



## BRIEFING CHILD PROTECTION IN EMERGENCIES

[www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)  
Saving lives, changing minds.



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

© International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva, 2016

Any part of this publication may be cited, copied, translated into other languages or adapted to meet local needs without prior permission from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, provided that the source is clearly stated. Requests for commercial reproduction should be directed to the IFRC at **secretariat@ifrc.org**

All photos used in this study are copyright of the IFRC unless otherwise indicated.

P.O. Box 372  
CH-1211 Geneva 19  
Switzerland  
Telephone: +41 22 730 4222  
Telefax: +41 22 733 0395  
E-mail: **secretariat@ifrc.org**  
Website: **<http://www.ifrc.org>**

## WHAT IS CHILD PROTECTION IN EMERGENCIES?

The inter-agency Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action defines *child protection in emergencies* as: “the prevention and response to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence against children in times of emergency caused by natural or manmade disasters, conflicts, or other crises.”<sup>1</sup> This includes all forms of physical and psychological abuse, sexual and gender-based violence, and deprivation of basic needs.

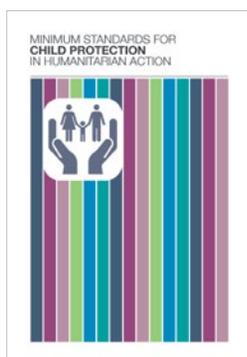
## WHAT IS THE AGE OF A CHILD?

According to international standards, the IFRC Child Protection Policy defines the age of a child as any person under the age of 18 years.

## WHAT ARE THE GLOBAL INTERAGENCY MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CHILD PROTECTION IN EMERGENCIES?

The Minimum Standards reinforce children’s specific rights as outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and support the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

For an introduction to the Minimum Standards, visit the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action [Youtube Page](#).



To view additional videos on specific Minimum Standards visit the [website](#).

