Foundations

Separated Children

CONTENTS

Separated Children

Introduction

Facilitators who have not recently trained or worked in the area covered by this Resource Pack, should read carefully through the various Topics, Overheads, Exercises, and Handouts before starting to plan their training activity. Please note that these materials aim to stimulate learning and discussion, and should be used in conjunction with stated policy (they do not replace it).

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE PACK

This resource pack refers extensively to the Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children, published in 2004. The Guiding Principles provide a framework for all organisations working with or on behalf of separated children. They seek to ensure that all actions and decisions taken concerning separated children are anchored in a protection framework and respect the principles of family unity and the best interests of the child.

This resource pack aims to develop discussion and learning based around these principles. It is directed at field, co-ordination and senior management level staff who need to have an understanding of the broad range of issues to do with separated children. It is not intended for more specialist staff who are directly involved in the care and family tracing of separated children: more detailed training material is available in Save the Children UK's Training Manual on Separated Children, and more specialised information on specific issues can be found in Save the Children UK's Field Guide.

It is vital that staff at all levels have a broad awareness of the issues facing separated children, and in particular, the prevention of separation, identification, broad knowledge of care arrangements and family tracing issues, as well as the need for inter-agency co-operation. It is also important that all staff be aware of the complexity of the systems required for family tracing, and of the difficulties involved in assessing situations and reaching decisions in difficult cases.

It is particularly important to note that some of the key messages in this resource pack will be found to be counter-intuitive for some people: for example, the disadvantages and potential dangers of institutional forms of care, and the dangers of evacuating children from war zones.

OVERVIEW

In almost all cases the family provides the best environment in which the child's basic developmental needs can be met. In addition to providing care and protection, it is where children learn how to behave with other people: where they

learn about their family history, and the language, culture, and customs of their community.

Separation from family is a devastating event for any child, and for those who are too young or for some other reason unable to give information about themselves or their family, the separation may become permanent.

In situations of armed conflict or other disasters the very survival of unaccompanied and separated children may be threatened. In addition, these children are most likely to have their basic rights violated and to risk abuse, exploitation or recruitment into armed forces.

Experience has shown that preserving family unity helps to minimise the effects of catastrophic events on children. However, separations do occur, particularly in situations with large population displacements, and it is therefore essential that activities to limit separations, as well as to identify children who have been separated, are in place and functioning as quickly as possible. The sooner that separated children are identified the greater will be the chance of successful family reunification.

The nature of prevention and identification activities will depend on a careful analysis of the situation, including the type of displacement that the population are experiencing. It is also necessary to understand some of the reasons why children may become separated in the first place, remembering that separations can be 'deliberate', as well as 'accidental'.

Once identified, separated children will need to be assured appropriate care arrangements (that will be reviewed on a regular basis), and the complex process of family tracing will begin. This process can often be long and organisations that do not have the capacity for a long-term commitment to a situation should not intervene in child protection work in emergencies.

KEY CONCEPTS

The following are the key concepts which are addressed in this resource pack.

1. Separation is a devastating experience for children and can have serious long-term consequences for the child's well-being.

2. All work with separated children should be in keeping with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and other international, regional and national instruments.

3. The importance of careful and co-ordinated planning in developing programmes on behalf of separated children cannot be over-estimated. This includes ensuring that any activities do not in themselves lead to further separations, albeit inadvertently.

4. High priority needs to be given, in all stages of any emergency, to strategies for the prevention of separation and the identification of children who have become separated.

5. Care arrangements for separated children should, wherever possible, be based on family and community responsibilities for children. Institutional forms of care should be avoided wherever possible, but the risks involved in foster programmes also have to be acknowledged.

6. Family tracing and reunification programmes need to be developed for separated children; these are complex and specialised programmes requiring knowledgeable and well-trained staff in order to provide a high quality service for highly vulnerable children.

7. A careful assessment of each individual situation is required to determine the nature, intensity and duration of support and monitoring activities.

8. Children in an emergency context are not available for adoption.

These key concepts are presented in **Overhead 1.0**.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC)

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) contains a number of articles that are of particular relevance for separated children. By ratifying the CRC governments undertake to put in place systems to protect children and to provide alternative care when children are separated from parents or caregivers. Furthermore, under **Article 2**, they are under an obligation to provide the same standards of care for all children within their jurisdiction; under **Article 3**, the "best interests" of the child must be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children; and under **Article 12**, children must be able to express a view on matters relevant to them. More specific provisions include **Article 22** that sets out the rights of a child who seeks refugee status or is considered a refugee, accompanied or unaccompanied, to receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance (refer also to Handout 2.1).

STRUCTURE OF THE RESOURCE PACK

The material in this resource pack is wide-ranging and designed so that those working with the resource pack can select sections appropriate to their needs.

Topic 1 examines some introductory concepts including definitions, the impact of separation on children, and the provision of protection and care in an emergency context.

Topic 2 introduces the Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children, including the Protection Framework and various principles that should inform any work with separated children.

Topic 3 looks at how children become separated; how to prevent separation; and cautions about the use of evacuation.

Topic 4 provides guidance on emergency assessments, including locating and identifying separated children.

Topic 5 covers issues around planning care arrangements for separated children, and looks specifically at agency fostering programmes and the negative aspects of institutional care for separated children.

Topic 6 details the six steps involved in family tracing and reunification - identification, documentation, tracing, verification, reunification and follow-up.

Topic 7 focuses on the importance of on-going monitoring activities, and looks specifically at the provision of material and psycho-social support.

Topic 8 briefly examines the issue of adoption in an emergency context.

Participatory exercises, overheads and handouts are provided. Facilitators are strongly recommended to develop regionally or country-specific materials, such as case studies, in order to make the training even more relevant.

Reference can also be made to the Separated Children in Europe Programme Training Guide (2001), included in the Reference Materials section of the ARC CD-Rom. The Training Guide was developed as a comprehensive introduction to the Separated Children in Europe Programme Statement of Good Practice, and designed to encourage and enable officials and professionals to examine the implications of the Statement of Good Practice for their roles and responsibilities within a workshop setting. The Training Guide provides extensive materials that will be of particular interest to those dealing with issues affecting asylum seeking children.

TERMINOLOGY

The following section describes how different terms are used in this Resource Pack. Facilitators should ensure that these terms are all clearly understood during training programmes.

Carer refers to the person exercising day to day care of a child or children, whether parent, relative, family friend or some other person. This might include foster parents, either taking in the child spontaneously or more formally through some kind of fostering scheme.

Orphan is a term that is used to mean different things in different languages and cultures: for example, in some cultures it implies the loss of mother, father, or both. In other contexts, it is used to describe the current living situation of a child rather than the status of the parents. For example, a child living on the streets may be seen as an orphan even though both parents are alive, while a child who has lost both parents and is living happily within the extended family might not be described as an orphan.

In many contexts the term "orphan" may carry very negative connotations.

Separated Child and Unaccompanied Child - definitions of these terms appear in Topic 1.

Fostering is open to various definitions. In this Resource Pack it is used to describe children who are living with *unrelated* carers. A useful distinction is to be made between **spontaneous, informal or unorganised** fostering which results from the initiatives taken by people themselves, and **agency, formal or organised** fostering which results from the work of an outside agency.

Care or Interim Care is used to describe care arrangements for separated children which are intended to be temporary, pending the return of the child to his or her own family. However, the term "interim" can be misleading in situations in which family tracing is unsuccessful, necessitating longer-term substitute care.

Psycho-social support comprises a wide range of strategies for responding to the psychological, emotional, social and spiritual needs of children and adults, especially those facing difficulties such as loss, separation or distressing events. It needs to be based on a clear understanding of the culture and should not assume that western approaches (e.g. counselling) are always appropriate.

Family Tracing and Re-unification is a complex process (described in detail in Topic 6) involving the identification of separated children, documentation, tracing, verification, reunification and follow-up. The term "tracing" is often used to cover the whole process: the acronym IDTR, or even IDTVRF, is also sometimes used.

The term "reunification" needs to be used with care as it can be misleading. Family tracing usually involves attempts to trace the child's own parents or, failing that, other members of the extended family. In the latter case it would be more precise to refer to "extended family placement" as the family may not be one with whom the child has lived before.

Note: The term **separated or unaccompanied "minor"** is not used in this Resource Pack because of its connotations with inferiority or lesser importance.

Separated Children
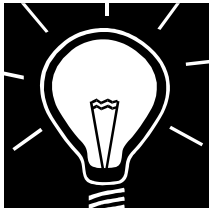
Topic 1
Introductory Concepts

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- *There is an important distinction to be made between unaccompanied children and separated children.*

- *Separation can have a far-reaching impact on children's development.*

- *Priority activities in emergencies are the prevention of separation and early identification of children who may have become separated.*

- *Wherever possible, care arrangements should be provided in a family/community based setting.*

Children separated from their parents and families because of conflict, population displacement or natural disasters are among the most vulnerable. Separated from those closest to them, these children have lost the care and protection of their families in the turmoil, just when they most need them. They face abuse and exploitation, and even their very survival may be threatened. They may assume adult responsibilities, such as protecting and caring for younger sisters and brothers. Children and adolescents who have lost all that is familiar – home, family, friends, stability – are potent symbols of the dramatic impact of humanitarian crises on individual lives.

The breakdown of social structures and services accompanying major crises means that communities and States themselves may not be in a position to provide the necessary protection and care for children without families. It is therefore imperative that humanitarian organisations ensure that the most vulnerable children are protected.

Source: Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children (2004).

Experience has shown that preserving family unity helps to minimise the effects of catastrophic events on children. However separations do occur, particularly in situations with large population displacements, and it is therefore essential that activities to limit separations, as well as identify children who have been separated, are in place and functioning as quickly as possible. The sooner that separated children are identified, the greater will be the chance of successful reunification with their family.

UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED CHILDREN

It is important that terminology is clearly understood as there is an important distinction to be made between "separated children" and "unaccompanied children". When an armed conflict or other disaster occurs, many children become separated from their parents or other care-givers. However, even in emergency situations, relatively few children are found to be totally alone (truly "unaccompanied"), even though many have been separated from their parents or usual caregivers. Many may be living with, or accompanied by, extended family members, friends, neighbours, or other adults, and are therefore classed as "separated".

Separated children are those separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary care-giver, but not necessarily from other relatives. These may, therefore, include children accompanied by other adult family members.

Unaccompanied children are children who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so.

Orphans are children, both of whose parents are known to be dead. In some countries, however, a child who has lost one parent is called an orphan.

Source: Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children (2004).

The family is defined in some places by the child's immediate relatives: parents, brothers and sisters. In other places there may be a far wider extended family including grandparents, aunts and uncles and more distant relations within a clan, village or community. Ways of caring for children vary, but generally all societies recognise that the best place for a child to be is with his or her family.

THE IMPACT OF SEPARATION ON CHILDREN

Children are more susceptible to illness and injury than adults, but separated children also lack the physical protection, and psychological and emotional support they need. Without such support, there is a great danger that their full development will be disrupted or impeded.

In the short term, they can be overwhelmed by the practicalities of fleeing their homes, arriving in an unfamiliar location, exhausted from the journey, and suffering the shock of dislocation from their family and environment. They may also be arriving into an alien culture, where they are unable to speak the language or to express their views. In the period following arrival, they are often faced with probing interviews about their backgrounds, identities and motives from officials who lack any understanding of their culture or circumstances. They may be subjected to fingerprinting or invasive medical examinations to establish their ages. They may be detained in ''waiting zones'', in reception centres, or even in prisons.

Separation does not occur in isolation from other events: a separated child may also have witnessed frightening and possibly violent events, and may have

experienced loss on a huge scale - loss of parents and family, of home, relatives, friends, school and the security that comes from a familiar environment. In situations of armed conflict or other disasters the very survival of unaccompanied and separated children may be threatened.

And for those children who are too young or for some other reason unable to give information about themselves or their family, the separation may become permanent.

SEPARATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Separation can have a profound effect on the developing child, both in the short term and in the long term. The impact will vary depending on the child's age, level of intellectual development, emotional maturity and the nature and duration of the separation. There will also be significant cultural variations, reflecting the very different patterns of child care, and in particular the different ways in which children become attached to parents, older siblings, relatives etc. Research evidence suggests that the period from about 4/6 months to 2/3 years is particularly important for the formation of bonds and the development of attachment behaviour, and that separation during this period may result in the greatest distress reaction.

The adverse effects of separation are likely to be limited if the child is looked after by caring adults who provide a level of affection, care and stimulation appropriate to his or her age, stage of development and particular needs. An adequate level of care is rarely available in residential centres or institutions.

It should also be noted that young children may have a very limited sense of time: this may mean that a separated child will have no concept of "interim" care of a few days, weeks or months: even a period of two weeks may feel like an eternity to a young child.

N.B. The ARC Resource Pack on **Child and Adolescent Development** provides additional information on the effects of separation on children.

PROTECTION AND CARE IN AN EMERGENCY CONTEXT

Having identified the effects of separation, and acknowledging the need for prioritised action on behalf of separated children, it is important to recognise that the circumstances of an emergency may pose some particular constraints and difficulties to providing for their care and protection.

- Priority decisions may have to be made when working simultaneously on prevention, immediate support and family tracing activities.

- A balance needs to be found between being sensitive and alert in identifying separated children, and avoiding the danger of taking actions which may encourage separations. Examples of the latter include separating children from the crowd or documenting them before ascertaining that they have been separated, or setting up high-visibility responses which encourage child abandonment.

- As a general rule, families taking care of a separated child during a population movement should be encouraged to continue to do so provided that both

parties are happy with the arrangement and if there are no immediate concerns about the child's well-being.

- If immediate documentation is not possible, families should be advised whom to contact when they reach their destination - e.g. Red Cross, UNHCR, NGOs or local authorities.

- Whether children are in spontaneous care arrangements or formal placements, periodic monitoring and review of the child's placement will be required, but could prove difficult in fluid or insecure situations.

- The longer the separation, the lesser the chance of ultimate reunification. However, the need for protecting separated children should always be the first consideration. The whole process of documentation, tracing, preparation, reunification and follow-up should be undertaken as thoroughly as the circumstances permit.

- Other priority decisions may have to be made e.g. to concentrate on younger children on the basis that older children have a better chance of coping on their own, or focussing on truly unaccompanied children ahead of separated children who are accompanied by adults.

- In regions in which several neighbouring countries are facing conflict, it is possible that children can experience repeated displacement and/or separations. This can have an especially serious impact on children as well as requiring a regional strategy and careful inter-agency collaboration and co-ordination. This issue is explored in Exercise 1.3.

- Organisations that do not have the capacity for a long term commitment should not intervene in child protection work in emergencies, and for those that do they should include an exit strategy so they can be working towards this in their planning.

SEPARATED CHILDREN WITHOUT ADDRESS

With some children it is difficult to obtain enough information to start tracing their families: this may be due to their young age, or because they are particularly distressed or have difficulties in communicating and may not know their address, their parents' identity or even their own identity. It is a mistake to neglect these children in favour of those whose families are easier to trace.

For these children some special procedures may need to be followed. These are discussed further under the section on documentation in Topic 6.

THE IMPACT OF HIV / AIDS

HIV/AIDS and conflict are combining to threaten the lives of young people, especially girls. Many children have lost their parents to AIDS, and are living without protection and assistance. Some of these children may be living with HIV/AIDS themselves. The stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS mean that they are often denied their basic rights to food, shelter, education and healthcare.

Not only have children been orphaned by AIDS, but because of their situation these same children can face an increased risk of exposure to HIV infection. It is

widely recognized that HIV/AIDS spreads rapidly in conflict situations as a result of a range of factors including sexual bartering, sexual violence, low awareness about HIV, and the breakdown of vital services in health and education. Powerlessness and fear heighten the risk of HIV transmission.

HIV/AIDS has important implications for all elements of programmes for separated children. Those children orphaned by HIV/AIDS need to be identified, along with all other separated children, and have their protection and care needs assessed as soon as possible. Care arrangements for these children should favour family-based placements within their communities. Community-wide sensitisation may be needed to help prevent and eliminate discrimination against these children. They will need access to voluntary and confidential counselling as well as health care and education. Awareness and prevention programmes need to be integrated into all areas of humanitarian response.

TRAINING MATERIALS FOR TOPIC 1

Overhead 1.1: Key Learning Points for Topic 1	Summarises the key learning points.
Overhead 1.2: Definitions	Presents the definitions used in the Inter-agency Guiding Principles.
Overhead 1.3: Protection and Care in an Emergency Context	Lists a number of difficulties and constraints that may be faced in an emergency situation.
Exercise 1.1: Definitions and Terminology	Introduces participants to the concepts behind definitions and terminology that are used.
Exercise 1.2: The Impact of Separation on Children	Sensitises participants to the effects of separation on children.
Exercise 1.3: The Case of Kollie	Considers the effects of multiple separations on a child's physical and social development.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAINING

For further information and training ideas reference can also be made to the Separated Children in Europe Programme Training Guide (2001).

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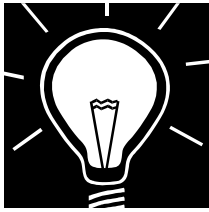
Topic 2
A Framework for the Protection of Separated Children

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- *An overall protection framework must guide all actions on behalf of separated children.*

- *Any decisions and actions on behalf of separated children should be informed by a series of guiding principles.*

- *Confidentiality and the protection of data needs to be ensured at all stages of the tracing and reunification process.*

- *In providing long-term solutions for unaccompanied and separated children, family reunification should be the first priority.*

As has already been mentioned, 2004 has seen the publication of the Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children.

The Guiding Principles provides a framework for all organisations working with or on behalf of separated children. It seeks to ensure that all actions and decisions taken concerning separated children are anchored in a protection framework and respect the principles of family unity and the best interests of the child. All stages of an emergency are addressed: from preventing separations, to family tracing and reunification, through to care arrangements and long-term solutions.

The Guiding Principles were developed and endorsed by: International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF); International Rescue Committee; Save the Children UK; World Vision International.

This document informs much of what follows in this topic.

A PROTECTION FRAMEWORK

The survival of unaccompanied and separated children may be threatened in armed conflict or other disasters. These children are most likely to have their basic rights violated and to risk abuse, exploitation or recruitment into armed forces.

Organisations working with or on behalf of unaccompanied and separated children must ensure that their activities are carried out impartially (not on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender or other similar criteria). Every organisation must take into account the overall need for protection and act according to its mandate, expertise or mode of action. Policies, programmes and

decisions adopted with regard to separated children must be in keeping with the provisions of:

- the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and its two Optional Protocols (2000);

- the four Geneva Conventions (1949) and their two Additional Protocols (1977);

- the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and its Protocol (1967);

- other relevant international treaties.

Handout 2.4 lists some of the key international instruments relating to separated children.

The concept of **"protection"** refers to all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual – in this case a child – as set out in the relevant human rights instruments and international humanitarian law. There are essentially three complementary types of action to help unaccompanied and separated children:

responsive action aimed at preventing, putting a stop to, and/or alleviating the immediate effects of a specific pattern of abuse;

remedial action aimed at restoring dignified living conditions through rehabilitation, restitution and reparation;

environment building aimed at creating and/or consolidating an environment (political, institutional, legal, social, cultural and economic) conducive to full respect for the rights of the individual.

Workshop on protection for human rights and humanitarian organizations – Doing something about it and doing it well, Report on the fourth workshop held at the ICRC, Geneva, 18-20 January 1999 (ICRC ref. 0742).

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

All children are entitled to protection and care under a broad range of international, regional and national instruments. Of particular relevance for separated children are:

- the right to a name, legal identity and birth registration;

- the right to physical and legal protection;

- the right not to be separated from their parents;

- the right to provisions for their basic subsistence;

- the right to care and assistance appropriate to age and developmental needs;

- the right to participate in decisions about their future.

This list is presented in **Handout 2.2**. In addition, please note that **Handout 2.1** and **Handout 2.4** highlight specific articles from the CRC and a variety of international instruments respectively, that have particular relevance to separated children.

Primary responsibility for ensuring children's survival and well-being lies with parents, family and community. The national and local authorities are responsible for ensuring that children's rights are respected. Efforts must be made in an emergency to protect family unity and avoid child-family separation.

The **principle of family unity** – or integrity of the family – states that all children have a right to a family, and families have a right to care for their children. Unaccompanied and separated children must be provided with services aimed at reuniting them with their parents or primary legal or customary care-givers as quickly as possible. If large numbers of children are separated from their parents or other relatives in an emergency, priority should be given to the most vulnerable, whether accompanied or unaccompanied, taking into account that the latter are likely to be more vulnerable.

The **best interests** of the child constitute the basic standard for guiding decisions and actions taken to help children, whether by national or international organisations, courts of law, administrative authorities, or legislative bodies. The Inter-agency Guiding Principles should be taken into account when determining the best interests of the child in a given situation.

A **child's opinion** should be listened to and given due weight in relation to the child's age and maturity. Children must be kept informed about plans being made for them. This includes decisions about placement and care, tracing and reunification. Programmes should actively engage children in the prevention of and responses to separation.

Non-discrimination: one of the basic tenets of international humanitarian law is that the protection and guarantees it lays down must be granted to all without discrimination. Thus all four Geneva Conventions and both Additional Protocols provide that the "specific categories of person they protect must be treated humanely (...) without adverse distinction founded on sex...". The Convention of the Rights of the Child reinforces this key principle and states that girls have additional, specific needs which have to be taken into account in programming for their care and protection.

The special needs of girls must be taken into account throughout armed conflicts and their aftermath. Appropriate responses must be developed at all stages of programming. See for example, Security Council Resolution 1261 (1999) on children and armed conflict which urges all parties to armed conflicts to take special measures to protect children, in particular girls.

COMPLEMENTARITY AND CO-OPERATION

Effective planning and co-ordination between all organisations involved, must ensure an integrated approach to all aspects of work with separated children, from prevention activities, through care arrangements, to tracing and reunification.

It is important that all action be co-ordinated with the relevant government authorities, unless this is not in the best interests of the children. Dialogue and co-ordination mechanisms need to start in the early phases of an emergency, and be maintained throughout the process.

Specific lead roles must be established for key areas, such as child care and tracing, according to each organisation's mandate, expertise and capacity to deal

with the given situation. In addition, a communication strategy needs to be considered to support the protection framework.

Organisations should strive to reach a common understanding and coherent action in line with the Inter-agency Guiding Principles.

Action to help separated children requires a **long-term commitment** - often lasting years - by the organisations involved. They should begin considering at the early stages of their involvement when and how they will end that involvement and hand over their activities to national or other entities.

LOCAL STRUCTURES

In all aspects of work related to separation the involvement of national and local authorities, as well as local organisations, will be of particular importance.

Their involvement stretches from prevention activities, though identification and documentation (for example, where authorities at ports of entry receive cases of concern), to the provision of protection and assistance services, right up to the reunification of families and follow-up.

It is important that local capacities are assessed as there may be a need to provide support, through capacity building or training, to ensure that they are fully equipped to respond to the special needs of separated children.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality and protection of the data collected on separated children is critical and all involved must be informed of this principle.

Organisations must ensure the permanent preservation of their records because later in life children may wish to obtain information on their origins. In certain situations it may be decided that records will be centralised under the responsibility of a specialised organisation.

Precautions must be taken when sharing and publishing information on unaccompanied and separated children, including photographs of children for tracing. It is important to know who will have access to the information collected.

Whenever separated children are moved, all appropriate documentation should accompany them including travel documents, birth certificate or any other registration or identification documentation, medical reports, school certificates, clothes and other possessions that may help to identify them.

LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS

Family reunification is the first priority for separated children. Should reunification not be in the child's best interests or not possible within an appropriate period, other medium and long-term options such as foster care, group homes or adoption will need to be arranged. (N.B. Adoption is not an option in the emergency phase).

The situation becomes more complex when separated children are living in a refugee context where a durable solution to their refugee status also has to be sought. The best durable solution for an unaccompanied or separated child will depend on the particular circumstances of his or her case. As for all children, family reunification should be the priority for the separated refugee child, be it in

the country of asylum, in the country of origin through voluntary repatriation or in a third country. The preferred durable solution will always be voluntary repatriation and this should at all times be kept under review and actively pursued where appropriate. Where voluntary repatriation is not possible, local integration is likely to be the most appropriate alternative. Resettlement of separated children should only be considered on an exceptional basis and through a case-by-case examination, where other solutions are not appropriate. **The possibility of eventual family reunification or voluntary repatriation should be kept open as long as possible**.

Handout 2.3 provides further information on durable long-term solutions.

N.B. UNHCR has specific guidelines to follow in dealing with unaccompanied children seeking asylum. Although the focus of these guidelines is on the determination of refugee status for unaccompanied children, they also contain recommendations on identifying and implementing appropriate durable solutions both for children who are found to qualify for asylum, and for those who are not. (UNHCR, Guidelines on Policies and Procedures in dealing with Unaccompanied Children Seeking Asylum. Geneva, 1997).

TRAINING MATERIALS FOR TOPIC 2

Overhead 2.1: Key Learning Points for Topic 2	Summarises the key learning points.
Overhead 2.2: A Protection Framework	Presents a protection framework taken from the Workshop on protection for human rights and humanitarian organizations (1999).
Overhead 2.3: Key Provisions for the Protection and Care of Separated Children	Summarises provisions from a broad range of international, regional and national instruments.
Exercise 2.1: A Protection Framework for Separated Children	A Case Study to highlight child rights and the importance of applying guiding principles.
Exercise 2.2: Using the CRC to Guide Decision-Making	Explores issues and dilemmas in determining the best interests of the child.
Exercise 2.3: Applying Guiding Principles: An Organisational Audit	Assesses to what extent organisations are able to apply guiding principles in their work.
Handout 2.1: Key Points Relating to Separated children from the CRC	Provides more detail on Articles related to the issues of Separated Children.
Handout 2.2: A Comprehensive Approach	Presents the guiding principles for work with Unaccompanied and Separated Children.
Handout 2.3: Durable Long-Term Solutions	Provides further information on long term durable solutions for refugee children.
Handout 2.4: Key International Instruments Relating to Separated Children	Lists relevant Instruments and Articles.

