

Critical Issues

Separated Children

CONTENTS

	Page
BRIEFING NOTES FOR FACILITATORS	
Introduction.....	3
Topic 1: Introductory Concepts	6
Topic 2: The Prevention of Separation	11
Topic 3: The Process of Family Tracing and Reunification – Guiding Principles..	17
Topic 4: Family Tracing and Reunification	22
Topic 5: Care Arrangements for Separated Children	30
Sample Programmes.....	39
TRAINING MATERIALS	
Overheads.....	47
Exercises.....	61
Handouts.....	115
RESOURCES	
Further Readings and Websites	124

Acknowledgements

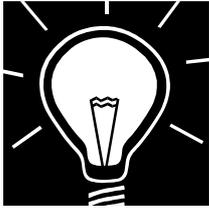
ARC Resource Packs have been developed from contributions made by a multitude of staff from within UNHCR and International Save the Children Alliance as well as other organisations – our thanks go to all of them.

UNICEF and the OHCHR have participated in the development of sections of these Resource Packs, in accordance with the principles and policies of their missions and within the scope of their respective mandates.

Particular recognition is given to the four independent consultants who have helped in developing the training approach and materials, namely Bruce Britton, Peter Firkin, Maureen O'Flynn and David Tolfree.

Editor: David Nosworthy.

Separated Children



Introduction

Facilitators who have not recently trained or worked in the area covered by this Resource Pack, should read carefully through the various Topics, Overheads, Exercises, and Handouts before starting to plan their training activity. Please note that these materials aim to stimulate learning and discussion, and should be used in conjunction with stated policy (they do not replace it).

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE PACK

This resource pack has been derived substantially, though not exclusively, from the Training Manual prepared by Save the Children (UK) with the benefit of a grant from ECHO. Their co-operation is gratefully acknowledged.

This resource pack is directed at field, co-ordination and senior management level staff who need to have a broad understanding of the range of issues to do with separated children. It is not intended for more specialist staff who are directly involved in the care of children and in the various activities associated with caring for separated children and family tracing: more detailed training material is available in Save the Children (UK)'s Training Manual on Separated Children. If more specialised information on specific issues is required within a particular region (e.g. the evacuation of children or more detailed skill-based training in family tracing), useful materials are to be found in Save the Children (UK)'s Field Guide.

It is, however, vital for staff at all levels to have a broad awareness of the issues facing separated children, and in particular the prevention of separation, broad knowledge of interim care and family tracing issues and the need for inter-agency co-operation. It is also important for all staff to be aware of the complexity of the systems required for family tracing, and of the difficulties involved in assessing situations and reaching decisions in difficult cases.

It is particularly important to note that some of the key messages in this resource pack will be found to be counter-intuitive for some people: for example, the disadvantages and potential dangers of institutional forms of care, and the dangers of evacuating children from war zones.

KEY CONCEPTS

The following are the key concepts which are addressed in this resource pack.

1. Separation is a devastating experience for children in situations of conflict and displacement and can have serious long-term consequences for the child's well-being.
2. All work with separated children should be in keeping with the provisions of the

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international, regional and national instruments.

3. High priority needs to be given, in all stages of any emergency, to strategies for the prevention of separation.
4. Family tracing and reunification programmes need to be developed for separated children; these are complex and specialised programmes requiring knowledgeable and well-trained staff in order to provide a high quality service for highly vulnerable children.
5. Care arrangements for separated children should, wherever possible, be based on family and community responsibilities for children. Institutional forms of care should be avoided wherever possible, but the risks involved in foster programmes also have to be acknowledged. Children in an emergency context are not available for adoption.
6. The importance of careful and co-ordinated planning amongst those agencies involved in developing programmes on behalf of separated children cannot be under-estimated. This includes ensuring that any activities do not in themselves lead, be it inadvertently, to further separations.

These key concepts are presented in **Overhead 1.0**.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC)

The human rights of children are fully articulated in one treaty: the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), offering the highest standard of protection and assistance for children under any international instrument. The approach of the Convention is holistic, which means that the rights are indivisible and interrelated, and that all articles are equally important. The CRC is the most universally accepted human rights instrument, ratified by every country in the world except three (Somalia, Timor-Leste and the USA are the exceptions). It provides the most comprehensive framework for the responsibilities of States parties to all children within their borders: by ratifying the Convention, national governments have committed themselves to protecting and ensuring the rights of all children without discrimination, including the rights of refugee and displaced children and adolescents.

The CRC defines a “child” as everyone under 18 years of age “unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”. The scheme of the CRC suggests that this exception should be interpreted as an empowering one, in other words that under-18s can claim the benefits of adulthood if granted by national law while still able to claim the protection of the CRC.

Two key principles underlying the CRC are the “best interests” and participation of the child, which have important implications for defining interventions on behalf of separated children. The CRC also emphasises the importance of the family in caring for and protecting the child. Family unity is also stressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

STRUCTURE OF THE RESOURCE PACK

The material in this resource pack is wide-ranging and designed so that those working with the resource pack can select sections appropriate to their needs.

Topic 1 examines some introductory concepts - definitions, the effects of separation and separated children in a children's rights context, the importance of family care and UNHCR policy.

Topic 2 looks at the issue of the prevention of separation, including the question of the evacuation of children.

Topic 3 provides an introduction to key principles and concerns underlying any work with separated children.

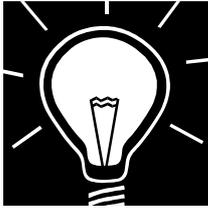
Topic 4 details the six steps involved in family tracing and reunification - identification, documentation, tracing, verification, reunification and follow-up.

