



The cost of the effects of violence against children in emergency contexts

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Key messages

- The human and economic costs of violence against children in emergencies are very high. Only one subset of these costs, for example, the economic impact of homicides of children in conflict-affected countries globally is estimated to be up to \$49.7 billion annually. This is approximately the size of Costa Rica's gross domestic product in 2013. These massive costs are higher than the investment required to prevent much of that violence.
- Human and economic costs result from lives of children lost; injuries and disabilities caused to children; rape and other forms of sexual abuse, particularly of adolescent girls; conscription into armed forces; and psychological trauma resulting from witnessing and experiencing violence, among others. In addition, huge economic impacts result from the cost of treating victims; productivity losses in the short and long run as a result of death or disability; and reduced human capital accumulation.
- Investing in prevention is good value for money, including in emergency contexts, but levels of government and donor spending on preventive and responsive actions in relation to violence against children in emergencies remain very low.
- Generating evidence on what works can contribute to increasing support for spending on preventive, not just responsive, actions in at-risk contexts.
- There is increasing evidence of successful examples on prevention and response to violence against children in emergencies. This provides some valuable lessons on actions that can be replicated elsewhere.

Introduction

Every day, millions of children throughout the world are subjected to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence in different settings, including in their homes, schools, communities and work environments. As a result, they experience impacts on their physical and mental health, their education and their overall quality of life. The consequences for children of violence are often intergenerational, with those who have faced violence as a child more likely to become violent adults. There is evidence that children who grow up with violence – whether domestic violence in the home or violence in their school, workplace, neighbourhood or community - may be more likely to re-enact violence as young adults. In the longer term, witnessing violence or being a victim of violence can condition children or young people to regard violence as an acceptable means of resolving problems (McFarlane, et al, 2014; McLean Hilker and Fraser, 2009). This cycle can have long-term impact on families' economic wellbeing resulting from the direct and indirect costs they face as a consequence of violence (see for example, Duvvury et al 2004).

Meanwhile, these consequences are generally linked to important economic costs. A recent study of the costs of violence against children estimated that the global economic impacts and costs resulting from physical, psychological and sexual violence against children could be as high as \$7 trillion (Pereznieto et al., 2014). The study also estimated the annual global costs of the worst forms of child labour at approximately \$97 billion. These massive costs are higher than the investment required to prevent much of that violence.

These estimated costs of physical, psychological and sexual violence against children, as well as of the worst forms of child labour, draw on global-level figures that include the economic impacts of violence against children in both development and emergency contexts¹.

While there is limited specific evidence on the extent and nature of violence against children in humanitarian situations, both conflict and natural hazards, existing evidence indicates it is more prevalent during emergencies than currently acknowledged (DFID, 2013). Children's exposure to violence in emergencies is significant. This is due to the fact that previously existing issues – such as violence in the home - might get worse; and new problems might also emerge as a result of the emergency context, for example new forms of violence and exploitation such as trafficking and worst forms of child labour and children's existing support systems might collapse. It is in these contexts where protective environments normally available for children – which can include legislation, policies and care provided by the government, communities and families – are eroded, making children much more vulnerable to violence. In addition, data suggest children make up at least half of the population affected by conflicts and natural hazards (Global Protection Cluster, 2013).

This brief presents some of the main consequences and costs related to violence against children in emergencies. As a specific example of the magnitude of the costs and economic impacts, it presents estimates of the costs of children associated with armed groups and forces and of the costs of homicides of children in conflict-affected countries. While these are only two of the many costs linked to violence against children in emergencies, they help illustrate the scale of the problem. The brief also presents data on spending by donors on prevention and response to violence against children in humanitarian contexts, given that donors become major stakeholders in fostering protective environments for children during humanitarian crises, where governments' capacities are stretched or constrained. It also gives some examples of cost-effective ways to prevent and respond to violence and exploitation against children in emergency contexts.

What are the global costs of violence and exploitation against children in emergency contexts?

The risks of violence against children during an emergency vary by country and depend on numerous factors such as numbers of children affected, severity of the violence, capacity of the country to respond and the strength of state institutions. The negative impacts of violence against children are huge. In 2006, an estimated 250-300 million children were affected by humanitarian crises and disasters globally through injury, death and income losses (Save the Children, 2007). An estimated 50% of the 24.5 million conflict-related internally displaced people are children (ibid.). While manifestations of violence against children may be present before disasters and/or conflict, emergencies may exacerbate child protection issues; the breakdown of institutions opens gaps for potential criminal and corrupt exploitation of the most vulnerable, particularly children.

