Putting Children
at the Heart of the
World Humanitarian Summit

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Children's perspectives and engagement in humanitarian emergencies

"Decisions being taken today will affect me more than those taking the decisions." 15-year-old girl participating in the Bali Climate Conference, December 2007[1]

All children have the right to be heard and participate in decision-making that affects their lives – whoever they are, and wherever they are.[2] Yet girls and boys' perspectives are often overlooked. This is especially true in the chaos of an emergency when practical, organizational, cultural and ethical issues can create barriers to meaningful participation.

The right to be heard is a guiding principle of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child[3] (UNCRC) -- the most widely ratified international human rights treaty in the world.[4] Children can and do play an important role in their own protection and in their communities' response to an emergency. For humanitarian actors, child participation is a vital way of ensuring accountability and effectiveness. Children who recognize abuse and violence against themselves and others, and who are empowered to participate in the humanitarian response, contribute to long-term development after the crisis and build safer communities where vulnerability and risk are reduced.

It is critical to acknowledge that children comprise half or more of the affected population in emergencies and are disproportionately affected by their impacts. UNICEF estimates that typically 50 to 60 per cent of the population affected by disasters is children.[5] Of all the world's children, the most vulnerable are those subject to multiple drivers of poverty in the most marginal, fragile and conflict-affected contexts characterized by

violence. Recent studies show that nearly a billion children live in countries that were affected by conflict in 2013 or 2014 alone.[6] Globally, levels of forced displacement reached a record high for the second consecutive year in 2014, with 59.5 million people fleeing their homes.[7] An estimated 13.9 million people are newly displaced.[8] The majority are children.[9]

It is imperative that the WHS process takes children's views and needs into genuine consideration. The success of the Summit and of future humanitarian action depends on it.

To facilitate this, a group of child-focused agencies[10] have compiled the views of more than 6,000 children from pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis settings in a range of countries, spanning over 10 years of their collective work with children in emergencies.

Aiming to contribute to discussions at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit around "Future humanitarian challenges related to natural hazards and conflicts", the report asks the following questions:

1. How can engaging children improve humanitarian effectiveness?
2. How can engaging children reduce vulnerability and manage risk?
3. How can children's ideas and perspectives drive transformation through innovation?
4. What are children's perspectives on their needs in conflict?

BACKGROUND TO THIS REVIEW: WHY ENGAGE WITH CHILDREN?

Emergencies can take up a significant proportion of a child's formative years, influencing crucial stages of social, cognitive, emotional and physical development. In times of crisis, children face significant protection risks. Existing vulnerabilities are exacerbated by environmental, economic and social disruptions. Boys and girls may face injury and disability, physical and sexual violence, psychosocial distress and mental disorders.[11] They may be separated from their families, recruited into armed groups, economically exploited or come into contact with the justice system.[12] Evidence repeatedly shows that these protection risks are interconnected and compounding.[13]

As a large proportion of the affected population in any emergency, girls and boys should be at the heart of humanitarian programming and able to hold humanitarian actors to account. Recent developments such as the 2014 Core Humanitarian Standard[14] and the IASC Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations[15] mean practitioners and policy-makers have clear and universal benchmarks describing exactly what it means to be accountable and engage crisis-affected children. States parties to the UNCRC have made strong commitments to child rights, and they play a central role in preparedness, response and recovery in times of crisis. Furthermore, evidence now shows that accountability mechanisms improve the quality, impact and sustainability of programmes.

This report reveals how the failure to consult and engage children reduces the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian programming, the capacity to reduce vulnerability and manage risk, and the ability to innovate. Children highlight issues and difficulties that may be overlooked by adults – especially those concerning their safety and protection. Adults who fail to consult children often fail to understand how problems may be connected and why intended outcomes are not achieved.

Since the adoption of the UNCRC in 1989, the scope and scale of child participation has increased. This has resulted in the development of minimum standards for child consultation and participation[16,17] growing numbers of academic studies on the topic, the issuance of a General Comment by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child[18] and subsequent toolkits[19], as well as the development of national and regional strategies for children's participation.[20]

Children are not a homogeneous group. No one child or group of children can be expected to speak for peers of different ages, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, race, religion or ethnicity. Moreover, childhood is a period of rapid change and evolving capacities. The only way to effectively take account of changing circumstances and perceptions is to engage children in ongoing consultations and to involve them in preparedness, response, monitoring and evaluation.

A substantial body of research by the child-focused agencies that commissioned this report, in addition to many others, has demonstrated the benefits of child participation at the individual, family and community levels, as well as in devising and implementing services and solutions. However, child participation remains far from systematic. The shortcomings of this traditional approach are highlighted by the fact that children know much more about their own needs than adults – especially where adults may be part of the problem.

METHODOLOGY

Children's perspectives reviewed in this report are drawn primarily from consultations with children undertaken by international non-governmental organizations or their partners during recent emergencies, and in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation work. There is an identified shortage of consultations during and immediately after situations of armed conflict but evidence from these situations has been reviewed and cited wherever possible.

