8 Child rights programming and emergencies

By the end of this chapter you will:

• understand why and how to apply CRP in emergency situations

• understand the constraints to applying CRP in emergency situations.

This chapter builds on and requires an understanding of the core CRP principles, tools and processes given in Chapter 2.

There's no good reason why you shouldn't be able to use a rights-based approach in your emergency response. Indeed, Save the Children argues that CRP should be integral to any emergency response. You will no doubt face particular challenges that are specific to emergency situations. This chapter shows you how to respond to those challenges.

Why apply child rights programming in emergencies?

You should apply a CRP approach in emergencies for two reasons: the international community, through a framework of rights and principles, has mandated that children should maintain their full range of rights in all situations; and the values and principles that underpin CRP represent good humanitarian practice!

Applying a CRP approach in emergencies is rooted in a number of internationally accepted guiding frameworks. These include:
• international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions
• refugee law

Some definitions

By **emergencies** we mean: "a situation where lives, physical and mental well-being or development opportunities for children are threatened as a result of armed conflict, disaster or complex situations and where local capacity is exceeded or inadequate".[1]

Emergencies can be further categorised as:
- **natural disaster**: where "the consequences of events triggered by natural hazards overwhelm local response capacity and seriously affect the social and economic development of a region"
- **complex emergency**: "a humanitarian crisis where significant breakdown of authority has resulted from internal or external conflict, requiring an international response that extends beyond the mandate of one single agency"
- **chronic emergency**: where "a number of natural or people-created situations are referred to as 'emergencies' but which may more usefully be considered as 'long-running complex situations'.[2]

- international human rights instruments, including the UN Charter and the UNCRC
- humanitarian standards, including the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movements and NGOs in Disaster Relief (1994), the SPHERE Project Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards, the INEE minimum standards for education in chronic crises and early reconstruction, the Paris Principles and Guidelines for children associated with armed forces or armed groups, and the Humanitarian Accountability Project minimum standards.
- international targets, including the Millennium Development Goals.

One such framework states that: *"Persons affected by disasters should enjoy the same rights and freedoms under human rights law as others in their country and not be discriminated against." Protecting Persons Affected by Natural Disasters, IASC Operational Guidelines on Human Rights and Natural Disasters*, 2006

Other frameworks state that:
* children must maintain the full range of rights in all situations, irrespective of who they are (as clearly stated in the UNCRC and a host of other international human rights instruments and International Humanitarian Law).
* these rights are more at risk of being violated, left unprotected and unfulfilled the more fragile the situation
* duty-bearers must continue to meet their responsibilities and obligations in all situations and in relation to all rights
* international conventions, charters and principles reinforce a rights-based approach in emergencies.

Using a CRP approach for your emergency response also represents good humanitarian practice. It will ensure that you:
* stay impartial
* protect children against abuses of power
* encourage children's participation as well as the participation of other beneficiaries
* target the most vulnerable children, their families and communities
* collaborate with and strengthen civil society, giving this increasing priority as the humanitarian response progresses, but keep it rooted in your initial analysis (CRSA, emergency preparedness plans (EPPs) and rapid assessment)
* hold the state to account to meet its obligations to children, their families and communities
* are accountable to beneficiaries and other stakeholders, enabling their input into your programme response and getting their feedback on your impact.

Codes of conduct for emergency response

Some agencies, networks and coalitions have developed codes of conduct (or minimum standards and operating procedures) to guide their emergency work. One of the most commonly used is the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movements and NGOs in Disaster Relief. This is a voluntary code, developed in 1994. It is a rights-based code, widely respected by humanitarian organisations, donors, governments and non-state actors.

The box opposite shows how the Red Cross/Red Crescent Code of Conduct relates to key human rights and CRP principles.