## WHAT ARE THE RELEVANT IFRC STRATEGIC FRAMEWORKS, POLICIES & MINIMUM STANDARDS?

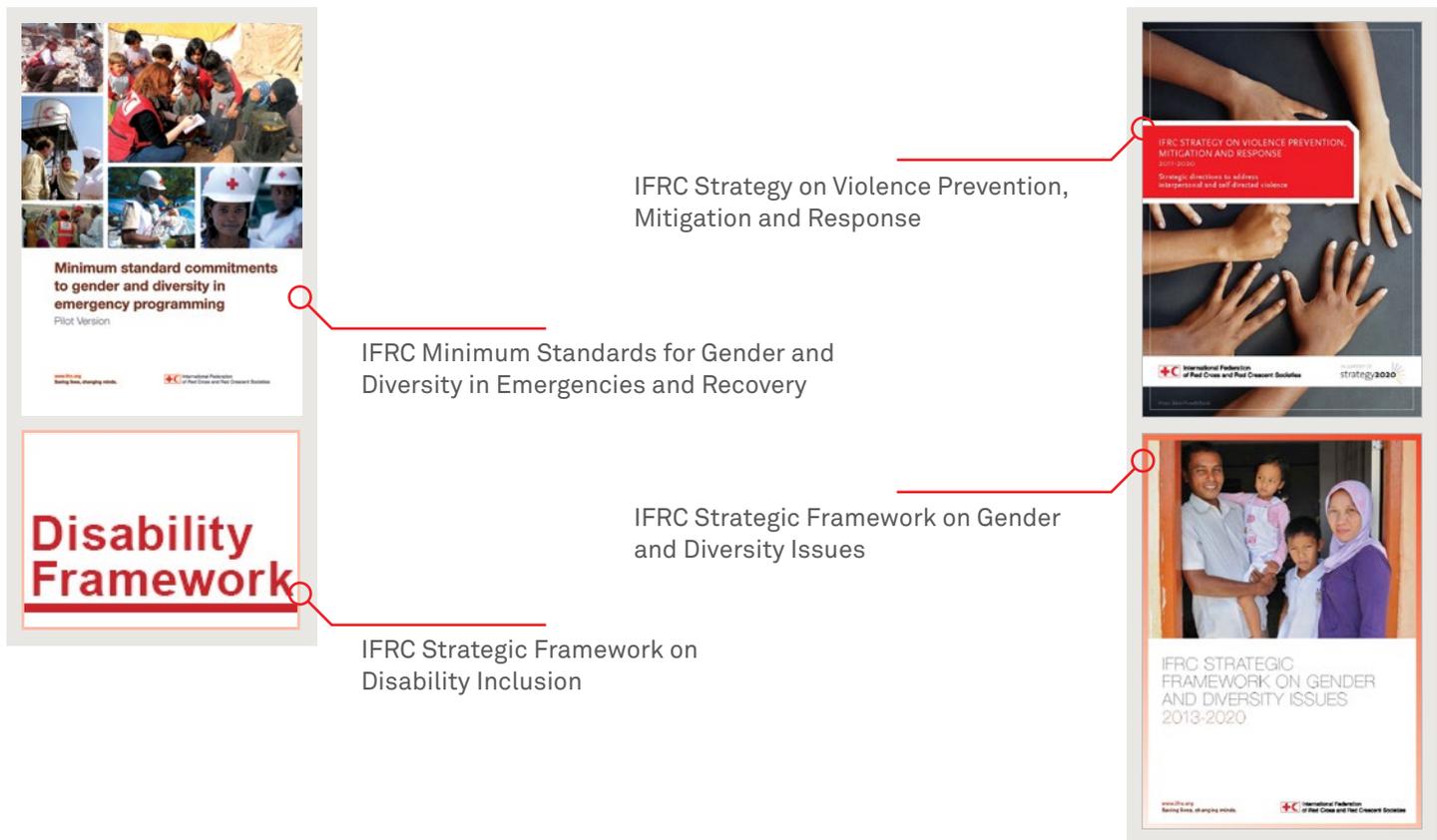


IFRC Plan & Budget 2016-2020

IFRC Principles and Rules for Red Cross Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance



IFRC Child Protection Action Plan 2015-2020



## WHAT ARE LOCAL CHILD PROTECTION LAWS?

For local child protection laws from countries around the world, visit the Child Rights International Network (CRIN) [legal database](#).

For more data on the status of children within specific emergencies and countries, see country profiles at the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action [website](#).

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILD PROTECTION IN EMERGENCIES?

Every agency that responds to emergencies is responsible for ensuring that they meet the child protection minimum standards. This includes the IFRC and all of its National Societies.

The IFRC is a core member of the Inter-agency Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (formerly known as the “Child Protection Working Group”) that is responsible for the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action.

**The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement calls upon States, National Societies, the International Federation and other relevant humanitarian and development stakeholders to ensure that their disaster—and emergency—management plans and activities include measures to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence in accordance with their respective mandates, such as putting in place specific training for relevant emergency—and disaster-response personnel, including the participation of women in disaster—and emergency-response teams, and engaging community members, in particular women, in decision-making about disaster risk management.<sup>2</sup>**

Resolution of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement  
(2015)

## WHY IS CHILD PROTECTION RELEVANT IN EMERGENCIES?

**#1 MOST  
AFFECTED  
POPULATION IN  
EMERGENCIES**

The majority of people affected by emergencies are often children.<sup>3</sup>

**TOP RISKS**

The risks to children defined in the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Emergencies include:

- physical, sexual, and psychological violence
- neglect
- injuries
- harmful practices including child, early and forced marriage
- psychological distress and mental disorders
- children associated with armed conflicts and armed groups
- child labour
- unaccompanied and separated children
- justice for children

**FACTORS THAT  
INCREASE THE  
RISK OF VIOLENCE  
AGAINST  
CHILDREN**

Children are among the weakest, smallest, and most dependent populations in emergencies.

**↑**  
**5%**  
**50%**  
**300%**

Statistics from locations from around the world have shown that the risk of violence against children during and after disasters can increase, even dramatically.<sup>4</sup>



There is a “consistent deprioritization of child protection in humanitarian action, reported year on year by child protection coordination groups and evidenced by statistics on funding and the funding of other research efforts in the humanitarian sector.”<sup>5</sup>

## TRENDS



“Despite an overall growth in humanitarian funding, CERF funding for child protection fell from US\$ 6.5 million in 2007 to US\$ 3.2 million in 2008, and then US\$ 2.9 million in 2009.<sup>5</sup> In 2009, child protection had the highest level of underfunding after the education sector.<sup>7</sup>”



Among the most neglected forms of child protection in emergencies include child-focused gender-based violence, trafficking and migration, and child labour,<sup>8</sup> and violence against children with disabilities.