Emergencies with the most consultations are recent: the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the 2013 Philippines Typhoon, the 2014 Ebola epidemic in West Africa and the ongoing Syrian conflict (2011-present). These are supplemented by material from a range of conflicts including the Central African Republic (2012-present), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1994-2003), Afghanistan (2001-present), South Sudan (2013-present), Sierra Leone (1991-2002), and other emergencies such as floods and food shortages in parts of Asia and Africa. The disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation work is principally from parts of Asia and Africa.

Most consultations have been conducted as part of assessments in early stages of emergencies, up to a few months of onset. In most instances, children are involved separately from adults and often divided into age groups. The age groupings vary (see table of examples below) but generally at least three sets are seen as necessary, typically 14-17, 10-13 and in some cases 6-9. Children under 10 years are generally less consulted, and for those under 6 years parents were used as a proxy in one assessment. Recent research has indicated the practical possibilities of involving younger children in participatory research and consultation (see Johnson et al 2014). Some consultations included youth, but this report focuses on the voices of children and presents disaggregated information for under-18s wherever possible.

Consultations have mainly used focus groups and/or workshops involving child friendly tools such as body maps. The convening organizations are rights-based and use the UNCRC as a framework, enabling the easy categorization of themes and responses in terms of rights, especially to education, protection from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect, and health. Other themes include recovery, access to services, priorities and future

aspirations. Survey questionnaires have also been used. Children have also been involved as peer researchers, in disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation, but this is usually after the immediate emergency phase.

EXAMPLES OF EMERGENCIES WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF CONSULTATIONS

PLACE	REPORT	GIRLS	BOYS	TOTAL	AGES	METHOD NOTES
Philippines Typhoon Haiyan/ Yolanda	Save the Children, Plan International, World Vision, UNICEF 2013[21]	n/a	n/a	124	7-12 yrs 13-17 yrs	Body map: Questions Visioning: done in child friendly spaces
	Save the Children 2014a[22]	n/a	n/a	n/a	8-15 yrs	
	Save the Children 2014b[23]	90	72	162	6-9 yrs 10-12 yrs 13-17 yrs	12 groups, 3 in each of 4 locations
	World Vision 2014b TANGO 2014[24]	127	126	253	12-17 yrs	Body map, Priorities
	World Vision 2014b TANGO 2014[25]	127 306	126 290	253 596	12-17 yrs 11-17 yrs	Body map, Priorities Survey with N. American tool
Haiti Earthquake	Plan Haiti 2010[26]	n/a	n/a	925	5-10 yrs, 11-16 yrs, 17-24 yrs	54 focus groups Separate groups boys and girls
	World Vision, TANGO 2010[27]	162	136	298	n/a	20 focus groups, three themes: Vulnerability/ resilience; access resources/ services; problems/impacts/solutions
	World Vision 2012a[28]	93	83	176	12-16	Separate focus groups boys/ girls. 4 themes: recovery; external support; disaster risk reduction; hopes and aspirations
	Global Movement for Children Haiti 2011[29]	n/a	n/a	n/a	10-30 parents	Focus groups & discussions with parents of children <10
Liberia Ebola Sierra Leone Ebola	Plan 2015a[30] and 2015b[31]	98 19 224 21	86 18 209 19	184 37 433 40	12-18	20 focus groups Case studies 40 focus groups Case studies
Syria conflict	War Child 2014d[32]	n/a	n/a	391	10-17 yrs	13 communities: power walk, community map, image theatre, ranking, body map, focus groups
	War Child 2013a[33]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Interviews, visits, FGDs
	World Vision 2014c[34]	n/a	n/a	140	10-17	80 Lebanon/ 60 Jordan: Group discussions, interviews, using themes
TOTALS		**1140**	**1039**	**3759**		

There is a shortage of children's consultations and reports available from the period during and immediately after armed conflict. In places, this literature review may appear skewed towards children's perspectives from disaster situations.

The UNCRC defines a child as a person under 18 years of age. However, it should be noted that local understandings of children and childhood vary greatly worldwide. These may depend on ages when under 18s are expected to assume domestic responsibilities, take paid work, marry or have children themselves. In addition, many governments have national policy definitions of 'youth' overlapping with the UNCRC definition of 'child': from 12-29 (Mexico), 13-19 (UK) or 16-40 (Nepal). Other laws, for example on the age of consent to marry or the age of criminal responsibility further add to the diversity of what is expected of children.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1. HOW CAN ENGAGING CHILDREN IMPROVE HUMANITARIAN EFFECTIVENESS?

"We should not be dependent on what is being provided to us like relief, because when relief stops what will we do?" A child from the Philippines.

