

Terms of Reference

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

Background

UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children's rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children. UNICEF's Child Protection Strategy¹ identifies the strengthening of child protection systems as a key to securing and operationalising a protective environment² in non-emergency as well as in emergency contexts. No child should be exposed to violence, abuse or exploitation. The Strategy, which adopts a two pronged approach to child protection, seeks to promote and protect children through strengthening child protection systems and bringing about changes in social norms that may expose them to child protection related risks.

Child protection systems are composed of components similar to other systems, such as health and education systems, including human resources, finances, laws and policies, governance, monitoring and data. There are also elements specific to child protection such as the continuum of care, the process of care, and the type of services that are offered, at different levels of this system. The system should reach all "levels" of a country, from the village through districts to the national level, and may need to be coordinated across borders, particularly when dealing with issues such as migration and refugees. How a community chooses to define those structures, capacities and functions will be as unique as the context in which it operates.³ And while the government plays a prominent role, other actors, and less formal aspects of the system are also recognised as integral parts of the child protection system. Mapping and assessment toolkits have been developed to assist in describing how a system is operationalised,⁴ including its identification, its specific goals, components, and processes. The process of assessing the system often results in a mobilisation of the actors around the identified goals and priorities.

A system remains more or less the same whether during an emergency or outside of one. What may differ are some of the priorities and the need for some areas of the system to expand or contract to respond effectively. The system, at its base, is one that the population knows and can access. To the extent possible, where systems are weak, child protection

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

² Eight elements are described in the Protective Environment Framework. They include: *Governmental commitment to fulfilling protection rights; Legislation and enforcement; Attitudes, traditions, customs, behaviour and practices; Open discussion, including the engagement of media and civil society; Children's life skills, knowledge and participation; Capacity of those in contact with the child; Basic and Targeted Services; Monitoring and oversight.* These elements together describe National Protection Systems and also Social Change. National Protection Systems comprise elements for which the State bears primary responsibility for action and they are described as government commitment, legislation, service provision, monitoring, and building human capacity.

³ Wulcyn, Fred. et al (2010) Adapting a Systems Approach to Child Protection Key Concepts and Considerations. UNICEF, UNHCR, Save the Children, Chapin-Hall

⁴ UNICEF. (2010) Child Protection Systems Mapping and Assessment Toolkit.

actors responding to humanitarian emergencies strive to build up and strengthen systems to improve the protective environment for children.

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

Hypothesis

Child protection systems are able to mitigate child protection risks and facilitate responses during and in the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster.

Purpose

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

- What aspects of the Child Protection system are critical to mitigating the impact of a disaster?
- What aspect of the emergency response is best served through the Child Protection System?
- What aspect of the Child Protection system should be better prepared to mitigate the emergency and support disaster preparedness measures?
- What aspects of the CP system lend themselves to being strengthened during or in the immediate aftermath of a disaster in situations where the system is weak?

While child protection systems do intersect with other areas such as health and education and can positively support these areas, this assignment is looking specifically at child protection. The intention of the assignment is not to assess the emergency response, rather to review how the existence of a system prior to the emergency impacted the ability to respond to child protection issues as well as the actual results for children. This could include, for example, the ability to deliver a service, or the knowledge of the population as to where to go for assistance, or the capacity of the government to absorb resources.

The focus of the country case studies will be on recurring natural disasters. The intention is therefore to look at the system pre disaster, and the immediate response in the first 3 months following a disaster.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. Conduct a literature review of the current evidence of the mitigating influences of systems in an emergency through prevention, mitigation and preparedness. This would review all types of emergencies – e.g. economic, disaster, conflict, economic; and all types of systems – e.g. protection, health, education, labour. It would include academic and grey literature.
2. Develop a detailed methodology for testing whether child protection systems mitigate child protection risks during an emergency. The methodology will include the investigation and description of the system before an emergency as well as during or/and immediately following the disaster. The methodology must be ethically sensitive to the environment in which the research takes place, particularly that which follows the disaster. It should be feasible to carry out the same methodology in 2 distinct countries.
3. Implementation of the methodology and complete documentation of the results. Recommendations will consider the above noted questions, and be based on the evidence garnered through the research and the literature review.

Indicators of Performance:

A report which would be comprised of:

1. Literature review of the current evidence on the mitigating influences of systems in an emergency.
2. A defined methodology for the testing of the hypothesis. This process would define the research methodology, and scope of the review. It would focus on situations of recurring natural disasters. This will elaborate on the methodology that was submitted in the application for the assignment. It will be expanded based on the literature review and knowledge of the countries to be included in the assignment. It would be reviewed by the UNICEF Senior Advisors and Chiefs of Child Protection in the respective country offices, prior to the field visits.
3. Documentation of case studies in emergency contexts of the mitigating impact of the child protection system, with particular attention to the question posed. It will include recommendations that may be applied in other disaster contexts.

Contract Arrangements

The assignment is for a period of 100 person working days over a period of 6 months. The consultant can work from a location of her/his choosing, but would be expected to travel to 2 disaster prone countries twice to develop the case studies. The first visit would be to look at the system, and the second visit to look at the systems role in the response. UNICEF will select the countries, with some consultation with the selected consultant(s). On-going and additional consultations would be expected to be undertaken remotely.

It is expected that drafts of the report would be reviewed in stages, notably, the draft literature review, the methodology prior to the field visits, the findings of each field visit, etc.

The full report would be reviewed in draft at the end of month five, with comments received and considered for the report finalisation.

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

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

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

Key skills, technical background, and experience required:

Essential:

- Understanding of UNICEF's child protection system approach, including familiarity with the above noted conceptual clarity paper and child protection mapping and assessment toolkits, including in emergencies
- Experience with
 - social science analysis, and particularly systems theory
 - social services
 - economics and political science
- Experience working in the context of natural disasters
- At least 8 years of experience in a related field
- Must be willing to work in a challenging environment, with limited daily supervision
- Excellent written and spoken English. Fluency in another UN language desirable
- Proven ability to work in another culture

Applications

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

Deadline for applications is 25 July 2011.