During conflict, the risk of sexual exploitation and violence towards girls and boys increases. Many children are at risk of sexual abuse and violence. Save the Children (2013) estimates that children under the age of 18 comprise the majority of survivors of sexual violence in conflict-affected societies, potentially representing as many as 80% of all survivors of sexual violence during times of war. In fact, the same study estimates that nearly 30 million children in conflict-affected countries have been or will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday. Country-specific figures in conflict-affected countries also underscore the magnitude of this phenomenon. For example, of

¹ Given the aggregated nature of the figures available, it is not possible to unpack these costs for the different contexts

the 20,000 cases of rape reported in 2000 during conflict in Colombia, Amnesty International found approximately 85% had happened to those under the age of 18 (Castillo, 2011).

Costs related to sexual violence can arise both for the state or other actors who provide services and for the individual, depending on the context and the nature of the health system. In terms of individual costs, for example, costs might arise from the medical treatment of resulting injuries and because of the potential for transmission of sexually transmitted diseases. Alongside medical costs, for instance, child pregnancy also poses important health risks to both the mother and the baby, and has the added cost involved in caring for a child who may face stigma in the community, potentially resulting in exclusion from school, work and other elements of community life. The child mother herself will most likely drop out of school and face significant losses in productivity (Karra and Lee, 2012) and earning potential over her lifetime, perpetuating the cycle of poverty. Sexual abuse against children can thus lead to poverty and long-term or permanent disability of the victimised children (CDC, 2014); psychological impacts and trauma can also result in loss of productivity over the life-course (Mazurana and Carlson, 2006).

Physical abuse and other forms of household violence are also commonplace in humanitarian settings, often increasing as a result of the additional strain placed on children's families or caregivers (Global Protection Cluster, 2013). Physical injuries and death of children can also happen on a significant scale during conflict. For example, according to some reports, an estimated 692 children were killed and more than 1,976 children and young people injured through violent incidents in the aftermath of the Iraq war between December 2012 and April 2013 (War Child, 2013). Medical costs as a result tend to be high, and injuries may cause permanent disabilities or psychological damage, but may also cause death, leading to loss of future income potential for families.

Psychological consequences are also significant. In Sierra Leone, a two-year follow-up study of 156 male and female child soldiers (aged 10-18 years) found boys who had been wounded during conflict showed an increase in hostility (Werner, 2012). Girls who were raped displayed higher levels of anxiety and depression over time (ibid). Psychological distress, trauma and mental health issues also result in lifelong income or productivity losses, even when direct costs are minimal in the near-absence of mental health support services. Additionally, the recruitment of children into armed forces is significant. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), more than 30,000 children – boys and girls – have been conscripted into the various militia (War Child, 2006). In Sierra Leone, rebels abducted 5,000-7,000 children and forcibly conscripted them (ibid.). The possible economic impacts of conscription may include: health care costs resulting from injury, loss of economic contribution due to death (see paragraph above), long-term reduction in economic productivity as children do not get an education and there is erosion of human capital, medical costs of increase in sexually transmitted diseases as girls are recruited as “wives”, and long term psychological impact on future adults and their children.

Emergencies significantly increase the risks of children becoming involved in the worst forms of child labour², given that their households can be thrown into poverty and have to adopt extreme coping mechanisms, which often include hazardous forms of work (ILO, 2010). Hazardous work is work which, by its nature or by the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to harm the health and safety of children. (CPWG, 2012). Child separation from parents or carers can also lead to an increase in trafficking, and more physical and sexual violence, ramping up costs, including of medical care, justice provision to victims, child protection systems, among many others (ibid).

