SUPPORTING AND RESPONDING TO FORCIBLY DISPLACED CHILDREN

Training Module for Child Helpline Counsellors
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INTRODUCTION

Children crossing borders face dangerous and stark realities, counsellors who are on the frontlines of child helplines, must learn and adapt to these situations. This training module aims to bring more knowledge to child helpline counsellors about children on the move, specifically forcibly displaced children.

How to use this training module

Child helpline counsellors will follow a child’s journey from pre-flight, during flight and after flight while understanding the key concepts associated with each phase of the flight.

Case stories and programmes of child helplines and UNHCR are interwoven in each phase of the flight into breathe life to these key concepts. Each case story and programme has a time tag and issue tag. An overview of the case stories and programmes under each time tag and issue tag can be found at the end of this training module.

When the child helpline counsellor is interested to know more about a key concept, case story or programme, the endnotes have links to the full text of the references.

Self-reflection exercises are distributed throughout the training module and a final assessment is accessible at the end of the training module to let the child helpline counsellors contemplate on the key concepts, case stories and programmes they previously studied.
KEY CONCEPTS

A forcibly displaced child is a child who moves to "escape persecution, conflict, repression, natural and human-made disasters, or other situations that endanger their lives, freedom or livelihood" and generally refers to a child who is forced to move for reasons other than economic. In this counsellor's manual, we consider children who are refugees, internally displaced, stateless and children seeking asylum.

A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, or conflict. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. For this reason they cannot return home. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are the leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries. People forced to flee their homes but without crossing an international border are known as Internally Displaced Persons, or IDPs. These individuals seek safety where they can find it—in nearby towns, schools, settlements, internal camps, even forests and fields. While they may have fled for similar reasons to refugees, IDPs stay within their own country and remain under the protection of its government, even if that government is the reason for their displacement. As a result, these people are among the most vulnerable in the world.

A stateless person is someone who is not a citizen of any country. Without a citizenship, stateless persons have difficulty accessing basic rights such as education, healthcare, employment and freedom of movement. A person can become stateless due to a variety of reasons, including sovereign, legal, technical or administrative decisions or oversights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights underlines that “Everyone has the right to a nationality.”

An asylum seeker is an individual who is seeking international protection. When people flee their own country and seek sanctuary in another country, they apply for asylum – the right to be recognized as a refugee and receive legal protection and material assistance. A returnee is an individual who has been restored national protection, removing the need for international protection, and, through the reintegration process, has the ability to maintain sustainable livelihoods, access basic services and fully reintegrate into communities in his/her country of origin.
Over 65.6 million people around the world are forcibly displaced. Of those, 22.5 million are refugees, 10 million are stateless and 33 million are internally displaced.

Children are disproportionately affected by forced displacement. As an example, over half of the world’s refugees are children, whereas the global child population is only 30 per cent.

Sub-Saharan Africa hosts over 26 per cent of the world’s refugee population. This number has soared in recent years, partly due to ongoing crises in the Central African Republic, Nigeria and South Sudan. It has also grown as a result of new conflicts erupting in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In 2015 alone, UNHCR established 12 new camps and expanded seven others due to continuing refugee emergencies.³

The number of people seeking refugee status in Europe has significantly increased over recent years. This is due in large part to war in Syria and Iraq, as well as conflict and instability in countries such as Afghanistan and Eritrea. In their desperate search for sanctuary, increasing numbers of refugees and migrants are crossing the Mediterranean, a perilous journey which has cost thousands their lives.⁴

The Asia and Pacific region is home to 3.5 million refugees, 1.9 million IDPs and 1.4 million stateless people. The majority of refugees originate from Afghanistan and Myanmar. The Afghan refugee population constitutes the largest protracted situation in the world. Up to 96 per cent of all Afghan refugees live in neighbouring Iran and Pakistan, which have generously hosted them for over three decades. The Myanmar situation also remains of key concern. An estimated 500,000 refugees from different ethnic groups have been fleeing for several decades in search of protection from ethnic conflict and violence.⁵

The Middle East and North Africa region continues to pose overwhelming challenges, with multiple and complex emergency situations on an unprecedented scale. The humanitarian situation in Syria remains volatile. After more than six years of conflict, there are over five million Syrian refugees in the region and counting. Elsewhere, violence and instability in countries such as Iraq and Yemen is triggering new waves of displacement. In these three countries, over 12 million people are internally displaced⁶.

Forcibly displaced children around the world
Organised crime, armed groups, statelessness and decades of conflict all pose a serious risk to populations in the Americas. Over seven million people are now displaced and asylum applications, particularly from Central American countries such as El Salvador and Guatemala, have sharply increased.\(^7\)

### How to identify forcibly displaced children in need of support\(^8\)

Awareness of a child’s issue is the key for a counsellor to best address the needs of a child contacting the child helpline. An important step in understanding the particular circumstances of forcibly displaced children starts by understanding their broader situation and experiences. Before developing interventions designed at supporting individual cases, it is of key importance to understand the situation and the existing risks and protection concerns faced by this particular group of children.

Any intervention will need to be supported by a skilled field workforce - through direct employment of the child helpline and specialised partners, to be able to address specific cases of children at risk or experiencing harm.

Child helpline staff and partners engaged in any identification or assessment exercise will need to be trained in key priority areas and aware of referral pathways to appropriate services – such as psychosocial services, registration and case management, specialised services for unaccompanied and separated children, vulnerable children and child survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, or SGBV.

The **story of Ger Duany** is an example of how the situation of a child evolves and how protection needed to change during his displacement. He faced risks pre-flight, during flight and after flight having suffered family separation, xenophobia, discrimination and child recruitment along the way. Click on the picture on the following page to read through his story and imagine what his needs would be at each stage of displacement.
Forcibly displaced children experience hardship and difficulties, but their own vulnerability plays an important role in increasing the actual risks. In order to understand the extent of these risks, it is important to assess their vulnerability when facing difficult circumstances.

