



CPMS Video Series - Facilitator's Notes

Standard 13 - Unaccompanied & Separated Children

Background: This document was created to promote the use of the Standard 13 video. It is intended to prompt discussion among people who have watched it and want to learn more about the topic, as well as to reflect collectively on how the standard is or could be implemented in their context. It could be used as part of a coordination meeting, briefing session, orientation or training workshop.

Discussion Points:

Message 1: Family separations can be prevented

- 1.1 What do we see as current/potential causes of separation?
- 1.2 What measures are in place at the a) organizational and b) community levels to prevent separation?
Who is doing what on prevention?

Things to stress

- Preparedness is critical in order to prevent separations which may happen to any child in any emergency, whatever its cause or nature.
- Approach the relevant authorities and other parties, so as to reduce the risk of separation. This must be based on an understanding of the causes of separation. Understanding the causes of separation in different contexts can help to ensure better preparedness, more relevant prevention measures and a more accurate response, mitigating harm to those children already separated.
- From the start of an emergency, or even before (where this can be predicted), communities should be informed of practical measures to avoid 'losing their children', humanitarian workers should be trained on their roles to ensure that children are protected and family unity preserved

Message 2: Act fast! UASC are amongst the most vulnerable in any emergency; thus in all humanitarian settings, prioritize actions for their care & protection.

- 2.1 Why is this so important?
- 2.2 What does "acting fast" mean in this context?
- 2.3 What are the critical "sticking" points?
- 2.4 Have we tried to mainstream the issue and engage other key actors?
- 2.5 Do we have clear inter-agency Family Tracing & Reunification or Standard Operating Procedures? Do we have a common action plan? Does this plan feed into a longer term strategy to support UASC?
- 2.6 For preparedness, do we have adequate resources & logistics, common information-sharing protocols & forms? What will need to change in making the rapid shift to emergency operations?

Things to stress

Immediate actions are a priority in order to:

- prevent further separations
- respond to separation, as rapid reunification may be possible & “physical clues” are easily lost
- prevent potential physical & psychological harm, abduction, trafficking & recruitment or use by armed forces or armed groups, as well as sexual abuse & exploitation

Whilst immediate actions are a priority, a long-term response is also likely to be needed. So there needs to be a broad vision of how immediate actions will feed into a longer term programme.

Message 3: The quality of care provision is central to the wellbeing of UASC

3.1 How are we going to monitor the quality of care? Where will the capacity to do this over the long term come from? If inadequate, how can we quickly build it? How do we involve UASC themselves?

3.2 In preparedness: What is currently in place and how can this be adapted for an emergency? How do we ensure that standards do not decrease?

Things to stress

- Alternative care provision in emergencies should be in line with internationally agreed guidance, meet the specific needs of children (i.e. age, gender, experience) and be in their best interests.
- Family-based alternative care options should be prioritized especially for children under 3. Where realistic and appropriate, children should be kept within their community of origin, and with siblings.
- Residential care should be avoided as this increases the likelihood of a family separating and can undermine children’s wellbeing.
- Monitoring of all alternative care arrangements is essential
- Family tracing should be the first priority and inter-country adoption should only be envisaged for a child once these tracing efforts have proved fruitless, and stable in-country solutions are not available. Adoption is not appropriate during emergencies.

Message 4: Complementarity and cooperation among all local, international and governmental organizations concerned are critical.

4.1 What is the coordination body? (How to adapt this for an emergency without sidelining pre-existing groups?) Are we linking with other humanitarian actors? Will the coordination arrangement encourage, promote and be accessible to local organizations?

4.2 Are there adequate human resources to ensure coordination?

4.3 Is/will this be a cross-border operation? What mechanisms are in place in the relevant countries?

What are the roles of UNHCR & ICRC?

4.4 Are there Standard Operating Procedures? (How can we develop/update them?)

4.5 Are there any sticking points in the coordination and collaboration? What can we do to address them?

Things to stress

- All action must be coordinated with the relevant government authorities (unless this is not in the best interest of the children). It is particularly important for cross-border situations.
- To ensure a comprehensive and strategic response, effective dialogue and coordination mechanisms need to start in the early phases of the emergency and need to be maintained throughout the response.
- Specific roles must be established for key areas, such as child care and tracing, according to each organization’s mandate, expertise and capacity to deal with the given situation. Agreed interagency tools and guidelines should be referred to/used.

- Responses should link to broader child protection initiatives and with broader humanitarian response (e.g. nutrition, livelihoods, mainstreaming). This is very time consuming and additional human resources may be required to cover all aspects.

Overall:

- How do we expand our teams to meet growing needs and retain quality service?
- How do we ensure our response is sustainable and feeds into longer term CP programming?
- Are we linking with efforts to implement other relevant standards: Human Resources, Case management, sexual violence, MHPSS, community-based child protection, CFS, etc.
- What training opportunities do we have and do we need to create?
- Have we mapped our human, financial and community resources?

Key Resources (created after publication of the CPMS):

- Unaccompanied & Separated Children Field Handbook (Inter-agency Working Group on UASC, forthcoming)
- Training materials: relevant modules in CPWG's Face-to-Face CPiE package (2014) and Action for the Rights of the Child (revised 2013); training pack tied to UASC Field Handbook (forthcoming)