



## Week 8

### **From Policy to Practice / Case Study: Saving & Protecting Children (2)**

*Week 8 further proceeds with a case study about **children (1)** in humanitarianism & development & the challenges of **saving (2)** & **protecting (3)** them. Along a usual definition, ‘children’ are young human beings under the age of puberty and/or below the legal age of majority. As stressed by most humanitarian and development actors, children pay the highest price of humanitarian crises and underdevelopment. Armed conflict, natural disasters and other emergencies expose millions of girls and boys to unthinkable forms of violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect. Children are forced to flee their homes, torn from their parents and caregivers. They may be injured or killed in conflict, or sometimes recruited by armed forces. Girls endure specific gender-based threats and violence (UNICEF). Saving & protecting them thus count among the most pressing tasks of humanitarianism & development.*

#### **1. CHILDREN IN HUMANITARIANISM & DEVELOPMENT**



- Children pay the highest price of humanitarian crises and underdevelopment.
- Wars, armed conflict, natural disasters as well as other emergencies expose millions of girls and boys to extreme violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect.
- Children are forced to escape from their homes, often torn from parents and caregivers along the

way.

- In conflict, children might be injured or killed by explosive weapons and remnants of war, including during attacks on schools and hospitals.
- Children might also be recruited by armed forces – not only as fighters, but as scouts, cooks, porters, guards, messengers and more.
- This is particularly the case for girls and women when the threat of gendered violence ascends.
- In conflict and disaster, children lose health, education, as well as protection services.
- Their mental health and psychosocial needs are neglected, with consequences likely to last a lifetime.
- Besides, nearly 400 million children across the world lack access to vital health care services, while nearly 265 million do not go to school.
- To date, more than 30 million children have been forcibly displaced by war, violence, natural disasters, and other crises according to UNICEF estimates.
- The world’s leading child-focused humanitarian and developmental aid agencies that

deal with these issues include organisations such as Save the Children, Plan International, as well as Defence for Children International.

- Big, medium, or small national & local agencies also have the protection of children as their main objective.
- Images of suffering children capture the moral need for humanitarianism and development.
- Pictures of starving children, walking skeletons with swollen stomachs, continue to move public opinions.
- These pictures have become iconic since the Nigerian-Biafran war, which was one of the first televised conflicts in modern history.
- As an archetypal embodiment of victimhood, childhood vulnerability triggers feelings of compassion, mobilise donors, and convince public opinion of the need for lifesaving humanitarianism and development.
- Displaced, trafficked, and malnourished children are special targets of humanitarian and developmental action.
- Child soldiers, street children, as well as child workers also exemplify the notion of a 'stolen childhood' that calls for responses.



► **For more information, please consult the ProQuest eBook and additional readings.**

## 2. SAVING THROUGH HUMANITARIANISM & DEVELOPMENT



- The notion of saving children can be traced back to 19<sup>th</sup>-century missionary work.
- The first child rights document ever adopted by a multilateral organisation was the 1924 League of Nations' Declaration of Children's Rights.
- It was mainly drafted by British social reformer Eglantyne Jebb, founder of Save the Children.
- There were two subsequent decisive texts: 1959 UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child, then

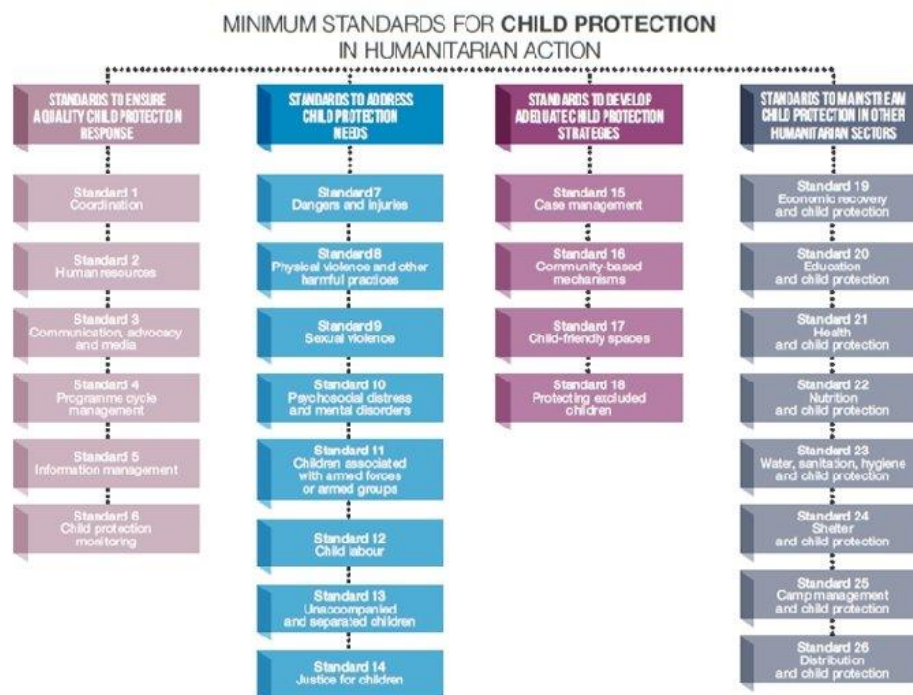
replaced by 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- Both depart from Jebb's original text and incorporates ideas from development that argue that children are persons under 18 years of age.
- In other words, children are separate from adults by psychobiological characteristics that are universally valid.
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child was a crucial time for humanitarian child protection as the first legally binding international treaty in this specific field.
- Beyond immediate crises, childhood must still be made the point of convergence between short-term humanitarian responses and development endeavours in the longer run.



► **For more information, please consult the ProQuest eBook and additional readings.**

### 3. PROTECTING THROUGH HUMANITARIANISM & DEVELOPMENT



#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

The below-reading materials can be found on ProQuest through your VLE platform (Online Library).

#### ProQuest eBook

- Kevin M. Cahill, *History and Hope: The International Humanitarian Reader* (Fordham University Press, 2013), pp. 140-154.

#### Additional readings

- Unprotected: Crisis in Humanitarian Funding for Child Protection (Save the Children, 2019).
- Roberto Burguet & Marcelo Soto, *Seeds of Hope: Assessing the Effect of Development Aid on the Reduction of Child Mortality* (Asian Development Bank, 2013).