Effectiveness is one of the most important challenges for the humanitarian sector today. The landscape and context of emergencies has changed tremendously over the past few decades. Ongoing crises such as protracted conflict in Syria and chronic food and nutrition crises in the Sahel highlight situations where the needs of affected populations far outstrip available resources and capacity to respond. A core theme for discussion at the World Humanitarian Summit asks: How can the humanitarian needs of people affected by crises be most effectively met? This literature review contributes to the discussion by examining evidence of how engaging and consulting children improves effectiveness – both for children themselves and for the broader affected population.

Context is essential. While consultations in different emergencies may highlight broadly similar core needs for children, such as education and protection, the range of other rights that remain unfulfilled and specific child protection concerns varies according to context, including the situation prior to the emergency. Moreover, there are specific and important challenges to humanitarian effectiveness in conflict settings.

What children do

Children are active in family and community life during and after emergencies just as they are beforehand. Roles and tasks are often allocated by family members, and may vary according to age, gender, disability, local expectations and norms, as well as household income, status and situation. Children routinely assume domestic and household responsibilities and these often continue in times of crisis. However, children's actions in recovery and relief efforts have historically been overlooked in assessments and consultations.

A survey in Syria showed that 83% of child participants said they would participate in the relief effort if given the chance.[35]

"We would like to help other children by raising their spirits, playing with them and entertaining them. We belong to one generation, and we understand what they lack and need, both psychologically and emotionally. We would love to take part in relief efforts and help other Syrian refugees and friends to help wipe away their tears and the pain of being away from their country". [36]

Yet, even when children are allocated work, they may not be supported. Among Syrian refugees, "One group of children explained how they were given the responsibility of cleaning up certain spaces in the shelter, but they lacked cleaning materials". [37]

Different levels of child agency are also seen in disaster risk reduction, in terms of `actions that seek to protect, influence or transform'. There is evidence of "Children protecting themselves and their communities, for example through child-led disaster drills at schools or small environmental and risk reduction projects; influencing the actions of others, for example through advocating for and leading behavioural change; transforming their environment, by informing or changing wider agendas, and addressing the root causes of vulnerability and risk management through institutions, policies and processes beyond their community boundaries". [38]

WHAT CHILDREN HAVE DONE IN EMERGENCIES AT DIFFERENT AGES: [39]

Children aged 5-10 years:	Children aged 12-17 years:
• Making toys for younger children;	• Rescuing and saving younger children;
	• Caring for younger children;
Children aged 9-12 years:	• Training younger children and peers;
• Providing first aid;	• Treating wounds and caring for injured people;
• Playing and supporting children who lost family members;	• Clearing up after emergency;
• Talking to and supporting friends who were sad;	• Helping to trace families;
• Collecting food and rations for old people;	• Helping old people to collect food and rations;
• Helping prepare food;	• Helping families with small children to collect food and rations;
• Helping to clean camps;	• Packing food for distribution;
	• Providing information about milk powder wanted;
Children aged 12 years:	• Cleaning camps;
• Teaching younger children;	• Cleaning and painting buildings;
• Caring for younger children;	
• Working as part of an emergency task group.	**Young people aged 18 and over:**
	• Rescuing and saving younger children;
	• Organizing entertainment;
	• Developing businesses;
	• Providing community communications;
	• Negotiating with outsiders on behalf of community.

What children want to do

Children in various emergency contexts reported frustration at not being allowed to help and contribute. In the Philippines, "(Children) are not invited to community meetings and so they just help out in whatever activities they find or are asked to do by adults". [40] Yet children had ideas for what they wanted to do. Again in the Philippines, "Many see the solutions to their shelter problems as their own to resolve through the physical labour of construction, collecting and recycling cheap materials, and through earning income to purchase housing materials"; "children mostly described working even harder as the key to resolving their current livelihood and financial woes." As one child noted, *"We should not be dependent on what is being provided to us like relief, because when relief stops what will we do? It would be great for us to plant root crops and vegetables to earn money. We should also be thrifty."* [41]

What children understand: knowledge of community and family circumstances

Apart from actions taken by children, their capacities for involvement are also reflected in the knowledge they have of community and family circumstances. For example, six weeks after Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, "children demonstrated a clear understanding of the relationship between the impact of the disaster and their family's income-generating ability". In Iloilo, where fishing is one of the main income sources, children openly discussed their worries about what would happen if their fathers were not able to go out fishing; they said they were *"scared they will go hungry"* and *"scared they won't be able to go back to school"*. [42]

Children demonstrated knowledge of family debt processes in many settings. For example, in Mongolia food security assessments, boys explained,

"Many herders are giving their animals to the bank in order to pay back their loans and they are becoming poor"; "You patch your front with the part from your back" (taking loans one after another); "Because of lack of cash we are becoming cautious about food consumption"; and made connections *"Unemployment means people are experiencing poor health, lack of cash and are drinking more".* [43]

What children see as priorities and needs

Children's consultations in different types of emergencies highlighted broadly similar needs and priorities, but specific gaps and problems varied. Education and protection are the most cited needs throughout all reviewed studies. Children reported not being able to go to school for a variety of reasons, including school closures and lack of schools; distance to school; active conflict making it unsafe for children to go to school; families not prioritizing attendance; the need to work; the cost of going to school; hunger and lack of food. These issues indicate a variety of general needs, such as nutrition and transport, which children express in the context of going to school and getting an education.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: HOW CAN ENGAGING CHILDREN REDUCE VULNERABILITY AND HELP MANAGE RISK?

