

## NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION WORKING GROUP (NCPWG)

### Background

In most emergencies, children tend to be the most severely affected, because they are among the most dependent sector in the community. During a crisis, existing systems to protect children may be undermined or damaged, leaving children extremely vulnerable. Children are more vulnerable to all forms of violence and exploitation following an emergency. Protecting children from these risks saves lives and reduces the long-term negative impact of humanitarian crises on children and their future development.

To support the implementation of Republic Act (RA) 10821, or the Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act of 2016, the National Child Protection Working Group (NCPWG) will work with government, non-government, and civil society partners to facilitate children's protection and provision of their needs before, during, and after a disaster. This includes implementing strategies on Child protection in Emergencies (CPIE), which comprise of complementing initiatives to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence against children, particularly to life-threatening situations/factors following an emergency such as family separation, exploitation, gender-based violence, and psychosocial distress.

### Summary of Risk

#### Immediate risks (from 24 to 72 hours after the disaster)

- Children may be displaced, and/or separated from parents, caregivers and other family members, particularly if the earthquake happens on day-time school day. Displacement and separation can make children particularly vulnerable to child protection concerns including but not limited to, psychosocial distress, exposure to abuse, exploitation, violence and neglect.
- Different vulnerabilities of boys (e.g., expected to be more engaged in child work) and girls (e.g., increased vulnerability for sexual abuse, trafficking) following an emergency. Aside from separated and unaccompanied children, vulnerable groups to be considered are children with disabilities, child-headed households, LGBTI children, children living and working on the streets, children from ethnic and religious minorities, children affected by HIV, adolescent girls, children in the worst forms of child labour, children without appropriate care, children born out of wedlock, and children living in residential care or detention.
- Emergencies increase the risk of gender-based violence (GBV) as protection mechanisms (law and order, community/family networks) are weakened and disrupted. There are increased expectations for children (especially boys) to help in livelihoods, psychosocial distress, separation, concerns on physical safety.

### Humanitarian Consequences

#### Intermediate risks (after 4 weeks);

- **Missing, separated, and unaccompanied children.** Separated and unaccompanied children are more at risk of disappearance, exploitation, and neglect in an emergency. These children have lost the care and protection of their families at the moment when they need them the most. The effectiveness of the family tracing and reunification process is linked directly to the length of time during which the children are separated, hence the urgency in rolling out a coordinated identification and registration strategy.
- **Most affected children and their families have psychosocial needs related to the emergency.** Most children who have experienced stressful situations will initially show changes in social relations, behaviour, physical reactions, emotions and spirituality. Reactions such as sleeping problems, nightmares, withdrawal, problems concentrating and guilt are normal, and can be overcome with time with psychosocial support. Prolonged displacement further exacerbates this problem. Child survivors, as well as their parents, require assistance in their return to normalcy through quality psychosocial support, including opportunities for safe play, recreation and non-formal education. A mechanism is required to coordinate MHPSS interventions planned by several clusters.

- **Risk of abuse, exploitation, violence and neglect.** During emergencies, there is an increased risk of violence against children as traditional elements of a protective environment are absent or less effective such as lack of law and order, disintegration of families and communities, change in some social norms and behavior. This can amplify pre-existing social problems and create new ones, such as gender-based violence and separation of children from their caregivers. Specialized services are needed to connect survivors with assistance, including medical care and counseling. When programmes are not established, not only do survivors not receive lifesaving assistance, the risks they face will continue as no measures will be put in place to prevent them. Vulnerable households, including single parent households, may require caregivers to work overtime leaving children unattended for long periods of time. Children, particularly adolescent boys and girls, may also be asked to work and 'help more' within and outside of the household. Adolescent girls and boys are often at a greater risk to gender based violence, exploitation, trafficking, labour, unwanted pregnancies, juvenile delinquency during this period with limited, if any support or access to services.
- **Lack of child protection-related information from less accessible emergency affected areas.** Not all affected areas (particularly geographically isolated communities or areas that will not be accessible following an emergency) and affected populations (e.g. indigenous peoples) would be covered by standard monitoring and assessments to identify their needs and concerns. The added problems caused by rumours and a lack of credible and accurate information tend to be major sources of anxiety for those affected by an emergency, and can create confusion and insecurity. Reaching all the children affected requires a significant scaling-up of activities, not only covering evacuation centres and transitory shelters, and ensuring that assistance reach the affected population in less accessible areas. Monitoring should always be combined with response and referrals in order to take immediate action to respond to risk to a child's life or wellbeing.