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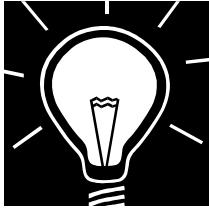
Topic 3

The Prevention of Separation

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- *It is essential that activities aimed at limiting separations are established as quickly as possible.*

- *Children become separated from their families in various ways and the response should reflect the cause.*

- *Agencies need to take great care to ensure that their own activities do not lead to accidental separations.*

- *The evacuation of children should only be undertaken under particular conditions.*

INTRODUCTION

Children are entitled to protection under the law and, in general, are better protected when they are with their family. In addition, experience has shown that preserving family unity helps to minimise the effects of catastrophic events on children. Separation from family is a devastating event for any child, and for those who are too young or for some other reason unable to give information about themselves or their family, the separation may become permanent.

It is essential that activities aimed at preventing separations are established as early as possible in any operation. The nature of these activities will depend on a careful analysis of the situation, including the type of displacement that the population are experiencing. It is also necessary to understand some of the reasons why children may become separated in the first place.

HOW CHILDREN BECOME SEPARATED

There are many reasons why children become separated from their families in emergencies. These can be considered under two broad categories, namely: **accidental separation** – such as when fleeing from danger or during evacuation; or **deliberate separation** when children are abandoned or given over to the care of another individual or a residential centre (perhaps in the belief that they will have a better chance of survival or access to services) or even where children take a decision themselves to leave.

It is possible to prevent children from being separated from their families, even in extreme emergencies. Approaches can be made to the relevant authorities and

other parties so as to reduce the risk of separation. These contacts aimed at preventing accidental and deliberate separation and promoting reunification must be based on an understanding of the causes of separation.

Accidental Separations

During conflict or natural disasters, especially where this results in population displacement, children can become separated from their family or those who are caring for them. Accidental separations may be particularly traumatic for the child as they may simply not understand what is happening. Reasons as to why such separations occur may include some of the following:

- children wander away from their parents or carers;

- families become separated during flight (or maybe even repatriation);

- children flee when their home is attacked;

- death or injury of family members;

- capture or arrest of family members;

- disabled children are unable to keep up with other members of the family;

- police or others taking a "lost" child to an institution without properly seeking information on the circumstances.

Deliberate Separations

The second category refers to separations where a conscious decision has been made on either the part of the child or the parents or carers. It may be that parents or carers have had an opportunity to explain to the child what is about to happen but the impact of separation on the child is still likely to be very distressing. Typically, circumstances may include:

- families under stress (from poverty, famine, breakdown of informal welfare or extended family structures, the death or disability of parents etc.);

- families sending children to stay with relatives or friends in third countries;

- children choosing to leave their family;

- children who live independently with their parents consent;

- the abandonment of children during flight (children of single parents may be especially vulnerable);

- families handing over children for their safety (to other local people, centres or aid workers);

- children left behind by their foster families (for example, during repatriation) - children of a different ethnic group from that of their carers may be especially vulnerable.

AGENCY-INDUCED SEPARATIONS

Agencies themselves may be responsible for causing separations by not attaching sufficient importance to family unity. At worst, this can result in agencies setting up forms of institutional care which then receive children who do have parents or other carers, or which fail to document children adequately, and do not make

strenuous attempts to enable the child to return.

Other typical examples of situations where intervention by outside agencies contributes to child separation include:

- badly-organised population movements, careless policies for the movement of children;

- inadequate record-keeping by the agencies providing emergency assistance;

- removing an apparently unaccompanied child from a situation without adequately investigating the child's circumstances and not keeping records;

- evacuation that does not follow guidelines (see section on Evacuation in this Topic);

- taking children to residential centres without following the correct procedures for documentation or liaising with specialist child-care agencies;

- fostering or adoption that does not follow guidelines;

- poorly-considered targeting of material assistance to separated children that may encourage some families to abandon children or to claim dishonestly that their children are "separated"

- activities on the part of hospitals and health centres that may lead to family separation. These include:

    - parents may be admitted for treatment without their children and without having made arrangements for the care of the children;

    - parents may not be able to stay with children who are admitted for treatment;

    - parents accompanying sick children may have other children at home who have been left unattended.

The categories are presented in **Overhead 3.2**.

SEPARATION CAUSED BY ARMED FORCES OR GROUPS

In situations of conflict, it should also be noted that actions by military groups can, and do, lead to separations. This may be as a result of protagonists targeting civilian populations (perhaps leading to chaotic flight), detaining parents, or through children being forcibly recruited into armed forces to fight or to take on other tasks (including sexual) or being abducted to act as human shields. Facilitators are referred to the ARC Resource Pack on **Child Soldiers** for further information on this category of separated children.

In addition, it should be remembered that peace-keeping forces also have the potential to create separations inadvertently if their interventions are not appropriately planned and informed. Many of the situations mentioned above, under "Agency Induced Separations", apply equally here. This issue has received increased attention in recent years and, notably, the Save the Children Alliance have been actively involved in providing training to military peace-keepers.

Criminal groups are known to have abducted separated children – for example, trafficking children for sexual purposes.

GENERAL MEASURES TO PREVENT SEPARATIONS

A number of general measures to prevent separations are detailed below.

- Community awareness of the causes and consequences of separation is vital, as well as their involvement in developing preventive measures. The active involvement of local leaders, local authorities, medical facilities, transit centres, religious organisations etc. is especially important, as well as information campaigns designed to promote widespread awareness of the issues.

- The use of mass-media, such as radio, may be especially important in non-camp situations particularly during large-scale population movements - including both flight and return.

- Awareness of ways to prevent separation should be raised among governments, donors, staff of national and international agencies, religious groups and communities, especially women as they are often the primary care-givers.

- Families should be made aware of measures that they can take in emergencies to minimise the risk of their children becoming separated. Parents and school teachers should teach children their name, address and details of where they come from, to facilitate tracing should they become separated. Name tags may be useful to identify children, particularly young children, if they are forced to flee.

- Identify particular locations where separations are most likely e.g. border crossings, checkpoints, transit sites, health facilities, and focus preventive activities at these points.

- Identify particular categories of children who are most vulnerable to separation e.g. fostered children, those with disabilities, children whose parents are in hospital, children with elderly carers etc.

- Organisations must ensure that their actions do not inadvertently encourage family separations.

- Deliberate separations can be prevented by ensuring that all households have access to basic relief supplies and other services, including education, and that providers of emergency care for children apply appropriate screening procedures.

- Speed is essential, not only in terms of establishing activities aimed at limiting separations, but also in responding with tracing activities when a separated child has been identified.

- Children who are alone are not always 'separated'. It should never be assumed that a child is unaccompanied. Even though he or she may have been found alone, there could be family members near by. If there are other members of the community in the vicinity they may be able to provide useful information or even take care of the child.

- In general, children are better off in their own community with people who are familiar to them and who may know their family and place of origin.

- Evacuation should only be carried out as a last resort when life is threatened

as it can often create further separations, as well as separating children from people in the locality who can provide information useful for tracing purposes.

A number of specific measures to avoid separations appear in **Handout 3.1**.

THE EVACUATION OF CHILDREN

Getting out of harm's way is a universal – and sensible – response to danger. Parents will often take children away from war zones, or send them away if they think this will ensure their survival; but families should be given the information they need to make such decisions on a rational basis. Experience in the UK during the Second World War was that children's well-being was often best served by remaining with their families, albeit in dangerous situations, rather than being evacuated to live with unknown families in the physical safety of the countryside. Subsequent experience has confirmed these findings.

Agencies that work in emergencies are often faced with difficult decisions about the removal of children from conflicts. Whenever possible, children should be evacuated with adult family members. Evacuating children without family members should be a last resort, carried out only after it has been carefully determined that protection and assistance cannot be provided in place and that evacuation of the entire family is not feasible. Separation of these children from their families is meant to be temporary.

An evacuation specifically for separated children may create further separations, as families may give up their own children claiming that they are separated. Evacuation can result in separating the children from people in the locality who can provide information useful for tracing purposes. Poorly organised and ill-considered evacuations have sometimes resulted in long-term separation from parents, as well as children living in unsatisfactory conditions, sometimes in a foreign country.

Children can become lost or be permanently separated from their families if their personal details are not recorded during evacuation or if this information is not passed on to the appropriate people. When an evacuation is being considered, an agency experienced in tracing and work with separated children should be involved in the planning and the implementation.

UNHCR and UNICEF, supported by ICRC, produced a paper, "Evacuation of Children from Conflict Areas: Considerations and Guidelines" (1992), that provides interesting analysis derived from a joint mission to the former Yugoslavia. The conclusions suggest three central principles:

- **Protect and Assist in place:** evacuation may reflect the failure of protection and assistance by local communities, governments and aid agencies.

- **Preserve Family Unity:** if children have to be moved it is important that they are accompanied by a family member.

- **Evacuate only under proper conditions:** the Guidelines set out some key recommendations which ensure that the wishes of parents and children are considered, that evacuation is undertaken in safety, that proper arrangements are made for the reception of the children, and that help is given to ensure that further or permanent separation does not occur.

The Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children also provides some useful guidance on the issue of evacuating children. This information appears as **Handout 3.3**.
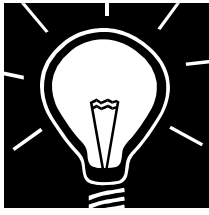
TRAINING MATERIALS FOR TOPIC 3

Overhead 3.1: Key Learning Points for Topic 3	Summarises the key learning points.
Overhead 3.2: How Children Become Separated	Presents three broad categories.
Exercise 3.1: Causes of Separation and Preventive Measures	Helps participants to identify why children become separated, to identify and prioritise measures for preventing separation.
Exercise 3.2: Prevention of Separation - Raising Awareness in the Community	Emphasises the importance of community awareness, community structures and inter-agency co-operation.
Exercise 3.3: Evacuating Children from Conflict Areas	Discussion exercise which encourages participants to consider when evacuation might be a viable option and to prioritise protection issues relating to children.
Handout 3.1: Specific Measures to Avoid the Separation of Children	Bullet list.
Handout 3.2: Preventing Separation	An extract from the IA Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children.
Handout 3.3: Evacuation	An extract from the IA Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAINING

The use of case material drawn from participants' own experience or from within the region would be especially appropriate for facilitating learning with this topic - particularly with regard to the issue of evacuation.

Separated Children

Topic 4
Assessing the Situation and Locating Separated Children

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- *Various factors must be considered in conducting effective assessments into the situation of separated children.*

- *Good co-ordination is required to avoid the duplication of information and unnecessary interviewing of children.*

- *Many separated children may be found in a variety of so-called "spontaneous care arrangements".*

- *Children in spontaneous care arrangements may not be considered as "unaccompanied", but may have significant protection and care needs.*

From the outset of any emergency situation it is important that information is gathered that will help to inform prioritisation and decision-making regarding separated children.

In some situations it may be possible to build on an existing situation analysis, however, in most emergency situations it is likely that specific assessments will be required with regard to separated children.

Although the assessment will provide valuable information that will assist in making appropriate decisions with regard to separated children, it must be remembered that many complex decisions about the specific protection needs of separated children will have to be made on an individual basis.

ASSESSMENTS

Assessments always have an impact. They constitute in themselves an 'intervention'. An ethical approach demands the following:

- a commitment to follow-up action, if required;

- refraining from taking action if the local community can cope by itself, unless the community's action violates the basic rights of children;

- avoiding methods that could stigmatise children, endanger them in any way or increase the incidence of family separation. In extreme cases, assessments may jeopardise the safety of the intended beneficiaries, for example by attracting the attention of groups that exploit children;

- avoiding the creation of false expectations.

Assessments must include:

- an analysis of the various political, economic, logistical and other causes and patterns of separation, and the intended or unintended part played by various entities and policies;

- a study of the community's customary attitudes towards 'orphaned' or otherwise separated children and the care it provided, including orphanages, prior to the emergency;

- the identification and estimated numbers of all unaccompanied and separated children in various locations disaggregated by age, sex and situation. In particular, groups of children at special risk should be identified, such as those with disabilities, child soldiers and those living in child-headed households;

- a review of the policies of all national and local authorities pertaining to separated and orphaned children;

- an analysis of measures taken by the community itself, and its resources;

- an analysis of the potential impact of relief programmes on family unity and the basic subsistence and rights of separated children;

- the identification of factors with potential to cause new separations or to aggravate the circumstances of children already separated. These may include particular patterns and degrees of violence, mortality rate and displacement, lack of food, security and access to basic services, possible recruitment of minors into armed forces and the establishment of orphanages.

Regardless of whether a situation analysis or an emergency assessment is being conducted, the following additional considerations should be included:

- **be rights-based** and, in particular, identify situations in which children are at risk of abuse, exploitation or discrimination;

- **be gender sensitive** and identify any gender-based areas of vulnerability;

- **be child participatory** and adopt methods by which children themselves can express their ideas, protection problems and needs. This requires careful planning and specific skills in communicating with children;

- **identify actual and potential duty-bearers** in relation to separated children;

- **take a long-term perspective**, focusing not just on immediate care and protection needs but on providing long-term care arrangements.

The Inter-agency Guiding Principles provides some detailed information on how to structure the assessment and this appears in **Handout 4.1**.

AVOIDING DUPLICATION

As stated in Topic 1, personnel have a duty both to ensure the care and protection for separated children and to set up family tracing activities. Both tasks may well be carried out simultaneously, or in parallel, and both involve gathering information from a variety of sources. Staff must make every effort to co-ordinate their activities so that there is minimal duplication of information gathered. For example, information gathered specifically for tracing purposes will certainly be relevant for the assessment process; information gathered in order to build an understanding

of the social and cultural background of the separated children, may be used effectively to inform tracing.

It is particularly important to ensure that children are not subjected to more interviews than are absolutely necessary, as they are likely to find the process stressful or difficult for some or all of the following reasons. They may:

- feel guilt or shame at having survived when other family members did not;

- have fears about the role of a strange professional person;

- associate professionals with difficult or frightening experiences they may have had with authority figures in their home country;

- negatively associate anyone who asks them to re-tell their 'story', with the experiences that led to their separation;

- be 'keeping secrets' because they have been told to do so by an agent, because they fear for family members 'left behind' or because they cannot bring themselves to talk about them;

- be afraid of being overwhelmed by the revelation of certain information.

Separated children need to be given time and appropriate opportunities to 'tell their stories'. Having made the effort to tell their story once, it is both difficult and distressing to repeat this story to another adult. The ARC Resource Pack **Working with Children** provides more information on communicating with children.

LOCATING SEPARATED CHILDREN

Even in large scale emergencies and refugee movements, relatively few separated children are found to be totally alone (truly unaccompanied). In most cases separated children will be taken in by families or will arrange for their own care without the intervention of any agency. The nature of such care arrangements may be strongly influenced by whether the separation was deliberate or accidental.

Many separated children may be found in a variety of so-called "spontaneous care arrangements" including:

- With extended family.

- With unrelated families – friends, neighbours and sometimes complete strangers.

- Children forming themselves into a group-living arrangement (including sibling-headed households).

It is essential that separated children are identified as soon as possible in order that their care and protection needs can be assessed and provided for, and that the process of tracing their families can be initiated with minimum delay. Locating many of these children will be an extension of the prevention activities already discussed in Topic 3.

For refugee children who find themselves in spontaneous care arrangements with unrelated host country families there could be very particular protection issues involved including problems of establishing their legal status and finding long-term durable solutions. The Inter-agency Guiding Principles (Section 6) state that: "Special efforts should be made at the earliest possible stage to identify

unaccompanied refugee children staying with host families from the country of asylum".

In addition to the challenge of locating separated children who have been absorbed into spontaneous care arrangements, personnel should be encouraged to consider other relatively "invisible" groups of children. The following suggestions may be worth exploring:

- **Child soldiers:** Separated children may have been recruited into the armed forces in a number of roles: soldiers, porters, cooks, messengers, sex slaves (see ARC Resource pack on Child Soldiers for more information).

- **Disabled and/or sick children:** For a number of reasons, children with disabilities or who are ill may have been abandoned by those who are responsible for their care. HIV+ children or those living with AIDS may also be ignored or abandoned because their chances of survival are deemed to be already limited, or that other children in the family are given "higher priority".

- **Children living on the streets:** As they may have no permanent or even regular base, this group of children/young people may often be overlooked.

- **Trafficking:** It is widely recognised that criminal groups often prey on displaced populations taking advantage of their often precarious living situation to traffic individuals, including children, or families. Children may be trafficked for various reasons including illegal international adoption and for sexual purposes.

- **Abducted children:** In conflict situations, where people are fleeing or on the move, children may have been abducted.

Careful thought and questioning of community members, including children, and cross-checking information gathered (see ARC Resource pack on Situation Analysis), will reveal some of these more hidden children who have been separated from their carers.

Ensuring that during any registration process personnel are informed and vigilant to the issues of separation will also provide a key opportunity for identifying separated children.

DIFFICULTIES IN LOCATING SEPARATED CHILDREN

Children who are in spontaneous care arrangements may not be considered as "unaccompanied", but they may have significant protection and care needs.

However, while it is essential that separated children are identified as soon as possible, experience demonstrates that it can be extremely difficult to identify some of these groups of children for some of the following reasons:

- Communities may be suspicious of questions being asked by outsiders unless they understand the reasons behind the questions and trust the people asking them.

- Families who take in children in order to benefit from their presence (e.g. to benefit from their labour or ration card) may be reluctant to reveal their presence for fear of losing the children. Sometimes categories of "hidden" separated children will have a marked gender imbalance.

- Children themselves may fear that if they are identified as "orphans" or "fostered" children they will experience discrimination and disadvantage in the wider community.

- Groups of children living without adult care may fear that if they are identified they will be split up in different foster homes.

It is worth noting that those children who have been absorbed into spontaneous care arrangements, and have not been identified as "separated", are potentially most at risk of abuse as their protection needs cannot be identified and monitored, and no family tracing activities will be initiated on their behalf.

SPONTANEOUS CARE ARRANGEMENTS AND POTENTIAL PROTECTION ISSUES

1. Children Placed with the Extended Family

In many societies, children are considered to belong to the extended family or clan rather than to the nuclear family: it is common for them to be cared for by older siblings, grandparents and aunts, and to spend periods of their childhood with various members of the extended family. When parents die or become separated from their children, members of the extended family automatically take in the children on an interim or permanent basis.

Potential Protection issues

However, this does not necessarily mean that these children are provided with a standard of care similar to that provided to the biological children of the family. A number of studies reveal a pattern of discrimination within the extended family which children themselves experience as hurtful and distressing. In many instances, the family is already experiencing material hardship, and very often the additional child is expected to be grateful and to accept that he or she may not be offered the same standard of care as others in the family – e.g. school uniforms and materials. This may lead to a situation in which the separated child feels "different" and isolated, and the result can be poor communication with the care-givers. An added difficulty is that the care-givers may not appreciate the importance to the child of having opportunities to talk about their feelings about being separated from their families, their sense of loss or grief, and their concerns for the future.

In extreme cases children may be at risk of abuse, including sexual exploitation and exploitative labour, or denial of access to schooling.

2. Spontaneously Fostered Children

In some societies, the idea of living with strangers is considered to be completely unacceptable, while in others it is more common. Traditional forms of fostering are not usually based on the best interests of the child but rather on a notion of exchange: the child may benefit from being given food, clothing etc. but the foster carers will benefit from the child's labour. In some cultures it is common for young children to be placed with older foster carers, who provide care for the child on the assumption that they will later benefit from material support when the child grows up. It is important to note that in some societies there is no expectation that the fostered child will be treated the same as other children in the household: cultural norms in some societies may even dictate that the child should **not** be treated the

same on the basis that he or she will benefit from the experience of a degree of hardship.

Potential Protection Issues

In order to assess the likely protection issues of spontaneously fostered children it is necessary to understand cultural norms regarding the placement of children with unrelated carers.

Research evidence suggests that in refugee situations, when there are significant numbers of separated children, unrelated families may take in an unknown child even when this is culturally uncommon. In some cases, this may be motivated by genuine humanitarian concerns or religious commitment: in others, children may be taken in so that the family can benefit from the child's labour, for sexual reasons or to enhance the family's perceived eligibility for certain material benefits. Frequently children are taken in for a mixture of motives. In all situations, it must not be assumed that fostered children will be accorded an adequate degree of care and protection, and it has been observed in many refugee contexts that spontaneously fostered children experience unacceptable levels of discrimination or abuse (including sexual). Economic issues may be as important as cultural norms in explaining the differential treatment of foster and biological children respectively.

Although, as a general rule, children who are taken in by unrelated families should be encouraged to remain if they are receiving an acceptable level of protection and care, it is vital that they are identified both for the purposes of family tracing and in order that a programme of monitoring and support can be established. However, refugee children in spontaneous care arrangements with unrelated host country families could face specific protection problems, and placement of these children in their own refugee community should be promoted.

3. Child-Headed Households

Child-headed households refer to children living independently in groups. Many of these groups are in fact supported by extended family living nearby or even in the same compound.

Children often express a strong preference for remaining together as a group without adult care, and point to a number of advantages:

- siblings can stay together;

- they can retain the family home (though not in refugee or displaced contexts);

- some children see it as preferable to fostering;

- they may experience less isolation and discrimination than living apart in families;

- older children can be more independent.

It is important to bear in mind that in many societies it is common for children, from an early age, to undertake various domestic and child care tasks in respect of younger siblings. This may mean that children from the age of around 12 and upwards may have a great deal of experience of parenting.

Potential Protection Issues:

Children living without immediate adult care – whether in a sibling-headed household or a group of unrelated peers living together – are perceived as having a number of areas of vulnerability and disadvantage which include:

- livelihood problems;

- lack of experience in solving a range of problems;

- vulnerability to abuse and exploitation;

- loneliness and isolation in the community;

- problems for the oldest child in finding a marriage partner;

- problems for the oldest child in attending school due to the responsibilities of fending for siblings (e.g. priority being given to income-generating activities).

A careful assessment of the circumstances of each child-headed household, and a planning process which involves the children themselves, will be required before a decision is made either to provide alternative care arrangements, or to offer a package of monitoring and support. The latter will be essential in order to ensure that they are adequately protected and given the help, both material and social, which they may need.

While all efforts should be made to keep siblings together, there may also be exceptional situations where, for example, very young children living with siblings would be better cared for and protected by placement with a foster family. If circumstances dictate that siblings cannot be kept together, it is vital that their care placements enable them to have frequent contact with each other and that their care is planned and reviewed jointly.

Identifying certain groups as 'child-headed households' without having carefully assessed their situation and protection needs, and targeting them for assistance may result in encouraging more children to split from their family or extended family in order to benefit from this assistance.

TRAINING MATERIALS FOR TOPIC 4

Overhead 4.1: Key Learning Points for Topic 4	Summarises the key learning points.
Overhead 4.2: Locating Separated Children	Presents a variety of possible locations for separated children.
Exercise 4.1: Locating Separated Children	Examines the variety of likely locations for separated children.
Exercise 4.2: Planning a Strategy for Locating Separated Children	Uses a case study as a focus for planning a strategy to trace and protect separated children.
Exercise 4.3: Protection Issues for Separated Children	Participants identify potential protection issues for different groups of separated children.
Handout 4.1: Gathering Relevant Information Effectively	An extract from the IA Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children.

Handout 4.2: Identifying Separated Children	Presents a number of considerations to guide activities in identifying separated children.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAINING

Invite participants to develop a publicity campaign for a camp situation which will encourage people to look out for and report children who might be lacking care and protection; or situations where there are suspicions that separated children are being neglected or abused.

Separated Children
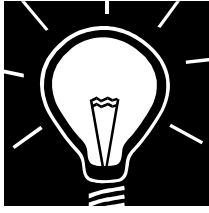
Topic 5
Care Arrangements for Separated Children

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- *In general, children who are found to be living with extended family or cared for by siblings, or who have been spontaneously fostered, should be encouraged to remain.*

- *For refugee children in spontaneous care arrangements with unrelated host country families, placement in their own refugee community should be promoted.*

- *Institutional forms of care should be avoided where possible.*

- however -

- *The risks and resources involved in fostering programmes need to be carefully considered.*

- *Some children and adolescents may need special forms of provision.*

KEY REFERENCE POINTS IN THE CRC

The family (is) the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of its members and particularly children..... The child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. (**Preamble**).

A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment .... shall be entitled to special protection and assistance... Care could include, inter alia*, foster placement, Kafalah or Islamic law, adoption, or if necessary placement in suitable institutions for the care of children.* (**Article 20**).

INTRODUCTION

As a general rule, children who are found to be living with extended family or cared for by siblings, or who have been spontaneously fostered, should be encouraged to remain, unless there is evidence that to do so is not in the interests of the individual child. The role of staff will be to identify gaps in their care and protection, and to work to address these. They may include addressing the following issues:

- Some separated children living in these circumstances are vulnerable to further separation, especially if there are perceptions (by themselves or others)

that they would be better off in institutions.

- Separated children living in family settings may require additional support (see Topic 7) but care needs to be taken to ensure that such support can be provided equally and in a sustainable way to all families in similar situations who are caring for a separated child.

- Some children will be abused or neglected and many are likely to experience discrimination. Such risks are likely to be greater when children are living with unrelated carers, and this is especially the case if the carers come from a different ethnic group from that of the child.

- Refugee children in spontaneous care arrangements with unrelated host country families could face specific protection problems, and placement of these children in their own refugee community should be promoted.

There will undoubtedly be other issues that will be relevant in different contexts and working situations. For children whose living situation is found to be unacceptable, and where appropriate support cannot be provided, it will be necessary to explore other arrangements for the provision of care.

Such a course of action should be handled extremely carefully and should, wherever possible, involve the relevant local authorities and communities. The issues involved are likely to be highly sensitive and it is possible that families will resist external intervention.

This Topic looks at Fostering Programmes, as well as issues related to Institutional Forms of Care. From the outset however it is important to highlight the benefits and importance of community-based care for the well-being of the child.

ASSESSING THE SITUATION AND NEEDS OF SEPARATED CHILDREN

Although family-based placements are strongly favoured wherever possible, policy has to be established in any emergency that reflects the nature and scale of the problem of separated children, cultural norms regarding substitute family care, the expressed wishes of the children themselves, and the feasibility of different forms of care.

It is essential that workers in these situations undertake an assessment to determine:

- the characteristics of the population of separated children, including those of children who have already been taken in by the extended family or by unrelated families

- the resources contained within the community;

- the cultural, social, legal and political context within which policy and practice need to be developed;

- the views of the children themselves.