Vulnerability means a child is unable to defend himself or herself when facing protection threats. It is assessed according to physical and emotional development, ability to communicate needs, dependence, etc. Understanding a child’s vulnerability to risks requires an assessment of the likelihood or predisposition of the children to be affected by those risks.
For example, although a child may have been exposed to sexual violence, you will find that his or her particular circumstances may also play a role in increasing or decreasing the likelihood of this child to come under real threat.

Those factors that decrease children’s exposure to risks are called protective factors. The factors that increase children’s exposure to risks are called vulnerability factors. Here below you can see some examples of protective and vulnerability factors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protective factors</th>
<th>Vulnerability Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The presence of a close bond with a stable adult figure</td>
<td>- Domestic violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A good support network</td>
<td>- Mental health/ disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A positive family environment, positive parenting, nurturing, supervision, guidance etc.</td>
<td>- Psychosocial distress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Engagement in activities (sport, singing, dancing, writing, drama, painting, etc.)</td>
<td>- Chronic illness or disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Attendance at school</td>
<td>- Family separation or breakdown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Community bonds (values, faith)</td>
<td>- Child not attending school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Child or family living on the street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Child labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Child-headed household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Unaccompanied, separated or orphaned child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Early pregnancy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Counsellors who have contact with high-risk, forcibly displaced children may observe that children would be outwardly displaying different reactions depending on the amount of time they contact the child helpline after the time of trauma pre-flight, during flight and after flight. Below is a table summarising some of the children’s reactions to displacements and what counsellors can advise given the different manifestations in children.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First 48 hours</th>
<th>What happens to children?</th>
<th>What do children need?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infants may respond to the disruption of routine and severe stress of parents by increased crying or alarm.</td>
<td>Carers: to make the children feel as safe as possible and the establishment of a secure environment. The provision of information will be essential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Younger children may be confused and not understand what is happening.</td>
<td>Basic services such as medical care, shelter, food and water. Lifesaving interventions for the whole community will benefit the children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Older children may experience disbelief, shock and numbness. They may then be targets for exploitation and at risk of abuse or abduction.</td>
<td>The establishment and continuation of semi-structured or structured activities such as child-friendly spaces or education. This also provides respite and focus for carers and promotes resilience ion the children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next two weeks</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infants may be withdrawn or very distressed if primary carers are absent, or depressed, injured or stressed. They may experience malnutrition and be more prone to disease.</td>
<td>Children should be actively involved in determining the nature of activities and contribute ideas for community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Younger children may demonstrate over-activity or withdrawal. They may regress to earlier behaviours, for example, by not speaking or, lose bladder and bowel control. They may want to be comforted or alternatively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
take on adult roles to comfort others. They may exhibit extreme anxiety and fear of loud noises, sudden movements and unknown adults. They may find it hard to play, or play repetitively.

Older children may demonstrate many of the above behaviours and suffer flashbacks and recall of the events. They may undertake risky behaviour, blame themselves or experience erratic moods, being very aggressive, self-destructive or withdrawn. They will try to regain control over aspects of their lives.

Infants may experience some delay in emotional or physical development as a result of carers' preoccupations and limited opportunities for exploration. Also because of a lack of nutrition and good healthcare.

Younger children will try to regain some sense of normality and routine and if not experiencing long-lasting impacts as described above will adapt quickly to the new routines imposed on them and develop new coping mechanisms.

Vulnerable and marginalised groups of children, children with disabilities, or from specific ethnic groups, should be identified (in consultation with other children) and targeted.

Carers can draw on multi-agency, linked support from those interventions established for children.

Activities provided for children act as a hub for other interventions, such as information, advocacy, and child protection committees.

Normality being restored for children, so enabling some hope for the future. Peer support, life skills and opportunities to participate, advocate and be heard enable children to rebuild their confidence and belief in the future.

Duty bearers take on increasing responsibility for the

The first six months

relief and rehabilitation initiatives.
by the emergency. If more deeply affected they may continue to exhibit the behaviours described above.

Older children understand the losses arising as a consequence of the emergency and may have real concerns about the future. They may demonstrate a need to take control over rebuilding or determining their future. If directly affected by the forcible displacement, for example by being separated, they may exhibit clear survival behaviours that could be damaging in the long term, for example by joining gangs or girls may seek out a male protector and in so doing be subject to exploitation.

Children requiring longer-term support as a consequence of the impact of the forcible displacement gain the support they require. For example, action to counter gender-based violence, family tracing, or community and psychosocial support for those affected by the forcible displacement.

Due to children’s vulnerabilities and risk for harm, child protection interventions must be given priority alongside other services. With this in mind, counsellors play an important role in listening to a child’s concerns and referring them to relevant protection services. In the next example, we explore how sexual violence and harmful practices develop during the different phases of displacement.
ISSUE TAG: Sexual Violence and Harmful Practices

TIME TAG: Pre-flight, During Flight, After Flight

What factors in forcible displacement increase the incidence of sexual violence against children?¹¹

Prior to flight, children are often targeted for abuse by the military, police or other persons in power in the country of origin, prompting the desire to flee. Sexual violence is also used as a weapon of warfare – for domination, intimidation and interrogation, or for ethnic cleansing. Sexual violence may even happen with the complicity of male community members, in the form of bartering women or girls for arms and ammunition or other benefits.

During flight, refugee children, are particularly vulnerable to sexual attacks by pirates, bandits, members of the security forces, smugglers and other refugees. Border guards may detain and abuse women and children, pirates may capture them and extort sex in exchange for their safety or onward passage. Smugglers may also assist vulnerable refugees across the border in exchange for sex or money.