“Research shows that the voices of children are often not heard and do not influence humanitarian decision-making.”<sup>9</sup>



Child protection in emergencies is considered a “lifesaving intervention.”<sup>10</sup>

## WHAT ACTIONS ARE NECESSARY, AND WHAT TOOLS ARE AVAILABLE?

### KEY ACTIONS BASED ON MINIMUM STANDARDS

Are all personnel briefed on child protection requirements (responsibilities, reporting, mainstreaming)?

### SAMPLE TOOLS AND ACTIONS

Ensure all personnel take the IFRC Online Child Protection Briefing. Is a free course for Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers and staff. It is available in multiple languages.

Provide a copy of the IFRC Child Protection Policy to all personnel.

Do not take pictures of children without their permission and from their parents/guardians.

Avoid interacting with children in ways that put them at risk. When privacy is needed, either a) go out of hearing but stay in sight of others, or b) follow the “two deep” rule – ensure two staff or volunteers are present with the child (best to have at least one person the same gender as the child).

### RESOURCES



Is child protection being included in relevant assessments?

Use the IFRC Rapid Assessment Guide for PSS/VP in Emergencies and Recovery.

In assessments, make efforts to include children who can be socially excluded like girls and boys with disabilities, migrants, or those belonging to religious or ethnic minorities, Indigenous groups, etc.

Collect and disaggregate data by age and sex.

See the Canadian Red Cross “Violence Prevention App for Disaster Responders” that provides checklists for conducting assessments, integrating into various sectors like WASH, Health, Psychosocial Support, and Livelihoods, and background information on violence in emergencies. It is available in multiple languages. The App is available for both **iOS** and Android (**English, French**). For the Spanish version, please change your device’s language to Spanish.



Ensure all facilities are assessed to be safe and accessible for girls and boys.

## WHAT ACTIONS ARE NECESSARY, AND WHAT TOOLS ARE AVAILABLE?

### KEY ACTIONS BASED ON MINIMUM STANDARDS

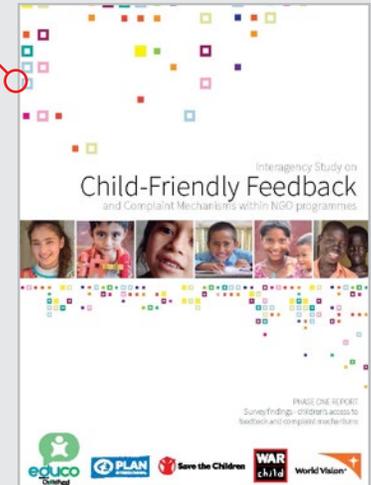
Are children participating in assessments and implementation?

### SAMPLE TOOLS AND ACTIONS

See samples in the Inter-Agency Study on Child Friendly Feedback and Complaint Mechanisms within NGO Programming.

Work with schools to develop child protection committees where girls and boys, parents, teachers, health care providers, police, and local NGOs can come together to identify priority protection needs and develop action plans to address the priorities.

### RESOURCES



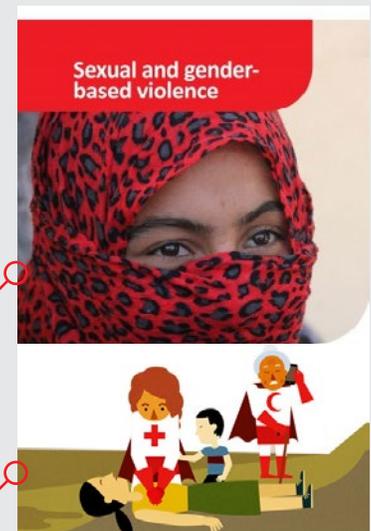
Are personnel prepared and supported to respond to child protection concerns?

Provide all personnel with a list of local referrals to respond to child protection concerns. Referrals can often be accessed through local government authorities, NGOs, or child protection/GBV/protection/PSS clusters.

For handling disclosures of violence, refer to and be trained on the manual on Handling Disclosures of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence.

See the "Where can concerns about child protection be reported?" section in this Briefing Note.