The Red Cross/Red Crescent Code of Conduct and CRP principles

| Code of Conduct	Human rights and CRP principles
1. The humanitarian imperative comes first	1. Application of principles of universality and inalienability
2. Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone	2. Application of principle of non-discrimination
3. Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint	3. Application of principle of non-discrimination
4. We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy	4. Implying an understanding of power, capacity, and marginalised and vulnerable populations (linking to the CRSA) to ensure both accountability of the State and assist in strengthening its capacity
5. We shall respect culture and custom	5. Implying an understanding and analysis of social, cultural, economic and political context (building on the CRSA), including the perspective of children and young people
6. We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities	6. Sustainable impact based on empowerment of rights-holders and capacity/role of civil society (see the three pillars and dimensions of change)
7. Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid	7. Participation and involvement of stakeholders, including children and young people in decision-making processes
8. Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs	8. Sustainable impact based on empowerment of rights-holders and capacity/role of civil society (pillar 3) and advocacy to address the underlying causes (CRSA)
9. We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources	9. Accountability to beneficiaries and range of other stakeholders, including children
10. In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects	10. Beneficiaries, including children and young people, are social actors

Constraints

All organisations face constraints, either internal, organisational constraints or features of the operating environment. In an emergency, these are likely to be significant. Constraints can be summarised as follows:

- the lack of capacity or will of the authorities (duty-bearers) to fulfil their responsibilities
- the pressure to respond quickly, restricting the ability to undertake a CRSA, involve stakeholders, plan strategic advocacy initiatives and ensure sustainable impact
- the unpredictable nature of the operating environment, making planning hard, demanding flexibility and agility and often removing the possibility of implementing in keeping with a clear-cut programme cycle
- a focus on technical expertise, limiting a holistic view of children, integrated response and longer-term planning, with children viewed as victims and not rights-holders
- high staff turnover, limiting effectiveness of capacity building and increasing the likelihood of poor understanding of CRP
- focus on security conditions, limiting stakeholder involvement, potentially putting children at risk if targeted and identified
- less secure/long-term funding available, creating a focus on immediate and tangible results
- unresponsive and disempowered children, their carers and civil society, limiting children and other stakeholders' involvement, working in partnerships and co-ordinated advocacy
- limited access to children, leading to adult-informed planning and implementation. This restricts children's involvement through the programme cycle, their empowerment and the possibility for long-term improvements to their lives.

Key steps

You can use the core CRP tools and child rights programme cycle described in Chapter 2 to guide your response in emergency situations as shown in the diagram opposite. This may mean that you need to adapt or change some of your usual ways of working in emergencies.

Child rights programme cycle in emergencies
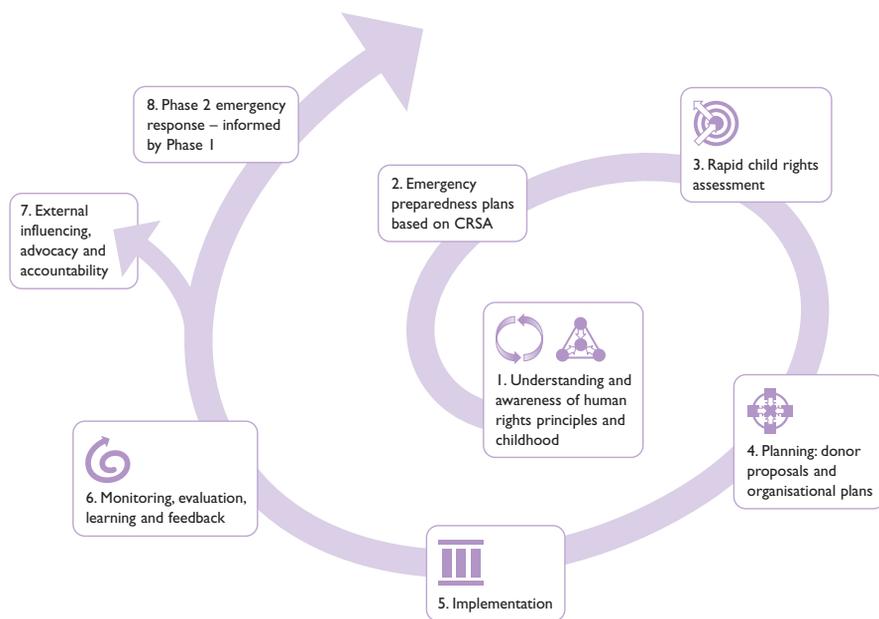
⟳ Awareness and understanding

You should build an awareness and understanding of children, childhood and children's rights into programme teams and emergency staff (if they are separate). This may involve reviewing terms of reference, recruitment procedures, job descriptions, briefings and debriefings, inductions, individual staff development plans, etc. Where separate emergency teams exist or new staff are recruited, this understanding and sharing of values and principles also assists in creating the respect and sensitivity needed between them and existing programme staff teams. This will require resources and leadership.