Armed conflict also increases school dropout: injuries, disabilities, psychological trauma, recruitment in armed groups and forces and pregnancy all affect a child's ability to carry on in school. For example, four years into the Syrian crisis, over half a million Syrian refugee children are out of school – and the numbers are rising. The education crisis is fuelling an epidemic of child

² Child labour is work that is unacceptable because the children involved are too young and should be in school, or because even though they have reached minimum age, the work they do is harmful to their emotional, developmental and physical wellbeing. Worst forms of child labour means forced or bonded labour, using children in armed conflict, trafficking for exploitation, sexual exploitation, illicit work or other work which is likely to harm children's health, safety or morals (hazardous work).

labour and early marriage (Watkins and Zyck, 2014). These educational losses have enormous implications for the present and future. The loss of human capital development will result in significant productivity losses, with impacts on children's future income as well as economic losses at the national level (Perezniето et al., 2010).

To summarise, violence against children in emergency contexts has economic implications stemming from:

1. Increased risk of sexual exploitation;
2. Increased risk of physical and psychological violence;
3. Increased risk of children becoming involved in the worst forms of child labour;
4. Increased risk of child trafficking owing to separation from families and/or caregivers;
5. Increased risk of recruitment into armed forces or groups.

All these heightened risks have profound economic implications, which range from medical costs as a result of physical injuries and psychological sequels, to lost schooling, losses in productivity and income foregone throughout affected individuals' lifetimes, among others. In addition, the scale of the impact of armed conflict and environmental disasters in terms of violence against children has increased over the past decade. The violence facing these children will have a devastating effect on their wellbeing, physical security and future development. Furthermore, violence committed against children also exacts a heavy price on the whole community in terms of lost productivity and risks of future violence.

The cost of violence against children in conflict

As outlined above, violence against children in emergency contexts has many costs. Most of these are difficult to estimate, given limited data on the scale and scope of the harm experienced by children and its consequences in such contexts. For instance, loss of children's lives, in addition to an enormous human cost, results in loss of income to the economy, given that these children will never contribute to it.

Permanent disability of children, depending on the form and extent of disability, may generate additional care and medical costs to the community. In some instances, there may also be reduced economic contribution as a result of physical and social barriers that hamper their income generating abilities.

In view of these data limitations and in order to give a sense of some of the economic costs arising as a result of violence against children in emergencies, this brief presents two different estimates of some of the global costs resulting from violence against children in conflict:

1. An estimate of the economic impact of children's association with armed forces or groups;
2. An estimate of the economic impact of the loss of life of children during conflict, based on figures on the number of homicides of children in conflict-affected countries.

While these are only a couple of the many costs and economic implications of violence against children in emergency contexts, they are nonetheless a useful proxy to gauge the scale of these costs and their implications.

The economic impact of children associated with armed forces or groups

Whilst the human cost to the children, their families and communities is most significant, the economic costs of children associated with armed forces or groups are also substantial, multi-fold and complex. According to the most recent data available the global figure for on the number of children associated with armed forces ranges between 250,000 and 300,000 (UN, 2000). However, this figure is not up to date and does not include country situations such as Syria, Northern Iraq and

Central African Republic where there is significant recruitment and use of children in armed groups or forces. As such, this figure is likely to be an underestimate, given the limited data available and the likelihood of underreporting, which is a major problem given the sensitivity of this subject.

Several assumptions were made in order to estimate the cost of children associated with armed forces or groups, identified below. First, it is assumed that the greatest incidence of children’s association with armed forces or groups takes place in low-income countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa (it happens elsewhere, including in countries such as Afghanistan, Syria, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Colombia, but often on a smaller scale). As such, the gross national income (GNI) per capita utilised for these calculations is that of low-income countries. Another assumption is that, out of the total number of children associated with armed forces or groups, half will suffer major injuries, psychological trauma, disabilities or death that result in a total loss of productivity in terms of their economic contribution to society during the rest of their lifetime. There are no precise figures in the literature or statistics on children associated with armed forces or groups that show how many of the children affected by this phenomenon are able to return to productive life; this is an approximation based on insights gained from the literature discussing the reintegration challenges for affected children, particularly in conflict or post-conflict countries, where opportunities and support mechanisms are very limited. For the remaining half, the assumption is that they will be reintegrated into productive life, but with years of school lost and psychological trauma, and therefore economic costs via income foregone resulting from lower productivity.

For the group of children who face complete economic losses, using the per capita GNI cost, an approach similar to the cost of a ‘disability-adjusted life year’ (DALY)³ is used. Since it is impossible to predict how many years a person who has suffered through conflict will live, the information presented is on an annual cost basis. Table 1 presents these results.