"In the new Haiti, the youth must take responsibility. We must teach younger children how to cope with natural disasters; many people died because of ignorance." Girl, Haiti. [44]

The number of people affected by humanitarian crises globally has almost doubled in the past decade, and over half of these are children. [45] The cost of humanitarian aid has tripled in the same timeframe. [46] Global challenges -- including inequality, climate change,

unstable food and energy prices, environmental degradation, rapid population growth and urbanization -- all contribute to increased vulnerability and growing humanitarian needs. In this context, humanitarian actors must not only respond to the impact of emergencies, but also work with communities, governments and development actors to reduce vulnerability and manage risk.

Children and young people have a crucial role to play. They have invaluable knowledge and perspectives on the present, as well as forming the next generations of parents, workers and community leaders, government and international representatives.

What children do

There has been increasing involvement of children in disaster risk reduction and management especially since the 2004 Asian tsunami and through cooperative initiatives on Children in a Changing Climate.

Efforts have focused on:

- Children learning about vulnerability, risks and actions to be taken;
- Children being consulted and engaged as significant actors in community-wide disaster risk reduction and management;
- Children taking a lead in identifying vulnerabilities and risks; and
- Children taking a lead in managing risk reduction.

Reviews of children's involvement in disaster risk reduction programmes have found:

"Children can make a number of positive contributions to disaster risk reduction including

- As analyzers of risk and risk reduction activities;
- As designers and implementers of disaster risk reduction interventions at community level;
- As communicators of risks and risk management options (especially communicating with parents, adults or those outside the community);
- As mobilisers of resources and action for community based resilience;
- As constructors of social networks and capital".[47]

What children want: Disaster risk education and preparedness

Children in several emergency contexts said they wanted disaster risk training and to be included in disaster risk programmes.

In post-earthquake Haiti, *"Before the event of January 12, I received no training, no information on natural disasters, not even at school. So I think that we have to better prepare for potential earthquakes, avoiding uncontrolled construction, using suitable materials and building to the standards."* 16-year-old boy, Haiti.[48]

What children want to do

After Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, children identified specific activities that they would like to be involved in the immediate term to reduce future risk. These included:

- Planting trees to protect land from future floods;
- Cleaning up the streets and the environment so they could get rid of mosquitos;
- Listening to weather forecasts so they can prepare and share information with their parents and teachers;
- Teaching younger siblings and children in school what to do if a disaster is coming;
- Recycling and reusing materials;
- Making sure they have an evacuation plan for their families; and
- Being involved in community decision-making about disaster preparedness.[49]

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: HOW CAN CHILDREN'S IDEAS AND PERSPECTIVES DRIVE TRANSFORMATION THROUGH INNOVATION?

In the Philippines, children proposed the idea to develop a `Disaster Risk Reduction Texter Clan': *"Using our mobile phone we send text messages about disaster risk reduction, warning people of an incoming typhoon and preparedness to our friends who live in high risk areas. When a typhoon is coming, I forwarded text messages on the weather forecast shared by our disaster risk reduction project staff taken from the weather bureau. We also send tips on what to do during bad weather."* 14-year-old boy, Eastern Samar, Philippines.[50]

Change is needed in the humanitarian system. A 'business as usual' approach is entirely inadequate in the face of unprecedented challenges. Many traditional ways of working fail to reflect social, political and economic realities. New voices must be heard in decision-making processes, new technologies must be included and new approaches must be adopted. Full and serious engagement with children is a vital way in which humanitarian actors can understand today's realities and tomorrow's challenges.

What children want to change (disasters and epidemics)

Children are not only receiving assistance but also seeing firsthand how it is delivered and who receives it. They expressed clear views about what people do with different types of assistance and whether what is distributed is what adults, young people and children actually need.

< 6 weeks after Typhoon Haiyan: When asked what adults should do to improve the response, children made the following recommendations:

- Boys said that names of beneficiaries receiving assistance should be encoded on a laptop instead of relying on hand-written records.
- Relief packages should include nails and carpentry tools to help parents to repair and rebuild homes.
- Distribution of clothes and shoes should be more orderly and items should be checked before they are given out because "many of them are second-hand damaged clothes and shoes in big sizes".
- Adolescent girls said that hygiene kits should include more sanitary napkins.
- In Iloilo, children recommend that the oil spill should be cleaned up quickly. Fish are dying and parents may not be able to resume fishing to support households.
- Children who are still in the evacuation centres want more toilets and washing facilities.
- In Tent City, adolescent girls want more privacy when they are using the toilets and washing facilities. Adolescent boys also said that there should be more toilets and washing facilities for girls.
- Everyone should be sure to "take care of Mother Nature". Children suggested that more could be done to recycle and reuse materials and also to clean up the debris that is making water sources dirty.
- Children who are lining up for relief items for their parents say that a separate line is needed for children so that they are not "squeezed and pushed aside by adults".
- Aid should be distributed fairly to all people who need help.[51]