Provide First Aid services to children and their families.



What systems exist for reaching and supporting the most vulnerable children?

For separated or unaccompanied children, implement Restoring Family Links (RFL) systems.

Ensure that the needs and capacities of children who may be socially excluded are part of assessments and planning. Partnerships with local or international agencies specializing in working with specific groups can be helpful.



## WHAT ACTIONS ARE NECESSARY, AND WHAT TOOLS ARE AVAILABLE?

### KEY ACTIONS BASED ON MINIMUM STANDARDS

Are adults and children being briefed about their rights to safety and rights to report any protection concerns?

Is there collaboration, where appropriate, with other agencies?

Is child protection being included as a cross-cutting theme in appeals and planning documents?

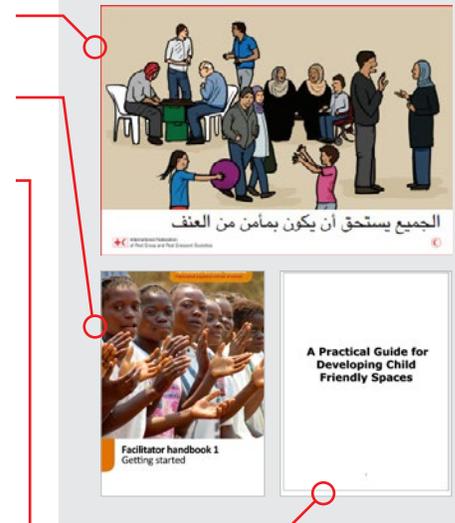
### SAMPLE TOOLS AND ACTIONS

Deliver the IFRC CBHFA Violence Prevention & Response Module.  
Include activities on Psychosocial Support such as child resilience.  
Implement Child Friendly Spaces.

Join local child protection/GBV/protection/PSS clusters  
Coordinate with local government agencies like schools, police, and health providers.  
Partner with NGOs, UNICEF, Save the Children, CARE, etc.  
Where aligned with the Fundamental Principles, consider partnerships with faith-based groups.

Add a specific budget line for child protection.  
Include a specific outcome/output/indicator on for child protection.

### RESOURCES



## WHAT ARE SAMPLE INDICATORS THAT CAN BE INCLUDED IN PROGRAM PLANNING?

What are sample indicators that can be included in program planning?

**OUTPUT 1:** IFRC and National Society volunteers, staff, contractors and consultants understand and formally agree to meet child protection standards.

**INDICATOR:** Number of volunteers, staff contractors and consultants that are briefed on IFRC (or National Society) child protection standards.

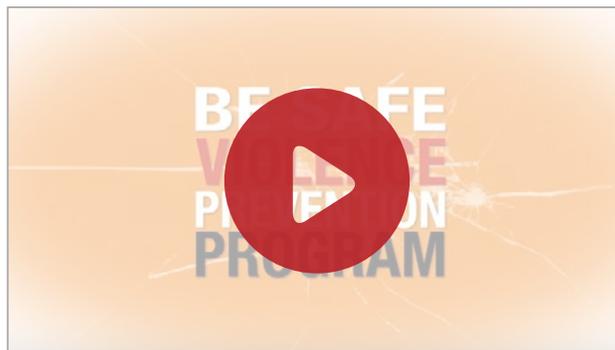
**OUTPUT 2:** IFRC and National Society projects meet child protection minimum standards to prevent and respond to physical, sexual and psychological violence and neglect against girls and boys.

**INDICATOR:** Number of activities that specifically aim to protect children from violence, with a focus on the most vulnerable children.

For specific outcomes and indicators for integration within specific sectors, see the [Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action](#).

### WHAT IS AN EXAMPLE OF ACTION TAKEN BY A NATIONAL SOCIETY?

There are many examples of action taken by National Societies. One specific example of child protection action using the CBHFA Violence Prevention & Response Module is from [Pakistan](#).



### WHERE CAN CONCERNS ABOUT CHILD PROTECTION BE REPORTED?

Any concerns of violence against children should be reported as soon as possible.

Personnel can report to their own line manager, a senior manager, Human Resources, or Safe Call Ltd (a confidential service for IFRC personnel):

by phone: +442076965652;

email: [ifrc@safecall.co.uk](mailto:ifrc@safecall.co.uk);

or website: <http://www.safecall.co.uk/confidential-contact.php>.