Topic 5 examines the range of care arrangements for separated children. This includes children living with extended families, those in child-headed households and spontaneously fostered children, formal fostering programmes, and residential centres. There is also a short section on inter-country adoption.

Participatory exercises, overheads and handouts are provided. Facilitators are strongly recommended to develop regionally or country-specific materials, such as case studies, in order to make the training even more relevant.

Reference can also be made to the Separated Children in Europe Programme Training Guide (2001). This training guide has been developed as a comprehensive introduction to the Separated Children in Europe Programme Statement of Good Practice. It has been designed to encourage and enable officials and professionals to examine the implications of the Statement of Good Practice for their roles and responsibilities within a workshop setting.

Separated Children



Topic 1

Introductory Concepts

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- *There is an important distinction between unaccompanied and separated children, but both are likely to require family tracing.*
- *Separated children must be identified as soon as possible.*
- *Separation can have a far-reaching impact on children's development.*
- *Separated children may be at greatly increased risk of exploitation and of recruitment into armed forces or groups.*
- *Programmes for separated children should have a clear child rights focus.*
- *Wherever possible, care arrangements should be provided in a family/community based setting.*

DEFINITIONS – UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED CHILDREN

For those children separated from their families and who are totally alone, the term “unaccompanied children” is generally applied.

However, even in emergency situations, relatively few children are found to be totally alone (truly “unaccompanied”), even though many have been separated from their parents or usual caregivers. Many may be living with, or accompanied by, extended family members, friends, neighbours, or other adults.

Consequently, a second term “Separated Children” has come into use. This term encompasses this extended group, and includes unaccompanied children, and reaffirms their need for protection and assistance.

“Separated Children” are defined by UNHCR as children under 18 years of age who are separated from both parents or from their *previous* legal or customary primary caregiver.

All such children are entitled to international protection under a broad range of international and regional instruments. All such children require priority action by all concerned organisations. This action should encompass their early identification, special protection and provision of care arrangements, as well as family tracing with a view to their reunification with parents or other traditional carers.

TERMINOLOGY

The process of family tracing and reunification is a complex one, involving the identification of separated children, documentation, tracing, verification, reunification and follow-up. The term “tracing” is often used to cover the whole process: the acronym IDTR, or even IDTVRF, is also sometimes used.

Where the term "carer" is used in this resource pack, it refers to the person exercising day to day care, whether parent, relative, family friend or some other person which might include foster parents either taking in the child spontaneously, or more formally through some kind of fostering scheme.

It is important to understand that different terms are used in different languages and cultures: for example, the term “orphan” can variously imply the loss of mother, father, or both. Similarly, the term separated child may, in some cultures, imply separation from father but not mother.

The term separated or unaccompanied “minor” is best avoided because of its connotations with inferiority or lesser importance.

SEPARATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Separation can have a profound effect on the developing child, both in the short term and in the long term. Experiences of separation and loss will have differing impact depending on the child’s age, level of intellectual development, emotional maturity and the nature and duration of the separation. There will also be significant cultural variations, reflecting the very different patterns of child care, and in particular the different ways in which children become attached to parents, older siblings, relatives etc. Research evidence suggests that the period from about 4 - 6 months to 2 or 3 years is particularly important for the formation of bonds and the development of attachment behaviour, and that separation during this period has the greatest distress reaction.

The adverse effects of separation are likely to be limited if the child is looked after by caring adults who provide a level of affection, care and stimulation appropriate to his or her age, stage of development and particular needs. An adequate level of care is rarely available in residential centres or institutions.

Young children may have a very limited sense of time: this may mean that a separated child will have no concept of “interim” care of a few days, weeks or months: even a period of two weeks may feel like an eternity to a young child.

Separation does not occur in isolation from other events: a separated child may also have witnessed frightening and possibly violent events, and may have experienced loss on a huge scale - loss of parents and family, of home, relatives, friends, school and the security that comes from a familiar environment.

N.B. Topic 4 of the **Resource Pack on Child and Adolescent Development** provides more detailed information on the characteristic effects of separation on children of different ages. This Topic also includes relevant participatory exercises.

SEPARATED CHILDREN AND ABUSE/EXPLOITATION

Separated children may be at greatly increased risk of rights abuses such as: abuse or neglect; trafficking; burden of work; sexual exploitation; recruitment into armed services etc. The nature of such abuses can often be age or gender specific, but they will remain at heightened risk without early identification and ensuring that their care and protection needs are provided for. Not only are separated children deprived of the care and protection normally provided by parents or other customary caregivers, but the fact of separation may mean that children have to fend for themselves, thereby exposing themselves to various risks. Even once interim care arrangements have been made, the possibility of abuse and/or exploitation is an ever-present reality, and adequate monitoring and follow-up must be provided for these children.

N.B. Some of these issues are raised in the **ARC Resource Pack Abuse and Exploitation** - see Topics 1, 2, 6 and 9, along with Exercises 2.4 and 4.3. See also the **Resource Pack on Child Soldiers**, especially Topics 1 and 3.

SEPARATION AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Almost all countries in the world have signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention reaffirms basic human rights and applies them to children who, because of their age and vulnerability, need special care and protection. Two key principles underlying the CRC are the "best interests" and participation of the child, which have important implications for defining interventions on behalf of separated children. The CRC also emphasises the importance of the family in caring for and protecting the child. Family unity is also stressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the Convention of 1951 relating to the Status of the Refugees.