Tools: Duty-bearer and rights-holder relationship, Four General Principles of the UNCRC, Code of Conduct, SPHERE Humanitarian Charter

Analysis

You should establish emergency preparedness plans. These should be based on the same framework as a CRSA in terms of data collection and analysis. But you will also need to carry out a rapid child rights assessment at the onset of an emergency. Use the Circles of Influence and Obligation tool to map stakeholders and analyse their roles, capacities, and the power relations between them. Be sure to include children in your data gathering and analysis.

Tools: Circles of Influence, capacity gap matrix. Also useful is a tool developed by the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) on participative approaches in the assessment phase of humanitarian action (see p. 98 of *Participation by Crisis-affected Populations in Humanitarian Action: A handbook for practitioners*, ALNAP, 2003).

Case study

Children and Livelihoods in Emergencies in **Sri Lanka**: Emergency **assessments** are, by their nature, very time-constrained, and a fine balance has to be struck between being sufficiently consultative in assessing needs and getting results fast enough to respond on time. However, in recent years Save the Children has ensured that its rapid livelihoods assessments in emergencies have included discussions with children to understand how the crisis and its impact on household livelihoods have in turn impacted on a variety of children's rights. In Sri Lanka, following the tsunami in 2004, for example, Save the Children held discussions with groups of affected children and covered a checklist of issues derived from their "Children and Livelihoods" briefing paper. The assessment found that children from the poorest families were most likely to be the ones out of school and unable to afford healthcare. As a result of the additional economic stress caused by the tsunami, those children were more exposed to three major protection risks: (a) under-age recruitment into armed forces; (b) engagement in high-risk livelihoods activities such as commercial sex work; and (c) potential risk of sexual exploitation in displaced camps and during the process of distribution of relief supplies.

Planning

Set your goals and objectives based on your emergency preparedness plan, your CRSA, and the rapid child rights assessment you carried out at the onset of the emergency. Use the five dimensions of change, and locate your activities within the three pillars. This will ensure that you not only deal with immediate survival needs, but look at the underlying causes and plan to strengthen the capacity of the state and civil society to address longer-term development rights.

Tools: dimensions of change and three pillars

Implementation

Implementing a humanitarian response programme, set against the three pillars model and consistent with CRP principles, may imply a shift in the way you work, even if identified specific activities remain the same. For example, learning from the tsunami response in Sri Lanka emphasised the lack of focus on implementing sustainable solutions, particularly working in collaboration with local civil society organisations:
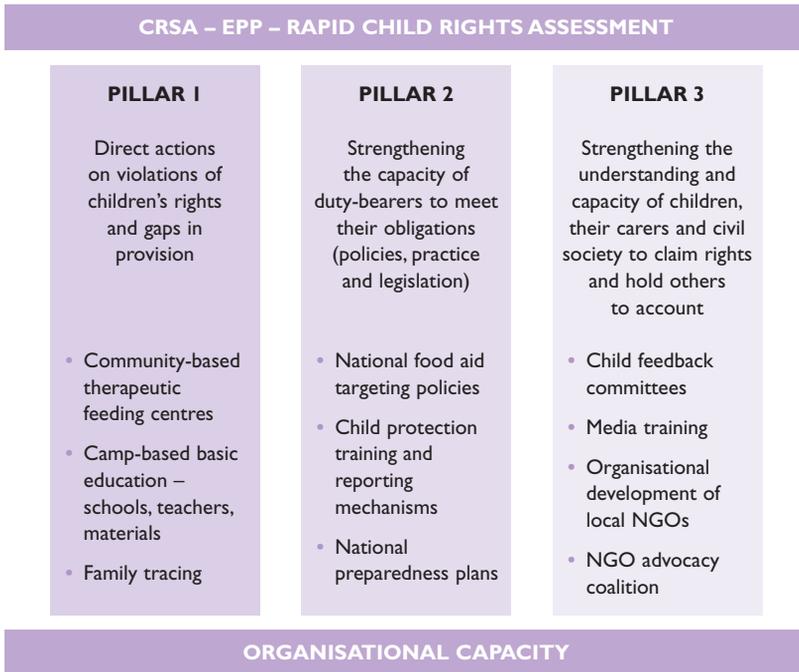
> *"The tsunami response in Sri Lanka is a prime example in which not taking local capacity into account slowed international assistance … every international agency came with a set of interventions in its tool kit to respond to the immediate needs of the population, but without a real backup plan for how to assist, should functioning local structures be already working to meet those needs."*
>
> Fitzpatrick M *Responding in the More Developed World*,
> Monday Developments, 2006

Tools: three pillars

Overleaf is an example of an emergency programme set against the three pillars. The balance of your activities between pillars would probably shift as the situation evolved.