After Flight, in the country of asylum, refugees often live in camps or in close urban quarters with inadequate essential items. These children and their families are particularly vulnerable to the exploitation of power and authority by officials. This environment may create a sense of hopelessness and powerlessness for both the children and their families. Feelings of desperation, influenced by an increasing sense of being marginalised, may lead to the targeting of children for sexual exploitation and violence. Common examples include girls and boys being approached for sexual favours in exchange for assistance, such as during food distribution or in exchange for positive refugee status. Women and children may end up as heads of household, thus without an adult male who can sometimes provide protection from outsiders. If they are without individual documentation of their own, they can be exploited more easily by those distributing humanitarian supplies, especially if those distributors are all male. Unaccompanied children are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.
In a **camp environment**, people may be forced into poorly designed spaces that do not promote social protection in the way the communities are located, creating risks in the access to basic services. In addition to the lack of social networks, poor camp design and gaps in humanitarian interventions physically put women and children at increased vulnerability to sexual violence - latrine, water point locations, lighting, and distance to collect firewood, even forcing them to leave the relative safety of camps. The lack of police protection, women in leadership structures and in service delivery, and the few opportunities for children’s voices or opinions to be heard by decision makers all play a role in increasing a child’s risk of sexual violence and exploitation.

Not all child helplines are given direct access to camps. Thus, children in camps may be unaware of the existence of the child helpline. Or, if they do have access to child helplines, they may not have the means to contact the child helpline through phone or online means. However, only 20 per cent of refugees live in camps. The child helplines have the opportunity to reach the remaining 80 per cent of the refugees who live outside the camps. For the children living in camps, the child helplines have been advocating through government, the UN agencies and UNHCR, that they gain access to these very vulnerable children.

During **repatriation operations**, large population movements may separate children from their support systems. Crowding and sudden movements leave children vulnerable to the same dangers they faced during flight and exile.

During the **reintegration phases**, returned refugees, particularly women and children, may be targeted by the local military or Government in retribution for having fled. Special attention must be paid to women and children during this phase to prevent sexual extortion in exchange for material assistance and/or documentation.
Every human being deserves a life free from persecution and discrimination. But displacement can affect anyone. Hundreds of thousands of people are forced to flee their homes every day – children as well as adults. People are displaced for various reasons including: armed conflict, violence, political unrest or individual persecution.

Prior to leaving their country of origin, children may have been exposed to or have experienced severe violence, rape, the killing of family members and friends, torture, brutality and starvation. In some cases, acts of violence may have been perpetrated by people known to them. Refugees describe experiencing or witnessing human rights violations, extreme deprivation, separation from or loss of family and friends, trauma and periods lacking food and water.  

Children can be particularly targeted, including through forced recruitment into armed forces or groups. This sometimes forces families to flee, or to send their children away alone to avoid conscription. When children and families flee, it puts them at greater risk of harm and separation.

Separation from family members can have profound effects on children. The emotional impact and the effect on a child’s development will depend upon age, developmental stage, the circumstances of separation and the resilience of each child. For example, when separation is associated with the death of a family member or if a child is abandoned, it can increase levels of distress. The length of separation and the child’s subsequent experiences will also have an impact. Very young children and some older children with special needs are dependent on adults for their survival. Experience has shown that even if children are cared for by an extended family
member, this does not necessarily decrease their exposure to risks similar to those of unaccompanied children.

Often, NGOs invest in educating government agencies and communities vulnerable to displacement to build their resilience and coping mechanisms in order to prevent or be prepared for eventualities such as separation. Below are examples of these education programmes in Somalia and La Strada Ukraine through its partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science, the National Police and the Ministry of Social Policy.

**ISSUE TAG: High Levels of Distress**

**TIME TAG: Pre-flight**

During an acute emergency related to severe drought in Somalia, an international NGO established several “The Desert Flower” Child Education and Welfare Centres. These centres provided children and adolescents with opportunities to learn, develop and acquire contextually relevant skills and strengthen their resilience through providing a safe environment in which parents can be sure their children will be cared for. The parents are also provided opportunities to be involved in an active way to increase their participation and self-confidence to protect and care for children. Facilitating provision of psychosocial support and promoting children’s active participation, the range of activities includes areas of education, art and culture, life skills, sport and leisure and well-being.  

**ISSUE TAG: Lack of Information**

**TIME TAG: Pre-flight**

La Strada Ukraine

To help counter the lack of information, La Strada Ukraine, with the support of the Ministry of Education and Science, has written several books on the protection and psychosocial support of children who have been forcibly displaced.
La Strada Ukraine also carries out training for National Police staff, employees of the regional subdivisions of the Ministry of Social Policy and the Ministry of Education and Science on the protection of the rights and interests of children. The materials and training developed by La Strada Ukraine makes sure that the best interests of the child is always ensured especially for the situation of internally displaced children in Ukraine.

**DURING FLIGHT**

In any forced displacement situation, there is likely to be some family separation. Children separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver, are referred to as separated children, or SCs. This includes children accompanied by other adult family members.

Unaccompanied children, or UACs, are children who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for them.

**Unaccompanied and separated children**

Separation from family members in a forced displacement situation is very distressing and can have profound effects upon children. The emotional impact and the effect on a child’s development will depend upon age, developmental stage, circumstances of separation and the resilience of each child. For example, when separation is associated with the death of a family member or if a child is abandoned, it can be more traumatic. The length of separation and the child’s subsequent experiences will also have an impact. Very young children and some older children with special needs are dependent on adults for their survival. Experience has shown that even if children are cared for by an extended family member, this does not necessarily decrease their exposure to risks like those of unaccompanied children.  

In addition to the psychological distress, lacking the protection of parents or usual caregivers, separated children are amongst the most vulnerable to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. This can include:
- Abuse or neglect by foster families
- Loss of identity, especially for children under the age of five
- Forced labour where children are used as domestic servants or farmers
- Living or working on the street
- Institutionalisation
- Discrimination as less access to food, school, proper clothes and bedding is common
- Lack of access to health care and schooling
- Abduction, trafficking and early or forced marriage
- Recruitment by armed groups
- Sexual violence and abuse, including exploitation and prostitution

Click on the picture below to read the story of Solomon, a 10-year old boy separated from his family forced to flee his home in Eritrea in a journey to reach his family in Europe.