Table 1: Annual global costs of children associated with armed forces or groups (\$)

	Children associated with armed forces or groups	Costs of children facing complete loss in productive capacity over their lifetime (50%)	Costs of children who are partially reintegrated but lose 5 years of schooling (50%)	Total
Lower bound	250,000.00	74,250,000.00	46,103,408.24	120,353,408.24
Upper bound	300,000.00	89,100,000.00	55,324,089.88	144,424,089.88

Source: Authors’ calculations

The global costs of children’s association with armed forces or groups are significant. In the lower estimate, they could amount to \$120 million annually; in the higher estimate, to \$144 million.

The economic impact of homicides of children in conflict-affected countries

Children are frequently casualties of conflict, suffering death or injury. During some conflicts, loss of life is recorded and calculated, for example, it is estimated that 400 children were killed during the Israeli–Palestinian conflict that took place between July and August 2014.⁴ However, it is not always an easy task to monitor such numbers and the specific age of casualties, the result being that global figures of loss of children’s lives is not known, and available figures are likely to be an underestimate.

Using figures in ‘Hidden in Plain Sight: A Statistical Analysis of Violence against Children’ (UNICEF, 2014a) on child victims of homicides, Table 2 provides an estimate of the economic impact resulting from the loss of life of children in conflict-affected countries. Although the data

³ A DALY can be thought of as one lost year of ‘healthy’ life. The sum of these DALYs across the population, or the burden of disease, can be thought of as a measurement of the gap between current health status and an ideal health situation where the entire population lives to an advanced age, free of disease and disability (http://www.who.int/healthinfo/global_burden_disease/metrics_daly/en/).

⁴ <http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/08/05/mideast-gaza-unicef-idINKBN0G51WL20140805>

does not specify how many of the homicides against children resulted from the conflict itself, this analysis assumes that, in contexts where the conflict is prevalent, the majority of them are directly correlated.

Table 2: Annual costs of children’s homicides in conflict-affected countries

Country	GNI per capita, Atlas method (\$)	Number of child homicides per 100,000 (2012)	Cost considering total child population (in \$ millions)
Afghanistan	680	8	760,899
Central African Republic	510	5	50,779
Colombia	7,020	13	12,128,660
DRC	230	14	956,938
Iraq	6,130	4	3,241,311
Mali	660	5	234,609
Nigeria	2,490	14	26,131,572
Occupied Palestinian Territory	2,810	N/A	N/A
Pakistan	1,260	4	3,051,569
Somalia	600	5	141,591
South Sudan	790	8	292,793
Sudan	1,500	6	1,371,418
Syria	3,871	1	298,841
Uganda	480	10	836,205
Yemen	1,290	2	248,777
Total			49,745,962

Note: The conflict-affected countries on the list are those identified as being or having recently been in conflict by the Humanitarian Response Info platform (<http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/>).

Source: World Bank World Development Indicators and data on homicide rates from World Health Organization (WHO) Global Health Estimate Summary Tables: Deaths by Cause, Age, Sex and Region, in UNICEF (2014a).

In a methodology similar to that used to find the economic impact of children associated with armed forces or groups, this estimate uses GNI per capita in the identified conflict-affected countries and presents the annual costs resulting from loss of children’s lives in conflict in relation to their annual loss of productivity. Again, this estimate is on an annual basis, assuming that children who lost their lives would have contributed to the economy at the average value of GNI per capita during that year. This is not the case, particularly for young children, however, it can be assumed that this is an average value of economic loss given gaps in statistical reporting. According to these estimates, **the annual global-level economic impact of homicides of children in conflict-affected countries is \$49.7 billion – approximately the size of Costa Rica’s gross domestic product in 2013.**

It is important to emphasise again that the economic cost of children’s association with armed forces and groups and of child homicides in conflict-affected counties are only two examples of many costs resulting from violence against children in emergency contexts. Others include those resulting from death, disability, illness, sexual violence and loss of schooling, with permanent physical and psychological effects over a lifetime. For example, in the case of the estimated 30 million child victims of sexual violence in conflict (Save the Children, 2013), victims, their families, their communities and the state incur a range of significant costs: costs related to injury, which can include costs of medical treatment or, where this is not available, loss of quality of life and productive capacity; costs related to early pregnancy and childbirth; costs of social stigma, which can result in exclusion from the community, including income-generating opportunities; and costs of STDs, including HIV/AIDS, which are often purposely transmitted to victims, among many other costs. While these cannot be quantified, largely because of lack of data, they are significant in both the short and the long term, affecting whole generations and countries’ economies for years to come.