Example – Implementation planning using the three pillars

CRSA – EPP – RAPID CHILD RIGHTS ASSESSMENT		
PILLAR 1 Direct actions on violations of children's rights and gaps in provision	**PILLAR 2** Strengthening the capacity of duty-bearers to meet their obligations (policies, practice and legislation)	**PILLAR 3** Strengthening the understanding and capacity of children, their carers and civil society to claim rights and hold others to account
• Community-based therapeutic feeding centres • Camp-based basic education – schools, teachers, materials • Family tracing	• National food aid targeting policies • Child protection training and reporting mechanisms • National preparedness plans	• Child feedback committees • Media training • Organisational development of local NGOs • NGO advocacy coalition
ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY		

Case studies

In Aceh, **Indonesia**, many children were separated from their families by the tsunami in December 2004. Save the Children set up a family-tracing database within the Ministry of Social Services in Aceh and seconded staff to the ministry to help build its capacity in managing the caseloads.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**, we implemented a programme to help vulnerable children in a conflict environment with limited access to much of the population. This involved working across all three pillars.

Case studies *continued*

At the national level, we provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Planning on the development of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The strategy aimed to address the root causes of children's problems as well as the symptoms, to promote 'joined-up' policy and programme planning for vulnerable children, and to ensure priority sectors included activities for children's health, education, nutrition and protection. Despite the fragility of national government structures, Save the Children saw this as a key opportunity to help the greatest number of vulnerable children over the coming ten years. The process included undertaking action research, strengthening the knowledge base of government ministries, working in a coalition of civil society actors, and developing participatory mechanisms through which children's opinions could be considered.

Monitoring, evaluation, learning and feedback

You need to build in effective monitoring and evaluation systems at the planning stage for the same reasons and using the same processes discussed in Chapter 5. In an emergency context, you may want to review your activities after one month, then again after four to six months, then after one year – taking due account of funding structures and donor requirements.

A number of evaluations of emergency responses in recent years have produced consistent recommendations, particularly around preparedness, working with and capacity building of local partners, beneficiary involvement, accountability and overall transparency and co-ordination.

Tools: Use the five dimensions of change (and a wide range of participatory monitoring tools detailed in Chapter 5) to monitor and evaluate your impact.

Overleaf is an example taken from a chronic emergency protection programme in Africa.

Example – Monitoring indicators using the five dimensions

Objective

By the end of 2009, community-based protection mechanisms are directly benefiting 42,000 children living without adequate family care and this is informing national debate, policy development and resource allocation.

Impact indicators (in each of the five dimensions of change)

Changes in the lives of children
- Number of children directly supported by child protection networks
- Number of out-of-school children returning to and regularly attending school
- Number of reported abuses of children and percentage successfully resolved
- Poorest households demonstrate greater economic capacity to withstand shocks

Children and young people's participation and active citizenship
- Children and adults understand benefits of children's participation in planning processes

Changes in policies and practices affecting children and young people's rights
- Number of child protection networks formed and operating effectively

Changes in equity and non-discrimination of children and young people
- Most vulnerable children receiving adequate care and support

Changes in civil society and communities' capacity to support children's rights
- Number of new community initiatives targeting vulnerable children

Key processes

In Chapter 2, we presented the key processes that CRP is based on: involving children at every stage; working with the most vulnerable children and fighting discrimination; creating a rights climate; working in partnership; working with and enabling the state; and empowering civil society and encouraging community involvement. The key processes will have a number of practical implications for your emergency work.

Involving children

You will be under pressure to assess and plan quickly, and this can make involving children seem more of a challenge. You will obviously need to carefully assess whether involving children puts them at risk of harm. But many emergency responses have proven that involving children at every stage of the programme cycle actually maximises the impact of activities, on children, their carers and in their communities (see case studies later in this chapter on Pakistan and Cuba).