Figure 2: Fourteen-year-old Eritrean refugee Solomon outside a refugee shelter in Milan © UNHCR/Alessandro Penso
In the previous section, children’s reaction to displacement was thoroughly discussed and the next story best illustrates the high level of distress that a child faces in his journey. Click on the picture below to read the story of Farzad, an eight-year old Afghan boy who retreats into silence after separation from his family during their family’s journey between Iran and Turkey.

Figure 3: Crossing a mountain border between Iran and Turkey one and a half years ago, eight-year-old Farzad was separated from his mother in the middle of a snowstorm. © UNHCR/Roland Schönbauer

**Family reunification**

Family reunification is normally the priority for unaccompanied and separated children unless it is contrary to the best interests of the child. Family reunification can take place in the country of asylum, the country of origin through voluntary repatriation or in a third country. Family reunification across state borders requires the support of specialised agencies including UNHCR and the ICRC.
Depending on the situation of the individual child, the reunification might have to be staggered, to allow both the child and parents to get used to one another. These types of complex family reunifications require longer term specialised case management support.

Family reunification is not always in a child’s best interests. This includes situations where reunification could lead to violence or abuse of the child; where the child refuses to be reunified and where the child has never lived with his or her parents.\(^\text{15}\)

**Alternative Care\(^\text{16}\)**

Where family reunification is not an option, child helplines together with other specialised service providers should explore the possibility of alternative care which may take the form of:

- **Informal care:** any private arrangement provided in a family environment, whereby the child is looked after on an ongoing or indefinite basis by relatives or friends (informal kinship care) or by others in their individual capacity, at the initiative of the child, his/her parents or other person, without this arrangement having been ordered by an administrative or judicial authority or a duly accredited body.

- **Formal care:** all care provided in a family environment which has been ordered by a competent administrative body or judicial authority, and all care provided in a residential environment, including private facilities, whether or not as a result of administrative or judicial measures.

With respect to the environment where it is provided, alternative care may be:

- **Kinship care:** family-based care within the child’s extended family or with close friends of the family known to the child, whether formal or informal in nature

- **Foster care:** situations where the child is placed by a competent authority in the domestic environment of a family (other than his or her own family) that has been selected, qualified, approved and supervised for providing such care.

- **Residential care:** care provided in any non-family-based group setting, such as places of safety for emergency care, transit centres in emergency situations, and all other short and long-term residential care facilities, including group homes. This option should only be used as a last resort when family based care is not an option or not in the child’s best interests.

- **Supervised independent living arrangements for children.**
Next are examples from child helplines in Greece and Thailand where they facilitated arrangements for alternative care for trafficked and illegally detained children respectively.

**ISSUE TAG: Smuggling and Trafficking**

**TIME TAG: During flight**

**The Smile of the Child Greece**

The National Helpline for Children SOS 1056 received a call from the Service Officer of the Athens International Airport’s Police Security Subdivision. They asked for our assistance in the transportation of four year-old girl from the Airport’s premises to the on duty Pediatric Hospital. We were informed that an adult man of Syrian origin had been arrested for trafficking due to missing travel documentation. The adult claimed he was the girl’s uncle and was accompanying her in order to reunite her with her parents in Sweden. At the passport control, he was asked to demonstrate documents proving his relationship with the girl but he only demonstrated papers for his own child.

Accordingly, the Public Prosecutor was informed and gave the order for the transportation for the girl to be taken to the Pediatric Hospital via our Organisation’s vehicle, while our Social Worker or Psychologist would accompany her through the procedure. This is a standard procedure in Greece for minors who are in danger for various reasons, or found unaccompanied. The child stays at the Hospital’s premises until the Social Services’ research is completed. In such cases, the SOS Helpline immediately activates trained volunteers from the Organisation who stay with the children during their time in the hospital and try to strengthen and empower them with simple tools like play, laughter and affection.

Subsequently, in the case of the four year old girl we received a call from the Hospital’s Social Workers who asked us to accommodate her in one of our Organisation’s Homes. The child was with us for an 8-month period, during which all the necessary actions were taken in order for her to be reunited with her family.
Childline Thailand

The family in this case study is from Pakistan, parents with a 19 year old daughter, 17 year old son, 13 year old twin girls and a 9 year old boy. This family left Pakistan because of religious persecution and the murder of extended family members, a horrific act of violence that the entire family above witnessed. They fled to Thailand on a tourist visa but eventually incurred an “overstay”. While the father was seeking to bring food back to the family members, the Immigration Police arrested the mother and children and placed them in the Immigration Detention Centre, or IDC, located at Soi Suan Plu, Bangkok. For two years this family, with the exception of the father, was incarcerated under very poor and crowded living conditions.

Now four of the children have been released into foster care. Unfortunately, we are unable to help the mother and 19 year old daughter because of our upper age limit of 18 years old. Our task is to find a third country to send the children to, however the 17 year old boy is now afraid that if we do not act quickly he will be forced to return to the IDC at age 18.

In terms of their physical health, the family have several severe medical conditions. The twin girls have had live removed from their hair, they both have a skin disease and have lost 7 teeth each. One of the girls has tuberculosis (TB) and now on medication for her condition. The 17 year old boy tried to commit suicide a few times so his psychological health is poor.

However, positive changes have been enacted on their behalf. The Step Ahead Organisation has arranged for online education and instruction for the children with the result of some noticeable improvement in their mental health. There also have been several opportunities for the children to visit their mother and 19 year old sister which has proved effective in reducing the separation anxiety.

So we are currently contacting the UNHCR to assist us in acquiring visa status for the family to be relocated to another country. Approval from a potential host country is our goal. We hope this process will be completed before the 17 year old boy becomes 18, at which time if he is still in Thailand, he will be arrested, and incarcerated back in the IDC.
Self-reflection exercise: Module II

What type of questions do you ask children to find out if they are separated from their family? How can you discover if family reunification is possible? When can you suggest alternative care for the forcibly displaced child?