## Response & Operational Capacity

The Child Protection Working Group (CPWG), a sub-cluster within the Protection Cluster, provides coordination support to government offices from the national to municipal levels in ensuring prevention of and response to child protection concerns in humanitarian settings. The group brings together NGOs, UN agencies, academics and others under the shared objective of ensuring more predictable, accountable and effective child protection responses in emergencies. In the humanitarian system, we constitute 'an area of responsibility' within the Global Protection Cluster. The efficient management or functioning of National CPWG is the joint responsibility of the cluster co-chairs (CWC and UNICEF), and all cluster members at the national level. Information management needs will be supported by the third (NGO) co-chair Save the Children. As mandated by RA 10821, the sub-national CPWGs were established on the basis of Regional Sub-Committee on the Welfare of Children (RSCWC)'s expanded function to include CPWG coordination.

As of November 2017 cluster resource mapping, the National Child Protection Working Group (NCPWG) has organised presence in 15 of the 17 regions in the Philippines, through the Regional Child Protection Working Group (RCPWG) under the Regional Sub-Committees for the Welfare of Children (RSCWCs). Specifically, RCPWGs have been organised in Regions I, II, III, MIMAROPA, CALABARZON, V, VI, VII, VIII, X, XI, XII, CARAGA, CAR, and ARMM. While NCR is yet to organise its RCPWG, they have been oriented on CPWG functions and resources from nearby regions in Luzon may complement the needed coordination requirements.

## Key Immediate Needs Capacity Assessment Worksheet

### NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION WORKING GROUP (NCPWG)

**Caseload:** 3.5 million of 17.7 million will require some form of immediate humanitarian assistance. In NCR, it is projected that 2.8 million people will be displaced, of which 1.6 million will be accommodated in the government-identified evacuation centers while the rest will be in unplanned camps or migrate to the provinces. The NCPWG will aim to reach around 960,000 children in the government evacuation centers (60% of 1.6M). The NCPWG, through UNICEF, has an available stockpile for 50 CFS to serve 17,500 children (350 children/ CFS) from 12,000 families in the most severely affected barangays.

**Planning figures for humanitarian assistance:** Sex and age disaggregated data is usually unavailable during the first 72 hours following an emergency. Given this, the CPWG would operate under the assumption that 60% of the affected population are below 18 years of age, and that half of this figure are girls. As data becomes more reliable in the next two weeks following the emergency, the CPWG will tailor its response to aim to reach for the excluded or marginalized children and their families, within the framework of targeted outreach interventions.

#### Preparedness Actions

- The NCPWG continues to strengthen the capacity of duty bearers and frontline workers at the national and sub-national levels, to enable them to prevent and respond to child protection concerns in emergency context. This included Child Protection in Emergencies (CPIE) Coordination Training in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao in August-October 2015, the roll-out of CFS Implementation Guidelines in May-June 2015, and the ongoing Child Protection Minimum Standards and RA 10821 orientation this 2017-2018, each participated by more than 120 sub-national CPWG members. CPIE has been incorporated in the Child Friendly Local Governance Module. Conduct of Gender Based Violence in Emergencies (GBVIE) orientation for NCPWG completed in September 2016, to enable CPWG partners on integrating new IASC Gender-based Violence Guidelines in emergency programming.
- Development of operational standards for child protection humanitarian response: the management of child friendly spaces (CFS), mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), and family tracing and reunification (FTR). CFS Implementation Guidelines approved by CWC Council Board Resolution No. 2, series of 2014. Roll-out dissemination was conducted in May-June 2015. MHPSS guidelines now for approval of DOH-HEMS and endorsement to the NDRRMC. Draft FTR guidelines to be developed by DSWD.

#### Assumptions:

- RSCWC members trained by NCPWG would be available for deployment and ready to apply the knowledge and skills on CPIE.
- Challenges in coordination within and across government offices with protection mandate and between national, regional and local level.
- Weak or absent infrastructure of appropriate technologies (such as internet connection) that would have relived a bottleneck in coordination, as access to timely communication is central for effective child protection and GBV coordination.
- Immediate access and transport of supplies to emergency-affected areas may be hampered by logistical difficulties.