In practice, involving children in emergency contexts means:
- creating opportunities for children to influence and shape emergency preparedness plans and engage meaningfully in emergency responses
- acquiring the knowledge, understanding and skills to ensure the safe, meaningful and ethical participation of children
- being familiar with child protection procedures
- preparing child-friendly materials
- ensuring safe and supportive environments
- strengthening children's capabilities
- increasing adults' capacities to engage with children
- exploring opportunities for children to influence advocacy and reconstruction efforts
- ensuring that learning feeds back into planning to improve children's participation
- equipping staff with the skills and techniques to work with children.

Case study

Children's participation – setting up safe spaces

Safe spaces can be a useful way to guide your emergency response. In the response to the 2007 earthquake in the **Solomon Islands**, Save the Children set up safe spaces and trained staff to find out children's views during all phases of the emergency response. Here are the guidelines we followed.

Case study *continued*

Practical guidelines

Assessments
- Interview children about their protection threats and education needs and desires.
- Young people can be trained to participate and lead assessments. They are often enthusiastic and well informed, with key insights into the demographics and needs of an affected population.

Safe space design and set up
- Include children when developing a list of safe space supplies and materials. They know best the games and activities that protect them cognitively, physically, and psychosocially.
- Include children and communities in determining where the safe space should be. They will be able to indicate safety and security precautions, as well as practical information about proximity to key resources.
- Include children and communities in deciding what materials to use when building a safe space. When possible, include them in safe space construction.

Safe space administration
- Children can help with administrative tasks such as registration, monitoring safe space policies, distributing snacks, keeping track of schedules, and helping set up and pack away games and activities.

Safe space activities
- Safe space activities should be participatory and learner-centred. They should be co-operative, interactive, and should help children learn for themselves.
- Responsible young people can lead and support activities for younger children.

Safe space monitoring and evaluation
- Children should be actively involved in monitoring and evaluating the safe spaces against the indicators. Through surveys, checklists or questionnaires, and interviewing other children and parents, they can help you find out what is working well, any problem areas, and possible solutions.

Case study *continued*

By continually seeking children's views, the safe spaces continued to be relevant to children's needs, and achieved the overall objective of helping them cope with the emergency affecting their lives.

Case study

In **Paraguay**, a national organisation, Global Infancia, supports emergency preparedness in schools in some regions of the country. The project is implemented in co-operation with school councils. It emphasises risk prevention and preparedness in case of emergencies and includes awareness-raising and building students' capacities. Preparedness plans are devised and shared by the students. There is training on first aid and the prevention of fires, and evacuation drills involving both students and teachers.

Working with the most vulnerable children and countering discrimination

You will already have identified vulnerable and marginalised children in your CRSA. Rapid assessments can build on this and identify specifically how these groups have responded to the shocks in the environment and how you can best assist them. (See box overleaf for how to assess the impact of gender relations on vulnerability.)

In countries where your access to vulnerable children is limited – for example, in parts of the DRC or Sudan – it is important to focus on the obligations of the state as the main duty-bearer, whose responsibilities to children within its borders do not change.

Working in partnership

Many of the challenges of co-ordination and working in partnership in an emergency situation (pressure of time, limited capacity of local partners, security considerations, issues of impartiality, competition for resources, etc) can be turned to your advantage if you analyse and plan in advance.

Gender relations and vulnerability

An understanding of how gender relations and inequalities influence both capacities and vulnerabilities involves looking at:

* the difference between boys' and girls' security and protection needs
* who holds what responsibilities, who does what work, and who controls resources
* the differences (as well as commonalities) in women's, men's, boys' and girls' priorities
* how women and girls are currently organised or are participating in social, economic, political, and religious structures
* the capacities of women, men, girls, and boys to participate in decision-making processes and reconstruction
* how men's gender identities influence their vulnerabilities, needs and priorities
* the differences among women and girls (as well as among men and boys)
* the opportunities to narrow gender gaps and support the equitable participation of women and girls in decision-making.

Working in partnership is particularly important in an emergency context because:

* local partners' knowledge of the culture and environment can increase the impact of your interventions
* it ensures longer-term impact of your interventions – your local partners are likely to remain long after international agencies have left
* it increases the potential of access, scale and scope, especially where local partners are integrated into communities that, due to security situations, national and international organisations do not have access to
* it creates knowledge and understanding of children and their rights beyond your organisation
* it creates networks of organisations with the capacity to support the fulfilment of children's rights at all levels of society
* it builds the capacity of partners.