AFTER FLIGHT

When families and children reach a destination that they would consider safe, protection of the forcibly displaced child is important as the vulnerability of the child remains a factor. The family and children reach a country of asylum where they may undergo asylum procedures to acquire legal status and access important rights such as the right to education, work, health and social protection.

After a period of time, repatriation and reintegration processes take place to ascertain if it would be possible for them to go back to their country of origin. Children who are separated and unaccompanied may receive alternative care. For the families and children who are unable to return to their country of origin, integration in their country of asylum may also happen.

Click on the next picture to take a look at the story of Moises and his brothers and how they fled El Salvador to Mexico, looking for safety.
Governments and civil society in the country of asylum receive forcibly displaced families and offer social and protection services. Here below are examples from the child helplines in Kenya, the Netherlands and Jordan on how they support asylum-seeking and refugee children in their countries.

**TIME TAG: After Flight, Country of Asylum**

**Childline Kenya**

Through a partnership with other NGOs, Childline Kenya has been able to run preventive programs and child protection systems strengthening programs in different parts of Kenya. This has enabled the child protection agents like the families and communities to understand that they
are not only charged with the responsibility to protect their own children but other children as well. Through this program, children are being empowered to participate in their own protection.

**TIME TAG: After Flight, Country of Asylum**

**De Kindertelefoon, The Netherlands**

De Kindertelefoon cooperates with the largest national NGO for refugees, Vluchtelingenwerk. They jointly run a special webpage, train their workers and provide information and awareness raising. De Kindertelefoon also provides technical support to a small NGO called Vrienden van Samah, which specialises in helping unaccompanied minor refugees.

**ISSUE TAG: Lack of Information, Navigating Asylum Systems**

**TIME TAG: After Flight, Country of Asylum**

**Jordan River Foundation**

The Jordan River Foundation (JRF) provides awareness raising and information sessions about their child helpline to different age groups in community centres targeting refugees. Since June 2017, they also provide workshops for refugee youth, facilitated by their peer-volunteers. JRF is currently improving their peer-chat to make it a better fit for refugee youth and hope that this will increase their access to the services.

*Integration*

Once children and families reach safety, whether in a new country or within their own country, their attention is turned to securing their survival and basic needs. For both children and adults,
settling down can be difficult when you miss your home, family and friends. Memories bring sadness and distress and for parents it can be difficult to deal with children’s emotions.

Stability and routine support children and their families and help heal the distress they have experienced. School, play and sports play important parts in children’s healing. For parents, learning a new language, understanding a new culture, getting a job or learning new skills are all important measures that help them rebuild and be better able to support their children.

Differences in culture or religion between parents and children may also make it more difficult for individuals to understand and support each other. Where the parents perceive differently their faith and heritage, it can lead to an erosion of the child’s self-esteem. Also, as children grow up in a country with a different culture or religion, they may face confusion over their self-identity. Some children may become involved in gangs to give themselves a sense of belonging. Below is a case from Sweden a young woman where she faces this situation with her mother.

**ISSUE TAG: Cultural Differences**

**TIME TAG: After Flight, Integration**

BRIS Sweden

I have a problem concerning my mother and my living situation. Four years ago I came alone to Sweden as a refugee. Later my mother also came to Sweden. Since that day, every day has been a bad day. My mother does not accept that I no longer use the hijab, that I have a boyfriend and friends from Sweden and other countries. She thinks that I should only have friends that are Muslims and no boyfriend. The problem is that before she came to Sweden I lived alone for more than two years, looked after myself and made my own decisions. Now it’s very hard for me to change back to how she wants me to be.

Parents who find it hard to find jobs in their new location can also affect the well-being of their child as the child may be exposed to certain dangers such as child labour in order to cope with this problem. Below is a case from Ukraine where a boy was led into situation of child labour as he tries to help the financial situation of his family.
La Strada Ukraine

“Hello! Do you protect children's rights? If so, please help me because my rights are very violated.”

The specialist found out that the child, together with his parents, moved to Zaporizhia six months ago. This was necessary, because in Soledar (an uncontrolled town of Donetsk oblast), fighting was taking place. The boy said that before war the family lived very well - the father worked at the bank and the mother was the director of a kindergarten. Unfortunately, they were forced to move out of their home very quickly because of the active military action, and were only able to bring with them documents, and some money, which was enough only for a short time. In Zaporizhia, the boy’s parents had difficulty adapting to the new conditions and did not find high-paid jobs. Nowadays, his mother works as a dishwasher in one of Zaporizhia’s restaurants and the father has a temporary day-to-day job.

Three months ago, the boy realised that his family had almost no money and wanted to help their situation. Without his parents' permission, he went to work for a construction company. He carried bricks, mixed the clay and performed other such labour for which he was promised pay. But during the three months that he worked with the construction company, his employers did not pay him anything. Due to the fact that he was working, the boy often missed his classes at school and his grades dropped dramatically.

The counsellor of the National Child Toll-Free Hot Line told the boy that he had done the right thing in deciding to phone and talk about his situation and they discussed the following options:

1) To tell his parents

2) To contact the Centre for Social Services for families, children and youth in order for them to make an assessment of the needs of the family. The Centre for Social Services will also provide psychological support for the family.

3) To contact the free secondary legal aid centre for detailed legal consultation to help resolve the boy’s situation and give him litigation support in court
4) For his parents to get assistance in searching for a job according to their education and working experience

5) To have a conversation between the child, his parents and his teacher in order to work out a strategy on how to improve his grades in school

6) To consult with the school psychologist for the recovery and continued support of the boy’s mental state

7) To have systematic psychological counselling with the child and his parents through the National Child Toll-Free Hot Line

At the end of the consultation, the boy was calm and had a lot of suggestions on how to cope with his problem. The counsellor also told the boy that if he had any further questions or problems, to call the child helpline again or ask his parents to call the child helpline if necessary.