All work with separated children must be in keeping with the provisions of the CRC, and other relevant international, regional and national instruments. UNHCR policy on children must be observed and established guidelines, notably on the protection and care of refugee children, and procedures should always be followed.

Key points from the CRC relating to separated children appear in **Handout 1.1**.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Families are the basic unit of society. In almost all cases the family provides the best environment in which the child's basic developmental needs can be met. In addition to providing care and protection, it is where children learn how to behave with other people: where they learn about their family history, and the language, culture, and customs of their community.

The family is defined in some places by the child's immediate relatives: parents, brothers and sisters. In other places there may be a far wider extended family including grandparents, aunts and uncles and more distant relations within a clan, village or community. Ways of caring for children vary, but generally all societies recognise that the best place for a child to be is with his or her family.

Experience has shown that preserving family unity helps to minimise the effects of catastrophic events on children. However separations do occur, particularly in situations of large population displacements, and it is therefore essential that activities to limit separations, as well as identify children who have been separated, are in place and functioning as quickly as possible. The sooner that separated children are identified the greater will be the chance of successful reunification.

If children are found to be alone, or current care placements are unsatisfactory, alternative arrangements for the child's care will have to be made: these may be temporary or long-term. Alternative forms of interim care are presented in Topic 5 on Care Arrangements for Separated Children, but as a general rule the preferred option is always a foster family from within the child's own community. It should also be noted that difficulties always arise where children's homes are seen as an alternative (see section 5.5). They may encourage children to leave their families, or families to place their children in these homes. Institutions may appear to offer benefits for children, but growing up in an institution is rarely the best solution for a child.

REFUGEE CHILDREN

Children form one of the clearly stated priorities of UNHCR. Within the broad category of children and adolescents, who typically form almost half of the world's refugee population, children separated from their families are considered as a highly vulnerable group. There are two reasons for this:

- the circumstances of separation may have had a profound impact on the child, whether in the form of death (which the child may have witnessed), deliberate separation or sudden and unprepared-for separation;
- separation may mean that the child does not have a trusted adult to provide care and protection. Even children cared for by the extended family or close family friends may not receive the same standard of care as other members of that family.

The UNHCR Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care sets out a number of principles and policies in relation to unaccompanied children, but which also guide work in relation to separated children: these include the following:

- preserving and restoring family unity are of fundamental concern;
- the identification, and provision for the special protection and care of unaccompanied children in every refugee situation, as well as their reunification with their families, shall be adequately and consistently addressed;
- for unaccompanied children without care, placement with a family within the child's own community is preferable;
- where family placements are not possible, small group care within the community can be arranged;
- children in an emergency context are not available for adoption.

TRAINING MATERIALS FOR TOPIC 1

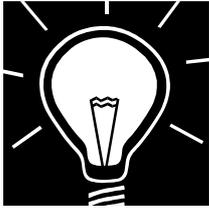
Overhead 1.1: Key Learning Points	Summarises the key learning points for Topic 1
Exercise 1.1: Separated Children: Definitions	Introduces participants to the concepts behind definitions that are used
Exercise 1.2: Separation: Sensitisation Exercise	Sensitises participants to the effects of separation on children
Handout 1.1: Separation and Children's Rights	Identifies key articles of the CRC relating to separated children

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAINING

Participants could be asked to identify relevant sections of the CRC rather than the facilitator presenting them. The effects of separation on children could be explored by inviting participants to briefly present the cases of individual children known to them.

For further information and training ideas reference can also be made to the Separated Children in Europe Programme Training Guide (2001).

Separated Children



Topic 2

The Prevention of Separation

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- *It is essential that activities aimed at limiting separations are established as quickly as possible.*
- *Children become separated from their families in various ways and the response should reflect the cause.*
- *Agencies need to take great care to ensure that their own activities do not lead to accidental separations.*
- *Children who are alone are not always “separated”.*
- *The evacuation of children should only be undertaken under particular conditions.*

Children are entitled to protection under the law and, in general, are better protected when they are with their family. In addition, experience has shown that preserving family unity helps to minimise the effects of catastrophic events on children.

Separation from family is a devastating event for any child, and for those who are too young or for some other reason unable to give information about themselves or their family, the separation may become permanent.

It is essential that activities aimed at preventing separations are established as early as possible in any operation. The nature of these activities will depend on a careful analysis of the situation, including the type of displacement that the population are experiencing. It is also necessary to understand some of the reasons as to why children may become separated in the first place.

HOW CHILDREN BECOME SEPARATED

Children can become separated from their families in various ways - two broad categories will be explored here but it should be noted that both can result in children becoming unaccompanied. The risk of separations occurring is likely to increase during large and chaotic population movements, particularly where there is (or people think there is) a threat to life.

These categories are presented in **Overhead 2.2**.

Accidental Separations

During conflict or natural disasters, especially where this results in population displacement, children can become separated from their family or those who are caring for them. Accidental separations may be particularly traumatic for the child as they may simply not understand what is happening. Among the reasons why these separations occur are:

- children wandering away from their parents or carers;
- families become separated during flight (or maybe even repatriation);
- children flee when their home is attacked;
- death or injury of family members;
- capture or arrest of family members;
- children are abducted for ransom, sale, military conscription, labour etc.;
- disabled children are unable to keep up with other members of the family;
- police or others taking a "lost" child to an institution without properly seeking information on the circumstances;
- agency-induced separations (this is considered further in section 2.2).