### Response Strategy

Noting that Child Protection is considered lifesaving<sup>1</sup> and in line with Strategic Objective 2, “Ensure the protection of rights of the most vulnerable, promote inclusive access to equitable and prompt humanitarian assistance.”, the NCPWG is ready to facilitate the following interventions consistent with the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (2012):

KIN Activity	Phase	Specific Response	Capacity	Operational Partners	Coordination	Challenges
<p><b>Facilitate the identification, documentation, family tracing and reunification (FTR) of missing, separated and unaccompanied children</b></p> <p><i>Child Protection interventions are needed to identify separated/unaccompanied/at risk children, to facilitate family tracing and reunification, alternatively to offer emergency care, including family-based care.</i></p>	Phase I (week 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the scope, causes and risks of family separation;</li> <li>Scale up advocacy around prevention and response to trafficking in persons in the affected provinces, cities, and key transit hubs; and</li> <li>Dissemination of key child protection messages on the risks associated with family separation.</li> </ul>	<p>NCPWG members oriented on global FTR guidelines, and ready to support RSCWC members.</p> <p>Advocacy materials ready for distribution. Camera ready files are available for re-printing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DSWD, CWC</li> <li>UNICEF</li> <li>Save the Children</li> <li>PLAN International</li> </ul>	<p>The NCPWG has contributed towards institutionalization of child protection initiatives in humanitarian response with the enactment of Republic Act 10821 (2016), Children’s Emergency Relief and Protection Act. This legislation requires local government units to restore civil registry documents to facilitate reunification of separated children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of coordination with Education, Food Distribution, and Livelihood clusters to maximize use of school registry and information on families in the unconditional cash transfer and cash for work programmes for family tracing and reunification purposes.</li> <li>Regular monitoring of CPWGs at regional and local levels to ensure functionality and the support of local government units in providing protective and support services for children in emergencies.</li> <li>Operationalizing CPIE information management arrangements within the NCPWG, including institutionalization of CPWG database.</li> </ul>
	Phase II (week 2-4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate identification, documentation, family tracing and reunification (FTR) of missing, separated and unaccompanied children; including coordination of appropriate interim care when necessary;</li> <li>Consider reviving the memorandum of agreement<sup>2</sup> with National Association for Social Work Education, Inc. (NASWEI) to assist local government units on case management;</li> </ul>				
	Phase III (week 5-12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen FTR capacity, including information management, of national and sub-national government bodies, including the Philippine National Police (PNP), inter-agency committees on anti-trafficking and violence against children, local government units, and local NGOs;</li> </ul>				

<sup>1</sup> Based on the Central Emergency Response Fund’s Life-Saving Criteria: [https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/CERF/FINAL\\_Life-Saving\\_Criteria\\_26\\_Jan\\_2010\\_2.pdf](https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/CERF/FINAL_Life-Saving_Criteria_26_Jan_2010_2.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Previous agreement was developed for TY Haiyan Response