A precarious legal status may leave children fearful of revealing details of their past experiences. Living in a legal limbo increases children’s distress and prevents them from being able to fully participate in their education and integration. As detailed in the next story, child helpline counsellors play an important part in these children feeling heard and can support them through these difficult decisions.

**ISSUE TAG: Cultural Differences**

**TIME TAG: After Flight, Integration**

BRIS Sweden

My father is a drug addict. My mother would like to get a divorce but we have not been granted asylum yet and we worry that a divorce would lead to us both getting deported. I am trying so hard to keep my father’s drug abuse a secret so that no one finds out about it and maybe report us. I try to please my father and do everything that he says because I am so afraid that we would not be allowed to stay in Sweden.
At the core of UNHCR’s definition of the concept of integration is a two-way process. This is premised on “adaptation” of one party and “welcome” by the other. It does not require the forcibly displaced person to relinquish his or her cultural identity.

The two-way process has the three dimensions that UNHCR emphasises as being part of the process of integration:

- As a legal process: refugees are granted a range of entitlements and rights which are broadly commensurate with those enjoyed by citizens. These include freedom of movement, access to education and the labour market, access to social assistance, including health facilities, and the capacity to travel with valid travel and identity documents. Realisation of family unity is another important aspect of integration. Over time the process should lead to permanent residence rights and in some cases the acquisition of citizenship in the country of asylum.
- As an economic process: refugees attain a growing degree of self-reliance and become capable of pursuing sustainable livelihoods, thus contributing to the economic life of the host country.
- As a social and cultural process: refugees acclimatize and local communities accommodate refugees to enable them to live amongst or alongside the receiving population without discrimination or exploitation, and contribute actively to the social life of their country of asylum.

**ISSUE TAG:** Lack of Information

**TIME TAG:** After Flight, Country of Asylum, Integration

BRIS Sweden

BRIS carries out advocacy work on access to information and integration and is part of the discussions concerning integration policy. BRIS meets with Swedish authorities to discuss how the processes around this group of children can develop and also how they can be more rights based. They push for every child’s right to information and for the right to be heard.
**Statelessness**

A stateless person is someone who is not a citizen of any country. Without a citizenship, stateless persons have difficulty accessing basic rights such as education, healthcare, employment and freedom of movement. A person can become stateless due to a variety of reasons, including sovereign, legal, technical or administrative decisions or oversights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights underlines that “Everyone has the right to a nationality.”

Gaps in national laws are a major cause of statelessness as every country has laws which establish under what circumstances someone acquires nationality or can have it withdrawn. A child born in a foreign country can risk becoming stateless if that country does not permit nationality based on birth alone and if the country of origin does not allow a parent to pass on nationality through family ties. Additionally, the rules setting out who can and who cannot pass on their nationality are sometimes discriminatory. For example, the laws in 27 countries do not let women pass on their nationality while some countries limit citizenship to people of certain races and ethnicities.18

Next is a the story of Artee, a girl from Northern Thailand living with no nationality, and a UNHCR programme for children born in countries of asylum in Kenya addressing the issue of statelessness. Click on the next picture to see the video of Artee Ma-Yer.
In Kenya, UNHCR has worked for a number of years with the Kenyan Department of Civil Registration. UNHCR facilitated missions by the Department of Civil Registration to refugee camps, and used these missions to highlight first-hand the issues faced by refugees and to advocate for access to registration services. As a result of these missions, the Department of Civil Registration mobilized district officers to support UNHCR operations. Building on this initiative, the government created an outreach program in 2012 where district officers attend camps with the UNHCR team to talk to refugees and initiate birth registration within the community. The results have been very positive so far, with many newborns being registered thanks to this initiative.19

**Repatriation**

A returnee is an individual who has been restored national protection, removing the need for international protection, and, through the reintegration process, has the ability to maintain sustainable livelihoods, access basic services and fully reintegrate into communities in his/her country of origin.

The reunification of refugee children with their family in the country of origin should only be carried out by humanitarian organisations who have the capacity to carry out a full assessment of the conditions in the country of origin as protection issues may exist. Reunification with family in the country of origin is also considered “voluntary return”, a durable solution in UNHCR terminology in which certain safeguards must be met. Click on the next picture to read the story of a refugee in Angola who returns home to Rwanda.
Figure 6: Musabyenamariya Fratenata and her children at the airport in Angola prior to their departure for Rwanda. © UNHCR/Martim Gray Pereira

**Reintegration**

Reintegration is a process that should result in the end of differences in legal rights and duties between returnees and their compatriots and the equal access of returnees to services, productive assets and opportunities. Communities in areas of return can benefit a great deal from returnees, as they can bring new skills, resources, higher standards of education, health and gender equality, which they may have acquired during their displacement and exile. One of the challenges in reintegration is to preserve gains made in exile when they return to more traditional social structures. Reintegration in this sense can be a socially transformative process. The “end state” of reintegration is the universal enjoyment of full political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights. Reintegration, therefore, is a collective responsibility under government leadership; some actors – for example UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies, play a lead role in the earlier
stages, while other actors – for example, development agencies, play a greater role later in the reintegration process.²⁰

Below are programmes of UNHCR and the child helpline in Ukraine aimed at addressing the concerns of returnees and how they can reintegrate more seamlessly.

**ISSUE TAG: Lack of Access to Education**

**TIME TAG: After Flight, Reintegration**

La Strada Ukraine

With the support of the UNHCR this year, an information campaign on combating gender-based violence has been introduced. Together with UN Women and since 2016, La Strada is working to implement a National Plan of Action for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 "Women, peace, security" until 2020. UNICEF has supported the National Child Toll-Free Hotline since 2013 in the area of the protection of the rights and interests of children, analysis of children's legislation, and preventive measures in schools. Representatives of the National Child Toll-Free Hotline are the members of sub-clusters coordinated by UNICEF such as the Child protection working group to protect the rights and interests of internally-displaced children and the Educational sub-cluster. In 2018, UNICEF plans to support the implementation of mediation in vocational schools.