Deliberate Separation

The second category refers to separations where a conscious decision has been made on either the part of the child or the parents or carers. It may be that parents or carers have had an opportunity to explain to the child what is about to happen but the impact of separation on the child is still likely to be very distressing. Typically, circumstances may include:

- families under stress (from poverty, breakdown of informal welfare or extended family structures, the death or disability of parents etc.);
- families sending children to stay with relatives or friends in third countries;
- children choosing to leave their family;
- children who live independently with their parents consent;
- the abandonment of children during flight (children of single parents may be especially vulnerable);
- families handing over children for their safety (to other local people, centres or aid workers);
- children left behind by their foster families (for example, during repatriation) - children of a different ethnic group from that of their carers may be especially vulnerable;
- agency induced separations - carers accepting assistance from relief agencies providing food and shelter in ways that do not keep families together.

AGENCY-INDUCED SEPARATION

As mentioned in the previous section agencies themselves may be responsible for causing both accidental and deliberate separations by not attaching sufficient importance to family unity. At worst, this can result in agencies setting up forms of institutional care which then receive children who do have parents or other carers, which fail to document children adequately, and do not make strenuous attempts to enable the child to return.

Other typical examples of situations where intervention by outside agencies contributes to child separation include:

- badly-organised population movements, careless policies for the movement of children;
- inadequate record-keeping by the agencies providing emergency assistance;
- removing an apparently unaccompanied child from a situation without adequately investigating the child's circumstances and not keeping records;
- evacuation that does not follow guidelines (see section 2.5 on Evacuation in this Topic);
- taking children to residential centres without following the correct procedures for documentation or liaising with specialist child-care agencies;
- fostering or adoption that does not follow guidelines;
- activities on the part of hospitals and health centres may lead to family separation.

These include:

- parents may be admitted for treatment without their children and without having made arrangements for the care of the children;
- parents may not be able to stay with children who are admitted for treatment;
- parents accompanying sick children may have other children at home who have been left unattended.

MILITARY INDUCED SEPARATIONS

In situations of conflict, it should also be noted that actions by military groups can, and do, lead to separations. This may be as a result of protagonists targeting civilian populations leading to chaotic flight, detaining parents, or could be through children forcibly recruited into armed forces or abducted to act as human shields or to take on other tasks (including sexual). Facilitators are referred to the **ARC Resource Pack on Child Soldiers** for further information on this category of separated children.

In addition, it should be remembered that peace-keeping forces also have the potential to inadvertently create separations if their interventions are not appropriately planned and informed. Many of the situations mentioned above, under "Agency Induced Separations", apply equally here. This issue has received increased attention in recent years and, notably, the Save the Children Alliance have been actively involved in providing training to military peace-keepers.

STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING SEPARATION

General Measures to Prevent Separations

Children who are alone are not always 'separated'. It should never be assumed that a child is unaccompanied. Even though he or she may have been found alone, there could be family members near by. If there are other members of the community in the vicinity they may be able to provide useful information or even take care of the child.

A number of general measures to prevent separations occurring are detailed below.

- Community awareness of the causes and consequences of separation is a vital preventive measure. The active involvement of local leaders, local authorities, medical facilities, transit centres, religious organisations etc. is especially important, as well as information campaigns designed to promote widespread awareness of the issues. The use of mass-media, such as radio, may be especially important in non-camp situations particularly during large-scale population movements - including both flight and repatriation.
- There may be only one opportunity to find information about very young children. Anyone who comes across a separated child must try to find out as much as possible about him/her as quickly as possible as parents or family members may still be in the vicinity.
- In general, children are better off in their own community with people who are familiar to them and who may know their family and place of origin. Communities will usually make an effort to care for separated children and this should be encouraged, rather than undermined by providing special services.
- Evacuation should only be carried out as a last resort when life is threatened. Wherever possible, a group should be evacuated together. An evacuation of separated children may create further separations, as families may give up their own children claiming that they are separated. Evacuation can result in separating the children from people in the locality who can provide information useful for tracing purposes.

Specific Measures to Prevent Separations

Children are especially vulnerable to separation during large population movements. Children's residential centres also unwittingly serve to encourage separations: this issue is dealt with in some detail in Topic 5, Section 5.5.

Some specific measures to avoid separations are detailed in **Handout 2.1**.

THE EVACUATION OF CHILDREN

Getting out of harm's way is a universal – and sensible – response to danger. Parents will often take children away from war zones, or send them away if they think this will ensure their survival; but families should be given the information they need to make such decisions on a rational basis. Experience in the UK during the Second World War was that children's well-being was often best served by remaining with their families, albeit in dangerous situations, rather than being

evacuated to live with unknown families in the safety of the countryside. Subsequent experience has confirmed these findings.

Agencies that work in emergencies are often faced with difficult decisions about how much support they should give to the removal of children from conflicts. Where children are unlikely to survive unless they are evacuated, the answer seems clear. But the situation is often difficult to assess, and in the rush to remove children from danger, basic precautions for safeguarding their identity may be ignored.

In some recent conflicts, agencies have arranged poorly organised and ill-considered evacuations which have sometimes resulted in long-term separation from parents, as well as children living in unsatisfactory conditions, sometimes in a foreign country.

Children can become lost or be permanently separated from their families if their personal details are not recorded during evacuation or if this information is not passed on to the appropriate people. When an evacuation is being considered, an agency experienced in tracing and work with separated children should be involved in the planning and the implementation.