KIN Activity	Phase	Specific Response	Capacity	Operational Partners	Coordination	Challenges
<p><b>Psychosocial support to affected children and families</b> <i>Child Protection programmes are needed to reduce the risk that short-term distress, may lead to longer term mental health issues, and children who need more specialized interventions are referred for support. More severe, long-term mental health issues have been linked to higher rates of domestic violence, substance abuse and other risky behaviors.</i></p>	Phase I (week 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide psychosocial first aid, particularly excluded or marginalized children and their families, within the framework of targeted outreach interventions, and set up a referral system for children or caregivers who need mental health services, and advocate for strengthening of these services by health actors;</li> </ul>	<p>NCPWG members oriented on MHPSS guidelines, and ready to support RSCWC members.</p> <p>Advocacy materials ready for distribution. Camera ready files are available for re-printing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DSWD, CWC</li> <li>Save the Children</li> <li>Child Fund</li> <li>Children International</li> <li>Handicap International</li> <li>PLAN International</li> </ul>	<p>Republic Act 10821 (2016) requires local government units to establish child friendly spaces.</p> <p>To date, 15 of the 17 regions have issued resolution adopting child protection sub-cluster functions. While NCR is yet to organise its RCPWG, they have been oriented on CPWG functions and resources from nearby regions in Luzon may complement the needed coordination requirements.</p>	<p>Staff and partners may not be able to readily respond, if they are likewise affected by the emergency.</p>
	Phase II (week 2-4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish Child Friendly Spaces (CFS), Community Based Child Protection Networks (CBCPN), and other forms of community based interventions, in evacuation and transit centres and other affected areas, to provide psychosocial support and facilitate child protection initiatives in coordination with the local government, NGOs, and communities;</li> </ul>	<p>The NCPWG, through UNICEF, has an available stockpile for 50 CFS to serve 17,500 children (350 children/ CFS) from 12,000 families in the most severely affected barangays.</p>			<p>Emergency stockpile of CFS and FTR kits may be insufficient, depending on magnitude of an emergency.</p>
	Phase III (week 5-12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen pre-existing community networks to provide psychosocial support to children and their families (including psychological first aid or PFA); and support activities for children in the community, including for mapping of services and provision of services for adolescent boys and girls, such as recreational activities, sports, cultural activities and life skills, to help recreate a routine and help them to build their resilience;</li> <li>Strengthen national and sub-national government capacity on delivering psychosocial support services (PSS), including through support to standardizing national psychosocial support protocols.</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Advocacy, communications and awareness raising activities around prevention and response to abuse, exploitation, violence and neglect</b> <i>Child Protection/GBV programmes are needed to roll-out prevention strategies, and to connect survivors with confidential and survivor-centred</i></p>	Phase I (week 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify priority child protection risks and share child protection messages with communities, families, children, and authorities;</li> <li>Specialist protection/GBV personnel are needed to mainstream measures for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) by humanitarian workers into other sectors (such as shelter, WASH and food distribution).</li> </ul>	<p>NCPWG members oriented on CPIE protocols &amp; guidelines, and ready to support RSCWC members.</p> <p>Advocacy materials ready for distribution. Camera ready files are available for re-printing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DSWD</li> <li>PLAN International</li> <li>Save the Children</li> <li>Child Fund</li> <li>Children International</li> <li>Handicap International</li> </ul>	<p>Republic Act 10821 (2016) requires local government units to train emergency responders on child protection.</p> <p>To date, 15 of the 17 regions have issued resolution adopting child protection sub-cluster functions. While NCR is yet to organise its RCPWG, they have been oriented on CPWG functions and resources from nearby regions in Luzon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wider dissemination of protocols to prevent sexual exploitation, violence and abuse, among humanitarian workers.</li> <li>Periodic updating of contact lists for protection referral pathways, and its dissemination before and after emergencies.</li> </ul>
	Phase II (week 2-4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide technical support to PNP Women and Children’s Protection Desk (WCPD), local councils for the protection of children (LCPCs) and local committees on anti-trafficking and violence against women and children (LCAT-VAWCs) to link them with community based child protection networks in affected areas.</li> </ul>				
	Phase III (week 5-12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen an integrated multi-disciplinary approach to child protection services, including case management and referral protocols at national and sub-national levels in coordination with social welfare, medical, police, legal and education professionals, including through the setting up of a CPWG desk at the</li> </ul>				

KIN Activity	Phase	Specific Response	Capacity	Operational Partners	Coordination	Challenges
<i>assistance e.g. health, psychosocial services.</i>		humanitarian hub to serve as one-stop shop at the first 72 hours following the emergency.			may complement the needed coordination requirements.	
<b><u>Child protection monitoring, through the use of the Child Protection Rapid Assessment (CPRA)</u></b>	<i>Phase III (week 5-12)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that child protection staff involved in monitoring, and involved community members, receive training specific to their roles in monitoring, including ethical considerations, and are kept up to date; and</li> <li>Ethical and responsible use of protection information to facilitate response. Ensure that existing organisations or people responsible for coordination discuss how information is collected through monitoring activities, and use it safely; at coordinated inter-agency level, identify appropriate responses to cases and violations.</li> </ul>	<p>NCPWG members oriented on CPRA protocols and guidelines, and ready to support RSCWC members.</p> <p>Advocacy materials ready for distribution. Camera ready files are available for re-printing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DSWD</li> <li>PLAN International</li> <li>Save the Children</li> </ul>		Regular monitoring of CPWGs at regional and local levels to ensure functionality and the support of local government units in providing protective and support services for children in emergencies.