**Self-reflection exercise: Module III**

Can you identify the stages of forced displacement? Can you enumerate the factors that influence forced displacement at each stage? Please cite examples of programmes that help address the children in each stage of forcible displacement.
Across the different phases of a forcibly displaced child’s journey – from Pre-Flight, During Flight and After Flight, we can see that partnerships with different actors play a key role in supporting the child’s needs.

Child helplines, through the programmes cited throughout the module, identified the importance of both internal and external collaboration as strategies to improve the work with forcibly displaced children. The importance of strong inter-agency partnerships with key people and the need to develop networks with other agencies were highlighted.

An identification and referral mechanism with partners, including – government, UNHCR and other UN agencies and other NGOs, should be developed as the first step in setting up standard operating procedures (SOP). An example of what a referral table could look like is shown on the next page.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of agency or organisation</th>
<th>Technical area or responsibility</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
<td>Primary and Secondary education</td>
<td>National or name of local administration with contact details and opening hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Social Affairs / Child Protection Department</td>
<td>Services for persons with special needs / Protection services for children</td>
<td>National or name of local administration with contact details and opening hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local police station / Juvenile Court / Detention centres</td>
<td>Law Enforcement / Application of juvenile justice / Detention centres for adults and children</td>
<td>National or name of local administration with contact details and opening hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs / Department of Refugees</td>
<td>Manages reception centre, immigration</td>
<td>National or name of local administration with contact details and opening hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO No. 1</td>
<td>Child Protection programme / Child at risk case management and Best Interest Determination (BID) or Best Interest Assessment (BIA) process</td>
<td>Name of Camp or Town with contact details and opening hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO No. 2</td>
<td>Health programme</td>
<td>Name of Camp or Town with contact details and opening hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO No. 3</td>
<td>Livelihood and Youth programmes</td>
<td>Name of Camp or Town with contact details and opening hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO No. 4</td>
<td>SGBV and Psychosocial programmes</td>
<td>Name of Camp or Town with contact details and opening hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Family and community participation in decision-making were seen as a useful strategy in bringing together families, other agencies and child helplines to address child protection concerns. The importance of learning from successful work with previous waves of forcible displacement and the need to transplant successful interventions were also highlighted.

Establishing formal links with organisations as well as specific organisational policies and procedures were also suggested as ways to improve work with families from refugee backgrounds. These policies should be developed with community members of the forcibly displaced families and monitored and updated regularly.

Below are examples of partnerships of child helplines in enabling the building of a robust referral network for forcibly displaced children.

**Lifeline/Childline Zambia**

We have a consortium of government agencies which include relevant line ministries such as the police under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Home Affairs. We work together as a consortium of network members by working together in addressing the needs of the forcibly displaced children.

**National Runaway Safeline US**

We are in contact with the state and national programs and government departments who handle these types of cases. In the USA, this is handled on the individual state level who in turn work with their national collaborators.

**The Smile of the Child Greece**

“The Smile of the Child” consciously embeds itself in the existing societal patchwork of initiatives and endeavors already undertaken by authorities at all levels, be it local, regional, national or beyond. The manpower and equipment of “The Smile of the Child” are not designed, built or deployed to compete with efforts made by municipalities or other authorities or to substitute
themselves over the latter. On the contrary, the structures set up by authorities very much belong to our society, are therefore valuable and deserve to be strengthened and improved, rather than downgraded or replaced. Cooperation, leads to added value in terms of both capacity and impact.

**Polaris Project US**

Hotline advocates who take calls provide referrals to both international and local NGOs who are then able to provide direct services (shelter, case management, legal services, etc.) to forcibly displaced children. The Hotline directly communicates with international and local NGOs to maintain an accurate database of resources for trafficking survivors, which can include forcibly displaced children.

**CONCLUSION**

The stories of Ger Duany, Solomon, Farzad, Moises, Artee and Musabyenamariya are just some of the voices spread out in the module describing what forcibly displaced children go through in their lives. Following their footsteps has allowed the child helpline counsellors to get an overview of their problems. And the key concepts taught in this module will guide the counsellors to best address the situation of these forcibly displaced children. A summary of the key concepts are as follows:

- Differences in the situation of a forcibly displaced child
- Vulnerability and protective factors increasing and decreasing exposure to risks
- Pre-flight, during flight and after flight conditions
- Effect of separation to forcibly displaced children
- Family reunification and alternative care
- Different perspectives during integration
- Statelessness
- Returnees circumstances in repatriation and reintegration

Child helplines offer help and support services for forcibly displaced children and fulfil these children’s fundamental right to be heard. Often, child helplines are a young person’s first point of contact with child protection services and the most trusted gateway for them to find help. They empower children to help themselves, to find help and to prevent violence and other forms of harm. Hence, it is vital that child helpline counsellors have a good grasp of the issue so they will
know what to do when a child in a similar situation contacts. Lastly, child helplines must also acknowledge that addressing the problem of forcibly displaced children requires the support of different government agencies and NGOs. Thus, building this strong referral network to help forcibly displaced children must be established and managed regularly.

ASSESSMENT

Click on the link to go through a quick assessment to check your understanding of the key concepts, case stories and programmes previously studied in this training module.
OVERVIEW OF THE TAGS

Time Tags

Pre-Flight

- Story of Ger Duany, Pages 5-6
- What factors in forcible displacement increases the incidence of sexual violence against children, Pages 11-12
- The Desert Flower - Child Education Welfare Centres, Page 14
- La Strada Ukraine supports various ministries advocating for the best interest of the IDPs, Pages 14-15

During Flight

- Story of Ger Duany, Pages 5-6
- What factors in forcible displacement increases the incidence of sexual violence against children, Pages 11-12
- Story of Solomon, Page 16
- Story of Farzad, Page 17
- The Smile of the Child Greece – Child trafficked from Athens International Airport, Page 19
- Childline Thailand – A Pakistani family in the Immigration Detention Centre, Page 20