Ebola and other examples

In the Ebola emergency in Liberia and Sierra Leone, lessons were broadcast through community radio when schools were closed. In Sierra Leone, for example, just over half of groups consulted recognized the value of these broadcasts, but "just under half of the children's focus groups said that the radio programmes were not useful because their parents did not have a radio, or could not afford batteries; they could not gather to listen at another household because of the restrictions on contact; the radio teacher went too fast; the sound was unclear; or children were not able to follow as they could not see the teacher or ask questions."[52]

At the same time, children spoke of how services linked to education provision had ceased and the negative outcome: *"When we were going to school, some NGO workers used to come and supply books and pens for us and preventive pills for our sisters. Because they are not coming now most of our sisters are pregnant"* Boy, Sierra Leone. [53]

What children want to change (situations of armed conflict)

Children's concerns included perceived inequity in the delivery of and access to aid, and being used to promote publicity for organizations. Children made suggestions for safety and protection in shelters and schools, although this was also linked to equity issues between host and displaced communities.

Children's recommendations to improve their safety and security in shelters in Syria included: "Make the shelter staff aware of how to deal with displaced people, to decrease their suffering" and remove tents within the shelter and secure a proper place for families as well as choosing safer shelter locations, teaching children where to go when there is bombing and points on dealing with weapons within the shelter. "All groups of children stated that support to parents should be provided, to improve their wellbeing and to help them know how to care more for their children. They asked to prioritize the equality of rights and responsibilities between the community and the displaced". [54]

Children in Syria made various recommendations for their protection at school, including hiring guards. They suggested: "Make new learning spaces that are in or near our shelter", and that children from all sides of the conflict need "a safe environment for studying". [55]

Ideas for innovation

Children's suggested innovations include improved connections, in particular internet, use of electronic media and broadcasting messages.

In Indonesia, for example, children broadcast messages through local radio on preventing the risk of flooding:

"A key message emphasizes the importance of changing the bad habit of littering. We children believe that by littering, it can block the water drainage channel as well as create blockage in the river that could trigger flood in the community (...) We also remind the community about the experience of a past flood incident in their village, which caused a crop failure and affected the income and livelihood of the community" Boy, 17, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. [56]

RESEARCH QUESTION 4: WHAT ARE CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR NEEDS IN CONFLICT?

"Safety is everything and without it nothing is possible" Child, Homs, Syria. [57]

The one billion girls and boys who live in areas that were affected by armed conflict in 2013 or 2014 face increased risk of all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

[58], [59] Thousands of children are killed or injured every year by explosive weapons and landmines.[60] In the long term, children's survival and development may be jeopardized by the psychological impacts of distress and untreated trauma. Their societies' ability to invest in their future is weakened.

Children growing up in these difficult circumstances have a lot to say about their needs and those of their families.

What children prioritize: Protection

Children expressed fear and preoccupation with issues of safety, security and protection in South Sudan, Syria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In South Sudan, "What children told us: they live in fear. They believe that the armed conflict may again be directed at them and their families. Many remember when armed men forced them to leave their homes, and most experience fear and distress without the comfort or familiarity of home". [61] In Syria, children say the feelings of fear and hopelessness are causing physical health problems.[62] In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, "More than one-third [of children] told us they are afraid all of the time or every day". [63]

Unsafe locations include shelters and the home. In all these locations children feared violence, sexual violence, exploitation and discrimination. In all consultations, unaccompanied and separated children, orphans and child-headed households reported specific protection concerns.

Education

Education is repeatedly seen as a major priority, even in conflict. In conflict situations, children prioritized protection over education, although in post-conflict settings these priorities are reversed. Research with children suggested, "Children's safety and security is interpreted as a necessary precondition, and therefore closely linked, with their access to education". [64] In Syria, some children argued "the right to develop and exist is more important than education, because without it, we can't learn anything. How can I focus on something and learn if I can't be guaranteed that I am safe at all?" [65] Children raise problems such as not being able to go to school because of closures, lack of safety travelling to school, violence or the threat of violence at school, family attitudes especially towards girls' education, needing to work, costs of attendance, and hunger and lack of food. Some children report facing problems at school if they remain, such as violence and discrimination, which may act as a deterrent and prevent their attendance.

Health problems include lack of medicines and specialized doctors, lack of access to services, differential treatment in service provision; pharmacies and the administration of collective shelters monopolize available medicines and sell them for higher profit on the black market.