Placement of children in orphanages or institutions, especially those within the host country, should almost **always** be avoided because this detaches the children from their own community and culture and raises serious difficulties in terms of durable solutions.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CARE PLANNING AND REVIEWING

The experience of separation from the child's own parents or previous care-givers is likely to be the source of considerable anxiety and distress, and this is likely to be compounded by unsatisfactory care arrangements and uncertainties about the future. It is vital that all separated children are registered for family tracing and that they are kept informed of the progress of efforts to trace their families. Continuing uncertainty about the future may make it more difficult for children to feel settled in their alternative care placement.

Careful situation analysis will help to identify a range of possible types of care placement. Arranging care placements for individual separated children should involve a careful consideration of all the available options and an open discussion with the child so that he or she can actively participate in any decisions, as is appropriate to his or her age and stage of development. Many separated children will have siblings with them, and it is of the utmost importance that siblings are kept together: if circumstances dictate that this is impossible, it is vital that their care placements enable them to have frequent contact with each other and that their care is planned and reviewed jointly.

Although in emergency situations it is usual to label care placements as "interim", it is important to remember that for some children these may prove to be long-term or even permanent: parents or previous care-givers may have died, or they may not be traceable (for example, if they are living in an area in which the security situation is such that tracing is impossible).

Whether children are in spontaneous care arrangements or formal placements, periodic review of the child's placement, in accordance with the CRC Article 25, will ensure that the child and the care-takers are kept informed of family tracing efforts, and that the child's progress and any areas of difficulty are openly discussed and steps are taken to resolve any problems which are identified.

For planning of alternative care arrangements, the Inter-agency Guiding Principles provides advice for Emergency Care and Assistance (presented in **Handout 5.1**).

FOSTERING PROGRAMMES

[N.B. This section provides an introduction to some of the key issues involved in the organisation of a fostering programme – it does not provide sufficient detail to facilitate the setting up of a fostering programme. This is a particularly sensitive issue and should be handled by trained and experienced personnel only - mistakes could have serious implications for the child's well-being.]

The setting up of an agency fostering programme should never be undertaken lightly. It requires considerable expertise in child welfare, as well as staff who are knowledgeable in child development and children's rights, and skilled in working with children and in assessing and working with foster carers.

In taking on the key responsibility as duty-bearer in respect of the rights of fostered children, agencies are accepting a long-term commitment to those children who, for whatever reason, will not be able to return to their own families. However, this commitment may be shared with, or passed on to, other agencies, governmental or non-governmental, or to specific community structures provided these are in a realistic position to make such long-term commitment. In establishing fostering

programmes, it is often necessary to invest resources in building the capacity of government or other organisations to take over responsibility.

Fostering programmes need to be planned in accordance with any legislation and policy in the country where fostering is being developed. For refugee children, it is also important to consider the implications of the laws and policies in the country of origin in the event of ultimate repatriation.

Programmes of formal fostering require considerable resources and infrastructure. Agencies planning to set up or support formal fostering must consider these long-term implications:

- the administrative and programme costs;

- the infrastructure and resources required;

- the management of the programme;

- the handover of the programme to government or other local agencies.

TYPICAL COMPONENTS IN A FOSTERING PROGRAMME

1. Recruiting Foster Carers

In cultures in which the idea of children living with strangers is unfamiliar, or is considered inappropriate, recruiting people to take in foster children poses a major challenge. Experience suggests that the following will facilitate the recruitment of foster carers:

- Well publicised official support – e.g. from government, local authorities and community leaders – possibly using radio broadcasts, posters etc.

- Working with and through community structures and local leaders – e.g. getting community leaders to arrange publicity meetings, working with faith-based organisations.

- Using existing foster carers as recruitment agents. Organisations of foster carers may be especially effective if they have a high profile in the community.

- Involving older children in seeking foster families: some agencies have experimented with the use of social mapping techniques to enable children to identify possible carers from within their own social networks[1].

2. The Selection, Education and Training of Foster Carers

Careful selection and preparation of foster carers will enhance their capacity to provide good quality care and protection for separated children. How this is undertaken will depend on the availability of skilled social workers and the extent of community involvement in fostering.

In most situations, foster parent selection and education tends to focus on the following key areas:

- assessing the motivation to foster;

- assessing the parenting of their own children;

- assessing the perceptions of community leaders and others who know the family;

- assessing their material means;

- preparing them for particular areas of difficulty associated with fostering.

Some agencies find it helpful to merge the processes of assessment and preparation, for example, by using courses or seminars which include elements of both assessment and training. With experience, fostering agencies will develop knowledge of those aspects of the foster carers' families which tend to lead to successful fostering within a particular context. However, in emergency situations they may have to rely on research derived from elsewhere, their own understanding of the particular cultural context, and their own emerging experience.

3. Matching and Preparing the Family and the Child for Placement

"Matching" is the process by which the particular needs and characteristics of the child are matched with the particular characteristics, resources and capacities of the prospective foster family. The preparation of both parties – including the children of the foster carers – is extremely important and should include anticipating and discussing possible areas of difficulty.

The preparation of the child may involve not just discussion, but also the use of dolls, toys, games and drawings to help the child to visualise life in the foster family and to express any concerns. Ideally, a phased introduction of the child to the foster carers should be undertaken – for example, progressing from a short visit to an overnight stay and ultimately to full-time placement, and allowing for discussion with a trusted and skilled adult at all stages to help the child to adjust to the great change in his/her life.

Extreme caution should be exercised in placing the child outside of his or her own community or ethnic group. In refugee contexts, placing the child with a family who comes from the same geographical area as the original family home will facilitate family tracing after repatriation. Foster carers should be of the same religious persuasion as the child.

The following principles should be followed.

- Siblings should be kept together unless this is contrary to their best interests.

- Foster parents should come from the same ethnic and cultural background as the child and should speak the same language.

- Children should be consulted about a possible placement: they should be introduced to the prospective foster family and given opportunities for expressing their wishes and feelings about the proposed placement.

4. The Placement Event

Most fostering agencies find it helpful to have a formal written agreement between the various parties, who may include the agency, the foster carers, community leaders, local authorities and/or the relevant government department, the residential centre (if the child is being transferred from a centre) and the child (depending on age and stage of development). The agreement will set out the various rights and responsibilities of each party and especially the obligations of each party in the event of the child's family being traced or of particular difficulties emerging in the placement.

It may be appropriate to introduce some form of public ceremony to mark the placement event: this helps to secure the child's acceptance in the extended family and community and to mobilise support around the child. It may provide an appropriate occasion for signing the written agreement.

5. Monitoring and Supporting the Placement

This is a vital and complex area, and is an absolutely essential aspect of an effective fostering programme. The needs of fostered children, and those of their carers, are likely to be quite similar to those of children living either with relatives, or within spontaneous foster families. The monitoring and support of all of these groups are considered in more detail in Topic 7.

6. Inter-agency Collaboration

The Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children place emphasis on the need for complementarity and co-operation among all organisations involved with separated children, including governmental bodies. It is particularly important that any continuing work being undertaken to trace the child's family is carefully co-ordinated with work to monitor and support the child in foster care. Regular reviews of the child's progress, in accordance with the CRC Article 25, will be a useful means of ensuring continuing and child-centred collaboration and planning.

INTERIM CARE AND LONG-TERM CARE

In emergency situations, fostering is often referred to as a form of "interim" care. However, experience demonstrates that significant numbers of separated children cannot be reunited with their families and will need permanent substitute care. Children whose parents are known to have died (for example of an AIDS related illness) will need substitute care which, from the outset, is intended to be permanent. It is also clear that despite the fact that the preparation of foster carers usually emphasises the importance of facilitating the child's return to his or her own family wherever possible, many foster carers are seeking to use fostering as a means of adding to their family on a long-term basis. Research suggests that many foster carers are actually seeking something more akin to a form of non-legal adoption[2]. This problem is not unexpected: to ask foster carers to be willing to give up the child if his or her own family is found, while at the same time asking them to treat the child in the same way as their own child and to offer love and care for as long as necessary, places them in a paradoxical situation.

These aspects of fostering present a huge dilemma for agencies, for fostered children, and for their carers in the event of the child's family being found after he or she is happily settled in a foster home. There is a difficult balance to be found between, on the one hand, the central principle of family unity and the child's right to family reunification (CRC Preamble and Articles 1 and 22) and, on the other hand, the principle of the child's best interests (Article 3) and the principle of continuity in the child's upbringing (Article 20 (3)). There are occasions when the child's interests may be served best by maintaining an existing placement.

There is no easy solution to this problem: however, four key principles emerge:

- the importance of integrating foster placement support with family tracing;

- the need for continued planning and reviewing of the child's care so that

difficult decisions can be made in a conscious way and not by default;

- all decisions need to be based on the child's best interests and not those of the adults involved;

- the child should be involved in the decision and his or her opinion must be respected, according to his or her age and stage of development.

When fostering does become permanent, consideration should be given to formalising the child's status in the family through legal mechanisms such as adoption or guardianship, or through informal or traditional means.

INSTITUTIONAL FORMS OF CARE

Residential care should be avoided wherever possible. There is now abundant evidence to show that the vast majority of residential homes do not provide an environment conducive to child development and that many of them infringe children's rights, sometimes in a gross manner. The presence of children's residential centres can often serve to further encourage the separation of children from their families. Typical activities that may lead to further and unnecessary separation of children may include the following.

- Families may be encouraged to send their children to residential centres if they think there will be significant benefits in doing so. They may, for example, feel that their child will be better fed and clothed in a children's centre. This will also free up more resources for other members of the family.

- Residential centres may provide resources that are not available in the community.

- Centres may take in children who have not been accidentally separated.

- Children's centres may not necessarily work towards returning children to their families. They may have financial, religious or personal reasons for hanging on to the children.

- Centres may not keep accurate, up-to-date records of the child and his or her family, therefore making it impossible to contact relatives.

- The centre may not encourage access by outside authorities. In particular, it may discourage family tracing or attempts to find placements for children in foster families.

- Comfortable living conditions in the centre may make children unwilling to leave or may mean that they have difficulty in living with a family again once they leave. Access to education may be seen as one benefit of living in a children's centre.

- The centre may not behave in a responsible or protective way towards the children and therefore cause them physical or emotional harm. Children in this situation may try to run away, thus exposing themselves to yet more danger.

While these are not necessarily characteristics of all residential institutions, experience shows that in practice it is extremely difficult to organise residential centres which avoid these problems.

In some situations, the sheer numbers of separated children needing immediate

care and protection mean that centre-based care is the only viable option. In such circumstances, it is vital that residential care is used strictly as an interim measure, pending family-based care options. It is also important that key principles are adhered to in order to ensure that residential centres meet the full range of children's needs, avoid the worst dangers of institutionalisation, and facilitate the return of the child to the care of his or her family. It is the quality of the staff that will most significantly determine the extent to which they meet the needs of children. This means that staff training will be an absolute necessity, though the personal qualities of staff and their commitment to children are of vital importance. These issues are covered in some detail in **Handout 5.2**.

SPECIAL TYPES OF PROVISION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

- **Adolescent group homes:** a group of young people of similar age may get together, or be placed together, in small houses, without adults living in. The houses may be given by the authorities, or land may be provided and homes built, for example, with support from NGOs.

- **Community homes:** these are a cross between a small children's home and a foster home. Small groups of children are cared for by foster parents or by a "mother". The children carry out the normal household tasks and live as part of the local community. The "family" is supported with housing, land, agricultural implements and household equipment. Such homes may provide short-term care pending family tracing, or longer-term care. The aim is that they should become as self-sufficient as possible, with the support of the local community.

TRAINING MATERIALS FOR TOPIC 5

Overhead 5.1: Key Learning Points for Topic 5	Summarises the key learning points.
Overhead 5.2: Care Arrangements for Separated Children – CRC	Quotation from the CRC.
Overhead 5.3: Care Arrangements in Emergency Situations	Lists varieties of care in emergency situations.
Exercise 5.1: Care Arrangements for Separated Children	Identifies and evaluates a range of care options for children and raises key issues which need to be considered.
Exercise 5.2: Care Arrangements for Separated Children – Issues and Dilemmas	Explores a range of issues and dilemmas in different case scenarios.
Exercise 5.3: The Importance of Socio-Cultural Information for Child Fostering	Considers what socio-cultural information is required in planning a child fostering programme.
Handout 5.1: Emergency Care and Assistance	Further detail from the Inter-agency Guiding Principles for distribution to participants.
Handout 5.2: Planning and Staffing Residential Centres	Additional detail, if required and appropriate, related to residential centres.

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[1] De Lay (2003) Mobility Mapping and Flow Diagrams

[2] Tolfree (2004) Whose Children?

Separated Children

Topic 6
Family Tracing and Reunification

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- *The process of family tracing and reunification has six distinct but overlapping stages.*

- *The various tasks and activities within each stage need to be clearly understood and co-ordinated between all of the agencies involved.*

- *Difficult decisions on the child's best interests have to be taken on a case-by-case basis by skilled child care professionals.*

The process of tracing the families of separated children and returning them to their care (or placing them with other family members) is a complex process that requires close co-operation among a number of agencies, with defined mandates and close links with the community.

This Topic provides only an introduction to this complex and skilled area of work.

There are several distinct tasks at different stages of the process.

Identification: the identification process establishes which children are separated from their families/carers and where they are to be found: information gathered at the identification point must be sufficient to lead those doing the documentation back to the child.

Documentation: this is the collection and recording of information about the child, his/her family and place of origin, the circumstances of separation and the wishes of the child.

Family tracing: these are the processes used to find the parents or other family members of the child. Families searching for their child usually do so through the ICRC tracing service.

Verification: this is the process of validating the relationships between the child and family member, and confirming the willingness of both for reunification.

Reunification/Placement: the ultimate aim of family tracing, to reunite the child with parents or previous family carers, or place the child with other members of the extended family.

Follow-up: this is the action following reunification to establish that the child settles happily with the family.

This long Topic is a composite one covering all stages in this process (the stages are listed in **Overhead 6.2**).

1. IDENTIFICATION

In populations of refugees or displaced persons where there are separated children, identifying and documenting them should be regarded as an urgent priority. Young children quickly forget information about their past, and it is important for children to be reunified before they became too attached to "interim" carers, or before they or their family experience further moves. Experience shows that children who have been through terrible events such as conflict, are likely to recover more quickly from these experiences if rapidly returned to their own family and community.

2. DOCUMENTATION

Separated children should be registered and documented as soon as possible after identification.

> **Registration** is the compilation of key personal data: full name, date and place of birth, father's and mother's name, former address and present location. This information is collected for the purpose of establishing the identity of the child, for protection and to facilitate tracing.
>
> **Documentation** is the process of recording further information in order to meet the specific needs of the child, including tracing, and to make plans for his or her future. This is a continuation of the registration process and not a separate undertaking.
>
> Source: Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children (2004).

What Should Be Documented?

- The child's identity - full name, including nickname, nationality, place of birth, age, gender, information about family, including name of mother and father. The compilation of a chart showing the child's family, other relatives and possibly friends may be helpful. Identification numbers are usually assigned by the agency undertaking the documentation.

- The child's current living situation - address, type of placement, details of the adults having care of the child, presence of siblings etc.

- History of separation - date, place and circumstances of separation, how and when the child came to be in the current placement.

- The child's opinions and wishes - perceptions of the current placement, hopes and ideas for the future, who they wish to trace.

- A photograph is normally taken as part of the documentation process. This should be taken as soon as possible, with the child in the same clothes he/she was wearing at the time of separation. The photograph must be given the same number as the form and attached immediately.

N.B. A standard registration form has been developed by the Inter-agency Group on Separated Children and is included as **Handout 6.1**.

How Is Documentation Undertaken?

- Interviews with the child (initial interviews may need to be followed up after some time if the child was not able to provide sufficient information during the first interview).

- Drawing and play may be helpful in eliciting information from children - especially those who are young or who have difficulty in expressing themselves verbally.

- Interviews with other people having knowledge of the child.

- Discussion within the community so that any other persons with knowledge of the child can communicate that information and understand its importance.

- Confidentiality and protection of the data collected on separated children is critical and all involved must be informed of this principle.

Who Undertakes Documentation Work?

This is a skilled and sensitive task requiring training not only in interviewing children but in the whole tracing process. More specifically, the following are required:

- knowledge of the child's language and culture;

- skills and experience in working with children - interviewing and the use of drawing, play etc. Sensitivity and patience, especially when the child is being asked to recall painful and frightening events;

- good literacy skills, the ability to keep good records and a good understanding of the forms.

Documenting Children without Address

Special procedures need to be used in cases where children, usually in the first few years of life, have no known address. These may include:

- documenting the children as early as possible - children's memory may fade and clues about their identity may get lost;

- interviewing children over a longer period;

- using visual and playful means to elicit memories from children – see, for example, De Lay (2003) Mobility Mapping and Flow Diagrams;

- special attention needs to be placed on obtaining information from other people around the child;

- interviewing by people with knowledge of the child's home area may help to jog his/her memory e.g. local festivals, crops or other characteristics of the area;

- involving the child's carers in gaining the child's confidence and using opportunities for quiet talking with the child;

- a variety of photographs should be taken as early as possible, including with the clothes the child was wearing when separation occurred, and along with siblings where there is a sibling group;

- care needs to be taken in verifying relatives when they come forward.

3. TRACING

> Tracing, in the case of children, is the process of searching for family members or primary legal or customary care-givers. The term also refers to the search for children whose parents are looking for them. The objective of tracing is reunification with parents or other close relatives.
>
> Source: Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children (2004).

There are various approaches to tracing:

Spontaneous tracing consists of activities carried out by families and communities outside of organised tracing programmes. Children search for their families, and families search for their children. It is important to understand how people in the community go about tracing, and especially the networks used for gaining information.

Case-by-case tracing involves workers following-up information on relatives in the area in which they are believed to reside. This approach tends to be time-consuming, as well as labour and transport intensive, though it is sometimes possible for several families to be traced in a particular locality during one visit.

Centre-based tracing is undertaken usually by centre staff on behalf of children living there, especially when they originate from the surrounding area. Sometimes this work can be done on an inter-centre basis, with centre staff co-operating with each other.

Large-scale tracing: rather different approaches need to be used when there is a need for tracing over a large geographical area e.g. when large populations take refuge in several different countries. This requires either one agency with staff in the relevant locations, or different agencies working co-operatively. This clearly requires agreement on procedures, standardised documentation and good systems for processing information. Tracing relies heavily on good community work - liaising with community leaders, convening meetings etc.

Mass tracing is a term used to describe a variety of approaches used in situations where there are large numbers of separated children making case-by-case tracing expensive and time-consuming. It is particularly appropriate in situations in which there are a large number of separated children thought to come from a particular area, or where there are large numbers of families e.g. in refugee camps.

Various approaches can be taken, including the following:

- displaying lists or photographs in places such as public buildings or communal areas (details of what information can be safely displayed publicly must be agreed at a local level so as not to expose children to further risk);

- visiting locations where people gather, such as market places (photographs or lists can be displayed and tracing workers can let people know about them by using megaphones);

- where appropriate, handing over lists of relatives sought to local leaders and returning at a later date for feedback;

- joining public meetings to speak about the tracing programme, read out names and display photographs;

- arranging public meetings especially for mass tracing - mass tracing has been carried out very successfully through community meetings.

All these activities should be arranged with the local authorities and leaders.

As well as tracing for the children on the list, mass tracing also provides an opportunity for:

- people who know the child or family to give information if no relatives come forward;

- finding out if children have returned spontaneously and no longer require tracing;

- separated children in spontaneous foster families to be documented;

- families seeking lost children to fill in a tracing request if a structure for this is in place;

- raising awareness on child welfare, child rights and the tracing programme.

Cross border tracing: this is essential when separated children and their families are to be found in more than one country.

ICRC and UNHCR both have a mandate for cross-border tracing: the Geneva Conventions grant ICRC the right to work during conflicts, while the 1950 Statute and 1951 Convention gives UNHCR the right to work with refugees. These international accords form the basis of local agreements – including free access and travel – for facilitating the work of these two agencies.

A tracing system must be in operation on both sides of the border, or on a regional basis as required, and there must also be channels for exchanging information. A centralised database is essential. Where more than one agency is involved, they must all co-operate in passing information to the agency centralising the data. If this does not happen, time is wasted duplicating tracing for children whose cases should have been closed. Tracing across international borders takes time and it can be difficult to keep track of separated children during this period. By the time the family has been found, the child may have moved or been abandoned. It is important to have a strong tracing network in place and to work closely with the community who may be able to support tracing activities. Normally, the reunification of separated refugee children is only considered with parents (as opposed to any other family members) in the country of origin. If children are reunited with members of the extended family in the country of origin and their parents remain in the country of asylum, there is a possibility of permanent separation occurring.

4. VERIFICATION

Once the parents or other family member of a separated child are located, it is vital that their identity and relationship with the child are confirmed. The purpose of verification is to prevent the child from being handed over to the wrong person. This can happen by accident - perhaps because of mistaken identity or bureaucratic errors - or more malevolent reasons, such as a desire for revenge or to exploit the child's labour. Verification is a built-in protection to the tracing system so people cannot access children who are separated from their families. It must *always* be carried out.

Verification checks that the person claiming the child really is who they say they are. Verification is also used to establish that the relatives are willing and able to take the child and that the child wishes to be reunited with these relatives.

When there is good information on the child's documentation form, verification should be straightforward; a more complex procedure is required where there is limited or no information about the child. In emergencies when there are large numbers of separated children, procedures for verification can be simplified, but they should still be done.

When and Where Is Verification Carried Out?

Verification of the adult's identity and willingness to take the child should be carried out at the time someone comes forward to claim a child or someone is found through tracing. It can be carried out in a tracing office, at a mass tracing meeting, or at the person's home if they are found on a tracing visit.

How Is Verification Carried Out?

Verification is carried out by tracing workers who ask the adult and child questions and record the information on a verification form. It takes place in steps:

1. checking the identity of the adult;

2. the adult confirms whether he or she is willing and able to care for the child;

3. information provided by the person claiming the child is checked with the original documentation form;

4. information provided by the person claiming the child is checked with the child;

5. the child confirms whether he or she wishes to live with the person found.

In situations in which there is any doubt about the relationship between adults and child, observation of their interaction and giving the child adequate time to express him/herself afterwards may be crucial.

Verification forms must always be completed.

Issues Arising During Verification which Require Further Action

During verification particular concerns may have been expressed by the child, the family or observed by the tracing worker. The tracing worker needs to know how to respond to these. It is important to allow time to discuss these concerns. Most concerns will not be obstacles to reunification, they may simply be a case of the child or family needing reassurance. Occasionally, the issues raised may be more serious requiring further action (examples include children who do not want to be reunified as this would mean losing education opportunities). This may involve more intensive preparation of the child and/or family and the community in which they live. Sometimes it will be necessary to make arrangements for future support through the community. Decisions need to be taken carefully, on a case by case basis, by skilled child care professionals.

Issues involved in situations where the family, the child or the tracing worker have concerns about reunification are presented in **Handout 6.2**.

In some cases, careful assessment will need to be carried out in order to arrive at decisions on the best interests of the individual child in complex and difficult cases.

5. REUNIFICATION/PLACEMENT

Families become separated in difficult circumstances. The memories of separation and experiences since separation may make family reunification difficult. It is also important to take into account the circumstances before separation as there may have been pre-existing difficulties. It must be recognised by agencies carrying out reunifications that this may not be an easy time for the child and family. In addition, while this part of the process is commonly referred to as "reunification", the reality is that children are often placed with a family with whom the child has never lived previously.

It is important that the child, the family and the community receive some kind of preparation for reunification. Time should be set aside to discuss future plans, and explain what will happen and when. The opportunity should be given to ask questions and raise any concerns, and the child and family should be told what resources or support will be available following reunification if there are difficulties. Sometimes it will be possible to exchange photographs or letters or to arrange a visit before reunification. IRC have developed some useful tools for assessing the family's capacity to care for a child and for facilitating the involvement of the family's social networks to assist in the integration of the child into the family and community[1].

Particular difficulties are often experienced in respect of the reunification of former child soldiers: careful preparation of the child, the family and the community will be required. Please see ARC Resource Pack on **Child Soldiers** Topics 4, 5, and 6.

When a child is reunited with his or her family the local authority and/or community leaders should be involved wherever possible. Where possible, they should be given notification of planned reunifications. In reality, where many reunifications are taking place, or when travel and communication are difficult, it may not be possible to inform people in advance. Local authorities should, however, be informed of reunifications which have taken place.

A member of the tracing team should be with the child for reunification. Ideally, this should be someone who has worked with the child. It could also be the person who was responsible for tracing and verification and who therefore has met the family and the community leaders before. If the child has been in a children's centre, a carer can also accompany the child. This is helpful for both child and carer. It is especially useful if the child has to travel a long distance to his or her family. Where carers of children are resistant to letting children return to their families, involving them in reunification may help. The ability to arrange for this depends on logistical, financial and human resources.

If the child has been in a foster family, it might be appropriate to involve the foster family in the reunification. This is the case when foster families have genuine affection for and interest in the child. Caution is necessary in cases where foster families want some form of payment or compensation from the child's family, though in some cultures this may be a traditional expectation. In reality it may be difficult to provide transport for the foster family though their involvement in the process, if possible, may be important to the child in facilitating continuity. Names and addresses of both families can be exchanged if appropriate.

Carrying Out the Reunification/Placement

Whether reunification takes place in the family home or in public, it should include the following key elements:

- some kind of ceremony of acceptance;

- advice to the child and family on problems they may encounter;

- signing the reunification form (essential).

The ceremony does not have to be elaborate, it can simply be a reading of the reunification form. It serves as a celebration and as a demonstration of the family's responsibility for the child, helping to ensure that the child is protected in his or her new environment. In a community setting the community and families publicly accept responsibility, as duty-bearers, for the children.

Reunification provides an opportunity for the tracing worker to discuss some of the difficulties the child and family may experience following reunification. When reunification is a public event, the tracing worker speaks publicly about the difficulties which might arise following reunification.

6. FOLLOW-UP

The term follow-up is often used to describe what may need to be done after children are reunited. It may be used to describe:

- general support to a family; for instance through visits by a social worker who helps the family link up with community support and resources;

- supporting the reintegration of children, for example where there are family or emotional difficulties;

- material support; assistance with school fees or other items.

It is important that everyone is clear what they mean by follow-up when discussing what it will involve, how it will be provided, by whom and for whom.

What Kind of Follow-up?

How follow-up is carried out depends on the resources available and the needs of the individual child and family. One or two visits may be all that is necessary: for example, one visit one month after reunification and another up to six months later. In other cases more frequent follow-up may be desirable. It may be possible during the tracing process to identify children who may need additional follow-up; for example, a child reunited with both parents after a short separation may be less likely to have problems than a child reunited with a distant relative living in difficult circumstances.