Spending on prevention of and response to violence and exploitation against children in emergency contexts by major donor governments

Estimating what governments spend on preventive and protective measures related to violence against children in emergencies poses several challenges. Firstly, particularly during rapid onset emergencies, resources spent are likely not planned in the budget and are authorised as spending without clear earmarks, with their rollout being on a case by case response basis. Secondly, many countries affected by emergencies – particularly low-income countries affected by conflict – are unlikely to have detailed budget and spending data on programmes to prevent and respond to violence against children. Third, if such data does exist, it is not available in secondary literature; primary research is needed to compile and analyse such figures. As such, donor spending on prevention and response to violence against children in emergencies is taken as a proxy of such spending, considering that donors can also play an important role in funding programmatic responses that are beyond the capacity of national governments during an emergency.

Drawing on the desk-based methodology used by the Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) report ‘Too Little, Too Late’ (Lilley et al., 2012), this analysis presents an overview of donor funding to child protection in emergencies from 2010 to 2013, drawing on data from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (FTS), a global, online, real-time database of humanitarian funding needs and international contributions.

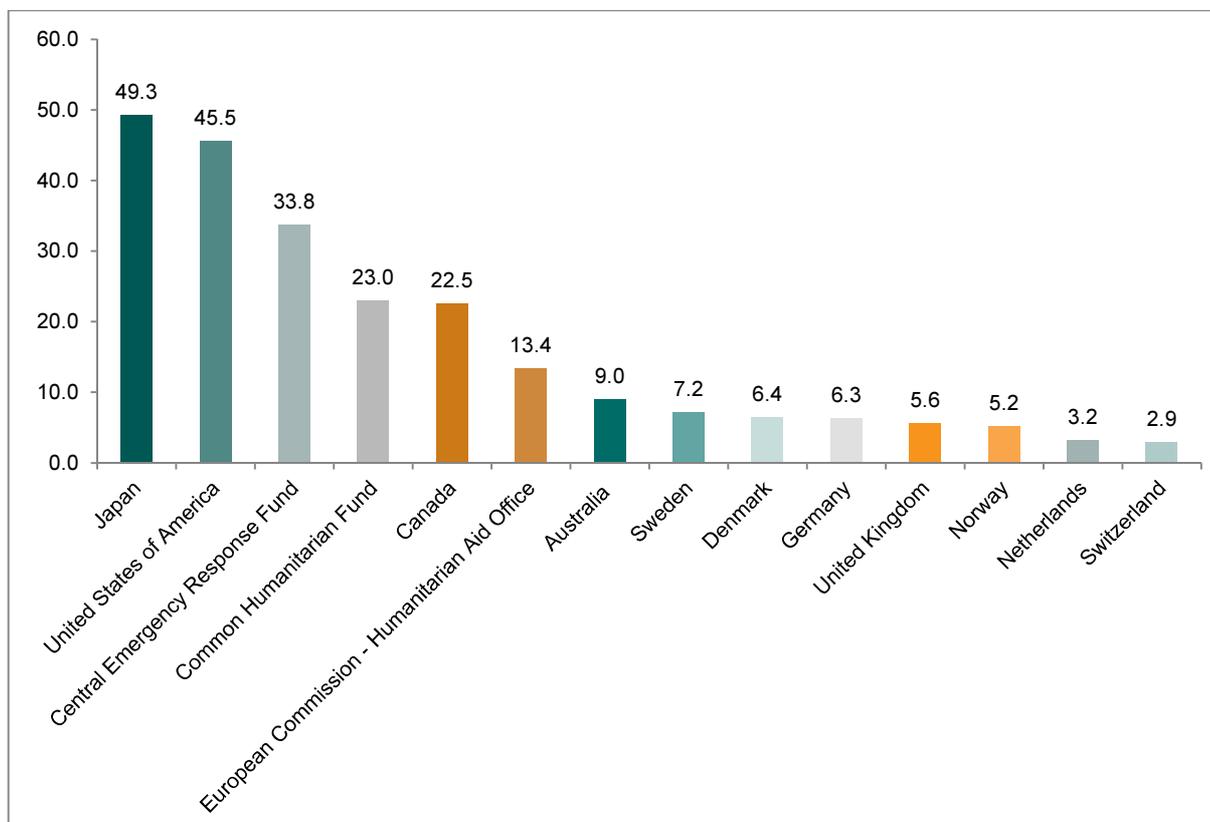
The data presented below is a summary of contributions by the top 15 donors to projects and programmes linked to prevention of and response to violence against children in emergencies. This includes FTS data under the following three sectors: health, education and protection/human rights/rule of law. Interventions were included in our analysis on the basis of the following project descriptions being referred to directly:

- Child, children, boys or girls or translations thereof;
- Protection or child protection or protective environments or safe schools; or health/nutrition in the case of conflict-affected children or child-friendly spaces; and
- Forms of violence or gender-based violence (GBV) or sexual- and gender-based violence (SGBV) or conflict or separation/trafficking

Our criteria for inclusion did not include:

- The reintegration or resettlement of displaced, or other, children into education facilities or alternative education, except if there was a direct reference to this taking place during conflict (so not, for example, in case of drought, flood or food crisis); and
- The primary or secondary prevention from harm – that is, basic need provision such as water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), shelter and nutrition, except if there is a direct reference to ‘conflict-affected children’.

Figure 1: Total contributions to prevention and response interventions linked to violence against children in emergencies, 2010-2013, 15 main donors (\$ million)



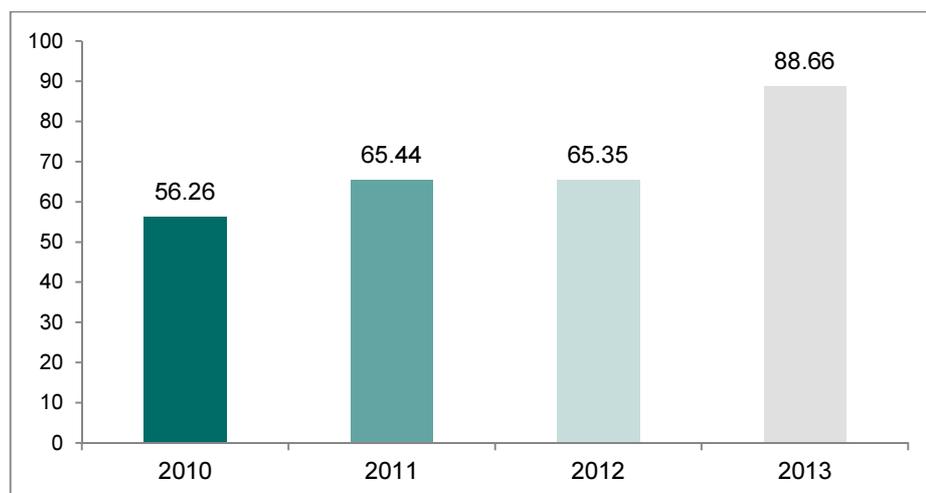
Note: It is important to highlight that it is very difficult to follow the expenditure of donors' resources during an emergency. The fact, however, that donors request the categorization of data aimed specifically at children in emergency settings, reveals a lot about their concern in their assistance priorities.

Source: Authors' calculations based on OCHA-FTS data

Figure 1 presents the total level of contributions for prevention and response projects and programmes linked to violence against children in emergencies as per the criteria defined above. It shows total contributions per donor during the period 2010-2013 by the 15 donors with the highest level of funding to this sector. The three highest donors per actual contributions during this period are Japan, the US and the Central Emergency Response Fund.

Figure 2 shows the quantity of contributions by all donors to prevention and response interventions linked to violence against children in emergencies from 2010 to 2013. While there are important variations each year in the levels of financial contributions from donors to this sector, this is not necessarily the result of greater or lower willingness to finance. Rather, it is influenced largely by the number of crises, the number of appeals for funding and the number of programmes being developed each year to respond to violence against children in emergencies.