UNHCR and UNICEF, supported by ICRC, produced a paper, "Evacuation of Children from Conflict Areas: Considerations and Guidelines" (1992), that provides interesting analysis derived from a joint mission to the former Yugoslavia. The conclusions suggest three central principles:

- **Protect and Assist:** evacuation may reflect the failure of protection and assistance by local communities, governments and aid agencies.
- **Preserve Family Unity:** if children have to be moved it is important that they are accompanied by a family member.
- **Evacuate only under proper conditions:** the Guidelines set out some key recommendations which ensure that the wishes of parents and children are considered, that evacuation is undertaken in safety, that proper arrangements are made for the reception of the children, and that help is given to ensure that further or permanent separation does not occur.

See **Overhead 2.3**.

TRAINING MATERIALS FOR TOPIC 2

Overhead 2.1: Key Learning Points	Summarises the key learning points for Topic 2
Overhead 2.2: How Children Become Separated	Presents the two main categories
Overhead 2.3: Principles of Evacuation	Indicates the three main principles
Exercise 2.1: Causes of Separation and Preventive Measures	Helps participants to identify why children become separated, to identify and prioritise measures for preventing separation

Action for the Rights of Children (ARC)

Exercise 2.2: Prevention of Separation: Awareness Raising in the Community	Emphasises the importance of community awareness, community structures and inter-agency co-operation
Handout 2.1: Specific Measures to Avoid the Separation of Children	Details specific measures to be taken during population movements, in hospitals and clinics and in residential centres

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAINING

The use of case material drawn from participants' own experience or from within the region would be especially appropriate for facilitating learning with this resource pack – particularly with regard to the issue of evacuation.

Separated Children



Topic 3

The Process of Family Tracing and Reunification – Guiding Principles

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- ***The process of family tracing and reunification is a complex one. Close collaboration is required between all parties involved.***
- ***Any decisions and actions on behalf of separated children should be informed by the guiding principles of Best Interests, Participation and Family Unity.***
- ***Confidentiality and the protection of data needs to be ensured at all stages of the tracing and reunification process.***

INTRODUCTION

The process of family tracing and reunification is a complex one, involving the identification of separated children, documentation, tracing, verification, reunification and follow-up. These six key steps will be dealt with in more detail in Topic 4, while this topic is devoted to the presentation of the principles and guidelines which should inform all decisions and actions at any stage of the process. Close collaboration will be required between all parties involved.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In providing for the protection and care of separated children many difficult and complex situations may be encountered. Cases must be assessed on an individual basis. Any actions or decisions made regarding cases should be informed by the following series of guiding principles.

- **Best Interests:** The best interests of the child should guide all decisions and actions concerning the separated child (CRC, Article 3).
- **Participation:** Children have a right to participate in decisions about their future. They have a right to express their opinions (CRC, Articles 12 and 13).
- **Family Unity:** Every effort therefore should be made to protect family unity and avoid family separation. Separated children have a right to be re-united with parents, relatives and guardians. Those working with them should encourage family tracing, family contact and family reunification as quickly as possible. If reunification is not immediately possible, care of the child should be as consistent and continuous as possible to enable the child to build up relations with those who care for him or her (CRC Preamble, Articles 5,9,18 and 27).

FAMILY TRACING IN EMERGENCIES

The circumstances of an emergency may impose some particular constraints and difficulties on tracing activities.

- Priority decisions may have to be made - e.g. to concentrate on younger children on the basis that older children have a better chance of coping on their own.
- A balance needs to be found between being sensitive and alert in identifying separated children, and avoiding the danger of taking actions which may encourage separations. Examples of the latter include separating children from the crowd or documenting them before ascertaining that they have been separated, or setting up high-visibility responses which encourage child abandonment.
- Immediate tracing should be the priority - the longer the separation the less the chances of ultimate reunification. However, the need for protecting separated children should always be the first consideration. The whole process of documentation, tracing, preparation, reunification and follow-up should be undertaken as thoroughly as the circumstances permit.
- Families taking care of a separated child during a population movement should be encouraged to continue to do so provided both parties are happy with the arrangement. If immediate documentation is not possible, families should be advised whom to contact when they reach their destination - e.g. Red Cross, UNHCR, NGOs or local authorities.

FAMILY TRACING IN THE CONTEXT OF REGIONAL CONFLICTS

In regions in which several neighbouring countries are facing conflict, it is possible that children can experience repeated displacement and/or separations. This can have an especially serious impact on children as well as requiring a regional strategy and careful inter-agency collaboration and co-ordination. Exercise 3.5 provides a case study which examines some of these issues.

FAMILY TRACING FOR CHILDREN WITHOUT ADDRESS

With some children it is difficult to obtain enough information to start tracing - this may be due to their young age, or because they are particularly traumatised and may not know their address, their parents' identity or even their own identity. It is a mistake to neglect these children in favour of those whose families are easier to trace.

For these children some special procedures may need to be followed: these include:

- documenting these children as early as possible: children's memory may fade and clues about their identity (clothes and other possessions) may get lost.
- interviewing children over a longer period, where appropriate using various forms of play, drawing etc..
- special attention needs to be placed on obtaining information from other people around the child, who may have important clues as to the child's past.

- interviewing by people with knowledge of the child's home area may help to jog his/her memory - e.g. particular festivals, crops, handicrafts which are characteristic of the area.
- involving the child's carers in gaining the child's confidence and using opportunities for quiet talking with the child (e.g. at bathing or feeding times). It is important for the carer to feel part of the tracing team (remember though that, for some, their job may be at stake if children are returned to their families).
- a variety of photographs should be taken as early as possible, including with the clothes the child was wearing when separation occurred, and along with siblings where there is a sibling group.
- care needs to be taken in verifying relatives when they come forward.

LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS

Any plan for a long-term solution to a separated child's situation must be based on that child's best interests. Family reunification should be the first priority. For unaccompanied children, should such reunification not be in the best interests of the child, or not possible within an appropriate time frame, other medium and long-term options such as foster care, guardianship and adoption may be sought. (N.B. Adoption is not an option in the emergency phase). In general, separated children living with close relatives should be encouraged to stay together while family tracing activities are concluded.

The situation becomes more complex when unaccompanied or separated children are living in a refugee context where a durable solution to their refugee status also has to be sought. The best durable solution for an unaccompanied or separated child will depend on the particular circumstances of his or her case - for separated children living with close relatives, they should again be encouraged to stay together. The preferred durable solution will always be voluntary repatriation and this should at all times be kept under review and actively pursued where appropriate. Where voluntary repatriation is not possible, local integration is likely to be the most appropriate alternative. Resettlement of separated children should only be considered on an exceptional basis and through a case-by-case examination, where other solutions are not appropriate. **The possibility of eventual family reunification or voluntary repatriation should be kept open as long as possible.**

UNHCR also has specific guidelines on policies and procedures to follow in dealing with unaccompanied children seeking asylum. Although the focus of these guidelines is on the determination of refugee status for unaccompanied children, they also contain recommendations on identifying and implementing appropriate durable solutions both for children who are found to qualify for asylum, and for those who are not. (UNHCR, Guidelines on Policies and Procedures in dealing with Unaccompanied Children Seeking Asylum. Geneva, 1997).

DOCUMENTATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality and protection of the data collected on separated children needs to be ensured at all stages of the tracing and reunification process. Agencies and field offices must ensure permanent preservation of records because children later in life often have to obtain information on their origins. In certain contexts it may be decided that records are centralised under responsibility of a specialised organisation.

Caution has to be taken when sharing and publishing information on separated children, including photographs of children for tracing. It is important to be aware of who will have access to the information collected.

Whenever engaged in moving unaccompanied or separated children all appropriate documentation should accompany them including necessary travel documents, birth certificate or any other registration or identification documentation, medical reports and school certificates.

MATERIAL ASSISTANCE

The issues around material assistance may present dilemmas for CSOs and other staff at any stage of the family tracing process. Inappropriate decisions about material assistance can cause resentment in the community and can also have negative effects on the welfare of individual children.

In general, if assistance is provided it is better that this is done through existing community or local support systems. It is also better if families receiving separated children are not given special treatment compared to other families in equally difficult circumstances. However, this can present difficulties where there are limited resources available and particularly where this lack of material assistance may prevent reunification from taking place. Agencies may be able to work together locally to find ways of overcoming this dilemma. It is also important that all those carrying out reunification have a similar policy and approach to material assistance.

For example, many children return to situations of great hardship. While this is often a problem for the community in general, it may present an obstacle to reunification. It may not only be the family itself which faces hardship but the child may also have expectations that cannot be met. If a child has been used to a higher standard of living in a children's centre or has been earning money on the streets or as a labourer, he/she may find it difficult to stay with his/her family. Poor access to school, poor living conditions and hard work for little obvious return make a child more likely to leave his or her family. There are various ways of addressing this problem:

- the family or community can be assisted through existing systems of welfare support, these include local authorities, churches and local and international organisations. This can include broad assistance to the community through rehabilitation of services such as health care, education, income generation projects, agricultural rehabilitation such as seed and tool programmes etc.
- if resources are available, assistance can be given to families in need who receive separated children in the form of basic kits containing, for example,

items for food production. It must be clear that any assistance of this kind is short term.

- sometimes assistance can be given with school fees or help with income-generation to the poorest families. This assistance is short term, and may cause resentment if it is not available to other families in need.

LOCAL STRUCTURES

As already mentioned, family tracing and reunification is a complex process requiring close collaboration from all of the parties involved: national and international. Of particular importance will be the national and local authorities, as well as local organisations.

Their involvement stretches from the identification and documentation stage where, for example, authorities at ports of entry receive cases of concern, through the provision of protection and assistance services, right up to the reunification of families, and follow-up. It is important that local capacities are assessed as there may be a need to provide support, through capacity building or training, to ensure that they are fully equipped to respond to the special needs of separated children.

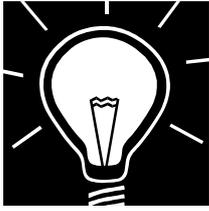
TRAINING MATERIALS FOR TOPIC 3

Overhead 3.1: Key Learning Points	Summarises the key learning points for Topic 3
Overhead 3.2: Guiding Principles in Family Tracing and Reunification	Presents the key principles in family tracing
Exercise 3.1: Decision-Making regarding Family Reunification	Explores issues and dilemmas in determining the best interests of the child
Exercise 3.2: Planning a Strategy for Tracing Separated Children	Uses a case study as a focus for planning a strategy to trace and protect separated children
Exercise 3.3: When Guiding Principles are not Applied	Case study which explores the consequences of separated children rights being violated, and explores solutions

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAINING

Ideally facilitators should devise training materials based on situations familiar to participants. There are many opportunities for using techniques such as brainstorming and group discussion of issues such as identification of separated children, tracing, problems in reunification, the pros and cons of material provision for reunified families, structures for follow-up and support, and so on.