However, some problems only become apparent after reunification. Often difficulties arise within families after reunification as a result of the changes which have taken place in the family since separation, the changes to the family when a child is received back, and from the experiences of both the child and other family members during separation.

Who Should Follow-up?

Once a child has been reunited they become the responsibility of the family and community and ideally follow-up should be taken on at the community level. Prior

to reunification, potential sources of support and assistance such as community initiatives, local co-operatives and NGOs, should be identified for the family and child and discussions held with them.

However, some involvement of the tracing worker may be valuable to facilitate the process. It is important for whoever is involved in follow-up to have suitable training or experience in dealing with children and families and their problems.

TRAINING MATERIALS FOR TOPIC 6

Overhead 6.1: Key Learning Points for Topic 6	Summarises the key learning points.
Overhead 6.2: The Six Steps in Family Tracing and Reunification	Presents the six steps in a family tracing and reunification programme.
Exercise 6.1: The Child's Story, Part 1 - Identification and Documentation	Participants use a case study to develop understanding of processes of identification and documentation.
Exercise 6.2: The Child's Story, Part 1 - Tracing	Participants use a case study to develop understanding of issues around tracing.
Exercise 6.3: The Child's Story, Part 2 - Verification	Participants use a case study to develop understanding of processes involved in verification.
Exercise 6.4: The Child's Story, Part 2 - Reunification	Participants use a case study to develop understanding of processes of reunification.
Exercise 6.5: Agency Co-ordination in Working with Separated Children	Examines key players and range of activities which would contribute to effective co-ordination among agencies.
Handout 6.1: Registration Form for Unaccompanied and Separated Children	This is the form developed by the Inter-agency Group on Separated Children
Handout 6.2: Issues Arising during Verification	Details some of the problems from the viewpoint of the child, the family and the tracing worker.

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[1] De Lay (2003) Mobility Mapping and Flow Diagrams

Separated Children
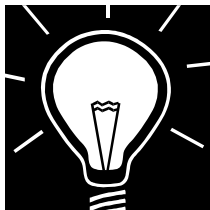
Topic 7
Monitoring and Supporting Separated Children Living in Family Situations

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- *Agencies working with separated children have clear responsibilities, as duty-bearers, to ensure that the child's progress and well-being are monitored and supported.*

- *Based on an overall protection framework, criteria may need to be developed locally, involving children and their communities, to determine priorities for follow up.*

- *A careful assessment of each individual situation is required to determine the nature, intensity and possibly the duration of the support required.*

- *The pattern of support needs to take account of the full range of children's rights and needs.*

- *Monitoring and support activities must ensure that children are consulted and informed on decisions affecting them.*

- *Various community structures may have the potential to provide support to separated children, including associations of foster carers, community-based organisations and young people themselves.*

INTRODUCTION

This is a special topic looking at monitoring and support for separated children in any family setting. The issues therefore relate not only to the follow-up of children following reunification or placement, but also to a number of care arrangements that have been discussed in previous topics of this resource pack including separated children living with extended family, unrelated carers, or in child-headed households, as well as those in formal arrangements such as agency foster care. The support needs of these various categories will vary, and clearly each case will require an assessment of the degree and nature of support required.

It is likely that monitoring and support activities will be viewed as an integral part of any placements where external agencies have been involved. For children in spontaneous care arrangements the need for effective monitoring and support activities will be equally great, although establishing the roles and responsibilities of duty-bearers is likely to be more complex.

While Western approaches to monitoring and support have been based on the availability and sustainability of a professional social service, the realities of many

emergency situations mean that local authorities are not in a position to provide a full level of support, and the principal front-line sources of support for children and their families are the extended family and the local community. As such, agencies are increasingly focussing on community structures as being the most appropriate and effective method of providing support not only for foster families but for a range of other potentially vulnerable children.

What is clear is that the children in all of these situations are in a potentially vulnerable and potentially long-term substitute family situation. Moreover, a rights-based approach to programming requires a commitment on the part of the agencies involved, as duty bearers, to ensure an effective and, where necessary, long-term follow-up of these children.

Organisations that do not have the capacity for a long term commitment should not intervene in child protection work in emergencies, and for those that do they should include an exit strategy so they can be working towards this in their planning.

Key Reference Points in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

*States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures. (**Article 3.2**).*

*A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or in whose own best interests cannot be allowed to remain in that environment, shall be entitled to special protection and assistance provided by the State. (**Article 20.1**).*

COMMUNITY MONITORING AND SUPPORT

Many fostering agencies have moved away from a Western model of fostering which vests responsibility for follow-up in the agency, and towards a model which locates follow-up responsibility at a local level. In practice, this presents a number of difficulties.

- Although primary responsibility for the monitoring and support of separated children would normally rest with local authorities, often in an emergency context they will lack the necessary capacity and resources: even a national framework of legislation, policy and procedures may be lacking.

- In situations of conflict, communities are frequently weakened by ethnic, religious or political differences, often compounded by poverty, which limits the extent to which people are willing and able to take on collective responsibility for children in a vulnerable situation.

- In urban areas, the sense of community may be relatively weak and the ties within the extended family may also be weaker than in rural areas.

- Where refugees are scattered among host-country nationals, the local community structures will not necessarily be willing to take on responsibility for refugee children.

- Some agencies have naively located responsibility for separated children "in the community" without clearly identifying community structures or leaders who are in a position to take on a long-term duty bearer role.

- Community structures which are set up in a refugee context do not necessarily endure into a repatriation situation.

Equally serious is the danger of agencies making the assumption that the government, whether in the host country or country of origin, will take over responsibility for separated children when in effect they may lack the capacity – and possibly the willingness – to do so in a meaningful way.

On the other hand, there is strong evidence that one of the most effective protection strategies is to embed care arrangements for separated children within the community by raising awareness of the needs and rights of separated children and by strengthening both a sense of collective responsibility and facilitating good linkages between substitute families and members of the local community.

A number of approaches have been taken to locate responsibility for separated children within the community, usually with an agency providing important facilitative support in the form of training and capacity-building and professional support especially in respect of the more difficult situations which might be faced (e.g. placement failure, allegations of abuse etc.).

FACILITATING APPROPRIATE COMMUNITY STRUCTURES

In many refugee situations it has been possible to facilitate the setting up of community structures to take over the major responsibility for supporting children in a potentially vulnerable situation. Sometimes this has consisted of employing, training and supporting a cadre of community workers, social supporters or "bare-foot social workers". In other situations, the community has been supported in setting up its own volunteer structures, for example in the form of a social welfare or child welfare committee. An example is given in **Handout 7.1**.

There may be an important role for faith-based organisations which often have the social capital, credibility, commitment to humanitarian issues and the continuous presence in the community to take on a responsibility for separated children and their carers. Schools too may have a role to play.

Recent work published by Save the Children (D.Tolfree, (2004). Whose Children?) looked at how to locate responsibility within the community for separated children and their carers in an effective way. From the evidence of case-studies and other sources, five key points emerged.

1. Embedding the Care of Separated Children within the Local Community

Facilitating good linkages to members of the local community can be protective and supportive in several different ways. It can provide both a window through which the child's treatment can be viewed by other members of the community, and as opportunity for the cares, and more particularly the child, to disclose areas of difficulty to people who may be perceived as trustworthy and helpful. It can also provide sources of material and social support both to the child and to the carers.

2. Locating Specific Responsibilities

Effective planning and co-ordination is required between all those involved in the care and protection of separated children, and must also ensure an integrated approach to monitoring and support activities. Relevant government authorities should play a key role, unless this is not in the best interests of the child.

This topic has already referred to the important role that can be provided by both formal and informal local structures. However, it is important to note that responsibility cannot simply be located "in the community" without clearly defining *who* within the community has taken on the responsibility. This does not necessarily mean placing the responsibility on one individual but rather looking to broadly target social structures so as to reach a variety of people who can then carry a responsibility for child protection.

3. The Role of Young People Themselves in Child Protection

Children and adolescents should not just be seen as the objects of care and protection, but as social actors who may have an active role to play in child protection within their community. There is evidence that in some situations children are more likely to disclose abuse and discrimination to other children than to adults: mobilising young people, empowering them through training and capacity-building and possibly enabling them to take on formal as well as informal roles in child protection may be an effective part of an overall strategy. Peer networks could be an important and effective way of providing support. The example given in **Handout 7.1** illustrates the involvement of children.

4. Assessing Individual Follow-up Needs

A careful assessment of each individual situation will help to determine the nature, intensity and possibly the duration of the support required. A risk assessment may be found to be helpful: although the criteria will vary from one context to another, the following risk factors may indicate a need for particularly careful and/or intensive follow-up support:

- children who have not previously experienced a close attachment relationship;

- those who have experienced abuse or neglect in the past;

- those who have had an extended period in residential care;

- children who for various reasons are displaying behavioural problems;

- children who have experienced frightening or distressing events;

- those who are experiencing difficulties in school or who have dropped out;

- the presence of relationship difficulties with other children in the family or in the neighbourhood;

- carers who lack experience of parenting or who are experiencing difficulties in managing the child's behaviour;

- situations in which children (e.g. those in child-headed households) are experiencing hostility or indifference within the extended family or local community;

- children with a disability, some form of health problem or who are HIV positive.

It is important that follow-up responds to the full range of children's rights and needs – physical and material, educational, social, emotional and spiritual. There is sometimes a tendency to underestimate the need for psycho-social support and the need to address issues such as the child's reactions to loss and separation, current relationship difficulties, discrimination and abuse, fears for the future, etc.

5. Organisations of Families/Carers

An approach that is being increasingly promoted is the mobilisation of carers themselves, both to provide a collective and more formalised responsibility for separated children and to take a range of steps to improve the care and protection provided to separated children. The example given in **Handout 7.1** includes this component.

SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES OF MONITORING AND SUPPORTING CHILDREN

Whatever arrangements are made for monitoring children, whether in spontaneous or formal care arrangements, a number of principles may be found helpful.

1. Knowledge and understanding of children and their rights should be raised as widely as possible within the community – this may be achieved via Child Welfare or Child Protection Committees.

2. When conducting follow-up visits it is important to talk to both the care and the child – possibly both separately and together. It is important to ensure that the child is consulted and informed on decisions affecting him or her.

3. Monitoring must draw on a variety of sources of additional information from within the community. The views of teachers, community leaders, neighbours etc. may shed light on the well-being of the child. Some agencies find it useful to deploy two workers (or volunteers), one to talk privately with the child and the other to meet the carers and possibly make discrete inquiries in the local community.

4. The child should have the opportunity of talking privately with a trusted adult outside of the family: This may require sensitively gaining the trust of the child's carer.

5. During reunification or placement procedures a written agreement may provide a useful way of defining the pattern of follow-up.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PERIODIC REVIEWS

The CRC places a specific obligation to review the child's placement (Article 25), though in practice this is frequently ignored. A formal review of the circumstances of a foster placement provides an excellent opportunity to consider the child's development, progress and well-being and any areas of difficulty. It provides a good opportunity to consider and communicate the progress of family tracing and where this has not been successful to consider whether some mechanism should be found to give added security to the child (and the carers) by formalising the placement as permanent. Children placed with the extended family, or in some other type of placement, will also benefit from a regular pattern of reviews.

MATERIAL SUPPORT

The question of material support to families that are caring for separated children is a difficult and contentious one. In general it has been found preferable to institute a policy of no direct material support, as this immediately precludes families motivated by material gain. Other dangers associated with material support include the potential for marginalising the child further, undermining the communities own coping initiatives and raising expectations that may not be sustainable.

On the other hand, the expense of caring for young children, for example requiring milk formula, can sometimes be a major issue, and the absence of some form of material support will inevitably reduce the number of families volunteering to foster. In urban economies in particular, where there is more of a cash economy, it may be difficult to encourage families to take in a child without some form of material assistance.

An approach often taken by agencies is to facilitate the family's access to income-generating opportunities – for example, by advocating for their inclusion in existing programmes, targeting vulnerable families for their own micro-credit programmes or facilitating groups of people (e.g. child-headed households or foster carers) to set up work cooperatives or micro-credit schemes.

TRAINING MATERIALS FOR TOPIC 7

Overhead 7.1: Key Learning Points for Topic 7	Summarises the key learning points.
Exercise 7.1: Risk and Protective Factors	Case studies which promote discussion on risk and protective factors for separated children.
Exercise 7.2: Monitoring and Support for Separated Children	Discussion exercise which identifies relevant duty bearers, needs for monitoring and support, and possible intervention strategies.
Exercise 7.3: The Protection and Assistance Network	Mapping and discussion exercise which identifies professionals and agencies working with separated children.
Handout 7.1: Sinje Camps in Sierra Leone	An extract from a Case Study of the Care and Protection of Separated Children in the Sinje Refugee Camp, Liberia.

Separated Children

Topic 8
Adoption

KEY LEARNING POINT

- ***Children in an emergency context are not available for adoption.***

ADOPTION AS A CULTURALLY-SPECIFIC CONCEPT

Adoption within western societies is generally understood as a form of child care whereby the child's parental rights and responsibilities are permanently transferred to the adopters, who are usually unrelated to the child by birth. The child normally takes the family name of the adopters. In other countries, adoption may be understood quite differently.

- In some countries the idea of adoption is inconceivable. It is simply not considered possible for parental rights to be transferred to an unrelated person.

- Adoption may be practised but in accordance with custom rather than as a judicial process.

- Islamic societies generally do not allow for adoption, but *Kafalah* is a form of family care which does not involve a change in kinship status.

- In some cultures where adoption is practised, it is the rights and needs of the adoptive parents which take precedence over those of the child.

In refugee emergencies, if the question of the adoption of separated children is raised, it is vital that the notion of adoption is fully understood within the particular cultural context.

ADOPTION IN REFUGEE CONTEXTS

It is UNHCR's policy that children in emergency situations are not available for adoption. The following issues need to be carefully addressed:

- In emergency situations it is extremely difficult to ascertain whether a separated child has parents or other family members able to provide care. It is vital that exhaustive attempts at family tracing are made. Where parental consent is said to have been given, it is also extremely difficult to establish whether or not this has been freely given and whether the notion of adoption is fully understood.

- It is a requirement of the CRC that adoption is only carried out by "competent authorities" who determine, in accordance with applicable law and procedures and on the basis of all pertinent and reliable information, that the adoption is permissible in view of the child's status....." (Article 21 (a)). This is vital in ensuring that decisions are made in accordance with the best interests of the individual child and it is vital that any moves to place a refugee child are scrutinised very carefully.

- Any placement which uproots the child from his/her own community and culture should almost always be avoided.

INTER-COUNTRY ADOPTION

This term is given to the practice of adoption which requires the child to move to another country: usually it involves adoption by individuals or couples from western societies of children from other societies. In most cases, this is also *trans-cultural adoption* and in many cases it is also *trans-racial.* It is a highly contentious practice, and one in which abuses and corruption appear to be widespread. It is usually motivated by the needs of potential adopters and not those of separated children, and where it involves placing the child in an unfamiliar culture, this often creates problems and conflicts for the child, often appearing only in adolescence and early adulthood.

Inter-country adoption is regulated by the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption" of 1993. This Convention establishes a system of co-operation among contracting states and a requirement that adoptions are arranged through a Central Authority within each state. It requires that inter-country adoption is only carried out if it is in the best interests of the child and sets out the consents that must be made. It requires that due consideration should be given to "the child's upbringing and his or her ethnic, religious and cultural background". It requires that professional work is undertaken with the prospective adopters, the child and the natural parents. In addition, the Recommendation concerning the Application to Refugee Children and other Internally Displaced Children of the Hague Convention was adopted in 1994. This Recommendation underlines the need for parental consents and emphasises the need for measures to be taken for family tracing and reunification before adoption is considered.

In refugee situations where the issue of inter-country adoption is raised, it is imperative that *it is approached with the utmost caution* and that the advice of competent experts is sought.

TRAINING MATERIALS FOR TOPIC 8

Overhead 8.1: Key Learning Point for Topic 8	Summarises the key learning point.
Exercise 8.1: Inter-country Adoption	Explores some of the contentious issues involved in inter-country adoption

Separated Children
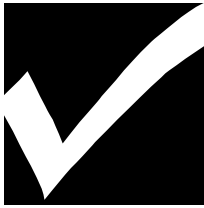
Sample Programmes

Different participants are likely to have different learning needs and priorities. We have divided participants into three broad groups: senior managers, sector co-ordinators and field staff.

Senior managers are those people who have key responsibility for an NGO's operations in a country or region or a UNHCR Section. They will have overall responsibility for strategy and resource allocation within the organisation's policy framework. Senior managers' needs are likely to be best served through briefings.

Sector co-ordinators comprise those people who have responsibility for a particular aspect of their agency's work in a country or region or who have a responsibility for a particular function within an operation, such as for example UNHCR programme, protection or community services officers. Sector co-ordinators are those responsible for translating policy into practice and ensuring that programme budgets reflect the necessary resources to support good practice.

Field staff are those people working in the field who are responsible for implementing the programme activities. They often have considerable front-line experience. Field staff may value the opportunity to develop and practise new skills as well as develop their knowledge and understanding.

Training programmes should be designed with the responsibilities and learning needs of these different groups in mind. If possible, participants from different groups should be trained separately but, if this is not possible, exercises and input should be selected which will meet the needs of all groups. It may be possible to use different small group exercises to address the needs of each type of participant in a mixed group workshop.

Two types of programme are included in this resource pack. The first describes a half day Awareness-Raising Workshop. The programme makes detailed reference to materials from the resource pack and describes how a facilitator might use these materials to conduct a session lasting three and a half hours.

The second example is for a full day workshop. It is written in the form of a Session Plan which covers:

- the overall aim of the training session;
- specific learning objectives;
- a description of what will be covered and the sequence to be followed;
- the timing for each part of the session;
- who will take responsibility for the different parts of the programme;

- what inputs and exercises will be used;

- what materials (e.g. handouts, overheads, briefing papers, index cards) will be required;

- what equipment (e.g. flipchart, overhead projector, blackboard, video) is needed.

The purpose and development of session plans are described in detail in the **ARC Facilitator's Toolkit**.

Both programmes are intended as guidance examples only. It is very important that the facilitator should think carefully about the group of participants with whom he or she will be working and devise a programme that takes into account:

- the role and responsibilities of the participants;

- the learning needs of the participants;

- their existing level of knowledge;

- their interest in the subject;

- their willingness to share experience and admit to gaps in their knowledge / skills;

- current / local issues and priorities for the participants;

- the amount of time they have available;

- their position in their organisation.

Any training programme should be devised, if possible, in consultation with the intended participants. If it is not possible to consult with all participants (for example, by sending out an application form including questions about their expectations for the training), the facilitator should try to speak to a sample of participants before making final decisions about the programme.

The facilitator should also consider:

- the range of Topics to be covered;

- the order in which Topics should be addressed;

- how to encourage the sharing of experience and information between participants;

- who will carry out the training;

- what methods will be most appropriate for the participants.

More detail on the process of training can be found in the **ARC Facilitator's Toolkit**.

Remember to build in a workshop evaluation - you will find ideas for this in the **ARC Facilitator's Toolkit**.

DETAILED PROGRAMME FOR A HALF DAY AWARENESS SESSION

This programme is designed to provide participants with an introduction to the protection and care of separated children in an emergency context. It highlights the importance of preventing separation as well as early identification of those children who have become separated, and looks at appropriate care arrangements for these children.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- understand the definitions of unaccompanied children, separated children and orphans;

- consider various causes of separation and assess different strategies for the prevention of separation;

- identify strategies for locating separated children in emergencies;

- consider a variety of different care options for separated children and assess the strengths and weakness of the different options.

PREPARATION

The facilitator should prepare an information pack for the participants that may include:

- copies of the relevant Handouts and Briefing Notes;

- a copy of the Reading List and relevant Readings;

- copies of relevant materials from the region / country / locality (e.g. research papers, monitoring reports).

If possible, this pack should be sent to participants in advance.

The facilitator should gather any locally relevant information on the Topics to be addressed in the training and identify individuals with specific expertise who could act as resource persons. All participants can be asked to bring along relevant material to display / share with others. The facilitator could, if possible, devise locally appropriate case-studies.

The facilitator should study the notes for each Exercise carefully to ensure that all the necessary materials are prepared in advance.

Introduction – Separated Children

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10 mins	Introduce the agreed objectives of the workshop on Separated Children on a prepared flipchart. Adapt **Overhead 1.0 Key Concepts** to introduce the relevant Key Concepts.	Flipchart summarising objectives Overhead 1.0

Definitions

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5 mins	Using Topic 1 Briefing Notes outline the effects of separation on children.	
20 mins	In small groups develop definitions for "unaccompanied children", "separated children" and "orphans". In plenary verify and extend these definitions.	Exercise 1.1 Overhead 1.2
15 mins	Brainstorm with participants the types of constraints that may be faced in providing protection and care for these children in an emergency context (refer to Topic 1 Briefing Notes).	Overhead 1.3

Inter-agency Guiding Principles

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15 mins	Using Topic 2 Briefing Notes provide a short introduction to the Protection Framework and key guiding principles.	

Causes of Separation and Preventive Measures

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45 mins	Introduce Exercise 3.1 and invite participants to work through the exercise. In plenary, ensure that points raised in Topic 3 Briefing Notes under each heading are discussed. Note ideas for prevention activities on a flip chart.	Exercise 3.1
5 mins	Introduce and distribute Handout 3.1.	Handout 3.1

Locating Separated Children

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| 10 mins | Explain the importance of effective assessments and highlight some of the difficulties that may be encountered in locating separated children. | |
| 40 mins | Introduce Exercise 4.2: Planning a Strategy for Locating Separated Children. | Exercise 4.2 |

Care Arrangements

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10 mins	Introduce the main care arrangement options for separated children using the Briefing Notes for Topics 4 and 5, and Overheads 5.2 and 5.3.	Overhead 5.2 and 5.3
30 mins	Using Exercise 5.1 as a basis, brainstorm with the group different care arrangements that are possible, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses in different situations.	Exercise 5.1
10 mins	Briefly explain the importance of on-going monitoring and support activities to the various care arrangements using Topic 7 Briefing Notes.	

Conclusion

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| 15 mins | Facilitator summarises main points emerging from the session and facilitates a brief evaluation. | |

SESSION PLAN FOR A ONE-DAY WORKSHOP ON SEPARATED CHILDREN / WORKING WITH CHILDREN

This programme has been written in the form of a training plan to demonstrate how materials from more than one Resource Pack can be combined to create a workshop that is customised to the needs of a particular group of participants. It is intended as an example only.

OVERALL AIM

To raise the awareness of participants about the effects of separation on children and introduce some of the issues involved in ensuring effective communication at all stages of the tracing process.

This session only aims to provide an introduction to the skills required in communicating with children. It is recognised that, from time to time, staff will find themselves in situations where they need to obtain or share information with children and will not necessarily have specialised support available. However, personnel who need to communicate with children on a regular basis, particularly distressed children, should seek more specialised training.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- understand the definitions of unaccompanied children, separated children and orphans;

- identify those Articles of the CRC that apply to effective communication with separated children;

- describe the importance of children's involvement at all stages of the family tracing process;

- understand the range of skills needed when working with children in situations where they are separated from their carers;

- identify the particular challenges that working with separated children places on adults' communication skills;

- describe a number of ways in which children can become separated from their carers;

- understand the processes that need to be applied in identifying and assessing the situation of separated children;

- consider how appropriate on-going monitoring and support may be provided.

Timing	Content	Methods	Materials	Resources and Equipment	Responsibility
30 mins	**Welcome and Introductions** **Sharing and Agreeing of Objectives**	Short participatory exercise where participants can get to know each other. Sharing and refining of objectives.	As required in introductory activity	Flipchart and pens	
45 mins	**The Effects of Separation and Definitions**	Short input by facilitator on the effects of separation based on Topic 1 Briefing Notes Small group exercise to explore definitions	Briefing Notes Topic 1 Exercise 1.1	Flipchart and pens	
45 mins	**Guiding principles**	Short introduction to the Protection Framework and guiding principles using Topic 2 Briefing Notes. Group exercise on Applying Guiding Principles: An Organisational Audit	Briefing Notes Topic 2 Exercise 2.3		
SUGGESTED BREAK					
40 mins	**The Importance of Skills in Communicating with Children**	Short input by facilitator based on Briefing Notes for Working with Children Topic 1. Small Group exercise to identify articles of the CRC relevant to communicating with children, and specifically separated children.	WWC Topic 1 WWC Overhead 1.2 Handout 2.1	Flipchart and pens	
40mins	**The Six Stages of Family Tracing**	Introduce the six stages of family tracing using Topic 6 Briefing Notes. Brainstorm ideas for the involvement of children at each stage of the process.	Overhead 6.2	Overhead projector Flipchart and pens	
40 mins	**Cultural Factors in Communicating with Children**	Brief input using WWC Topic 1. Small group exercise.	WWC Exercise 1.2	Flipchart and pens	

SUGGESTED BREAK				
60 mins	**Causes of Separation and Preventive Measures**	Short input by facilitator Small group exercise that should highlight the involvement of children.	Topic 3 Overhead 3.2 Exercise 3.1	Overhead projector Flipchart and pens	
15 mins	**Locating Separated Children**	Brief input by the facilitator using Topic 4 Briefing Notes on identifying possible locations of separated children and involving children in assessments.	Topic 4 Overhead 4.2	Overhead projector	
45 mins	**Communicating with distressed children**	Input from the facilitator on communicating with distressed children using WWC Topic 3. Small Group exercise.	WWC Topic 3 WWC Exercise 3.5		
SUGGESTED BREAK				
60 mins	**Care Arrangements for Separated Children**	Input from the facilitator using Topics 4 and 5 on spontaneous and organised care arrangements. Small Group exercise.	Topics 4 and 5 Overhead 5.3 Exercise 5.2	Overhead projector Flipchart and pens	
15 mins	**Monitoring and Support**	Input by the facilitator on monitoring and support using Topic 7 Briefing Notes.			
30 mins	**Action-planning**	Small group action-planning exercise.		Flipchart and pens.	
15 mins	**Workshop evaluation**	Evaluation exercise.	Evaluation form		

Separated Children

Overheads

Separated Children – Overhead 1.0

Key Concepts

- Separation is a devastating experience for children and can have serious long-term consequences for the child's well-being.