Figure 2: Total contributions to prevention and response interventions linked to violence against children in emergencies, by year, 2010-2013 (\$ millions)



Source: Authors' calculations based on OCHA-FTS data

This analysis does not provide enough information on the quantity of funding for prevention and response to address violence against children in emergencies with respect to needs, as the data is not reported. As Lilley et al. (2012) note, for 2007-2009, the sector's funding was inconsistent, despite significant requests and requirements for programme work. To understand the amount of funding available in relation to the need, it is important first to develop more systematic research and information on the size and value of prevention and response projects relative to other programmatic areas in the protection sector, which might in fact be leading to decreased financing. This needs to be analysed in light of government and NGOs' emergency response capacities when addressing key issues related to the prevention of and response to violence against children.

Effective ways to prevent and respond to violence and exploitation against children in emergency contexts

A recent report by UNICEF (2014b), 'Ending Violence against Children, Six Strategies for Action' notes that, according to research and practice over the past few years, the knowledge and capacity to prevent violence against children and reduce its consequences exist. The report explains that the science base for developing effective violence prevention strategies and therapeutic interventions is expanding and that there is more and more evidence for strategies showing that – with sufficient commitment and investment – creative approaches to prevention can generate change.

Different types of violence against children require distinct preventive and responsive measures in order to be implemented. The evidence on effective preventive programmes and policies on violence against children is growing, although there are still important gaps in the rigorous documentation of such evidence. Most documented case studies related to preventive programmes for violence against children, particularly in developing countries, have limited details about their success rates (including a dearth in formal evaluations of interventions) or lack a cost-effectiveness analysis. This is even more complex in the case of emergencies, where evaluations are more challenging.

Nevertheless, some examples of preventive and responsive interventions related to violence against children in emergencies have recently been evaluated and documented, for example in 'Good Practices and Solutions for Child Protection: A Review of Lessons Learned' (Global Protection Cluster, 2014). This section presents some successful examples that have been implemented at a relatively low cost, particularly in view of the consequences they are addressing and the medium- and long-term costs they are helping reduce. The three examples below provide an overview of programmes aiming to prevent and/or respond to different manifestations of violence against

children, mainly in conflict contexts. They will provide some important insights about the types of approaches that have worked effectively and that have the potential to be scaled up to contribute to eliminating violence against children in emergency contexts.

UNICEF programmes to help protect children in emergencies in South Sudan⁵

In South Sudan, UNICEF implements programmes to help protect children in emergencies, with a focus on issues that arise as a result of armed conflict. An evaluation of UNICEF's Child Protection in Emergencies Programme (CPiE) over the period 2010-2012 focused on the adolescent age group, given that adolescents are at greatest risk of GBV and recruitment into armed groups. The programme was considered to be effective and sustainable in reintegrating adolescents from the armed forces. A total of 1,194 children were reunified with their families in 2012 (against a target of 1,200). Other programme components were less successful. For instance, an underachievement was recorded against the release of children in society, and addressing GBV was also weak.

Some of the successful strategies followed in South Sudan to achieve successful preventive and responsive outcomes included the following:

- There was a shift towards economic interventions and livelihoods, with adolescents reintegrating from armed forces and armed groups to develop their income-generating capacity and strengthen their resilience in the short and middle term. This was done by providing five small ruminants (sheep/goats) to each child, together with training on how to care for them. After 14 months, a study of the pilot group of 39 children found all were still with their families (they had not returned to the barracks) and all were in some form of education or training. The consensus was that the project was effective and sustainable.
- The programme directly promoted prevention of violence and recruitment and supported women's empowerment to address violence against girls and women by training women's peacekeeping teams to confront GBV (in one case a group of women directly challenged armed forces and engaged in dialogue to promote protective behaviours).
- Placing a CP specialist within the child protection unit of the Sudan People's Liberation Army turned out to be a very effective strategy. It has significantly influenced the child protection agenda from within and led to support for implementation of the action plan.

UNICEF's programmes for children in emergencies in DRC⁶

A recent evaluation of UNICEF's programmes to protect children in emergencies in DRC reviewed aspects of the programme over the period 2011-2012, with a focus on protection issues arising from armed conflict. The evaluation focused on GBV and the reintegration of children associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAAFAG).

In this emergency context, UNICEF had identified family separation as the main protection violation, putting children at risk of many subsequent consequences, including violence. This was followed by recruitment of children and child labour. Sexual violence was the most important form of violence against women, including adolescent girls.