Separated Children



Topic 4

Family Tracing and Reunification

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- *The overall process has six distinct but overlapping stages.*
- *The various tasks and activities within each stage need to be clearly understood.*
- *Difficult decisions on the child's best interests have to be taken on a case-by-case basis by skilled child care professionals.*

The process of tracing the families of separated children and returning them to their care (or placing them with other family members) is a complex process which requires close co-operation among a number of agencies, with defined mandates, and close links with the community. There are several distinct tasks at different stages of the process.

Identification:

the identification process establishes which children are separated from their families/carers and where they are to be found: information gathered at the identification point must be sufficient to lead those doing the documentation back to the child.

Documentation:

this is the collection and recording of information about the child, his/her family and place of origin, the circumstances of separation and the wishes of the child.

Family tracing:

these are the processes used to find the parents or other family members of the child. Families searching for their child usually do so through the Red Cross tracing service.

Verification:

this is the process of validating the relationships between the child and family member and confirming the latter's willingness for reunification.

Reunification:

this is the ultimate aim of family tracing, to reunite the child with parents or family members.

Follow-up:

this is the action following reunification to establish that the child settles happily with the family.

This long Topic is a composite one covering all stages in this process (the stages are listed in **Overhead 4.2**).

4.1 IDENTIFICATION

In populations of refugee/displaced persons where there are separated children, identifying and documenting them should be regarded as an urgent task. Young children quickly forget information about their past, and it is urgent for children to be reunified before they became too attached to their current carers, or before they experience further moves.

There are some key principles to be observed in identifying separated children: these are detailed in **Handout 4.1**.

4.2 DOCUMENTATION

Separated children should be documented as soon as possible after identification.

What Should Be Documented?

- The child's identity - full name, including nickname, nationality, place of birth, age, gender, information about family, including name of mother and father. The compilation of a chart showing the child's family, other relatives and possibly friends may be helpful. Identification numbers are usually assigned by the agency undertaking the documentation.
- The child's current living situation - address, type of placement, details of the adults having care of the child, presence of siblings etc..
- History of separation - date, place and circumstances of separation, how and when the child came to be in the current placement.
- The child's opinions and wishes - perceptions of the current placement, hopes and ideas for the future, who they wish to trace.
- A photograph is normally taken as part of the documentation process. This should be taken as soon as possible, with the child in the same clothes he/she was wearing at the time of separation. The photograph must be given the same number as the form and attached immediately.

How Is Documentation Undertaken?

- Interviews with the child.
- Drawing and play may be helpful in eliciting information from children - especially those who are young or who have difficulty in expressing themselves verbally.
- Interviews with other people having knowledge of the child.
- Discussion within the community so that any other persons with knowledge of the child can communicate that information and understand its importance.

Who Undertakes Documentation Work?

This is a skilled and sensitive task requiring training not only in interviewing children but in the whole tracing process. More specifically, the following are required:

- knowledge of the child's language and culture;

- skills and experience in working with children - interviewing and the use of drawing, play etc. Sensitivity and patience, especially when the child is being asked to recall painful and frightening events;
- good literacy skills, the ability to keep good records and a good understanding of the forms.

4.3 TRACING

There are various approaches to tracing:

Spontaneous tracing consists of activities carried out by families and communities outside of organised tracing programmes. Children search for their families, and families search for their children. It is important to understand how people in the community go about tracing, and especially the networks used for gaining information.

Case-by-case tracing involves workers following-up information on relatives in the area in which they are believed to reside. This approach tends to be time-consuming, labour- and transport- intensive, though it is sometimes possible for several families to be traced in a particular locality during one visit.

Centre-based tracing is undertaken usually by centre staff on behalf of children living there, especially when they originate from the surrounding area. Sometimes this work can be done on an inter-centre basis, with centre staff co-operating with each other.

Large-scale tracing: rather different approaches need to be used when there is a need for tracing over a large geographical area - e.g. when large populations take refuge in several different countries. This requires either one agency with staff in the relevant locations, or different agencies working co-operatively. This clearly requires agreement on procedures, standardised documentation and good systems for processing information.

Tracing relies heavily on good community work - liaising with community leaders, convening meetings etc..

Mass tracing is a term used to describe a variety of approaches used in situations where there are large numbers of separated children making case-by-case tracing expensive and time-consuming. It is particularly appropriate in situations in which there are large number of separated children thought to come from a particular area, or where there are large numbers of families e.g. in refugee camps.

Various approaches can be taken, including the following:

- displaying lists or photographs in places such as public buildings or communal areas;
- visiting locations where people gather, such as market places (photographs or lists can be displayed and tracing workers can let people know about them by using megaphones);
- where appropriate, handing over lists of relatives sought to local leaders and returning at a later date for feedback;
- joining public meetings to speak about the tracing programme, read out names and display photographs;

- arranging public meetings especially for mass tracing - mass tracing has been carried out very successfully through community meetings (see below).

All these activities should be arranged with the local authorities and leaders.

As well as tracing for the children on the list, mass tracing also provides an opportunity for:

- people who know the child or family to give information if no relatives come forward;
- finding out if children have returned spontaneously and no longer require tracing;
- separated children in foster families to be documented;
- families seeking lost children to fill in a tracing request if a structure for this is in place;
- raising awareness on child welfare, child rights and the tracing programme.

Cross border tracing: this is essential when separated children and their families are to be found in more than one country.