- All work with separated children should be in keeping with the CRC and other legal instruments.

- The importance of careful and co-ordinated planning in developing programmes on behalf of separated children cannot be over-estimated.

- High priority needs to be given to the prevention of separation and identification of children who have become separated.

- Care arrangements for separated children should, wherever possible, be based on family and community responsibilities for children.

- Family tracing and reunification programmes need to be developed.

- A careful assessment of each individual situation is required to determine the nature, intensity and duration of support and monitoring activities.

- Children in an emergency context are not available for adoption.

Separated Children – Overhead 1.1

Key Learning Points for Topic 1

- There is an important distinction to be made between unaccompanied children and separated children.

- Separation can have a far-reaching impact on children's development.

- Priority activities in emergencies are the prevention of separation and early identification of children who may have become separated.

- Wherever possible, care arrangements should be provided in a family/community based setting.

Separated Children – Overhead 1.2

Definitions

Separated children are those separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary care-giver, but not necessarily from other relatives. These may therefore include children accompanied by other adult family members.

Unaccompanied children (also called unaccompanied minors) are children who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so.

Orphans are children, both of whose parents are known to be dead. In some countries, however, a child who has lost one parent is called an orphan.

Source: Inter-agency Guiding Principles

Separated Children – Overhead 1.3

Protection and Care in an Emergency Context

- Priority decisions may have to be made when working simultaneously on prevention, immediate support and family tracing activities.

- A balance needs to be found between being sensitive and alert in identifying separated children, and avoiding actions which may encourage separations.

- As a general rule, families taking care of a separated child during a population movement should be encouraged to continue to do so.

- Periodic monitoring and review of the child's placement will be required, but could prove difficult in fluid or insecure situations.

- The longer the separation the less the chances of ultimate reunification. However, the need for protecting separated children should always be the first consideration.

- Other priority decisions may have to be made e.g. to concentrate on younger children, or focussing on truly unaccompanied children.

- It is possible that children can experience repeated displacement and/or separations. This can have an especially serious impact on children as well as requiring a regional strategy and careful inter-agency co-ordination.

- Organisations that do not have the capacity for a long term commitment should not intervene in child protection work in emergencies, and for those that do they should include an exit strategy so they can be working towards this in their planning.

Separated Children – Overhead 2.1

Key Learning Points for Topic 2

- An overall protection framework must guide all actions on behalf of separated children.

- Any decisions and actions on behalf of separated children should be informed by a series of guiding principles.

- Confidentiality and the protection of data needs to be ensured at all stages of the tracing and reunification process.

- In providing long-term solutions for unaccompanied and separated children, family reunification should be the first priority.

A Protection Framework

The concept of "**protection**" refers to all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual – in this case a child – as set out in the relevant human rights instruments and international humanitarian law. There are essentially three complementary types of action to help unaccompanied and separated children:

- **responsive action**: aimed at preventing, putting a stop to, and/or alleviating the immediate effects of a specific pattern of abuse;

- **remedial action**: aimed at restoring dignified living conditions through rehabilitation, restitution and reparation;

- **environment building**: aimed at creating and/or consolidating an environment (political, institutional, legal, social, cultural and economic) conducive to full respect for the rights of the individual.

An overall protection framework must guide all actions on behalf of separated children.

Workshop on protection for human rights and humanitarian organizations – Doing something about it and doing it well, Report on the fourth workshop held at the ICRC, Geneva, 18-20 January 1999 (ICRC ref. 0742).

Separated Children – Overhead 2.3

Key Provisions for the Protection and Care of Separated Children

All children are entitled to protection and care under a broad range of international, regional and national instruments. Of particular relevance for separated children are:

- the right to a name, legal identity and birth registration;

- the right to physical and legal protection;

- the right not to be separated from their parents;

- the right to provisions for their basic subsistence;

- the right to care and assistance appropriate to age and developmental needs;

- the right to participate in decisions about their future.

Efforts must be made in an emergency to protect family unity and avoid child-family separation.

Separated Children – Overhead 3.1

Key Learning Points for Topic 3

- It is essential that activities aimed at limiting separations are established as quickly as possible.

- Children become separated from their families in various ways and the response should reflect the cause.

- Agencies need to take great care to ensure that their own activities do not lead to accidental separations.

- The evacuation of children should only be undertaken under particular conditions.

Separated Children – Overhead 3.2

How Children Become Separated

Accidental Separation

Deliberate Separation

Agency-induced Separation

Separated Children – Overhead 4.1

Key Learning Points for Topic 4

- Various factors must be considered in conducting effective assessments into the situation of separated children.

- Good co-ordination is required to avoid the duplication of information gathering and unnecessary interviewing of children.

- It is essential that separated children are identified as soon as possible in order that their care and protection needs can be assessed and provided for.

- Many separated children may be found in a variety of so-called "spontaneous care arrangements".

Separated Children – Overhead 4.2

Locating Separated Children

Children in Spontaneous Care Arrangements:

- Children Placed with the Extended Family

- Children Living with Unrelated Families

- Child-Headed Households

"Invisible" Groups of Children:

- Child soldiers

- Disabled and/or sick children

- Children living on the streets

- Trafficking

- Abducted children

Separated Children – Overhead 5.1

Key Learning Points for Topic 5

- In general, children who are found to be living with extended family or cared for by siblings, or who have been spontaneously fostered, should be encouraged to remain.

- For refugee children in spontaneous care arrangements with unrelated host country families, placement in their own refugee community should be promoted.

- Institutional forms of care should be avoided where possible.

- however -

- The risks and resources involved in fostering programmes need to be carefully considered.

- Some children and adolescents may need special forms of provision.

Separated Children – Overhead 5.2

Care Arrangements for Separated Children – CRC

"The family (is) the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of its members and particularly children.....

The child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. (Preamble).

Separated Children – Overhead 5.3

Care Arrangements in Emergency Situations

- Members of their extended family

- Older siblings

- "Spontaneous" fostering by unrelated carers

- Formal or arranged fostering

- Various types of residential home or centre

- Some adolescents may prefer some form of small group living arrangement, with or without adult care-takers

Separated Children – Overhead 6.1

Key Learning Points for Topic 6

- The process of family tracing and reunification has six distinct but overlapping stages.

- The various tasks and activities within each stage need to be clearly understood and co-ordinated between all of the agencies involved.

- Difficult decisions on the child's best interests have to be taken on a case-by-case basis by skilled child care professionals.

Separated Children – Overhead 6.2

The Six Steps in Family Tracing and Reunification

- Identification

- Documentation

- Family Tracing

- Verification

- Reunification/Placement

- Follow-up

Separated Children – Overhead 7.1

Key Learning Points for Topic 7

- Agencies working with separated children have clear responsibilities, as duty-bearers, to ensure that the child's progress and well-being are monitored and supported.

- Based on an overall protection framework, criteria may need to be developed locally, involving children and their communities, to determine priorities for follow up.

- A careful assessment of each individual situation is required to determine the nature, intensity and possibly the duration of the support required.

- The pattern of support needs to take account of the full range of children's rights and needs.

- Monitoring and support activities must ensure that children are consulted and informed on decisions affecting them.

- Various community structures may have the potential to provide support to separated children, including associations of foster carers, community-based organisations and young people themselves.

Separated Children – Overhead 8.1

Key Learning Points for Topic 8

Children in an emergency context are not available for adoption.

Separated Children

Exercises

	Definitions and Terminology	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
	The Impact of Separation on Children	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
	The Case of Kollie	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
	A Protection Framework for Separated Children	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
	Using the CRC to Guide Decision-Making	Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
	Applying Guiding Principles: An Organisational Audit	Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
	Causes of Separation and Preventive Measures	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
	Prevention of Separation - Raising Awareness in the Community	Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
	Evacuating Children from Conflict Areas	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
	Locating Separated Children	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
	Planning a Strategy for Locating Separated Children	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
	Protection Issues for Separated Children	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
	Care Arrangements for Separated Children	Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
	Care Arrangements for Separated Children – Issues and Dilemmas	Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

5.3	The Importance of Socio-Cultural Information for Child Fostering	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
6.1	The Child's Story, Part 1 - Identification and Documentation	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
6.2	The Child's Story, Part 1 – Tracing	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
6.3	The Child's Story, Part 2 – Verification	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
6.4	The Child's Story, Part 2 – Reunification	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
6.5	Agency Co-ordination in Working with Separated Children	Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
7.1	Risk and Protective Factors	Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
7.2	Monitoring and Support for Separated Children	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
7.3	The Protection and Care Network	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
8.1	Inter-country Adoption	Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

Separated Children

Exercise 1.1: (Facilitator's Notes)
Definitions and Terminology

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- differentiate between similar terms which have different implications;

- understand the definitions of unaccompanied children, separated children and orphans.

TIMEFRAME

40 minutes

METHOD

Write the following words on a flipchart:

Unaccompanied Child, Separated Child, Orphan, Carer, Family, Minor.

Ask participants to work in pairs and to decide upon a definition for each term within a specific context known to them.

Ask them to also consider in what ways these terms might be understood differently by different people? Might they have different connotations in different contexts? Allow 15 minutes for this.

In plenary, ask participants to share their definitions. Develop these using the material in the Briefing Notes for Topic 1 as well as the Terminology list that appears in the Introduction of this resource pack.

Provide participants with the definitions for unaccompanied children, separated children and orphans as they appear in the Inter-agency Guiding Principles. These appear in Overhead 1.2.

RESOURCES

Flipchart and marker pens.

Separated Children

Exercise 1.2: (Facilitator's Notes)
The Impact of Separation on Children

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVE

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- identify potential impact of separation on children at different ages and stages of their lives.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Explain that the purpose of this exercise is for participants to share what they know about how the experience of separation might impact on children's lives in both the short and the long term.

Ask participants to work in pairs. Allocate one of the following age groups to each pair:

- Children up to the age of five
- Children from the ages of five to thirteen
- Children from the ages of thirteen to eighteen

Ask each pair to reflect on their own personal and professional experiences of childhood separation and to discuss both the physical and the psychological consequences that separation could have on the group of children that they have been asked to consider.

Facilitate a plenary session where feedback regarding each age group is given and discussed. Ensure that both physical and psycho-social consequences are discussed, and that short and long term implications are considered. Use Briefing Notes for Topic 1 to supplement ideas given by the participants

RESOURCES

Flip chart paper and pens.

Separated Children

Exercise 1.3: (Facilitator's Notes)
The Case of Kollie

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVE

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- identify some of the effects of multiple separations on a child's physical and social development.

TIMEFRAME

30 minutes

METHOD

Ask the participants to work in small groups. Distribute copies of the **Participants' Notes**, asking participants to read the brief case study and answer the question at the end of it.

In plenary, then pull together thoughts under the two headings of physical and social impacts, relating these to the age and development stage of the child.

RESOURCES

Flip Chart paper and pens.

NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR

- Consider both short-term and long-term effects of separation.

- Second and subsequent separations may trigger emotional responses stemming from previous experiences of separation.

- Repeated separations may leave the child with a profound sense of abandonment and may inhibit his/her ability to trust other people and to form new attachments

- Early adolescence may be a stage where young people have a particularly strong need to re-discover their mother or father.

- Repeated change has a wide impact on children - consider the effects of constant disruption to schooling, peer-group relationships etc.

Separated Children

Exercise 1.3: (Participants' Notes)
The Case of Kollie

OBJECTIVE

By the end of this exercise, you will be able to:

- identify some of the effects of multiple separations on a child's physical and social development.

TIMEFRAME

30 minutes

METHOD

Working in small groups, read the case study and answer the question at the end of it. There will be a plenary session where thoughts will be discussed under the headings of physical impact and social impact.

THE CASE STUDY

Kollie was a five year old boy living with his parents in Monrovia, Liberia. As a result of the war they fled to Sierra Leone in 1990 and lived in Kenema, a moderate-sized town. The following year they were forced to flee again because of the civil war in Sierra Leone, and went to Guinea where they lived in a village close to the Liberian border.

His father decided to return to Monrovia in order to ascertain whether it was safe for the family to return, and to find a secure place to live. By now Kollie was seven. While the father was gone, there was an attack on Monrovia which prevented the father from returning to the family. Early in the following year, there was an attack on the region where Kollie was living with his mother - they became separated as people fled in different directions. The boy ended up living with an unrelated family in another region of Guinea.

At the age of 12, Kollie decided to return to Monrovia in the hope of finding his father: on his own initiative he established contact with a driver who took him to Monrovia. However, on arrival he failed to make contact with his father and could find no information about his whereabouts. He had nowhere to live and had no alternative but to live on the streets and fend for himself.

Question

What impact do you think each experience of displacement and each separation might have had on this boy's physical and social development, and why?

Separated Children

Exercise 2.1: (Facilitator's Notes)
A Protection Framework for Separated Children

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- identify rights that have been denied, or violated, to children in a given case study;

- understand the importance of applying guiding principles when working with separated children;

- consider the importance of effective co-ordination and collaboration between all those involved in protecting separated children.

TIMEFRAME

20 minutes introductory concepts

20 minutes case study

30 minutes plenary

METHOD

Using Overheads 2.2 and 2.3, and the information in the Briefing Notes for this topic, provide an introduction to the concept of a Protection Framework for separated children. This will include information about the Inter-agency Guiding Principles (what they cover and organisations that have endorsed them); and key legal instruments that protect separated children.

Ask participants to work in small groups. They should read the case study provided, (or write a new case study appropriate to the circumstances of the participants) and answer the following questions:

- What rights have been denied in the case of these two boys?

- Which principles have not been applied, and what effect has this had on the boys in question?

- What course of action could you now propose on behalf of these two boys?

Allow 20 minutes for this. Facilitate a plenary session in which answers are shared and discussed.

In relation to the third question, ensure that information under the headings of "Complementarity and Cooperation", and "Confidentiality" are covered.

Distribute copies of Handouts 2.2 and 2.3. Spend some time going through these documents to ensure that participants understand them clearly.

RESOURCES

Flip chart paper and pens.

Participants' Notes for this exercise.

Overheads 2.2 and 2.3.

Copies of Handouts 2.2 and 2.3.

Separated Children

Exercise 2.1: (Participants' Notes)
A Protection Framework for Separated Children

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, you will be able to:

- identify rights that have been denied, or violated, to children in a given case study;

- understand the importance of applying guiding principles when working with separated children;

- consider the importance of effective co-ordination and collaboration between all those involved in protecting separated children.

TIMEFRAME

20 minutes introductory concepts

20 minutes case study

30 minutes plenary

METHOD

Work in small groups. Read the case study below, and answer the following questions.

- What rights have been denied in the case of these two boys?

- Which principles have not been applied, and what effect has this had on the boys in question?

- What course of action could you now propose on behalf of these two boys?

You will have 30 minutes for this. A plenary session will follow.

CASE STUDY FROM EASTERN EUROPE

As told by a UNHCR Protection Officer:

"A few weeks ago the deputy head of the Aliens Police in K… (a region in a country in Eastern Europe) asked our local NGO partner to provide emergency humanitarian assistance to two 14-year-old boys (a Bangladeshi and a Sri Lankan) who were detained with a group of other illegal aliens. The deputy said that the two boys were accompanied by adult relatives and that he wanted to release the boys and put them in the care of the NGO pending expulsion. I spoke with the deputy on the phone and suggested instead that he should release the adult relatives as well so as not to split the family, at which point the deputy said there weren't any accompanying relatives. So I said to the deputy that the State has a special duty towards unaccompanied children and, while I would work with him to find a solution, it was not necessarily the right solution to place these children in the care of the NGO. I said I was sure there had to be a temporary State solution pending a more durable solution. I asked whether these children were asylum-seekers and the deputy said they were not, although he then admitted they had not been interviewed because there was no interpreter. He then lost patience with the telephone discussion and said that unless I authorized the NGO to care for these unaccompanied children he would dump them in the street in the next hour.

"So, the NGO tried to provide emergency assistance while I took up the matter with central government. However, the home that the NGO found for the these children refused to take one of them in because he had a skin disease (I had already recommended medical examinations) and he ended up being transferred to quarantine in hospital. The other child followed him into hospital shortly afterwards.

"Meanwhile, I discussed the case with the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs which informed me that indeed the State is responsible towards these unaccompanied children and that the Aliens Police should have referred the case to the Ministry's social workers in the regional office in K…... I obtained an undertaking from the Ministry that its social workers would, with the co-operation of the NGO, obtain social histories of the children using the UNHCR forms designed for this purpose. The Ministry also undertook to take over the case from the NGO and to discharge the State's legal responsibility to ensure the care of the children until family reunification was arranged.

"However, the social workers never went to see the children because the hospital records indicated that they were not minors but were 18 - information provided by the Police (still without having interviewed them!) and uncritically copied into the records by the hospital staff. The NGO could not at first get access to these children because they were in quarantine but, once it did get access, one of the boys (the NGO was unable to communicate with the other because of the lack of an interpreter) said he was aged 16, i.e. a minor. The two boys were then transferred to a nearby Detention Centre."

Separated Children

Exercise 2.2: (Facilitator's Notes)
Using the CRC to Guide Decision-Making

TARGET GROUPS

Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

• reflect on some of the dilemmas in determining the child's best interests;

• understand the importance of children being involved in decision-making about their own futures.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Ask participants to work in small groups. Distribute copies of Participants' Notes for this exercise, and copies of the CRC for each group. Ask participants to read the following case study. Explain that their task is to provide a response to the father's request based on the following Articles of the CRC:

• Article 3: the child's best interests.

• Article 12: the child's opinion/participation.

• Articles 5 and 18: parental rights and responsibilities.

Allow 30 minutes for this. Each group should then share and discuss their response in plenary with the other participants. Provide further information as relevant from Briefing Notes from Topic 2 and distribute copies of Handout 2.1.

RESOURCES

Participants' Notes for this exercise.

Copies of the CRC.

Copies of Handout 2.1.

Separated Children

Exercise 2.2: (Participants' Notes)
Using the CRC to Guide Decision Making

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, you will be able to:

- reflect on some of the dilemmas in determining the child's best interests;

- understand the importance of children being involved in decision-making about their own futures.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

In your small groups, read the following case study. Referring to CRC: Article 3, best interests of the child; Article 12, the child's opinion; Articles 5 and 18, parental rights and responsibilities; develop a response to the boy's father. You will be asked to share your response in a plenary session.

CASE STUDY

In A……….. (a country in Eastern Europe), there is a sporadic civil war between rebels fighting for independence and the government. Many refugees have fled to a neighbouring country which is sympathetic to the rebel cause. After a long lull in the fighting, some refugees are spontaneously returning to their homes and UNHCR is facilitating return on a case-by-case basis, with some basic assistance provided.

A refugee father approaches UNHCR in A………. . He is looking for assistance to secure the return of his 16 year old son who fled to the neighbouring country and has been living in rather unsatisfactory conditions with a group of adolescent boys in an urban setting, with minimal support from UNHCR. The rest of the family has fled to another neighbouring country and have no plans to return.

As a result of the father's representations, a Community Services Officer (following discussion with the Protection Officer) decides to interview the boy. He confirms his wish to return but his manner during the interview leads the CSO to feel that he has some fears which he is unable or unwilling to express verbally. It is learned from reliable sources in A……… that social and political pressure is mounting within the refugee community; and that they plan to send young men back to fight for their independence.

Separated Children

Exercise 2.3: (Facilitator's Notes)
Applying Guiding Principles: An Organisational Audit

TARGET GROUPS

Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- identify gaps in applying the guiding principles to existing programmes;

- assess the extent to which the organisation could strengthen its application of the guiding principles.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

Ask participants to work in groups by organisation. Explain that the purpose of this exercise is to reflect on the current organisation practice in relation to the Inter-agency Guiding Principles; and to consider potential areas of improvement.

Distribute copies of the Participants' Notes and ask participants to complete the worksheet by deciding which of the three columns (1, 2 or 3) best describes their agency's current practice. If they feel that they are not always able to apply the principles, ask participants to consider the constraints or difficulties that they face and identify possible actions to address these.

As an additional task participants could be asked to analyse whether their organisations policy towards separated children is in line with the guiding principles. If their agency does not currently have a written statement of its policy, they are asked to decide whether it would be easy or difficult to adopt each of the Principles.

Allow 40 minutes for this task. Facilitate a plenary session where answers are shared and ideas for improving on current practice are discussed.

RESOURCES

Participants' Notes for this exercise.

Separated Children

Exercise 2.3: (Participants' Notes)
Applying Guiding Principles: An Organisational Audit

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, you will be able to:

- identify gaps in applying the guiding principles to existing programmes;

- assess the extent to which the organisation could strengthen its application of the guiding principles.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

Divide into groups by organisation and discuss and complete the following worksheet. A plenary session will follow.

Principles	1. Practice always consistent with principle	2. Practice often consistent with principle	3. Practice rarely consistent with principle	A. Difficulties/ constraints to applying this principle include:	B. Applying this principle could be strengthened by:
Family Unity: all children have a right to a family, and families have a right to care for their children.					
Best interests: all actions concerning the child should be in his or her best interests.					
Child's Opinion: girls and boys have the right to be involved in all decisions that affect them					
Non-discrimination: All rights apply to all children without exception.					
The Special needs of girls: must be taken into account throughout armed conflicts and their aftermath.					
Complementarity and Co-operation: effective planning and co-ordination between all organisations.					
Long-term commitment: from the outset be aware of the long-term implications of work with separated children including possible hand over activities.					
Durable Solutions: decisions should take account of the long term interests and welfare of the child					

Separated Children

Exercise 3.1: (Facilitator's Notes)
Causes of Separation and Preventive Measures

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

• understands the various ways in which children might become separated from their families;

• identify and prioritise measures for preventing separation.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Introduce the topic of separation by explaining very briefly the different ways in which a child might become separated from his/her carer(s). Give one example for each of the following: *accidental separation, deliberate separation, agency induced separation.*

Divide participants into three groups. Give each group a piece of flip chart paper and a marker pen. Assign one of the three types of separation (above) to each group. Ask them to think of other examples or situations where children might become separated under their heading. They should write their answers on flip chart. Allow 20 minutes for this.

Plenary: Each group to present their answers. Other groups to add or comment. Discuss with participants ways they might consider prevention of separation under each heading, using Briefing Notes from Topic 3 and Handout 3.1.

Distribute copies of **Handout 3.1 and 3.2**.

RESOURCES

Flip chart and pens.

Copies of **Handout 3.1**.

Separated Children

Exercise 3.2: (Facilitator's Notes)
Prevention of Separation - Raising Awareness in the Community

TARGET GROUPS

Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- understand the importance of involving the community in the prevention of separation;

- identify key features of a community awareness-raising programme which would encourage the prevention of separation.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

Introduce the idea that the involvement of the local community is an essential component in preventing the separation of children from their carer(s), especially in situations where communities are in transit or fleeing. Brainstorm with the participants reasons why this is the case.

Put the participants into groups. If there are existing teams or groups that should logically work together, use these, if not, then select random groups of 4 or 5 participants per group.

Ask the groups to discuss and prioritise key features of a campaign which aims to raise awareness – both in the local community and among local organisations – of what can be done to prevent separation. (The campaign must reflect the local situation and the resources available, and must work through the local structures.)

Plenary. Use information from Topic 3 and also the **Notes for the Facilitator** (below) to inform the plenary session.

RESOURCES

Flip chart and pens.

NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR

- Families and communities must be made aware of how children can become separated and of how these separations can be avoided

- Encourage families to identify possible meeting-points when deliberate separation occurs.

- Institutions and agencies must be made aware of how outside interventions – whether in the form of children's centres or badly organised relief assistance – can contribute to separations.

- Where possible, prevention of separation activities should be undertaken by local communities and organisations, such as schools and churches.

- Disseminate information about communication systems - the role of ICRC message systems, UNHCR officers, tracing agency offices etc.

- Use the mass media such as newspapers and radio to disseminate information - especially important in non-camp situations.

Separated Children

Exercise 3.3: (Facilitator's Notes)
Evacuating Children from Conflict Areas

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- discuss under which circumstances evacuation should be considered as a viable option;

- list key principles guiding the evacuation of children from conflict areas.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

Provide a brief introduction to this session by explaining that the process of evacuating children from conflict areas, poses significant protection challenges.

Divide participants into small groups. Distribute copies of Participants' Notes for this exercise and ask groups to discuss the questions. Allow 30 minutes for this task.

Facilitate a plenary session where groups share and discuss answers. Record answers to Questions 2 and 3 on flip chart. Provide a final summary to this session using the Briefing Notes for Topic 3 and providing participants with copies of Handout 3.3.

RESOURCES

Flip chart paper and pens.

Participants' Notes for this exercise.

Copies of Handout 3.3.

Separated Children

Exercise 3.3: (Participants' Notes)
Evacuating Children from Conflict Areas

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, you will be able to:

• discuss under which circumstances evacuation should be considered as a viable option;

• list key principles guiding the evacuation of children from conflict areas.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

In your small groups read the following text (taken from "Strengthening Protection in War" ICRC, Geneva, 2001) and discuss the questions that follow:

"In armed conflict, warring parties often subject the civilian population in particular minorities – to a whole range of abusive acts aimed at making them flee their homes. Killings, massive detention, physical and psychological harassment, discrimination and other measures amounting to terror are used to make individuals and groups leave their home areas.

"Faced with calls for help from people in urgent need of protection, humanitarian organisations first response is usually to make every effort to stop the mistreatment. When these efforts fail and it appears impossible to protect people on the spot, some organisations have opted to evacuate particularly vulnerable individuals or groups. This is usually a measure of last resort."

Questions

1. Are there any circumstances where it might be justifiable to evacuate children without their families or primary carers?

2. In order to prevent separation of children and unnecessary physical and/or psychological stress before, during and after the process of evacuation, what key principles should guide an evacuation plan?

3. What practical steps can be planned in advance to make an informed and safe reception of evacuee children in the area to which they are evacuated?

Separated Children

Exercise 4.1: (Facilitator's Notes)
Locating Separated Children

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- explore a range of possible places where separated children might be found in a given situation;
- consider approaches to identifying separated children in these circumstances.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Divide the participants into small groups. Give each group two of the case studies (ideally one camp and one non-camp situation) provided in the **Participants Notes** for this exercise. For each case study, ask the groups to:

- identify possible locations of separated children;
- suggest ways of identifying separated children in these circumstances.

Allow 30 minutes for this.

Plenary: use the Briefing Notes for Topic 4 and the following **Notes for the Facilitator** to inform this session.

RESOURCES

Participants Notes for this exercise.

NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR

Spontaneous Fostering within the Community: Such arrangements may occur with related or unrelated families. Members of the community can often identify children who are not living with regular primary care-givers. Community structures may still exist, even though a population may be on the move. Awareness campaigns, including use of the media, may be useful in generating information.

Living Independently: Separated Children may have formed themselves into group-living arrangements, including sibling-headed households. Such groups may be found living within the community but equally may be on their own and found scavenging in places such as the city dump. Some may be living in slums or other sites around cities. Some may be highly resistant to any form of intervention in their lives.

Living on the Street: Children sometimes work on the streets as vendors, for example selling cigarettes. They may have no permanent or even regular base, and are a group that could easily be overlooked.

Hospitals / health centres / emergency medical sites: Separated children, especially babies, are often found in hospitals and health centres following conflict, hence tracing teams need to set up contacts with these places. Medical agencies are often the first to reach an emergency, and they may therefore come across separated children.

Prisons / Detention Centres: When tracing teams visit prisons, they can often obtain information about separated children. Women in prisons may take their children with them, especially breast-feeding babies, or they may leave them with relatives, older children and friends. Tracing teams can also check for family members who might be in prison. Separated children are sometimes picked up from the streets and imprisoned.

Orphanages: These exist in many countries. Following conflict, separated children may be taken to orphanages, and hence it is important that they are visited by tracing teams.

Religious Structures: As with orphanages, separated children may be taken to local religious organisations that may take them in or even organise for their care within the local community.

Armed Forces and Groups: Separated children are at high risk of under-age recruitment into regular or irregular armed forces or groups. They may be exploited in a variety of ways including as cooks, porters, messengers, fighters, sexual slaves etc.

Working Situations (possibly exploitative): Particularly hidden could be children working as domestics. However, children may be involved in a wide range of other work, often exploitative, including markets, factories, commercial farms, or the sex trade etc. Military barracks tend to attract a range of people trying to earn a living.

Child Trafficking: Criminal groups often prey on displaced populations to traffic individuals, including children. Accessing information from illegal activities like these will be very difficult.

Abducted children: In conflict situations, where people are fleeing or on the move, children may be at risk of abduction including into armed forces or groups.

Separated Children

Exercise 4.1: (Participants' Notes)
Locating Separated Children

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, you will be able to:

- explore a range of possible places where separated children might be found in a given situation;

- consider approaches to identifying separated children in these circumstances.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Divide into small groups. You will be assigned two of the case studies below.

For each case study:

- identify possible locations of separated children;

- suggest ways of identifying separated children in these circumstances.

There will be a plenary session.

THE CASE STUDIES

Situation one

Refugees are flooding into a medium-sized regional town, driven by fighting in the countryside between a group of rebels and the national forces. The town, which usually has about 100,000 inhabitants, is a market and administrative centre for a large area. However, its population has swelled to nearly a quarter of a million because of the refugees and the arrival of humanitarian relief organisations.

Situation two

A camp has grown up in the countryside, far from any town or city of any size. It is on the banks of a river, which provides a source for drinking water and other activities. The camp is well run, but is growing quickly. The organisations involved are struggling to keep things properly organised.

Situation three

A refugee camp is situated 2–3 km from the edge of the national capital and spreads over several square km. Co-ordinated by UNHCR, several local and international NGOs are implementing programmes, the camp is well established and provides a full range of facilities.

Situation four

A displaced population is in transit from one camp to another that is considered to be more secure. They are being supported in their journey by an international NGO. A major road junction outside a small town has become a natural stopping-place both for those being transported and for those moving under their own power. As a result, a disorganised site has developed.

Separated Children

Exercise 4.2: (Facilitator's Notes)
Planning a Strategy for Locating Separated Children

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- identify key considerations that should form the basis of a situation analysis;

- prepare a plan for locating and assisting separated children in this situation.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

Divide the participants into small groups. Give each group a copy of the case study.

Explain to the participants that they have arrived to work in the situation described. Their task is to develop an outline plan to locate and assist separated children in this situation. Explain that they need to find out *who* is separated, prioritise which groups of children are in greatness need of assistance, and identify methods that they will use in these processes. Suggest that they note key points on a flipchart so that they can present their plan to the rest of the group.

Allow 40 minutes for this.

Plenary: invite groups to share their plans. In discussion, include information from the Briefing Notes for Topic 4, and from the **Notes for the Facilitator** below.

RESOURCES

Participants' Notes for this exercise.

Flip chart paper and pens.

NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR

The following issues should emerge from the exercise.

- A key component from the outset must be the prevention of further separation.

- An assessment will be required to ensure that valid information is available not only to identify protection issues, but also to assess causes and effects, key stakeholders and available resources.

- Different approaches need to be used in finding out information about separated children: existing registration systems, modest surveys, "walk and talk" techniques, focus group discussions etc.,

- Involving communities in all aspects of work with separated children is vital. An important element of this will be ensuring that children are involved in all aspects of the process, including ensuring that their opinions are heard in relation to any decision-making processes on their behalf.

- The importance of understanding local definitions, e.g. of concepts such as "orphan", "separated child" etc.

- The importance of finding out about cultural norms about the care of separated children. Is it a traditional practice for parentless children to be cared for by particular relatives? By unrelated adults? In either case, how are children treated in comparison with other children in the family?

- An important strategy will be to strengthening existing community structures.

- Unaccompanied children will require priority assistance, and while those separated children living with families should in general be encouraged to remain their protection situation needs to be assessed and monitored.

- Evidence of children being abused or exploited, either within the family or for example due to exploitative work, needs to receive the urgent response of organisations working in the situation.

- Gender issues may be significant: separated girls *may* be more vulnerable to sexual exploitation (though sexually abused boys may be a significant hidden problem) while separated boys *may* be more vulnerable to recruitment into armed services. Gender imbalance may reflect the existence of trafficking of girls, spontaneously fostered children who are not being identified, separated girls in domestic service, separated boys recruited into armed groups, etc.

- Limited access to resources can have profound effects and often lead to separation including abandonment, children being sent away from the family, sending children in search of resources, forcing children into work etc. Unaccompanied children could be particularly vulnerable to exploitative situations including being forced into sex work.

- Institutions or centres can readily exert a "pull-effect" and encourage unnecessary separations unless very great care is taken to document children and assess their family circumstances carefully.

- Co-ordination activities need to be addressed in order to ensure that all stakeholders work in a co-ordinated and effective manner.

Separated Children

Exercise 4.2: (Participants' Notes)
Planning a Strategy for Locating Separated Children

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, you will be able to:

- identify key considerations that should form the basis of a situation analysis;

- prepare a plan for locating and assisting separated children in this situation.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

Work in small groups.

Imagine that you have arrived to work in the situation described in the case study. Your task is to develop an outline plan to locate and assist the separated children in this situation. You need to find out *who* is separated, prioritise which groups of children are in greatness need of assistance and identify methods that you will use in these processes.

Note key points on flipchart so that you can present your plan to the rest of the group.

CASE STUDY SCENARIO

Following a severe outbreak of fighting, approximately 100,000 people flee their communities and seek refuge in a neighbouring country. By the time you are deployed as a member of a UNHCR emergency team it is apparent that there are significant numbers of separated children. During the first few days of the deployment, the following are drawn to your attention.

- Food rations are minimal.

- Many people lack basic shelter.

- A local NGO has opened an "unaccompanied children's centre", and immediately many children either found their way there or were abandoned there by their parents or other carers, including small infants.

- When the emergency team asked community leaders about separated children, they brought in six "orphans" who turned out to be children who had lost their fathers and who were living either with their mother or relatives of their father.

- There are believed to be large numbers of children of all ages living with extended family and unrelated adults. Some children are living with very elderly carers. At this stage it is not entirely clear whether living with unrelated adults is a culturally common practice. There are many reports of abuse and exploitation, including sexual abuse, of children taken in by other families.

- There is evidence that there are many more separated boys than girls in the age range of 10 – 15.

- There appear to be many children, including quite young children, sleeping in groups or individually without adult supervision and without proper shelter.

- Many children are coming forward looking for their parents, and many parents are looking for separated children.

- There is anecdotal evidence of boys, aged 13 – 15, being recruited into armed forces, especially boys not living with their own families.

- A camp committee has been formed, comprising block leaders (all men).

- ICRC is offering to develop a regional family-tracing programme.

- Both material and human resources are extremely limited.

Separated Children

Exercise 4.3: (Facilitator's Notes)
Protection Issues for Separated Children

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- identify protection issues for certain groups of separated children;

- discuss ways in which they might gather information to inform their assessment of these groups of children;

- consider difficulties that may be faced in obtaining information.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

Children living in spontaneous care arrangements are at increased risk of neglect, abuse and exploitation and, having located them, agencies have a responsibility to assess their protection needs. In an urban area separated children have been located in the following situations:

- as children placed with the extended family;

- as children living with unrelated families;

- as child-headed households.

Divide participants into small groups and ask them to address the following questions. For each group:

1. List the potential protection issues that children might face.

2. For each protection issue cited, consider the methods that you would use to gather the information to determine whether there was need for intervention.

3. Identify potential difficulties that may be faced in obtaining information.

Allow 30 minutes for this task.

Ask groups to record their main points on a flip chart for presentation to a plenary. Facilitate discussion and distribute copies of **Handouts 4.1 and 4.2**.

Separated Children

Exercise 5.1: (Facilitator's Notes)
Care Arrangements for Separated Children

TARGET GROUPS

Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- identify the range of care options for separated children;

- consider some of the advantages and disadvantages of each.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Ask participants to brainstorm different ways in which care can be provided for separated children.

Then ask participants to work in groups of three or four. Give each group a copy of the following chart. Using the ideas from the brainstorming session, ask them to consider the advantages and disadvantages for each care option. Allow 25-30 minutes for this.

Plenary: go through each care option recording advantages and disadvantages for each on a flip chart. Use the **Notes for the Facilitator** below to inform the discussion.

Alternatively, ask participants to consider the importance of the planning and review of care arrangements and to identify issues that must be considered when *planning* care arrangements for separated children. Refer to Topic 5, to inform this discussion.

RESOURCES

Flip chart paper and pens.

NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR

- Make sure that spontaneous care arrangements are considered, including children placed with relatives, children living with unrelated families and child-headed households.

- Reference should be made to "invisible" groups of children.

- Consider the whole range of children's needs - not just physical needs.

- Consider the particular needs of children and adolescents at different stages of their development.

- Children may need care over very different timescales - from a few days to indefinite care. How sustainable are different forms of care?

- Issues of child participation.

- Cultural norms regarding care.

- Structures for assessing and supporting foster homes.

- Should foster parents receive material support?

- Centres have the danger of attracting children who do have families, and may cause children to become institutionalised.

Separated Children Exercise 5.1
Care Arrangements for Separated Children

Care Option	Advantages	Disadvantages	Points to consider
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

Separated Children

Exercise 5.2: (Facilitator's Notes)
Care Arrangements for Separated Children – Issues and Dilemmas

TARGET GROUPS

Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- consider protection issues in selecting different care options for children;

- apply guiding principles to decision making processes;

- navigate some of the dilemmas that can be faced in decision-making.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Divide participants into small groups. Ask each group to study three of the case scenarios presented in the Participants' Notes for this exercise. For each scenario, ask them to consider what care options are possible and decide which would be most appropriate, giving reasons.

- Which protection issues should you be considering in this case?

- Based on this, what care options are possible?

- What course of action would you recommend, bearing in mind the principles of best interests, participation of the child and family unity?

Plenary session: Use information in Topic 5 and the **Notes for the Facilitator** below to inform this session.

RESOURCES

Flip chart paper and pens.

NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR

- There may be urgent need to promote a strategy for the prevention of separation. Awareness campaigns may need to involve the military, local authorities, NGOs as well as the community at large.

- Encourage family care: where possible, seek a family environment for children, but acknowledge that group care is sometimes both appropriate and unavoidable.

- Avoid special treatment: the assistance given to separated children should be broadly similar to that given to the general population.

- Cater for a variety of needs: be prepared for the whole range of children's needs, ranging from the feeding of young babies to the protection of vulnerable adolescent girls. Ensure that care arrangements don't just concentrate on meeting physical needs.

- Individual protection issues need to be responded to promptly and sensitively.

- Particular circumstances may demand unusual and creative decisions on care arrangements, especially for adolescents.

- Care arrangements for individual children should be made in consultation with the children themselves, especially in the case of adolescents.

- **Urgent** issues should not always take precedence over **important** issues: children fostered in host-country families, for example, may not present urgent problems but to ignore them may create a huge and growing problem in the future.

- Child-headed households may need support - by other members of the community or by NGOs - but care needs to be taken that any support given - especially material support - does not raise expectations from other families which cannot be met.

Separated Children

Exercise 5.2: (Participants' Notes)
Care Arrangements for Separated Children – Issues and Dilemmas

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, you will be able to:

- consider protection issues in selecting different care options for children;

- apply guiding principles to decision making processes;

- navigate some of the dilemmas that can be faced in decision-making.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Work in small groups. Study three of the case scenarios below. For each scenario, consider what care options are possible and decide which would be most appropriate, giving reasons.

- Which protection issues should you be considering in this case?

- Based on this, what care options are possible?

- What course of action would you recommend, bearing in mind the principles of best interests, participation of the child and family unity?

There will be a plenary session.

THE CASE SCENARIOS

1. Refugees, amongst them separated children, are repatriated to their country of origin. The children's centres are reluctant to take adolescents as they say they cause problems. Two young girls of fifteen arrive at a transit site. The parents of both were killed in the fighting, and they aren't sure where their other relatives might be. One centre agrees to take them. The next week, the tracing agency is asked to remove one girl as she is "making trouble". When the tracing worker interviewed the girl, it emerged that she had been raped by the night watchman.

2. There are large numbers of displaced children in a camp, including groups of teenage boys who are separated from their families. The boys refuse to accept foster care, saying that they are made to work all the time. No centre will

accept them. They drift into the local village, seem to be sleeping in the market place and are becoming a nuisance to the inhabitants.

3. During the forced closure of a camp people flee in all directions. Mothers are deliberately leaving their babies with relief workers. A large number of babies have been abandoned: some whose family fled, others whose family were killed in the shooting that broke out. Agencies set up an emergency care centre for the babies. Babies are traditionally breast-fed in this community.

4. During the population movements following a conflict, the local military were picking up babies who had survived and asking families to take care of them. Once the relief workers arrived, the families began to bring the children in, claiming that they couldn't manage to feed another child.

5. An emergency children's centre is set up in a transit camp to care for separated children. Many are malnourished and receiving supplementary feeding. However, the rest of the population is similarly malnourished.

6. A well-known personality has raised money for emergency care for children. The NGO which he is supporting is insisting on publicity for the centre, including signs on the building, and has flown out large quantities of bottled milk, toys, luxury food and clothing.

7. A refugee camp contains an unusually large number of separated children, mainly boys. Within their country of origin it was traditional for boys to spend long periods of time in groups tending cattle away from their homes. It was partly for this reason that they strongly favoured a group-living arrangement in the camp. However, some have been profoundly disturbed by their experiences of conflict and flight and were felt by Protection and Community Services staff to be in need of more personal family care.

8. In a large-scale refugee emergency, many separated children are taken in by host-country families. Because of the pressing problem of other children having nowhere to live, and the urgent need to establish a family-tracing programme, the situation of these children is not assessed on the basis that at least they have families to care for them.

9. Because the refugee population was previously the target of genocidal attacks, the camp contains a significant number of child-headed households. Many children (some as young as 11) seem committed to caring for younger siblings, but there are many difficulties in arranging house-building, ensuring food security, maintaining the health of younger children and so on.

10. In this refugee camp there are a large number of children living with extended family members, but many of the children complain of discrimination in favour of the other children in the household in areas such as access to food, burden of domestic work, and educational opportunities.

11. In a scattered refugee population are many child-headed households: in some cases the oldest is no more than 12 or 13 years old, and some are caring for children aged 2 – 5. Many have refused to be placed in foster care.

Separated Children

Exercise 5.3: (Facilitator's Notes)
The Importance of Socio-Cultural Information for Child Fostering

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- identify socio-cultural information required in planning a child fostering programme;

- identify appropriate sources of such information.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Participants to work in small groups.

Give each group a copy of the participants' notes for this exercise. Participants are invited to consider the scenario presented and then determine what socio-cultural information is required and how they will find this information.

Allow 30 mins for this exercise.

Plenary: use flip chart to summarise the key issues that emerge from this discussion. The following questions and points can be used by the facilitator to guide the plenary session.

RESOURCES

Participants' Notes for this exercise.

Flip chart paper and pens.

NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR

- Who traditionally cares for the child when the mother dies? when the father dies? when both die?

- Under what circumstances, if any, are children cared for by unrelated carers?

- Under what circumstances are children taken into institutions and how acceptable is institutional care seen to be in this culture?

- What are the cultural expectations about the quality of care for unrelated children - i.e. are they treated the same as children of the family? Does the idea of care in this context refer to "care for the whole child" or just physical care? What are the risks of abuse?, or differential treatment such as restricted access to food, clothes, schooling etc.? Are the work obligations any different for an unrelated child? These may be very difficult questions to find out about: there may be a useful parallel in the characteristic relationship between a child and a step-parent. These issues raise ethical issues regarding what is an acceptable level of care. Who determines what is acceptable?

- How might a lost parent be understood within this culture? e.g. might there be a presumption of death?

- What are the norms regarding caring for children from different clanship or tribal groups?

- What are the norms regarding caring for children of a different religious persuasion?

- How might the inheritance rights of a child be altered by fostering? From whom would he/she inherit land or property?

- What are the norms regarding the name of a fostered child?

- What are the potential sources of support/supervision/monitoring of a fostered child e.g. existing community leaders, elders, teachers, women's organisations, welfare agencies etc? What is the likelihood of abuse or exploitation being concealed?

- Does the culture allow for a child to express his/her opinion freely to an outside person?

- Are there any customs regarding children living together in groups in this culture?

Possible sources of information:
- Refugees themselves (probably the most important and most accessible)
- University departments of anthropology
- Governments
- NGOs
- UNHCR

Note: information should be disaggregated by age and gender where appropriate.

Separated Children

Exercise 5.3: (Participants' Notes)
The Importance of Socio-Cultural Information for Child Fostering

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, you will be able to:

- identify socio-cultural information required in planning a child fostering programme;

- identify appropriate sources of such information.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Participants are asked to consider the following scenario and answer the two questions that follow.

SCENARIO

An influx of refugees into a neighbouring country in Africa contains a large number of children who are separated from their families, either because of the death of parents or separation from them during the chaos of fighting and flight. Some have been spontaneously absorbed into other families (some related, others unrelated to the child), some adolescents have formed themselves into groups and other children have been found wandering around the camp looking lost. In order to begin to plan care arrangements for unaccompanied children, and in order to decide what to do about children who have been spontaneously fostered, you need to find out about the relevant cultural norms and practices.

QUESTIONS

What do you need to know about?

How will you find this information?

Separated Children

Exercise 6.1: (Facilitator's Notes)
The Child's Story, Part 1 - Identification and Documentation

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- understand what needs to be included in the process of identification and documentation;

- have considered the range of skills needed to carry out these tasks effectively.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Divide participants into small groups. Ask them to read the case study. Explain to them that their task is to handle the identification and documentation for this child. In their groups they should answer the following questions.

- What do you need to find out about Jean-Claude?

- How are you going to find answers to these questions?

Ask them to note their answers on a flip chart. Give them 15 minutes for this part of the exercise.

Plenary: Ask them to share their answers. Build up a full picture with them, using information from the Briefing Notes in Topic 6.

Once these questions have been answered, ask the whole group to consider what skills may be needed to carry out this work effectively. Facilitate a group discussion to answer this.

RESOURCES

Copies of the **The Child's Story, Part 1**.

Flip charts and pens.

THE CHILD'S STORY, PART 1

My name is Jean-Claude and I am eight years old. Before the war I lived with my parents, my two sisters and two little brothers up on a hillside. On a clear day you could see the mountains in the far distance from our house.

One day there was fighting all around our house. I didn't know what was happening. I was afraid and I couldn't see my parents. I managed to pick up my three-year-old brother Emile, who was on the ground crying. I also grabbed one blanket, a mat, a pot, a plate and a few heads of corn.

We headed in the direction that I thought the rest of the village would have taken, but we found ourselves on our own. We didn't know where our parents, sisters or brother were. We were particularly worried about our brother Pascal, who was only two years old and might be lost.

Eventually we arrived at a river, where you could pay to get a boat across. We were told that on the other side, 10 km further on, there was a camp where you could get food from the Red Cross. Since we had no money, we had to give up our only saucepan to be able to get across.

By the time we got to the other side there were thousands of people, some sick, some walking very slowly, others rushing around frantically. We kept asking about our family, but no one knew them. Emile would often cry and I would try to comfort him.

A few kilometres on there was a narrow bridge that everyone was trying to cross at the same time. It was the rainy season and the ground was slippery with deep mud. We were all squashed together – men, women, children and even some goats – trying to edge forwards. I tried to hold on tightly to Emile's hand.

Suddenly there was panic because someone heard shooting. Some people pushed forwards, others backwards. Emile's hand had slipped from mine. I shouted his name many times, but I could not see or hear him. I ran backwards to see if he was there. I then ran in the other direction, but there was no sign of him. In the panic some people had jumped into the river and drowned. I prayed that Emile was not among them, and that some kind family had found him and comforted him.

I climbed a small tree, hoping that I would be able to see Emile if he went by. Eventually I decided to make my way towards the Red Cross camp. When I got there I was so exhausted that I just found a corner and went to sleep.

Early the next morning, just as it was getting light, an adult came up to me and asked me if I had lost my family. At first I was scared to answer, since I didn't know who this person was. Then I saw that they were wearing the badge of an organisation, and they explained that they were looking for children on their own so that they could help them find their families again.

Separated Children

Exercise 6.2: (Facilitator's Notes)
The Child's Story, Part 1 – Tracing

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- identify the steps that they need to take in family tracing;

- make decisions about prioritising greatest needs;

- consider the range of skills needed to carry out these tasks effectively.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Divide participants into small groups. If they have already completed Exercise 6.1, explain that you are using the same case study for this exercise. Ask them to read the case study for Exercise 6.1 (again). Explain that they are working in this camp. Their task is to trace the families of the children that have arrived and have been separated from their families. Participants should answer the following questions.

- What steps would you take in order to try to trace Jean-Claude's family?

- What factors may hinder you in this tracing process?

- If resources are limited how would you prioritise activities?

Ask them to note their answers on flip chart. Allow 15 minutes for this.

Plenary: Ask participants to share their answers. Build up a full picture with them, using information from the Briefing Notes in Topic 6.

Once these questions have been answered, ask the whole group to consider what skills may be needed to carry out this work effectively. Facilitate a group discussion to answer this.

RESOURCES

Copies of the **The Child's Story, Part 1** from Exercise 6.1.

Flip charts and pens.

Separated Children

Exercise 6.3: (Facilitator's Notes)
The Child's Story, Part 2 – Verification

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

• identify when and where verification should be carried out;

• understand how to carry out the verification process;

• consider some of the issues that might arise as a result of this process.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Divide participants into small groups. If they have already completed Exercise 6.1 or 6.2, explain that this is the second half of the same story. Ask them to read the case study. Their task is to use this story to describe the process of verification. In doing so they should address the following questions.

• When and where should verification be carried out?

• How should verification be carried out?

• Consider some of the issues that might arise from verification which will require further action.

Ask them to note their answers on flip chart. Give 15 minutes for this.

Plenary: Ask them to share their answers. Build up a full picture with them, using information from the Briefing Notes for Topic 6 and **Handout 6.1**. If appropriate, provide participants with a copy of this handout at the end of the session.

RESOURCES

Copies of the **The Child's Story, Part 2**.

Handout 6.1.

Flip charts and pens.

THE CHILD'S STORY, PART 2

I was put in a tent with children from the same area that we came from. Some were very young and didn't know which village they came from. I did see, sitting quietly in the corner, one little girl, Rosette, from our home village, who my brother used to play with. I excitedly told the woman who was looking after us that I knew the girl. But the woman said that it was better for her to stay there at the camp, since the girl hadn't said herself which village she was from, and they didn't want to send her to the wrong place. I was upset that the woman didn't believe me. But at least I could tell the girl's family back home that I had seen her and that she was alive.

The people in the camp told me to wait, since each day children arrived who had been found along the road. The next morning I waited eagerly as more and more people came to the camp. Finally, in the afternoon I spotted Emile holding the hand of a young boy who had just reached the camp. I shouted his name and ran up. At first he just looked straight ahead, as if he wasn't aware of anything around him. Suddenly he looked up, realised it was me and jumped into my arms.

The older boy with him saw that I was clean and had nice clothes on, so he asked where he could also get help. I said that the foreigners organising the place for separated children gave out biscuits, clothes and soap. I wanted to help this boy, called Michel, who had helped my brother.

He said that his aunt was on the other side of the camp, but that he wasn't with his parents. So I said that he should say that he is separated, and then he could join us and be taken home in a bus. So he did that, and was able to get some nice new clothes like us.

For a few months Emile and I stayed at the camp, along with our new friend Michel. Finally we were able to return to the provinces we came from. All the children from our province were taken in a big truck to the same children's centre. There we bumped into other children from our village, who had also lost their families.

Every day social workers from organisations would come and collect children and take them back to their village if their relatives had been found. No one knew whose turn it would be the next day, so we just hoped it would be ours. We were happy to see other children go home, but didn't understand why it took so long for us. Maybe all our relatives had been killed, or they didn't want us back in the village.

Eventually, after five weeks we were told that, although our parents had not been found, there was an aunt and our sisters who were back in the village. We were happy to know that we would soon be back with our sisters, but worried about where our parents and little brother Pascal might be. Also, my aunt was very sick and I didn't know how she would be able to look after us two and my sisters.

Before we went to the village, the social workers showed us a photograph of our aunt and asked if we recognised her and wanted to go and stay with her. Of course I said yes, since I wanted to see my sisters again, although I didn't know how my aunt would cope.

After a few weeks back in the village, we were told by the local district leader that there would be visits organised to special children's centres for people who had lost very small children. Eventually the day came when the bus came to our village. I went off with my aunt to see if we would be able to find Pascal.