### WHERE CAN MORE INFORMATION BE ACCESSED?

See the [IFRC website for violence prevention and response](#) for more information.

**Violence, while complex and frustrating, is not inevitable. In fact, like the risk of other public health crises, such as diarrheal diseases, respiratory illnesses, measles, malaria and lack of nourishment which can escalate in disasters, violence can be contained, curbed, and ultimately prevented. The ability of violence to thrive on ignorance, secrecy, denial and the chaos of disasters can be thwarted.<sup>11</sup>**

## REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> Child Protection Working Group. (2012). *Minimum standards for child protection in humanitarian action*.
- <sup>2</sup> Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. (2015). *Resolution: sexual and gender-based violence: Joint action on prevention and response*.
- <sup>3</sup> UNHCR. (2014). *Global Trends Report 2013*.
- <sup>4</sup> Sources for an increase in violence against children in emergencies:
- Amnesty International. (2011). *Aftershocks: Women speak out against sexual violence in Haiti's camps*. Amnesty International; Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice (CHRGJ). (2011). *Sexual violence in Haiti's IDP camps: Results of a household survey*. CHRGJ
  - Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice. (2011). *Sexual Violence in Haiti's IDP Camps: Results of a household survey*. CHRGJ, online.
  - Enarson, E. (1999). *Emergency preparedness in British Columbia: Mitigating violence against women in disasters. An issues and action report for provincial emergency management authorities and women's services*. Retrieved from: [http://www.onlinewomeninpolitics.org/sourcebook\\_files/Resources/Report-%20Emergency%20Preparedness%20in%20British%20Columbia%20\(Mitigating%20Violence%20Against%20Women%20in%20Disasters\).pdf](http://www.onlinewomeninpolitics.org/sourcebook_files/Resources/Report-%20Emergency%20Preparedness%20in%20British%20Columbia%20(Mitigating%20Violence%20Against%20Women%20in%20Disasters).pdf)
  - Pinheiro, P.S. (2006). *World report on violence against children*. New York: United Nations.
  - Chan, K.L. & Zhang, Y. (2011). Female Victimization and Intimate Partner Violence After the May 12, 2008, Sichuan Earthquake. *Violence and Victims*, Volume 26, Number 3, 2011.
- <sup>5</sup> Global Protection Cluster. (2015). *A matter of life and death: child protection programming's essential role in ensuring child wellbeing and survival during and after emergencies*.
- <sup>6</sup> Cited in Global Protection Cluster. (2015). *A matter of life and death: child protection programming's essential role in ensuring child wellbeing and survival during and after emergencies*.  
 "As child protection is "hidden" under the overall protection Cluster funding reporting, the most recent data on the details of financing for child protection in emergencies is that compiled in 2007 – 2009 for the report "Too Little, Too Late." This funding pattern goes against the trend of overall CERF funding, which increased dramatically in 2008 and then decreased in 2009. See Sarah Lilley, Johanna MacVeigh, Christine McCormick and Misty Buswell (2011) Too Little, Too Late: Child protection funding in emergencies, commissioned by the Child Protection Working Group of the Global Protection Cluster."
- <sup>7</sup> Cited in Global Protection Cluster. (2015). *A matter of life and death: child protection programming's essential role in ensuring child wellbeing and survival during and after emergencies*.
- <sup>8</sup> Jabry, A. (Ed). (2005). *After the Cameras Have Gone – Children in Disasters* (second edition). London: Plan International.
- <sup>9</sup> Jabry, A. (Ed). (2005). *After the Cameras Have Gone – Children in Disasters* (second edition). London: Plan International.
- <sup>10</sup> OCHA. (January 2010). Central Emergency Response Fund Life-Saving Criteria.
- <sup>10</sup> IFRC and Canadian Red Cross. (2012). *Predictable, preventable: best practices in addressing interpersonal and self-directed violence during and after disasters*. IFRC.

# The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

**Humanity** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

**Impartiality** It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

**Neutrality** In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

**Independence** The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

**Voluntary service** It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

**Unity** There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

**Universality** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

For further information, please contact:

**International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

PO BOX 372  
CH-1211 Geneva 19  
SWITZERLAND