Working with and enabling the State

The State remains the prime duty-bearer during times of conflict, natural disaster, or protracted complex emergencies. But it is unlikely to be able to meet all of its obligations. This may be due to shocks to its local structures (such as destroyed schools and health centres, and displaced personnel), or due to an unwillingness and/or lack of authority in the area (eg, budgets prioritising military spending, geographical areas of the country no longer under central control, and policies directly aimed at further marginalising particular groups of people).

In practice, working with/enabling the State in an emergency context means you should:
- clarify the different roles of the State, international agencies, local organisations, etc, with a constructive and transparent approach
- assist the State as prime duty-bearer – for example, in terms of technical capacity, funding, co-ordination mechanisms, etc
- share awareness and understanding with the State of human rights principles, international humanitarian law, and child rights programming, through a demonstration of good practice in your own programmes, research, advocacy and policy development
- identify appropriate fora during the planning process through which the State can contribute, with their roles and expectations clearly defined
- implement programme interventions with State partners
- monitor and evaluate your activities, involving the state in data gathering, analysis and feedback processes
- maintain impartial and transparent positions in relation to the State
- carry out risk analysis as you make strategic decisions that could involve the State.

Empowering civil society and community involvement

When emergencies take place, and the longer they last, the more likely it is that communities and civil society become weak, disempowered and marginalised. However, empowering civil society and involving communities affected by an emergency from the outset can counter this process. It builds rather than undermines local capacity, decreases dependency and helps people to retake control over their lives. It also creates an understanding and awareness of children's rights that can provide the basis for bringing about longer-term change in children's lives.

In practice, empowering civil society in an emergency context means you should:
- analyse the roles, capacities and power dynamics of communities and civil society and monitor these as your programme progresses
- share awareness and understanding with civil society of the principles that underpin children's rights
- involve civil society and community members (as well as children) in gathering data and analysis for your CRSA, emergency preparedness plan and rapid assessment
- identify appropriate ways for civil society groups to contribute, with their roles and expectations clearly defined
- implement your programme interventions with civil society partners and community members
- involve civil society groups and community members in monitoring and evaluating the impact of your activities.

Creating a rights climate

Children's rights are at their most vulnerable during emergencies – both their immediate survival rights (such as access to food, healthcare and education) and the increased risk of marginalisation, abuse and exploitation.

In practice, creating a rights climate in an emergency context means:
- fostering an understanding and awareness of the dimensions of social change, power dynamics, and access to rights and ideologies by all actors directly involved in the emergency response, including humanitarian staff themselves
- implementing a programme that challenges existing power relations, by creating opportunities to involve and empower people and groups who are marginalised through the emergency. Understanding the risks and consequences involved in challenging power relations will inform your programming decisions. For example, whether or not to undertake a large-scale food distribution programme where access is dependent on local authorities known to exploit children, and whether or not to challenge their abusive practice
- involving people who are marginalised and disempowered in the monitoring and evaluation of your work.

Case study

In 2005 a huge earthquake hit **Pakistan**, India and Afghanistan. Save the Children responded immediately in each of the countries affected. Of the 4 million people affected, 1.6 million were children. Three International Save the Children Alliance members, already present in Pakistan, took the lead in defined geographical areas to implement a co-ordinated response.

Save the Children Sweden adopted a community mobilisation approach as the implementation strategy. This approach had been successful in the post-Afghan conflict emergency response, where experience showed that meaningful community participation results in empowering communities to take control of their lives. Using this approach, communities affected by the earthquake were facilitated to take the lead in all phases of the emergency response – from assessment to survival support, and later in the ongoing reconstruction phase.

At the outset of the operation, one male and one female social animator were selected from each target community on recommendations of the community. They organised male, female and child community groups. These groups, with support from the project staff, carried out assessments of damage caused by the earthquake and identified inputs for ensuring survival of the affected people. The community-prioritised response was implemented with community groups leading the process for relief distribution and ensuring it reached the most vulnerable families.

In the second step, these community groups were facilitated to organise formal male, female and child committees. These were informed about child protection issues and how communities could ensure the protection of children in emergencies. The committees are now being supported to organise themselves into formal community-based organisations (CBOs). As an exit strategy, Save the Children will support these CBOs to cluster into one organisation and build its capacity to work on children's rights.

Our response included the distribution of tents, blankets, children's waterproof shoes, cash transfers, construction of shelters, and the establishment of safe play areas for children and children's clubs. We also took

Case study *continued*

a lead role in restoring access to primary education for affected children. We built 130 school structures and partnered with teachers, communities and the government in provinces to reopen and support government primary schools. Many of these students, especially girls, had never attended school before. Great efforts were made to ensure that all children could go to school.