Play is an important priority depending on location. Children in conflict situations linked the lack of play space with isolation and stress, and to an increase in violence and aggression between children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to achieve transformative change as a result of the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), a key outcome must be to ensure that the success of humanitarian action is measured by significant improvements in the situation of the most vulnerable children in countries which are highly susceptible to natural hazards, fragility and conflict.

Through the World Humanitarian Summit, the fate and future of millions of children worldwide can be positively influenced by governments, civil society, donors, UN agencies and implementing partners.

Throughout the literature review, children highlighted several key themes and priorities , which are captured in the Guiding Principles below.

Children also made suggestions and recommendations for improvements, which are captured in the following Thematic Recommendations. The child-focused agencies also present their proposals, based on children's stated needs and prioritizing their needs. The recommendations are child-centred and needs based. They represent the agencies' collective contribution to the World Humanitarian Summit process.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **Children are not a minority group:** Children comprise half or more of crisis-affected populations and represent the future generation. Children want to be systematically consulted by humanitarian actors before, during and after emergencies. They want their views to be taken seriously and their rights and needs to be addressed in the planning, coordination, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of crisis prevention and response.
- **Children are agents of change:** Girls and boys of all ages want to have and must be given the opportunity to express their views and opinions freely, influence decisions affecting their lives, participate in the rebuilding of their communities and societies and realize their rights. They want to continue their education, help during disasters, support their peers and communities and help to foster peace.
- **Children want to be given the opportunity** to hold humanitarian actors and governments accountable for agreed interventions and call for corresponding mechanisms to be established to facilitate this.
- **Children have the right to be protected at all times and call for this repeatedly.** All humanitarian actors and governments are responsible for ensuring that their actions do not place children at risk in any way and that the responses they undertake as well as the programmes they implement improve the safety and well-being of children.

- **Children prioritize education in emergencies**, including in situations of armed conflict, and express concern for their futures when their education is interrupted. Donors, humanitarian actors and national governments must listen to what children want and ensure they can continue to access an education in times of emergencies and crises.

- **Children want the views of all to be reflected, especially for those who are marginalized.** Data informing prevention and response actions, such as risk and needs assessments, must be disaggregated by age and gender, as well as disability, ethnicity and other social and economic inequalities faced by children.

THEMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

While recognizing the extensive nature of the consultations that have been represented in this report, the UN agencies, NGOs, governments and the donor community must commit to further research and consultations with socially marginalized groups of children, including street-connected children, orphaned children, unaccompanied and separated children, and child heads of households. In addition, further research and consultations are needed during conflicts and what children need to reduce vulnerability and manage risk in their schools and communities in conflict situations.

Humanitarian Effectiveness and Financing

1. **Measure impact on children:** the impact of humanitarian action on building resilience and improving the safety and well-being of the most vulnerable children should be integrated into monitoring, evaluation and learning processes.

   - **A pilot** should be committed to by a set of partners at the WHS that would look at developing indicators and measures of progress in: disaster risk reduction, children's health, nutrition, education, protection, psychosocial support, employment and empowerment before, during, and after crises. The pilot should also test a globally defined 'vulnerability scale' in an attempt to understand the impact of humanitarian action on reducing children's vulnerability and realizing their rights.

2. **Two-way community communication:** Seek commitment from humanitarian actors to support programming that enables safe two-way communication with children to ensure their needs are taken into account.

   - Humanitarian actors, including donors, must place **child participation and mechanisms to ensure accountability to children** at the heart of strategies for strengthening engagement with crisis-affected populations in needs assessments, program delivery and real-time monitoring and evaluation, while simultaneously promoting children's access to communications channels and placing emphasis on innovative approaches for engagement with children.

3. **Long-term, predictable funding streams:** Developing a fit-for-purpose model for humanitarian financing must be the priority of an effective global prevention and response system that provides reliable support to children. This is particularly critical in situations of protracted crises and for in transition periods from emergency response to rehabilitation and development. Context-appropriate continuation of development aid is also vital to the survival and development of children in emergency settings, and critical for future stability.

   - **A Donor Framework Agreement** should be developed and adopted at the WHS around effective multi-year humanitarian aid funding models that ensure sustainable outcomes from international aid for children.

4. **Seek transformative donor commitments** to systematically increase fulfillment of funding requests for the chronically underfunded sectors targeting children, such as education and child protection in emergencies. Child protection and education spending should be reported through the UN Financial Tracking system to ensure more transparency and accountability by donors and humanitarian actors. As part of humanitarian preparedness, response and reconstruction activities children's specific needs and rights must be mainstreamed (notably education, nutrition, maternal and child health and child protection). This must involve prioritizing and mobilizing the necessary humanitarian financing, support and coordination.

   - As a follow-up to the WHS, **develop a set of core standards** that ensure neglected crises and chronically underfunded areas of a response, such as Child Protection and Education in Emergencies, are fully funded through a fairer distributive appeal process. Additionally, a commitment should be made to evaluate the existing humanitarian system's ability to respond to child-focused sectors of education and child protection.