We arrived at the centre and were asked many questions about my brother, such as his age and what he was wearing when we got separated from each other. We were then asked to look along a row of several children of similar age to Pascal. Towards the end of the line we eventually saw him. At first he didn't realise it was us, but then we began to sing his favourite song to him and he began to cry and hold on to us very tightly. We were then asked to put our thumbprint on a special form to show that we had found our brother. I don't know who the form was for – maybe for the children's centre – and then we went home in the bus.

Separated Children

Exercise 6.4: (Facilitator's Notes)
The Child's Story, Part 2 – Reunification

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- identify what preparation is needed for both the family and the children before reunification takes place;

- what is involved in carrying out reunification;

- what follow-up might be necessary.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Divide participants into small groups. Give each participant a copy of the case study that is used in Exercise 6.3. If they have already completed Exercises 6.1 or 6.2, explain that this is the second half of the same story. Ask them to read the case study. Their task is to use this story to develop a plan for the reunification of Jean-Claude's family. In doing so they should address the following questions.

- What preparation for the family and for the children will be necessary for this reunification to take place successfully?

- What key elements should be included in the actual reunification of the family with the children?

- What sort of follow–up might be required for the children and for the family?

Ask them to note their answers on a flip chart. Give them 15 minutes for this.

Plenary: Ask them to share their answers. Build up a full picture with them, using information from the Briefing Notes for Topic 6.

RESOURCES

Copies of the **The Child's Story, Part 2** from Exercise 6.3.

Flip charts and pens.

Separated Children

Exercise 6.5: (Facilitator's Notes)
Agency Co-ordination in Working with Separated Children

TARGET GROUPS

Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- identify the key players in working with separated children/family tracing;
- identify and discuss the main barriers to good co-ordination.
- identify a range of activities that will assist co-ordination between agencies;

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

Introduce the exercise by asking participants to brainstorm key players working with separated children and/or family tracing in their area. Write their suggestions on a flip chart.

Ask participants to work in pairs and to consider barriers to good co-ordination and a range of activities that will assist in strengthening co-ordination between agencies. Give them 15 minutes to do this.

Plenary: Identify and discuss the main problems and issues involved in improving communication. Identify and discuss the main activities that can be used to assist and improve co-ordination.

The **Notes for the Facilitator** below may help to inform this plenary session.

RESOURCES

Flip chart paper and pens.

NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR

- Co-ordination is essential to avoid duplication of effort, waste of resources and time, as well as ill-conceived and potentially harmful interventions.

- The principles of co-ordination apply equally to work in acute emergencies and to work in more stable situations.

- Dialogue and co-ordination mechanisms need to be established from the early stages of an emergency, and be maintained throughout the family tracing process.

- Co-ordination mechanisms should define a clear framework for co-ordinating activities, decision-making and sharing information at local, national and regional levels.

- Ways should be sought to ensure that relevant information is shared appropriately and that unnecessary interviewing of children is avoided.

- The roles and responsibilities of all agencies working with separated children should be clearly defined, and the role of each agency should be understood by all the others. Specific lead roles must be established for key aspects of work being conducted on behalf of separated children.

- Relevant government authorities should be involved in inter-agency collaboration, unless this is not in the best interests of the child.

- Communities will be an important partner in all elements of work with separated children.

- Children and adolescents should not just be seen as the objects of care and protection, but as social actors who may have an active role to play in child protection within their community.

- Separated children must be consulted and informed on decisions affecting them at all stages of the family tracing process.

Separated Children

Exercise 7.1: (Facilitator's Notes)
Risk and Protective Factors

TARGET GROUPS

Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- describe what is meant by 'risk factors' and 'protective factors';
- identify some of the main risk factors faced by separated children;
- identify protective factors for separated children.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

Divide participants into small groups. If possible, select the groups according to the professional function of participants (e.g. protection staff, government policy makers, immigration officials, police officers, social workers, field officers, residential care staff, etc.).

Distribute copies of the Participants' Notes **Part One: Risk Factors** and ask each group to respond to the questions provided. Allow 15 minutes for this.

Discuss the groups' answers in plenary.

Now distribute copies of Participants' Notes **Part Two: Protective Factors**, again asking the groups to answer the questions. Allow 15 minutes for this

Discuss the groups' answers in plenary.

RESOURCES

Flipchart and pens.

Participants' Notes **Part One** and **Part Two**.

Separated Children

Exercise 7.1: (Participants' Notes)
Risk and Protective Factors

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, you will be able to:

- describe what is meant by 'risk factors' and 'protective factors';

- identify some of the main risk factors faced by separated children;

- identify protective factors for separated children.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

This exercise is presented in two parts.

Part One looks at risk factors facing separated children and is based on the case study of a 16 year old boy in West Africa. Read the case study and answer the questions at the end.

You will then be presented with a second case study, **Part Two**, which looks at protective factors for separated children using the story of two brothers in Western Asia. Again read the case study and answer the questions at the end.

Work in small groups to complete the tasks as set out above, preparing your answers for presentation to a plenary session for discussion.

PART ONE: RISK FACTORS

Read the following text and answer the questions below.

Risk factors can be thought of as circumstances that increase the likelihood of adverse physical or psychological reactions to separation. Protective factors are those circumstances that help to reduce or protect the child from adverse physical or psychological reactions to separation.

As well as the effects of separation that were discussed in Topic 1 of this Resource Pack, research by Save the Children (UK) has identified several factors that effect children displaced by armed conflict:

- age;
- previous exposure to violence (as victims or witnesses or having been forced to carry out acts of violence);
- identification with those who have perpetrated violence;
- loss or disappearance of parents;
- being overwhelmed by severe anxieties;
- difficulties in the mourning process and in managing change;
- difficult experiences on arrival in a country of asylum, e.g. lack of appropriate services and care;
- racism and other forms of discrimination;
- isolation.

The threat to the well-being of the child is inevitably increased when the separation becomes lengthy or even permanent.

A 16 year old boy came from a country in West Africa. His tribe had been a target of violent government repression and his family had frequently to go into hiding to save their lives. He was recruited at the age of 13 into a guerrilla group which he joined in order to protect himself. He was later captured and imprisoned. Eventually he was released from prison but shortly after his return to his village a massacre took place. He managed to flee but later found his parent's bodies. Now in another country in W Africa, he is living in a large town with a group of boys of his own age. He is attending school but has a very hard time concentrating because he is overwhelmed by memories of home and has no one with whom he feels he can talk about what happened to him.

QUESTIONS

1. Which of the risk factors detailed above apply in this case?
2. Do any other factors apply? If so, what?
3. What could be done to reduce the effect of these factors?

PART TWO: PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Read the following text and answer the questions below.

Protective (sometimes called 'mediating') factors are those circumstances that help to reduce or protect the child from adverse physical or psychological reactions to separation.

These can include:

- having an appropriate carer who can help contain a child's anxieties;

- access to a social or community network;

- being involved in the education process;

- being able to make use of cultural healing processes and traditions;

- leading as 'normal' a life as possible in the circumstances.

One of the most important protective factors is the presence of a trusted individual with whom the child can talk and reflect on their experiences at their own level of understanding.

Two brothers aged 12 and 15 arrived from a country in Western Asia. They were fleeing the civil war and the risk of being recruited into one of the armed groups. Their father had been killed and their mother had sold the families property in order to send her sons out of the country. She did not have enough money to accompany them. The border police contacted the local child welfare agency. A social worker came to pick them up and brought them to a children's home. A social worker carried out a thorough assessment of their needs and enrolled them in the local school where they are taking language classes. They have a key worker at the home who is herself a refugee. She has helped them to contact members of their community and to attend a local mosque. Although it is hard because they miss their mother and home and worry about her safety, they feel supported in their daily life and able to deal with the new culture.

QUESTIONS

1. Which of the protective factors detailed above apply in this case?
2. What could be done to further support and help these children?

Separated Children

Exercise 7.2: (Facilitator's Notes)
Monitoring and Support for Separated Children

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- identify relevant duty bearers for separated children;
- list information required for assessing a separated child's monitoring and support needs;
- discuss possible intervention strategies when rights are being violated;
- consider relevant return issues.

TIMEFRAME

75 minutes

METHOD

Introduce the exercise by providing an overview of why individual assessments are important protection tools for separated children living in all care arrangements.

Divide participants into small groups. Ask them to consider two or three of the case studies in the Participants' Notes and discuss the questions that follow.

Allow 30 minutes for this. Note: facilitators should consider adapting or rewriting these case cameos to suit the particular circumstances of the participants.

Plenary: groups to report back on their discussions under the following headings.

- Duty bearers for children who have been separated.
- Information needed to assess monitoring and support needs.
- Intervention strategies when the rights of separated children are being violated.
- Transfer of responsibility on return.

RESOURCES

Flip chart paper and pens.

Separated Children

Exercise 7.2: (Participants' Notes)
Monitoring and Support for Separated Children

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, you will be able to:

- identify relevant duty bearers for separated children;

- list information required for assessing a separated child's monitoring and support needs;

- discuss possible intervention strategies when rights are being violated;

- consider relevant return issues.

TIMEFRAME

75 minutes

METHOD

In your small groups, read the case studies that follow. Choose two or three, and for these, discuss the questions below.

You have 30 minutes for this task.

A plenary session will follow.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Who should be regarded as the duty-bearers in respect of the rights of these children?

2. What kind of assessment would be required in order to determine their monitoring and support needs?

3. Are these children likely to be vulnerable to other child rights abuses e.g. exploitative labour, recruitment into armed groups, sexual exploitation etc.?

4. Who should intervene if their rights are being violated? Is there a need to identify or to set up some additional structure to provide protection and support? If so, how might this be pursued?

5. If the populations in question were able to return home, how should responsibility for these particular cases be transferred, assuming no functioning government social welfare department?

CASE STUDIES

Case 1: Juliet is aged 9. After becoming separated from her family in the chaos of flight, she was taken in by an unrelated family who later took her to a residential children's centre. After two years and following unsuccessful attempts to find her own family she was placed by an agency in a family. The foster carers are in their late 40s and have three older children (aged 15, 17 and 18). In the centre she had become very withdrawn and isolated and this pattern continued in the foster family. After placement she started wetting the bed at nights and has been very reluctant to go to school. She is often found silently weeping but will not talk about what is upsetting her. The carers are very committed to her but are anxious about the apparent lack of progress in helping her to feel more secure and happy.

Case 2: Marie and Charles are aged 11 and 13. They were taken in spontaneously by a foster family two years ago, and though they registered them for family tracing with ICRC there has been no progress with this. They have 6 children of their own, some older and some younger, all of whom attend school. The children look reasonably well cared for but neighbours report that they seem to work much harder than the other children in the family: they seem sometimes to go without food and do not attend school. On several occasions they noticed bruising on their bodies. There is a welfare committee in the camp but it is not very active.

Case 3: A child-headed household comprising girls of 15, 12 and 9 and boys of 13 and 7 are living together in a hut constructed by neighbours. Their parents are thought to have been killed. They have a ration card. They resolutely refuse to be split up among different foster families and are clearly strongly attached to each other. The older two carry the main burden of caring for the younger ones and have dropped out of school. There is a suspicion that the oldest girl is selling sexual favours in order to earn money and she seems to be pestered by men in the community. The 13 year old can occasionally find work as a casual labourer but is also suspected of stealing in the camp. Although there was some initial support for them in the refugee camp, there is a general feeling that they should be under adult care, and there is resentment and suspicion about the activities of the two oldest children.

There is no camp welfare committee and no NGO is currently offering the family any support. The co-ordinating agency feels that the family have some protection needs and may need long-term support.

Case 4: Petra is 13 and was fostered by an unrelated family about 3 years ago when she became separated from her own family when they fled from their village. There is no news about her family and there is no formal monitoring and support offered to her or to the family. Neighbours heard her screaming one night when the foster mother was away from the family and when this was investigated the foster father admitted raping her. Both the child and the foster father refuse to leave the home. There is no agency involved in arranging fostering in the camp and the nearest children's centre is 50 kilometres away. The girl has heard about this centre and absolutely refuses to go there.

Case 5: Patricia was found apparently abandoned as a 2 year old by a family who then took her in and registered her as though she was their own daughter. They have not revealed her presence to any of the authorities though the history of the child is well known in the community. As a result of the efforts of her own parents to find her, they have now arrived in the camp and have identified the family caring for her. She is now 5 years old and has no memory of her own family.

When her natural parents arrive at the home, they insist in taking her with them, the foster carers resolutely refuse and the child screams uncontrollably. Eventually it is agreed that she should remain in the foster family for the time being and the natural parents look to the co-ordinating agency to resolve the problem.

Separated Children

Exercise 7.3: (Facilitator's Notes)
The Protection and Care Network

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- describe the inter-connections between agencies and professionals working with separated children;

- illustrate the inter-connections with examples of good practice;

- identify opportunities for improving co-operation between agencies and professionals.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

Divide participants into groups, ideally by organisation. Ask them to begin by drawing a child in the centre of a flip chart and then around the child developing a network diagram showing the agencies and professionals who have a role to play in the protection and care of separated children in their working situation.

Ask participants to add the following information to the network diagram.

1. Indicate the importance of the inter-connections between agencies/ professionals by using different types of lines.

2. Indicate where there are examples of good co-operation (e.g. joint missions, shared policies) using a 'tick' or a 'smiley face' on the relevant line.

3. Identify opportunities for improving co-operation using a 'question mark' or a 'sad face'.

The network diagram should be presented back to the large group for discussion. The presentations should include an explanation of how the 'system' works, examples of good co-operation where they are indicated on the diagram, and suggestions as to how co-operation might be improved in the future.

Ensure that identified opportunities for improving co-operation are taken forward in an action planning session.

Separated Children

Exercise 8.1: (Facilitator's Notes)
Inter-country Adoption

TARGET GROUPS

Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVE

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- explore the complex and contentious issues involved in inter-country adoption within a refugee context.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

Divide participants into groups, allocating each group one of two case scenarios.

In the first part of the exercise, participants read their case scenario and prepare an argument to support the position of either the Children's Home or UNHCR.

Allow 20 minutes for this.

Each group should then appoint a delegate who, in the second part of this exercise, will debate the case presented with the delegate of the other group. All other participants will act as observers. Allow 10 minutes for the debate.

Ask the "delegates" to come out of role and facilitate a plenary discussion.

RESOURCES

Briefing Notes for Groups Representing the Children's Home.

Briefing Notes for Groups Representing UNHCR.

Flip chart and pens.

NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR

- Issues around residential care practice - the admission of children without ascertaining a real need for institutionalisation, contact with parents, planning for children's individual futures.

- Poorly considered evacuation of children.

- Issues about parental consent to adoption.

- The potential cultural conflicts which individual children will experience if moved to another cultural environment after an already seriously disrupted childhood.

- No attempt has been made to trace the families of the children.

- Possible alternatives to inter-country adoption might be voluntary repatriation (under appropriate circumstances), local fostering (while repatriation is considered and steps taken to trace the families of the children).

- Issue of child participation in decision-making: what techniques might be used to discuss the options with these young children?

- What criteria might be used to determine the best interests of the individual child?

Separated Children

Exercise 8.1: (Participants' Notes)
Inter-country Adoption

OBJECTIVE

By the end of this exercise, you will be able to:

• explore the complex and contentious issues involved in inter-country adoption within a refugee context.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

In the first part of the exercise, your group will be asked to read one of two case scenarios.

You will then prepare an argument to support the position of either the Children's Home or UNHCR (you will be given these by the facilitator).

Each group should then appoint a delegate and, in the second part of this exercise, the two delegates will debate the case presented. All other participants will act as observers.

There will be a plenary discussion.

Exercise 8.1: Briefing Notes for Groups Representing the Children's Home

Case Scenario

During a prolonged period of civil conflict in this Eastern European country, a number of institutions were evacuated to safer areas or to neighbouring countries.

One of these institutions was the Sunshine Home, a children's home, run by a Christian organisation which provided a range of child care options, including inter-country adoption. The home has now been in a safer part of the same country, which has its own *de facto* government, for two years, with no prospects of returning and no contact with any of the families of the children. Conditions in the home are barely satisfactory. Many of the original staff have left and increasingly local staff are being hired.

It is understood that children were originally placed in the home for a variety of reasons: some were the children of single parents, while others are thought to have been placed there by families concerned at their ability to provide care during the deteriorating economic and security situation in their country.

The director of the organisation running the home feels that the children's needs would now best be met by placing them for adoption in third countries: the organisation operates in several countries in which there are approved adopters awaiting placement of children. They have no programme of approving adopters in the country where the home is located. As many of the children had been placed in the home by parents, he feels that the children have, in effect, been abandoned and that their best interests would best be served by adoption. The Department of Social Welfare confirms that these children can legally be deemed to have been abandoned, hence they can use a procedure for adoption without parental consent, but that the agreement of UNHCR should be gained before any moves are made to place them for adoption.

The country is not a Contracting State in respect of the Hague Convention on Inter-Country Adoption.

Notes for the Role Play

You feel strongly that these children should now be placed for adoption. There seems no immediate prospect of returning to their original community, there is no contact with either of their parents. However, your organisation has no personnel in the area of origin and your records show that most of the children were placed in the home by parents. The philosophy of your organisation is to rescue children from deprived backgrounds and to place them in good Christian families, and you are not convinced that inter-country adoption creates cultural conflicts for children. You feel that it would be in the best interests of the children to grow up in Christian families in third countries. You are also concerned that you have lost many of your original staff and there is pressure from your organisation to close the home for financial and administrative reasons.

Your organisation has the capacity to arrange adoptions in a way that complies with the Hague Convention and the CRC.

Exercise 5.4: Briefing Notes for Groups Representing UNHCR

Case Scenario

During a prolonged period of civil conflict in this Eastern European country, a number of institutions were evacuated to safer areas or to neighbouring countries.

One of these institutions was the Sunshine Home, a children's home, run by a Christian organisation which provided a range of child care options, including inter-country adoption. The home has now been in a safer part of the same country, which has its own *de facto* government, for two years, with no prospects of returning and no contact with any of the families of the children. Conditions in the home are barely satisfactory. Many of the original staff have left and, increasingly, local staff are being hired. It is understood that children were originally placed in the home for a variety of reasons: some were the children of single parents, while others are thought to have been placed by families concerned at their ability to provide care due to the deteriorating economic and security situation.

The director of the organisation running the home feels that the children's needs would now best be met by placing them for adoption in third countries: the organisation operates in several countries in which there are approved adopters awaiting placement of children. They have no programme of approving adopters in the country where the home is located. As many of the children had been placed in the home by parents, he feels that the children have, in effect, been abandoned and that their best interests would best be served by adoption. The Department of Social Welfare confirms that these children can legally be deemed to have been abandoned, hence adoption can be considered without parental consent, but that the agreement of UNHCR should be gained in advance. The country is not a Party to the Hague Convention on Inter-Country Adoption.

Notes for the Role Play

You are extremely concerned at the prospect of these children being placed for adoption overseas. Your information is that the home accepted children with few questions asked. Before the evacuation, many of the children had contact with their parents, but this was not actively encouraged by the home. You feel that the evacuation of the home was unnecessary and poorly carried out. You feel that the move to have them placed for adoption is motivated by the NGO's convenience rather than for the benefit of the children. However, you also have some concerns about the quality of care being offered in the home.

You also feel concerned that these children have been disturbed by the evacuation, and that yet further moves to place them outside of the country will make the situation worse. Some of the children attend local schools and have integrated reasonably well.

Although you are aware of the legal argument that the children are technically available for adoption on the grounds of abandonment, you are not satisfied that it is appropriate to go ahead with legal adoption without making strenuous attempts to contact the families, to discuss adoption with them and seek their informed consent. In any case, the home does not seem to value involving children themselves in important decisions, and you have doubts about the capacity of the home's staff to prepare the children psychologically for such moves. You feel that consideration should be given to finding foster homes for these children, preferably from within the refugee community.

Separated Children

Handouts

Separated Children

Handout 2.1
Key Points Relating to Separated Children from the CRC

All children have a right to their own **name and nationality**; the right to know this and to be aware of their family, cultural and national heritage (Articles 7 and 8).

All children have a **right to a family and families have a right and responsibility to care for their children**. Early efforts should therefore be made to protect family unity and avoid family separation. Separated children have a right to be reunited with parents, relatives and guardians. Those working with them should encourage family tracing, family contact and reunification as quickly as possible. If reunification is not immediately possible, care of the child should be as consistent and continuous as possible to enable the child to build up relations with those who care for him or her (Preamble, Articles 5, 9, 18, and 27).

Children have a right to **maintain personal relations** and direct contact with their parents except if it is against their best interests (Article 9)

All children are entitled to **provision for their basic subsistence**. Assistance for separated children must meet their basic needs in a way which is comparable with what children can expect in the surrounding community: it should not encourage further family separation (Articles 6 and 20).

Separated children are entitled to **care appropriate to their age and developmental needs**. In most cases this is best met by family care. If it is not possible to provide care in the child's immediate or extended family, alternative care such as foster placement or, if necessary, placement in suitable institutions for the care of children, shall be provided (Article 20).

Children have a right to **participate in decisions about their future**. They have a right to express their opinions (Articles 12 and 13). They have a right to have a **periodic review of their placement** (Article 25).

Children have a right to **physical and legal protection**. Separated children may have particular protection needs. Protection should be needed extended to those at risk from armed conflict, military recruitment, sexual assault, prostitution, torture, exploitative work, or any other form of violence, abuse or neglect. Children outside their own country are entitled to care, protection and representation regardless of their legal status (Articles 19, 20, 22, 32, 33, 34, 35 and 38).

Communities and authorities have the prime responsibility for ensuring children's survival and well-being. Where there is external assistance, it should aim to increase the community's capacity to meet the needs of all children, including separated children (Article 5, 18, 20).

The **best interests of the child** should guide all decisions and actions concerning the separated child (Article 3).

Separated Children

Handout 2.2

A Comprehensive Approach

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

The survival of unaccompanied and separated children may be threatened in armed conflict or other disasters. These children are most likely to have their basic rights violated and to risk abuse, exploitation or recruitment into armed forces.

All children are entitled to protection and care under a broad range of international, regional and national instruments. Of particular relevance for separated children are:

- the right to a name, legal identity and birth registration;

- the right to physical and legal protection;

- the right not to be separated from their parents;

- the right to provisions for their basic subsistence;

- the right to care and assistance appropriate to their age and developmental needs;

- the right to participate in decisions about their future.

Primary responsibility for ensuring children's survival and well-being lies with parents, family and community. The national and local authorities are responsible for ensuring that children's rights are respected. Efforts must be made in an emergency to protect family unity and avoid child-family separation.

The **principle of family unity** - or integrity of the family - states that all children have a right to a family, and families have a right to care for their children. Unaccompanied and separated children must be provided with services aimed at reuniting them with their parents or primary legal or customary caregivers as quickly as possible. If large numbers of children are separated from their parents or other relatives in an emergency, priority should be given to the most vulnerable, whether accompanied or unaccompanied, taking into account that the latter are likely to be more vulnerable.

The **best interests** of the child constitute the basic standard for guiding decisions and actions taken to help children, whether by national or international organizations, courts of law, administrative authorities, or legislative bodies. These Inter-agency Guiding Principles should be taken into account when determining the best interests of the child in a given situation.

A **child's opinion** should be listened to and given due weight in relation to the child's age and maturity. Children must be kept informed about plans being made

for them. This includes decisions about placement and care, tracing and reunification. Programmes should actively engage children in the prevention of and responses to separation.

Non-discrimination: one of the basic tenets of international humanitarian law is that the protection and guarantees it lays down must be granted to all without discrimination. Thus all four Geneva Conventions and both Additional Protocols provide that the "specific categories of person they protect must be treated humanely (...) without adverse distinction founded on sex...". The Convention of the Rights of the Child reinforces this key principle and states that girls have additional, specific needs which have to be taken into account in programming for their care and protection.

The special needs of girls must be taken into account throughout armed conflicts and their aftermath. Appropriate responses must be developed at all stages of programming. See for example, Security Council Resolution 1261 (1999) on children and armed conflict which urges all parties to armed conflicts to take special measures to protect children, in particular girls.

Source: Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children (2004).

Separated Children
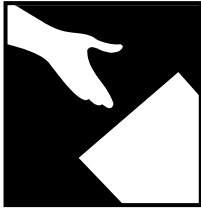
Handout 2.3

Durable Long-Term Solutions

DURABLE LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS

As is the case for all children, family reunification should be the priority for the separated refugee child, be it in the country of asylum, in the country of origin through voluntary repatriation or in a third country.

- The decision on the return of a child to the country of origin for family reunification should be based on the best interests of the child. Each case should be reviewed individually by balancing the desirability of family reunification with the following non-exhaustive list of factors:

  ✓ conditions in the proposed place of return in the country of origin in terms of threat to the child's physical security and/or the risk of persecution;

  ✓ conditions in the country of asylum;

  ✓ the wishes of the child;

  ✓ the wishes of the parents and their capacity to care for the child;

  ✓ the quality of care arrangements in the country of asylum.

- Where relatives other than parents/primary care-givers have been traced in the country of origin but parents/primary care-givers have not yet been found, caution should be exercised before proceeding with this family reunification as it could result in permanent separation from the child's parents/primary care-givers.

- If reunification is not possible despite all efforts, finding an alternative placement for the child in the country of origin is the preferred solution providing that fundamental changes have taken place there that make voluntary repatriation possible. Careful planning and monitoring of transfer, reception and care arrangements are essential upon return. All relevant documentation must accompany the child.

- Placing the child in an adoptive family in another country either through local integration in the asylum country or resettlement in a third country, i.e. inter-country adoption, should be considered only if the child cannot be suitably cared for in the country of origin. In addition to the usual criteria for adoptions outlined earlier in these guidelines, inter-country adoption should take place only if voluntary repatriation to the country of origin in conditions of safety and dignity does not appear feasible in the near future and options in that country would not better provide for the child's well-being.

Source: Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children (2004).

Separated Children

Handout 2.4
Key International Instruments Relating to Separated Children

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1. Child Specific Human Rights Instruments

- Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child - the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, 2000

- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child - the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, 2000

- International Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000

- Rome Statue of the International Criminal Court, 1998

- Hague Conference on Private International Law:

  - ✓ Convention for the Protection of Minors, 1961

  - ✓ Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, 1980

  - ✓ Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption, 1993 and its Recommendation concerning the application to Refugee Children and other Internationally Displaced Children, 1994.