To improve local ownership, Save the Children helped revive school management committees, involving them in the planning, management and evaluation of public education. These committees existed before the earthquake, but many only on paper. Communities have now selected committee members, trained committee chairs, co-ordinated with the government, facilitated initial meetings and recruited women and children as participants. With the emergency phase of the response still ongoing, we are already planning to continue long-term support for education and child protection. This involves a commitment to investing in our local partners, signing long-term contracts with them and engaging with local authorities to plan for the handover of responsibility for our projects to these partners. In some districts the education programme has now been extended to cover all primary education. We have created strong partnerships with both local NGOs and the Department of Education, based on the best practice experience from the emergency response.

Yes, but...

❝We simply don't have the time. Humanitarian work is all about speed, effectiveness and life-saving responses. We know what works and what doesn't. ❞
CRP will help you understand the environment and respond appropriately. It does not have to slow down your response. It does mean asking the right questions of the right people – including children, young people, women and others. This is the best way to ensure your response is fast and appropriate, meeting priority needs and ensuring that underlying as well as immediate causes are addressed.

❝Emergencies cultures and development cultures are essentially at odds with each other, with teams attracting very different people, different skills and experiences and different operating practices.❞ This has been an issue for a long time. A CRP approach is a real opportunity for you to bring these two worlds together. You can apply the basic principles, approaches and tools in all situations – emergency programmes or development work – because your priority is to see children's rights fulfilled (both immediately and over generations).

❝We are professional humanitarian workers with our specialisations, experience and priorities. We're not rights workers – we're not informed and trained in rights-based approaches beyond our ability to refer to international humanitarian principles.❞ Working for a child rights organisation demands that you engage with and apply a rights-based approach. Even so, and in other organisations, it may be that you and your teams need additional support, through training and development. This in no way negates the importance of your technical specialisation that helps ensure the best possible response.

❝Working with partners is a luxury in humanitarian situations. Local partners, where they exist, are quickly overwhelmed and are not likely to be considered impartial. It's better if we do the job ourselves, building directly the capacity of local people.❞ It is fundamental to a rights-based approach that you assess the capacity of local organisations and work with them. It will improve the impact of your activities, and help you bring about the changes you want for children both immediately and in the longer term. Your emergency preparedness must involve planning to work with these potential partners alongside direct operations and working with the State.

❝If only we had the tools, checklists, formats – the operating procedures – we'd give it a go.❞ It's true that specific tools for applying a CRP approach in emergency situations are few and far between. This is partly because the generic rights-based tools and questions can be adapted and used in emergencies, as we hope we have shown. However, there is still scope to develop further tools based on proven experience that are more easily accessible in emergency situations (in terms of language and flexibility).

66 Even more than in development situations, donors have their own agendas in emergencies, often politicised and always with pressure to spend funds fast and produce immediate and concrete results. 99
Your relationship with your donors should be a two-way relationship. Accepting and spending the funds must be compatible with child rights-based principles and these must be reflected in emergency response programmes. With certain donors this can be negotiated over time, especially with those who claim to be rights-based (such as DFID, SIDA, CIDA and WFP). Your emergency response can bring immediate and very visible results. But it must also address the root causes of the situation. This implies effective learning programmes, capacity building of civil society organisations and state structures, the active involvement of children and their communities and effective advocacy work.

66 Community-based targeting, response identification and even implementation sound great, but we don't always have the time to do all or even some of these. In addition, communities themselves are also subjective, with their own agenda and discriminating power bases. 99
In our experience, involving a wide range of community members – not just the obvious (such as village chiefs, the most educated, elders, etc) – in identifying the most vulnerable children pays real dividends. It creates long-term buy-in and confidence, real potential partners, and it ensures a transparent and more equitable process that empowers all involved. Often you can check and triangulate this information against other sources (eg, school attendance, government census figures, nutrition surveys, etc).

66 Where we operate, our priority is on life-saving humanitarian responses. We don't have the time or resources to undertake such a wide range of activities. 99
Clearly, in a rapid onset emergency, you have to prioritise life-saving responses. But experience shows that the long-term effectiveness of your response is dependent on the capacities and commitment of the communities you work with to bring about improvements in children's lives.