Some of the main strategies the programme followed included the following:

- UNICEF's protection programme has supported implementing partners on the ground to provide medical, psychosocial and reintegration assistance to 25,729 minors, and developed protocols to provide a holistic response to sexual violence.
- The programme has also supported reintegration programmes that aim to reduce the risk of re-recruitment through the training of partners and community and church-based networks, and the implementation of action plans on working with sexual violence in armed conflict.

⁵ UNICEF Evaluation Office (2013a).

⁶ UNICEF Evaluation Office (2013b).

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- UNICEF’s holistic actions include the development of protocols that provide a holistic response to sexual violence and co-leading the multi-sectoral assistance pillar of the National Strategy to Combat Gender-Based Violence. It provides health, counselling and socioeconomic services to survivors, essentially through partners: it has reached 25,729 minors. It also supports advocacy through the V-Day (Victory Day) campaign, a global activist movement to end violence against women and girls.
 - There has been a significant increase in the reporting of violations through the systematic training of partners and community and church-based networks (1,299 grave violations reported between 2011 and June 2012).
 - UNICEF has also successfully negotiated an action plan on recruitment and use of children by the military and sexual violence in armed conflict (signed in October 2012, the first to include sexual violence), which has been used successfully as an advocacy tool against impunity.
 - Additional actions have included effective investment in capacity-building through the child protection sub-cluster based on workshops, although these can be strengthened by making them more systemic and based on capacity needs assessments.

Weaknesses with the programme indicate there is less emphasis on the prevention of sexual violence than on responding to survivors, despite indications of an increase in sexual violence and in the number of survivors seeking services. One of the programme’s challenges is that girls tend to be released, avoiding formal channels, to reduce stigma, which makes it harder to reach reintegration services.

Middle East Children’s Alliance and Afaq Jadeeda in Gaza⁷

The Middle East Children’s Alliance (MECA) and Afaq Jadeeda (New Horizons) established a partnership in 2005 to provide for the needs of children and their families in Nuseirat Refugee Camp in Gaza. One of the initiatives undertaken is the Let the Children Play and Heal Programme. This psychosocial support programme aims to address children’s psychological needs as a result of ongoing assaults. It gives thousands of children and youth opportunities to express themselves through art, dance, music, story-telling, theatre and puppetry; to get support from the larger community; and to just have fun in safe spaces. Some of the specific actions have included the following:

- School and community visits by trained staff members, supervised by a psychologist, were conducted throughout Gaza to work directly with 110,000 children aged 4-15 years.
- In addition to the group art activities, the teams identified children who need follow-up for their physical and psychological wounds and referred them for specialised ongoing care and treatment.
- The programme included 20-hour training courses for mothers in different areas of Gaza that gave 480 women new ideas on ways to support their children. It created and distributed 10,000 pamphlets for parents that gave advice on dealing with children during crisis situations.

Conclusion and recommendations

The global costs related to violence against children in emergencies cannot be estimated accurately, given the dearth of specific data on the numbers of children affected globally and the complexity of the costs that result from these grave violations to children’s rights, including death, rape and permanent disability, among many others. However, the analysis that can be done indicates that they are huge. For example, this study estimates that the costs of children’s association with armed forces and groups could amount to between \$120 million and \$144 million annually. The economic impact of children’s lives lost during conflict could amount to \$49.7 billion annually. And these are just two of the many costs of violence against children in emergencies.

⁷ Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies et al. (2013).

Spending to prevent and respond to violence against children in emergencies is carried out mainly by donors, given the multiple demands for resources of emergency-affected states and the possible breakdown of response systems during emergencies. Commitments by donors have been important over the past few years, although insufficient baseline data and weak monitoring mean it is difficult to know exactly how much has been spent on prevention of and response to violence against children. Governments – particularly those at risk of natural or human emergencies – must also invest in preventive actions related to violence against children to minimise the extent and costs of the consequences on children’s lives.

In the case of emergencies, more systematic research and evaluation of the types of programmes that work is needed in order to identify good, cost-effective programmes and to reduce the risk of violence faced by children. This evidence base is increasing, but there is still not enough information about the cost-effectiveness of interventions. More preventive and responsive policies and programmes should be implemented and scaled up globally, with the aim of making more rapid progress to eliminate all forms of violence against children.

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