Transformation through Innovation

1. **Child-centred innovation:** empower children and build their resilience through the development of innovative child-centred participatory approaches.

   - **New multi-stakeholder partnerships** should be created through the WHS process to build investment funds for child-centred and child-led innovation and technologies such as use of mobile technology and radio. Children must be included in identifying and co-developing this type of innovation.

Reducing Vulnerability and Managing Risk; Serving the Needs of People in Conflict

1. **Child-focused planning:** include models that safely consult children, assess the protection risks and their impacts on children's well-being:

   - **Emergency preparedness, response and recovery plans** that are child-focused and ensure the participation of children must be developed and resourced as standardized procedure within humanitarian action.

   - **Disaster risk reduction activities must be included** in formal and non-formal education programs in emergency-prone contexts and children must be involved in the planning of activities and their implementation.

   - **Consult with children about their needs and wants on a regular basis** and ensure consultation mechanisms include new child participants to maintain a diversity of views, especially in pre-disaster settings.

2. **Prioritize child-focused interventions:** Child protection and education in emergencies must be prioritized as lifesaving interventions alongside health, food, water and shelter. Greater cross-sectoral coordination must be achieved to ensure children's safety, well-being and recovery.

   - **Re-categorize Child Protection as 'Lifesaving Assistance':** humanitarian policies, guidelines and practice, including donor policies, must be changed to recognize Child Protection as a lifesaving intervention.

   - **Recognize that Education in Emergencies forms an integral part** of delivering an effective response for children in emergencies and recognize that a good-quality education response must provide children with psychosocial support. Schools provide a protective environment where children can access essential services and receive what they prioritize the most – an education.

- **Prioritize, fund and deliver education and child protection** as core aspects of the first phase of an emergency response.

- **Commit to the use of the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action** and to the **INEE Minimum Standards for Education**: all humanitarian donors and actors must commit to the use of the Minimum Standards, mainstream Child Protection in all humanitarian interventions and ensure strengthened cross-sectoral coordination and programming.

- **Support parents to support their children's** continued education by ensuring that adequate livelihood and aid assistance is provided.

3. **Respect for IHL and Child Rights:** call for urgent and unequivocal respect of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law, particularly the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols and UN Security Resolutions on children and armed conflict, in crises and end impunity by holding perpetrators of violations against children to account.

_____

[1] Children in a Changing Climate nd1 (no date, possibly 2008) A right to participate: securing children's role in climate change adaption no place: Children in a Changing Climate, p.1.

[2] In accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child, a child is defined as every human being below the age of eighteen years.

[3] Article 12 (Respect for the views of the child). UN Treaty Collection, Convention on the Rights of the Child.

[4] The UNCRC has been ratified by all UN member states except the USA and Somalia. As above.

[5] UNICEF no date UNICEF and Disaster Risk Reduction. Available here: http://www.unicef.org/malaysia/UNICEF_and_Disaster_Risk_Reduction.pdf (accessed 22 July 2015).

[6] David Steven, If Not Now, When? Ending Violence Against the World's Children, New York University, Centre on International Cooperation, October 2014.

[7] UNHCR 2015 World at War: Global Trends 2014 Geneva: UNHCR.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] TBC org sign off: Plan International, The ChildFund Alliance, SOS Children's Villages, Save the Children, World Vision International, War Child UK and UNICEF

[11] See Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action 2012, Geneva : Child Protection Working Group.

[12] As above.

[13] As above.

[14] Sphere Project, Groupe URD, HAP International, People in Aid 2014 Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability. Available here: http://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/files/files/Core%20Humanitarian%20Standard%20-%20English.pdf. (Accessed 19 July 2015).

[15] IASC 2011 Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations (CAAP) Geneva: IASC

[16] IAWGCP 2007 (Inter-agency working group on children's participation) 2007 Minimum standards for consulting with children Bangkok: IAWGCP.

[17] Save the Children 2005 Practice Standards in Children's Participation London: Save the Children.

[18] CRC GC 2009 (Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment) 2009 General Comment No 12 The Right of the Child to be Heard Geneva: United Nations.

[19] Lansdown, G. and O'Kane, C. 2014 A Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Children's Participation London: Plan, the Concerned for Working Children, UNICEF, World Vision, Save the Children.

[20] For example, CoE nd (Council of Europe) nd (no date, probably 2010) Child and Youth Participation in Finland: a Council of Europe Policy Review Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

[21] Finnegan, L. 2013 After Yolanda: What Children Think, Need and Recommend Manila: Save the Children Philippines for Save the Children, Plan International, World Vision, UNICEF

[22] Save the Children 2014a See me, ask me, hear me: children's recommendations for recovery three months after Typhoon Haiyan Makati City, Manila: Save the Children.

[23] Save the Children 2014b Are we there yet? Children's views on Haiyan recovery and the road ahead Makati City, Manila: Save the Children

[24] TANGO 2014 Typhoon Haiyan Response Baseline Report no place: World Vision

[25] Ibid.