Case study

Cuba is hit frequently by hurricanes and floods, yet the impact on its population and environment is relatively slight compared with other disaster-prone countries.

In recent years, the Cuban government has pioneered emergency preparedness education in schools and communities to reduce the population's vulnerability to natural disasters and to promote children and young people's active participation in society. It is a process that could be adapted as a model elsewhere.

A project called 'We are Prepared, Listening to the Waters', was launched by the Cuban Ministry of Education and Cuba's Civil Defence in collaboration with other organisations, including Save the Children. The aim was to involve young people in risk management for floods, earthquakes and hurricanes in the east of the country. Forty-two schools took part, and the project's success has meant that local authorities and members of the community responsible for protecting the public can now call on a large number of children for assistance in times of emergency.

Most importantly, the students were involved at every stage of the design and implementation of the programme. Four groups were set up to be responsible for emergency measures, focusing on: technical risks and resources; health and sanitation; social issues in the community; and education. Each group learned about their particular area, was trained in risk reduction and shared their ideas with other community members and authorities. For example, the education group launched a campaign to target those most at risk and made proposals about how disaster risk management could be included in school curricula.

Where to go for more information

There are many manuals, guides and training kits on approaches to emergency work, but using a child rights-based approach to emergencies is a relatively new field. Here are some of the most practical resources to guide your CRP approach to emergency work.

CRIN Newsletter: Child Rights and Emergencies, 2007

The Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction, as promoted by the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)

Impact Measurement and Accountability in Emergencies: The Good Enough Guide, Emergency Capacity Building Project, 2007 (see Monitoring, evaluation, learning and feedback)

Child Rights Perspective in Response to Natural Disasters in South Asia: A retrospective study, Save the Children Sweden, 2006. This is a comprehensive overview of Save the Children's experience in the South Asia region, with detailed case studies and lessons learned.

Protecting Children During Emergencies in Nigeria: A toolkit for trainers, Save the Children UK, 2005

Child Protection in Emergencies, Save the Children, 2006

Rising from the Rubble: Communities lead the earthquake response, Save the Children Sweden, 2006

Gender in Emergencies: General guidelines, Save the Children UK, 2005[3]

Working with the Most Vulnerable in Emergencies, Save the Children UK, 2005

Recommended websites and additional materials on children and others in emergencies:

Action for the Rights of Children (ARC): *Training modules for refugees/ displaced children,* Save the Children, 2002, including on situation analysis, child soldiers, separated children. http://www.icva.ch/doc00000773.html#bc

Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response, The Sphere Project, 2004 Edition, Published by Oxfam Publishing. Can be accessed via: www.sphereproject.org This manual offers a set of minimum standards and key indicators that inform different aspects of humanitarian action, from initial assessment through to co-ordination and advocacy (see monitoring section).

Gender and Humanitarian Assistance Resource Kit – www.reliefweb.int/library/gharkit

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Guidelines for Prevention and Response, UNHCR, revised version 2003, can be accessed via website: www.unhcr.ch

Adolescent Programming in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations, UNICEF, 2004, can be accessed via website: www.unicef.org/publications

Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movements and NGOs in Disaster Relief, can be accessed via website: www.icrc.org

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership – International, can be found on www.hapinternational.org and aims to make humanitarian action accountable to its intended beneficiaries through self-regulation and compliance verification.

Protecting Persons Affected by Natural Disasters – Operational Guidelines on Human Rights and Natural Disasters, IASC, 2006, can be accessed via website www.reliefweb.int

Growing the Sheltering Tree: Protecting rights through humanitarian action, IASC, 2002 http://www.icva.ch/files/gstree.pdf

People In Aid Network: www.peopleinaid.org Promotes best practice in the management and support of aid workers.

Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP): www.alnap.org ALNAP was established in 1997, following the multi-agency evaluation of the genocide in Rwanda. It is a collective response by the humanitarian sector, dedicated to improving humanitarian performance through increased learning and accountability.

Notes

[1] Based on the International Save the Children Alliance Emergency Liaison Team definition in the positioning statement on Alliance co-operation on emergencies, as well as Save the Children Child Protection in Emergencies documents from 2003

[2] From the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) definitions

[3] Adapted from the summary guidelines of the inter-agency workshop on the integration of gender into needs assessment and planning of humanitarian assistance; plus Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and World Food Programme (WFP) gender guidelines