  - ✓ Convention of on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Co-operation in respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children, 1996

- Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty, 1990

2. Humanitarian Law Instruments

- The four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949

- Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977

- Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), 8 June 1977

3. Instruments Covering Refugees and Stateless Persons

- Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951

- Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1967

- Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, 1954

- Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, 1961

4. Regional instruments and declarations

- Organisation of African Unity Convention governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, 1969

- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990

- Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, 1984

5. Additional General Human Rights Instruments

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, and its Optional Protocol, 1976

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966

- Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment of Punishment, 1984

- International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1965

Source: Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children (2004).

Separated Children

Handout 3.1
Specific Measures to Avoid the Separation of Children

Specific Measures during Population Movements

Children are especially vulnerable to separation during large population movements. Some specific measures which can be taken to avoid separations are listed below.

- Ensure that families know of the precautions they can take to keep their family together e.g. holding the hand, attaching string to children's clothes, using name-tags, necklaces or bracelets.

- Ensure that people know what to do when children become separated.

- Encourage families to ensure that young children know their names and addresses.

- Identify particular locations where separations are most likely - e.g. border crossings, checkpoints, transit sites, health facilities, and focus preventive activities at these points.

- Identify particular categories of children who are most vulnerable to separation - e.g. fostered children, those with disabilities, children whose parents are in hospital, children with elderly carers etc.

- Avoid measures which are seen to specifically target separated children and provide them with special care which may encourage further separations.

Specific Measures for Health Centres and Hospitals

- Health workers should take note of any children who need to be cared for, and should help the parent(s) to make appropriate arrangements.

- Parents should be encouraged to stay with their sick child, but if this is not possible (for example, when the parent is unable to arrange for other children to be cared for), full contact details for the family must be recorded.

- Health centres and hospitals treating parents should be responsible for ensuring that care for the children has been arranged and that records are kept of their whereabouts.

- Health workers could raise awareness of the risks of family separation among the people attending the health centre, particularly for services that affect children such as immunisation, mother and child clinics and nutrition programmes.

Specific Measures for Child Care Centres and Institutions

Children who are perceived to be "orphans" or "abandoned" children are frequently seen by some aid agencies as groups deserving special treatment. Experience demonstrates that the presence of children's residential centres can often unwittingly serve to further encourage the separation of children from their families (or other carers). Agencies providing centres need to be fully aware of UNHCR policy, and their staff may need training if they are to avoid increasing the numbers of separated children.

Separated Children

Handout 3.2
Preventing Separation

There are many reasons why children become separated from their families in emergencies. Separation occurs either accidentally – when fleeing from danger or during evacuation – or deliberately when children are abandoned or given over to the care of another individual or a residential centre, perhaps in the belief that they will have a better chance of survival or access to services.

It is possible to prevent children from being separated from their families, even in extreme emergencies. Approaches can be made to the relevant authorities and other parties so as to reduce the risk of separation. These contacts aimed at preventing accidental and deliberate separation and promoting reunification must be based on an understanding of the causes of separation.

- Awareness of ways to prevent separation should be raised among governments, donors, staff of national and international agencies, religious groups and communities, especially women as they are in many cases the primary care-givers in emergencies.

- Families should be made aware of measures that they can take in emergencies to minimise the risk of their children becoming separated. Parents and school teachers should teach children their name, address and details of where they come from, to facilitate tracing should they become separated. Name tags may be useful to identify children, particularly young children, if they are forced to flee.

- Families and communities must be made aware of the particular vulnerability of girls as they are particularly susceptible to marginalisation, poverty and the suffering of armed conflicts. Girls are also particularly at risk of neglect, abuse, including sexual abuse and exploitation.

- When appropriate in a particular situation, special measures must be taken to protect children, in particular girls, from rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence in situations of armed conflict

- In areas where unrest is anticipated, those engaged in prevention work should strike a balance between anticipating problems and taking care not to aggravate people's sense of insecurity.

- Deliberate separations can be prevented by ensuring that all households have access to basic relief supplies and other services, including education, and that providers of emergency care for children apply appropriate screening procedures.

- Organisations must ensure that their actions do not inadvertently encourage family separations. Separation can be provoked when families entrust their children to organisations hoping that they will get better care and services for them.

- All sectoral services including health, food aid, logistics must be reviewed to ensure that their systems and practices do not cause family separation.

Source: Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children (2004).

Separated Children

Handout 3.3
Evacuation

Whenever possible, children should be evacuated from their place of residence together with adult family members. Evacuating children without family members should be a last resort, carried out only after it has been carefully determined that protection and assistance cannot be provided in place and that evacuation of the entire family is not feasible. Separation of these children from their families is meant to be temporary.

International humanitarian law provides guidance to facilitate the return of evacuated children to their families and country. (Additional Protocol I to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, Article 78).

- Priority must be given to protection and assistance to enable families to meet the needs of the children in their care. This involves clearly identifying needs and addressing them effectively so that people are able to choose to remain where they are and to keep their families together.

- Evacuating all children from a particular location may not be feasible. The choice of which children to evacuate should be reasonable, fair and based on clearly agreed criteria. Such criteria must strike a balance between the safety of the child and the benefits of the child remaining in his or her own environment.

- Reception and care arrangements at the destination must be confirmed prior to evacuation. Ways must be found to maintain contact between child and family, and measures taken to ensure early reunification. If the principles devised to protect the best interests of the child cannot be respected, the evacuation should be reconsidered.

- The humanitarian act of evacuating children where necessary does not exempt humanitarian organizations from providing those children's families with the assistance they require.

- Agencies or individuals should evacuate children only as part of a coordinated plan of action.

- Any decision to send children away must be based on the informed consent of their parents. This must include information about the evacuating agency to whom they are entrusting their children, the intended child-care arrangements and the risks and possible consequences of evacuation. Parents should give written consent prior to evacuation. The wishes of parents regarding the children's care, culture and religious education must be considered.

- Children should be given the opportunity to express their opinion, and it should be taken into consideration.

- Care-giving adults known to the children should accompany those evacuated without their families.

- The personal and family particulars of each child must be recorded in a personal profile and history file. This file should also include complete information as to the identity of the entrusting agency and copies of the parents' written consent. A copy of the file should travel with the child. Further copies should be given to the parents, national authorities - if appropriate, the organization responsible for the evacuation - and a neutral monitoring agency, such as the ICRC's Central Tracing Agency. Documentation for children should include sufficient travel documents to enable easy return to the country of origin.

- In extreme situations, where life is at immediate risk, full documentation may not be possible before evacuation, but every effort must be made to record at least rudimentary details such as names of the child and parents, date of evacuation and usual place of residence. Full documentation should be completed as soon as possible.

- Any evacuation, whether for safety or for medical reasons, should be limited to a place as close as possible to the child's home and family. The best interests of the child should determine the place of evacuation.

- Evacuated children have the same rights as all children. Special additional measures may be needed to deal with particular risks arising from the circumstances of the evacuation itself. For example, adequate documentation and record-keeping will prevent small children's names and identities from being lost.

- The care and placement of children should be supervised by national or local welfare services to ensure that these children receive care that meets at least the minimum standards. The most appropriate form of placement must be determined for each child. Family care is likely to be best.

- Every effort should be made to preserve the culture, language and religion of the children, with full respect for the expressed preferences of their families, particularly when considering placement.

- Communication between the child and his or her family must be maintained and special efforts should be made to facilitate that communication. If necessary, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent family news network can be used.

Evacuation, reception and care should be planned with a view to the earliest possible reunification of the children with their parents. It must be clearly explained to guardians or foster parents that, although the duration of separation may be long, the objective is family reunification.

Source: Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children (2004).

Separated Children

Handout 4.1
Gathering Relevant Information Effectively

Assessments should be conducted:

- as far as possible by a multidisciplinary team conversant with the issues related to separated children in emergencies, having knowledge of the historical, social and political situation as well as expertise in assessment methods;

- at the least by a team who have been thoroughly briefed on separated children's issues of the region;

- with the active participation of members of the affected community. Careful judgement must be exercised in the choice of local team members. This is particularly relevant in highly politicised circumstances in which some individuals may seek to use the assessment to pursue their own agenda;

- in a way that builds on existing knowledge and documentation, and after a review of any prior assessments involving the same population;

- periodically, as the situation of separated children typically changes over time, sometimes radically so, owing to the emergence of new factors;

- jointly by two or more of the specialised agencies, as inter-agency co-operation beginning with the initial assessment paves the way for a strong co-ordinated response later on. In cases where joint assessments are not possible, findings should be shared between concerned agencies;

- in the field by direct observation, interviews and focus groups with a broad range of key community informants and leaders. These include children, religious leaders, women's groups, local and national authorities, teachers, soldiers, prison authorities, orphanage staff, local and international NGOs, and UN staff.

- in such a way as to sensitise the community, the authorities, non-governmental organisations and others regarding the issues related to separated children.

Source: Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children (2004).

Separated Children

Handout 4.2
Identifying Separated Children

The following considerations should guide activities in identifying separated children:

- **Identifying separated children should not disrupt existing care arrangements**. There may be a danger that carers give up the child's care to others in the belief that he/she will be better off: conversely, the presence of separated children may be concealed for a variety of reasons.

- **Information campaigns** may be needed to raise awareness of the issue of separated children among government, military, local authorities, community leaders, schools etc., and to inform people of the procedures which should be followed in respect of a separated child. Clear information on the objectives of registration and documentation should be given.

- **Active searches** for separated children may be needed, in places such as:

    ✓ emergency accommodation and centres;

    ✓ hospitals, medical and feeding centres, police stations etc.;

    ✓ on the streets (e.g. in market places) where children may find food, work or shelter;

    ✓ residential homes;

    ✓ in substitute families among the refugees or local community.

- **Priority** should normally be given to those children whose tracing needs are most urgent - e.g. children who are totally alone, or very young children.

Separated Children
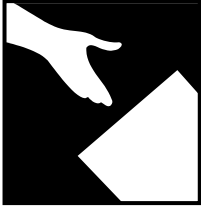
Handout 5.1

Emergency Care and Assistance

All children are entitled to emergency care and provision for their basic subsistence. Assistance for separated children must adequately meet their basic needs at a standard comparable to the surrounding community and should be provided in a way that preserves family unity, keeps children with their relatives or other care-givers and does not lead to separation.

In emergencies, interim care must be provided for children separated from their families until they are reunited, placed with foster parents or other long-term arrangements for care are made. This may include fostering, other forms of community-based care, or institutional care.

- Child protection must be the overriding factor. All children need security and physical and emotional care in a setting that encourages their general development.

- Where possible this care should be provided in families within the child's own community, with close monitoring.

- Interventions should build on and strengthen the systems that currently function in the community, and involve community leaders and local authorities, unless their views are not in the best interests of the child.

- Children must be kept informed of the plans being made for them, and their opinions taken into consideration.

- Co-operation between all agencies providing interim care is essential, using agreed guidelines for family and community-based programmes or institutional care.

- The provision of interim care should be based on the best interests of the child and should not be used to promote political, religious or other agenda.

- The focus must be on temporary care, with commitment to carry out family tracing.

Source: Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children (2004).

Separated Children

Handout 5.2
Planning & Staffing Residential Centres

Measures to Ensure that Centres Meet the Whole Range of Children's Needs

- If it is deemed necessary and appropriate for childcare centres to be opened, it is important that the following measures be included:

- Only children who have no one to take care of them should be admitted to the centre. Very strict criteria should apply to the admission of children who have families.

- If there are serious reasons why a child cannot stay with his or her family, the centre should work with local authorities to see if the difficulties in the family can be resolved and the child returned home.

- Admission to the centre should be regarded as temporary. Every care episode should be carefully planned, with clear and time-limited objectives set and reviewed regularly. The residential care experience should be carefully coordinated with other activities such as family tracing and the arrangement of other care options such as fostering or small group living.

- The centre should become actively involved with the authorities in maintaining family contacts and tracing the families of separated children. Brothers and sisters should be kept together. Home visits and visits to the centre by a child's relatives (or other friends or neighbours) should be encouraged.

- Each child must have a file. This should contain: full details of the child, the immediate family and other relatives who could be involved in the child's care; records of contact with the family; regular reports about the child's development. If the whereabouts of a child's family are unknown, the circumstances of the child's admission and any information known at that time about the child and his or her family must be recorded; the file should be updated by adding any new information acquired about the child or family. Ideally, the file should also contain a photograph of the child; a new photo should be taken each year, but all the previous ones should be carefully kept.

- The pattern of daily living should reflect the objectives of the centre. Staff should be deployed in a way that facilitates the establishment of appropriate staff-child relationships and provides young people with a choice of adult confidants; norms should be established (in conjunction with the residents where appropriate) and an appropriate system of rewards and punishments; educational and training opportunities should be integrated into the life of the centre; the participation of young people should be facilitated in order to encourage a sense of responsibility and a level of peer-support; and finally

positive interaction needs to be encouraged with people living in the local community.

- Living conditions for the children in centres should not be significantly different from those in the surrounding communities. Children should live in small groups of mixed age and gender. They should perform domestic tasks, as they would at home, they should be brought up in accordance with the local culture, and their family religion should be recognised. The children should attend school in the community rather than be educated separately in the centre.

- There should be local regulation of children's centres. The centres should observe accepted standards of childcare, and if a child leaves a centre, the relevant local authorities should be informed.

Staffing of Residential Care Centres

If residential centres are deemed to be necessary, it is the quality of the staff that will most significantly determine the extent to which they meet the needs of children. This means that staff training will be an absolute necessity, though the personal qualities of staff and their commitment to children are of vital importance. It is particularly important that staff training emphasises the following:

- The whole range of children's needs, not concentrating on just physical needs: in particular the need to provide individualised personal care consistent with cultural norms. Training needs to be provided according to the objectives of the centre and the tasks of the staff. It can be difficult to recruit staff who possess both the level of education required and also experience of parenting.

- The importance of integration with the local community

- The importance of centres providing care that is temporary and purposeful

- The need to co-operate actively with family tracing programmes. Care staff have a vital role to play in documenting children, encouraging their participation in planning for their future and preparing them for reunification. However, it needs to be remembered that successful family tracing may lead to the closure of the centre and loss of jobs.

- The need to provide special care for children with particular needs - e.g. children with disabilities or those who have been psychologically affected by their experiences.

- The importance of understanding the particular developmental needs of children and adolescents at different ages and stages.

Separated Children

Handout 6.1

Registration Form for Unaccompanied and Separated Children

The Registration Form for Unaccompanied and Separated Children, as developed by the Inter-agency Group on Separated Children, is reproduced on the following four pages.

REGISTRATION FORM FOR UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED CHILDREN

ICRC ID No. _____

Other ID No. _____
(Please specify organisation)

Unaccompanied child ☐
Separated child ☐

PHOTO

Please Note:

- *A **separated** child is any person under the age of 18, separated from both parents, or from his/her previous legal or customary primary care giver, but not necessarily from other relatives. An **unaccompanied** child is any person who is under the age of 18, separated from both parents, or from his/her previous legal or customary primary care giver and **also** his/her relatives.*

- *If the child does not remember his/her address, please note other relevant information, such as descriptions of mosques, churches, schools and other landmarks.*

Please fill out this form with a ballpoint pen. (1 form per child except for siblings under point 2.)

---

1. Identity of the child

Personal ID document type and no._____Sex M ☐ F ☐

Full name (as expressed locally) _____

Also known as (nickname) _____

Name(s) given to the child by others after separation from parents? **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

Date of birth/age _____ Place of birth _____

Nationality _____ Country _____

Ethnic group _____

Language(s) spoken_____

Distinguishing physical characteristics _____

Father's full name_____

Alive ☐ Dead ☐ don't know ☐

Mother's full name _____

Alive ☐ Dead ☐ don't know ☐

If father and/or mother believed dead, please give details_____

_____

Other persons familiar to the child_____

_____

Address of the child <u>before</u> separation (i.e. where the child grew up) _____

_____Tel. no_____

Person(s) with whom child lived _____

2. Siblings (brothers/sisters) accompanying the child

A. Full name _____

Date of birth/age_____Place of Birth _____Country_____

Current address _____

_____ Tel. no. _____

B. Full name _____

Date of birth/age_____Place of Birth _____Country_____

Current address _____

_____ Tel. no. _____

3. Current care arrangement of the child

a. Children's centre   ☐   b. Foster family (please specify nationality)   ☐ _____

c. Other (please specify) ☐ _____

Full name of institution/person(s) responsible_____

Address _____

_____ Tel. no. _____

Date this care arrangement commenced _____

Place foster family intends or is likely to return to or resettle in:

Address_____Country_____

4. History of separation

Date of separation _____Place of separation_____Country_____

Circumstances of separation _____

_____

_____

_____

List additional movements between place of initial separation and current location _____

_____

5. In case the child has been evacuated

By whom / through which organisation?_____ Date_____

Reason(s) for evacuation_____

From where ?_____ To where ?_____

6. Additional protection concerns

Has the child been associated with an armed force or armed group?   **Yes** ☐   **No** ☐

Child headed household	**Yes** ☐	**No** ☐

Child headed household   **Yes** ☐   **No** ☐

Disabled child   **Yes** ☐   **No** ☐

Medical   **Yes** ☐   **No** ☐

Street child   **Yes** ☐   **No** ☐

Girl mother   **Yes** ☐   **No** ☐

Abuse situation   **Yes** ☐   **No** ☐

Other (please specify) _____

Further information_____

Immediate action required ? **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ _____

7. Wishes of the Child

Person/s child wishes to find

Father ☐   Mother ☐   Brother ☐   Sister ☐

Other (please specify) ☐ _____

A. Full name and relationship _____

Last known address _____

_____ Country _____ Tel. no._____

B. Full Name and relationship _____

Last known address _____

_____ Country _____ Tel. no._____

C. Full Name and relationship _____

Last known address _____

_____ Country _____ Tel. no._____

Is the child in contact with/has heard from any relative(s)? (please give details) _____

_____

Does the child want family reunification?   Yes, as soon as possible ☐   Yes, later ☐   No ☐

8. Interview by other organisation involved in tracing

Has the child been interviewed by any other organisation(s) ?   **Yes** ☐   **No** ☐

Name of organisation(s) _____

Place of interview_____ Date_____

Country_____

Reference no. given to the child by other organisation _____

9.   List of documents carried by the child

_____

_____

_____

10.   Additional information which could help trace the child's family (please ask the child where he/she thinks his/her relatives, including siblings might be or whether the child is in contact with any family friend)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

11.   Disclosure of information

Does the child/guardian agree to the public disclosure (on radio, Internet, etc.) of his/her name and the names of relatives for the purpose of tracing his/her family?   **Yes** ☐   **No** ☐

12.   Place and date of interview _____

13.   Information obtained from:

   the child ☐   guardian ☐   other (please specify) ☐ _____

14.   Name of interviewer and organisation _____

15.   Organisation in charge of tracing the child's family (please specify name, address and contact numbers) _____

_____

16.   Signature of the child (if old enough) _____

Separated Children

Handout 6.2

Issues Arising during Verification

The Family has Concerns about Reunification

The following are possible reasons the family may feel unable to look after the child:

- the family's circumstances may have changed greatly since separation: births, deaths, marriages and separations frequently mean that the child's family is constituted differently from before.

- often, the person claiming the child is not the parent, but an aunt, uncle, or other member of the child's extended family who did not previously care for the child;

- sometimes a parent has remarried (or older brother or sister has married) and they or their partner may be reluctant to take in the child;

- the family may be experiencing serious hardship and may be worried about their ability to care for another child.

The tracing worker should try to find out how other people in the household feel about the child returning. The tracing worker can discuss concerns with the family, and discuss possible ways they could be overcome: for example, by encouraging contact between the child and family through letters, visits etc; gradual reintegration of the child; looking for additional means of support for the family, help from other relatives or neighbours, or from other forms of assistance in the community.

The Child has Concerns about Reunification

If the child is reluctant to be reunified with his or her family, the reasons should be explored. The child should be allowed to speak about these concerns on an individual basis with a tracing worker or carer. The child may find it difficult to talk about these things.

Reasons the child might be reluctant to return include:

- the child may have feelings of guilt about surviving, anger at being abandoned by the family, or the memories of separation may just be too painful;

- the child may be returning to a family situation which was difficult before separation, for example, there may be a past history of abuse;

- he or she may no longer have both parents; brothers and sisters may not be there;

- the child may have to consider living with a relative he or she hardly knows;

- the child might not want to leave his or her present home: maybe the child is in a town where living conditions are easier; it may be easier to continue schooling, or the child may have made friends where he/she is now.

Usually initial fears can be overcome with individual preparation such as discussion between the child and the tracing worker or carers and by family contact through letters, photos or visits.

Where there are serious concerns, for example a previous history of abuse, the situation must be carefully assessed and alternative arrangements made if necessary. Keeping the child informed of progress in tracing helps prevent the prospect of reunification coming as a shock. If the child feels that she is included and is involved in decisions made, this can help her feel that she has some control over her future, and is not simply a passive recipient of people's help. This is particularly true for older children.


The Tracing Worker Has Concerns about Reunification

During verification the tracing workers may have picked up information which they feel may affect the chances of successful reunification. These may be to do with the family or with the child.

If verification took place at the family home, the tracing worker will have had the opportunity to observe the family's situation and to talk to other family members about reunification. Often, verification will have taken place away from the family home, so if the tracing worker has concerns these will be based on the interview and on their impression of the person claiming the child.

- The person wanting to care for the child may be elderly or infirm or the tracing worker may identify possible problems such as alcohol abuse.

- The child may have become separated from his or her family because of existing problems such as poverty or violence. The potential for these to affect the chances of successful reunification may still be there.

- The child's experiences since separation may have made it more difficult for him to return to a family environment. For example, children may have special health, disability or emotional problems.

- Some children face particular problems. For example, child soldiers and children who have been in other countries and cultures during separation, particularly where they have learnt to speak another language and may have forgotten their own. In these cases preparing the child, family and community is very important.

Separated Children
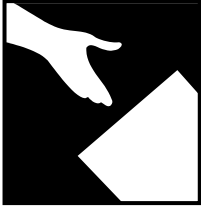
Handout 7.1
Sinje Camps in Sierra Leone

In the Sinje camps in Liberia for refugees from Sierra Leone, there were considerable numbers of separated children, including many young people who had been associated with fighting forces in their own country. The majority of these children had been absorbed spontaneously into foster families, though many of the older children preferred to live alone or in small groups. The quality of care in many of the foster homes was poor, with a great deal of discrimination in favour of the biological children of the family, and several instances of serious abuse.

The refugees themselves set up a Child Welfare Committee (CWC), with a mandate from the Camp Management Committee in each of the 2 camps, and this body assumed responsibility for responding to a number of child protection concerns. The Association of Concerned Carers (ACC) was established by foster carers to mobilise collective resources and accept a wider responsibility for the many separated children in the camps: they worked closely with the CWC.

When Save the Children UK became involved in the camps they decided to work mainly through existing community structures such as these. They had already worked in a camp which moved to Sinje, and one of their programmes was to facilitate the setting up of Boys' Clubs and Girls' Clubs. In Sinje they decided to adapt the approach with young people, emphasising their own responsibility, and the clubs set up their own leadership structures and pattern of meetings and they became largely self-directing.

SC UK offered a coherent package of awareness-raising and training to these various community structures, with a strong emphasis on children's rights and child protection. They supported these structures, which became the main front-line sources of monitoring and support for separated children, with their own staff intervening directly in more serious situations (such as allegations of abuse or the breakdown of a fostering placement).

What was observable in Sinje was a two-pronged strategy. First, at a macro level, there is the preventive and proactive approach consisting of awareness-raising work and education with the aim of improving the overall quality of care and protection for children, and preventing neglect and abuse. Although this strategy particularly had in mind the specific protection and care needs of separated children, the approach was a community-wide one which sought to address the protection needs of all young people in the camps. The approach rested firmly on the work of the Child Welfare Committee, the Concerned Carers and the young people's clubs, all within the overall authority and coordination of the Camp Management Committees, and all with technical support from SC UK.

The second aspect of the strategy was the more micro-level work done with the individual child (and foster family where appropriate). This was a more responsive approach to monitor children's well-being and to react to any problems or allegations of abuse. This operated in two ways. On an informal level, the Girls' Clubs and the Boys' Clubs had a growing role in providing reference-points for individual young people. Similarly, the Concerned Carers worked partly at this level, also offering a point of contact with other foster carers. At a more formal level, the Concerned Carers and the Child Welfare Committee made regular visits to fostered children and those in child-headed households, and intervened where necessary, with the more authoritative backing from the Camp Management Committee and SC UK.

The Boys' Clubs and Girls' Clubs appointed suitable members to act as Advocates within each block in the camp. They were charged with the responsibility to monitor child rights violations and to intervene when necessary. In practice it was found that they were able to play an active and responsible role in assisting and supporting other children, often in conjunction with the Child Welfare Committee and the Concerned Carers.

Note: this is taken from Abdullai, Miatta, Dorbor, Edwin and Tolfree, David (2002): "Case Study of the Care and Protection of Separated Children in the Sinje Refugee Camp, Liberia. Stockholm, Save the Children.

Separated Children
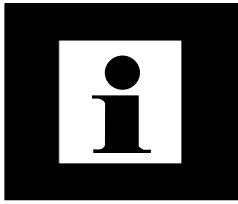
Further Readings and Websites

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Inter-agency (2004). Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children. Geneva, ICRC.

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FURTHER READINGS

UN General Assembly (2003). Assistance to Unaccompanied Refugee Minors – Report of the Secretary General. A/58/299.

Separated Children in Europe Programme Training Guide (2001). This training guide has been developed as a comprehensive introduction to the Separated Children in Europe Programme Statement of Good Practice.

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Tolfree, David (1994). Roofs and Roots: the Care of Separated Children in the Developing World. Aldershot, Arena.

Bonnerjea, Lucy (1994). Family Tracing: a Good Practice Guide. London, Save the Children. Also available in French.

Ressler, Everett (1992). Evacuation of Children from Conflict Areas: Considerations and Guidelines. Geneva, UNHCR, UNICEF.

Ressler, Everett, Boothby, Neil and Steinbock, Daniel (1988). Unaccompanied Children: Care and Protection in Wars, Natural Disasters and Refugee Movements. New York and Oxford, OUP.

WEBSITES

International Committee of the Red Cross

www.icrc.org

International Rescue Committee (IRC)

www.theIRC.org

Save the Children - UK

www.savethechildren.org.uk

The Save the Children UK Field Guide and Training Manual can be obtained via this site.

Separated Children in Europe Programme

www.separated-children-europe-programme.org

UNHCR

www.unhcr.ch

UNICEF

www.unicef.org

World Vision

www.wvi.org