After Flight

- Story of Ger Duany, Pages 5-6
- What factors in forcible displacement increases the incidence of sexual violence against children, Pages 11-12
- Story of Moises and his brothers, Pages 21-22
- Childline Kenya – Preventive programmes, Pages 22-23
- De Kindertelefoon, The Netherlands – Cooperation with local NGOs for refugees, Page 23
- Jordan River Foundation – Awareness raising in community centres, Page 23
- BRIS Sweden – Struggle with my mother, Page 24
- La Strada Ukraine – Boy helps his struggling family, Pages 25-26
- BRIS Sweden – Girl affected by divorce of parents, Page 26
- BRIS Sweden – Continuous advocacy work on refugee children’s right to be heard, Page 27
- Video of Artee Ma-Yer, Page 28
- UNHCR Programme for birth registration of children in refugee camps in Kenya, Page 29
- Story of a refugee in Angola who returns to Rwanda, Pages 29-30
- La Strada Ukraine – Information campaign on gender-based violence, Page 31

Alternative Care

- Story of Moises and his brothers, Pages 21-22

Country of Asylum

- Story of Moises and his brothers, Pages 21-22
- Childline Kenya – Preventive programmes, Pages 22-23
- De Kindertelefoon, The Netherlands – Cooperation with local NGOs for refugees, Page 23
- Jordan River Foundation – Awareness raising in community centres, Page 23
- BRIS Sweden – Continuous advocacy work on refugee children’s right to be heard, Page 27
- UNHCR Programme for birth registration of children in refugee camps in Kenya, Page 29

Integration
- BRIS Sweden – Struggle with my mother, Page 24
- La Strada Ukraine – Boy helps his struggling family, Pages 25-26
- BRIS Sweden – Girl affected by divorce of parents, Page 26
- BRIS Sweden – Continuous advocacy work on refugee children’s right to be heard, Page 27

Repatriation
- Story of a refugee in Angola who returns to Rwanda, Pages 29-30

Reintegration
- La Strada Ukraine – Information campaign on gender-based violence, Page 31

**Issue Tags**

**Abuse and Neglect**
- Story of Solomon, Page 16

**Child Labour**
- La Strada Ukraine – Boy helps his struggling family, Pages 25-26

**Child Recruitment**
- Story of Ger Duany, Pages 5-6

**Cultural Differences**
- BRIS Sweden – Struggle with my mother, Page 24
- BRIS Sweden – Girl affected by divorce of parents, Page 26

**Family Separation**
- Story of Ger Duany, Pages 5-6
- Story of Solomon, Page 16
- Story of Farzad, Page 17
- Story of Moises and his brothers, Pages 21-22
- Story of a refugee in Angola who returns to Rwanda, Pages 29-30
High Levels of Distress

- The Desert Flower - Child Education Welfare Centres, Page 14
- Story of Farzad, Page 17
- Childline Thailand – A Pakistani family in the Immigration Detention Centre, Page 20

Immigration Detention

- Childline Thailand – A Pakistani family in the Immigration Detention Centre, Page 20

Lack of Access to Education

- La Strada Ukraine – Information campaign on gender-based violence, Page 31

Lack of Information

- La Strada Ukraine supports various ministries advocating for the best interest of the IDPs, Pages 14-15
- Jordan River Foundation – Awareness raising in community centres, Page 23
- BRIS Sweden – Continuous advocacy work on refugee children’s right to be heard, Page 27

Navigating Asylum Systems

- Story of Moises and his brothers, Pages 21-22
- Jordan River Foundation – Awareness raising in community centres, Page 23

No Birth Registration

- Video of Artee Ma-Yer, Page 28
- UNHCR Programme for birth registration of children in refugee camps in Kenya, Page 29

Sexual Violence and Harmful Practices

- What factors in forcible displacement increases the incidence of sexual violence against children, Pages 11-12

Smuggling and Trafficking

- Story of Solomon, Page 16
- The Smile of the Child Greece – Child trafficked from Athens International Airport, Page 19

Xenophobia and Discrimination

- Story of Ger Duany, Pages 5-6
END NOTES

6. www.unocha.org
8. Guidelines on International Protection No. 8: Child Asylum Claims under Articles 1(A)2 and 1(F) of the 1951 Convention and/or 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, December 2009.
12. The working with refugee families project, Australian Centre for Child Protection, September 2009.
Child Helpline International

Child Helpline International’s work is firmly grounded in the principles and values enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, including children’s right to privacy and protection from harm. To preserve the trust and confidence children and young people place in child helplines every day, any personal detail has been altered.

The information presented and statements made do not capture the full scope of practices and policies of all countries and cases handled by the child helplines and other child protection organisations at the national level.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

This document was developed through a joint project between the Child Protection and Youth Unit in UNHCR’s Division of International Protection and Child Helpline International. While it draws on various sources, including UNHCR documents, it does not necessarily represent the official views of UNHCR.

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Child Helpline International is the international network of child helplines.

A global collective impact organisation of 181 members from 147 countries (May 2017).

Every year, child helplines around the world field millions of individual cries for help. Until the founding of Child Helpline International in 2003, these organisations did their great work in isolation, and with no access to one another. Now, we are working together every day to bring children’s voices to policy makers and influencers: we make sure the world listens to these voices.

Every child has a voice.
No child should be left unheard

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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Children’s rights are at the heart of UNHCR’s protection mandate. Over half of the world’s refugees are children, and children represent a significant proportion of stateless and forcibly displaced populations worldwide. UNHCR works with States and other partners to provide protection and solutions to children of its concern, including refugee, stateless, internally displaced and returnee children. This includes protecting and advocating against all forms of discrimination, preventing and responding to abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation, ensuring immediate access to appropriate services, and ensuring durable solutions in children’s best interests. UNHCR’s Framework for the Protection of Children (2012) places the Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of UNHCR’s protection mandate and builds upon UNHCR’s policy and guidelines on the protection of children and relevant Executive Committee Conclusions.