The focus on a few children as speakers or leaders creates more problems that make sustainability harder. Because children grow up into adults, others need to take their place. Without attention to processes of renewal, 'participation projects' will cease. The key to overcoming the problem is through an enabling environment that is genuine, inclusive, respectful, listening to and taking children seriously.

Participation is not only about speaking and representation at meetings and conferences. Consultations can take place through other forms of assessment and research.

Children can be manipulated by adults. Adults may control the processes of participation and manipulate children through poor quality and unethical processes to achieve outcomes for themselves. Such manipulation is, of course, not participation. It may superficially appear to be participation, but this is because there needs to be greater experience and critical understanding of participation definitions, processes and outcomes. The involvement of children does mean they should develop some skills and eventually challenge adult domination. Attention to standards for participation, transparency within and among agencies and processes of accountability work against manipulation. The greater problem is power and that manipulation is to be guarded against in all settings, including participation of adults.

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CRF, Directory of Children and Youth-Led Organizations in Cambodia, Child Rights Foundation, Children and Young People's Movement for Child Rights and Save the Children Sweden, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 2005.

This is a directory of nearly 100 organizations and associations led by children and young people in Cambodia. This list is limited to organizations with a clear structure, continuous programmes and contact addresses.

crf2002@online.com.kh

CRIN: Directory of child rights organizations

www.crin.org/organizations/index.asp?type=CRIN+Members

Organizations

Child Workers in Asia Foundation:

www.cwa.tnet.co.th/cwa-network.html

CWA is a network of nearly 100 NGOs working on child labour issues in Asia. The website has information on its Task Forces on Children's Participation in South and Southeast Asia.

Child Participation In South Asia:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ChildParticipationInSouthAsia/>

This listserv has more than 1,000 subscribers from around the world and is a useful forum for disseminating materials, posting messages and questions and for organizing discussions on children's participation.

Christian Children's Fund (Child Fund):

<http://www.christianchildrensfund.org/content.aspx?id=208>

Concerned for Working Children:

www.workingchild.org/

CWC is a south India-based NGO advocating for the rights of working children. The website includes information on CWC's publications and projects, including Dhruva, CWC's training unit on children's participation.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies:

<http://www.ifrc.org/youth/index.asp>

Plan International:

www.plan-international.org/action/participation/

This section gives an overview of children's involvement in Plan's programmes and provides a list of relevant publications. Many country-level examples of children's participation are listed under child-centred community development, education, water and sanitation and specific country programmes.

Save the Children Regional Alliance Information Databank (South Asia):
www.savechildren-alliance.org.np/

Save the Children South East Asia and Pacific Region:
www.seapa.net/home/home.htm

World Vision International:
www.worldvision.org/

The publication section in this website offers magazines, reports and books on child rights and children's participation and links to World Vision's country programmes.

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