26 Plan Haiti 2010 Anticipating the Future: children's and young people's voices in Haiti's Post Disaster Needs Assessment Haiti: Plan Haiti

27 World Vision International 2010 Haiti Earthquake Baseline Study Report no place: TANGO International and World Vision Haiti.

28 World Vision 2012 Hear our Voice: This is "the world YOUTH want": Youth Declaration no place: World Vision

29 GMC Haiti (Global Movement for Children Haiti) 2011 Policies and financing strategies to protect the rights of Haiti's children and youth after the 12 January 2010 earthquake Haiti: Global Movement for Children

30 Plan (Plan International) 2015a `What is the hope for us: young people in West Africa speak about the impact of Ebola in their communities' short film produced by Plan in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Norway

31 Plan (Plan International) 2015b Ebola beyond the health emergency: research into the consequences of the Ebola outbreak for children and communities in Liberia and Sierra Leone No place: Plan International

32 War Child 2014d Syria: Child Rights Situation Analysis no place (Netherlands?): War Child Holland

33 War Child 2013a Double Catastrophe: Voices from a war on childhood, a report marking 1000 days of violence in Syria London: War Child UK

34 World Vision International 2014c Children's report: Stand with me - Our Uncertain Future Uxbridge: World Vision International

35 World Vision 2014c Children's report: Stand with me - Our Uncertain Future Uxbridge: World Vision International, p.15.

36 As above, p.17.

37 War Child 2014d Syria: Child Rights Situation Analysis no place (Netherlands?): War Child Holland, p.28.

38 Back, E., Cameron, C., Tanner, T. 2009 Children and disaster risk reduction: taking stock and moving forward no place: UNICEF and Children in a Changing Climate, p.10.

39 Drawn from several sources, especially Plan International 2005 Children and the Tsunami: engaging with children in disaster response, recovery and risk reduction – learning from children's participation in the tsunami response Bangkok: Plan International

40 Finnegan, L. 2013 After Yolanda: What Children Think, Need and Recommend Manila: Save the Children Philippines for Save the Children, Plan International, World Vision, UNICEF, p.10.

41 TANGO 2014 Typhoon Haiyan Response Baseline Report no place: World Vision.

42 Finnegan, L. 2013 After Yolanda: What Children Think, Need and Recommend Manila: Save the Children Philippines for Save the Children, Plan International, World Vision, UNICEF, p.9.

43 Caldwell, R. 2009 World Vision Global Food Security Initiative Rapid Assessment Mongolia Final Report no place: TANGO International, p.12-13.

44 Plan Haiti 2010 Anticipating the Future: children's and young people's voices in Haiti's Post Disaster Needs Assessment Haiti: Plan Haiti, p.9.

45 UNOCHA 2014 Overview of Global Humanitarian Response New York: UNOCHA.

46 As above.

47 Back Cameron Tanner 2009 p36, quoting/referencing Tanner TM et al. (2009) Children's participation in community-based disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change. Participatory Learning and Action 60

48 Plan (Plan International) 2005 Children and the Tsunami: engaging with children in disaster response, recovery and risk reduction – learning from children's participation in the tsunami response Bangkok: Plan International.

49 Finnegan, L. 2013 After Yolanda: What Children Think, Need and Recommend Manila: Save the Children Philippines for Save the Children, Plan International, World Vision, UNICEF, p.17.

50 UNISDR and Plan International 2012 Children's action for disaster risk reduction: views from children in Asia, p.15-16.

51 Finnegan, L. 2013 After Yolanda: What Children Think, Need and Recommend Manila: Save the Children Philippines for Save the Children, Plan International, World Vision, UNICEF, p.16.

52 Plan (Plan International) 2015c Ebola beyond the health emergency: Summary No place: Plan International, p.10.

53 As above.

54 War Child 2014d Syria: Child Rights Situation Analysis no place (Netherlands?): War Child Holland, p.19.

55 As above, p.24.

56 UNISDR and Plan International 2012 Children's action for disaster risk reduction: views from children in Asia no place: UNISDR, p.22.

57 War Child 2014d Syria: Child Rights Situation Analysis no place (Netherlands?): War Child Holland

58 Stevens, D. 2014 If Not Now, When? Ending Violence Against the World's Children. New York: NYU.

59 CPWG 2012 Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action Geneva: CPWG

60 UN Mine Action Gateway 2015 UNMAS Brochure 2015.

61 World Vision 2014d Fear and Want: children living in crisis in South Sudan Uxbridge: World Vision International, p.4.

62 War Child 2014d Syria: Child Rights Situation Analysis no place (Netherlands?): War Child Holland, p.28-29.

63 World Vision International 2014a No one to turn to: life for children in Eastern DRC Uxbridge: World Vision International

64 War Child 2014d Syria: Child Rights Situation Analysis no place (Netherlands?): War Child Holland, p.20.

65 Researcher's notes on a discussion between children in Damascus. As above.