ICRC and UNHCR both have a mandate for cross-border tracing: the Geneva Conventions grant ICRC the right to work during conflicts, while the 1950 Statute and 1951 Convention gives UNHCR the right to work with refugees. These international accords form the basis of local agreements – including free access and travel – for facilitating the work of these two agencies.

A tracing system must be in operation on both sides of the border, and there must also be channels for exchanging information. A centralised database is essential. Where more than one agency is involved, they must all co-operate in passing information to the agency centralising the data. If this does not happen, time is wasted duplicating tracing for children whose cases should have been closed. Tracing across international borders takes time and it can be difficult to keep track of separated children during this period. By the time the family has been found, the child may have moved or been abandoned. It is important to have a strong tracing network in place and to work closely with the community who may be able to support tracing activities. Normally, the reunification of separated refugee children is only considered with parents (as opposed to any other family members) in the country of origin. If children are reunited with members of the extended family in the country of origin and their parents remain in the country of asylum, there is a possibility of permanent separation occurring.

4.4 VERIFICATION

Once the parents or other family member of a separated child are located, it is vital that their identity and relationship with the child are confirmed. The purpose of verification is to prevent the child from being handed over to the wrong person. This can happen by accident - perhaps because of mistaken identity or bureaucratic errors - or more malevolent reasons, such as a desire for revenge or to exploit the child's labour. Verification is a built-in protection to the tracing system so people cannot access children who are separated from their families. It must *always* be carried out.

Verification checks that the person claiming the child really is who they say they are. Verification is also used to establish that the relatives are willing and able to take the child and that the child wishes to be reunited with these relatives.

When there is good information on the child's documentation form, verification should be straightforward; a more complex procedure is required where there is limited or no information about the child. In emergencies when there are large numbers of separated children, procedures for verification can be simplified, but they should still be done.

When and Where Is Verification Carried Out?

Verification of the adult's identity and willingness to take the child should be carried out at the time someone comes forward to claim a child or someone is found through tracing. It can be carried out in a tracing office, at a mass tracing meeting, or at the person's home if they are found on a tracing visit.

How Is Verification Carried Out?

Verification is carried out by tracing workers who ask the adult and child questions and record the information on a verification form. It takes place in steps:

1. checking the identity of the adult;
2. the adult confirms whether he or she is willing and able to care for the child;
3. information provided by the person claiming the child is checked with the original documentation form;
4. information provided by the person claiming the child is checked with the child;
5. the child confirms whether he or she wishes to live with the person found.

In situations in which there is any doubt about the relationship between adults and child, observation of their interaction and giving the child adequate time to express him/herself afterwards may be crucial.

Verification forms must always be completed.

Issues Arising During Verification which Require Further Action

During verification particular concerns may have been expressed by the child, the family or observed by the tracing worker. The tracing worker needs to know how to respond to these. It is important to allow time to discuss these concerns. Most concerns will not be obstacles to reunification, they may simply be a case of the child or family needing reassurance. Occasionally, the issues raised may be more serious requiring further action. This may involve more intensive preparation of the child and/or family and the community in which they live. Sometimes it will be necessary to make arrangements for future support through the community. Decisions need to be taken carefully, on a case by case basis, by skilled child care professionals.

The issues involved in situations where the family, the child or the tracing worker have concerns about reunification are given in **Handout 4.2**.

In some cases, careful **situation analysis** will need to be carried out in order to arrive at decisions on the best interests of the individual child in complex and difficult cases.

4.5 REUNIFICATION

Families become separated in difficult circumstances. The memories of separation and experiences since separation may make family reunification difficult. It must be recognised by agencies carrying out reunifications that this may not be an easy time for the child and family.

It is important that the child, the family and the community receive some kind of preparation for reunification. Time should be set aside to discuss future plans, and explain what will happen and when. The opportunity should be given to ask questions and raise any concerns, and the child and family should be told what resources or support will be available following reunification if there are difficulties. Sometimes it will be possible to exchange photographs or letters or to arrange a visit before reunification.

Particular difficulties are often experienced in respect of the reunification of former child soldiers: careful preparation of the child, the family and the community will be required. Please see **Resource Pack on Child Soldiers** Topics 4, 5, and 6.

When a child is reunited with his or her family the local authority and/or community leaders should be involved wherever possible. Where possible, they should be given notification of planned reunifications. In reality, where many reunifications are taking place or when travel and communication are difficult, it may not be possible to inform people in advance. Local authorities should, however, be informed of reunifications which have taken place.

A member of the tracing team should be with the child for reunification. Ideally, this should be someone who has worked with the child. It could also be the person who was responsible for tracing and verification and who therefore has met the family and the community leaders before. If the child has been in a children's centre, a carer can also accompany the child. This is helpful for both child and carer. It is especially useful if the child has to travel a long distance to his or her family. Where carers of children are resistant to letting children return to their families, involving them in reunification may help. The ability to arrange for this depends on logistical, financial and human resources.

If the child has been in a foster family, it might be appropriate to involve the foster family in the reunification. This is the case when foster families have genuine affection for and interest in the child. Caution is necessary in cases where foster families want some form of payment or compensation from the child's family. In reality it may be difficult to provide transport for the foster family. Names and addresses of both families can be exchanged if appropriate.

Carrying Out the Reunification

Whether reunification takes place in the family home or in public, it should include the following key elements:

- some kind of ceremony of acceptance;
- advice to the child and family on problems they may encounter;
- signing the reunification form (essential).

The ceremony does not have to be elaborate, it can simply be a reading of the reunification form. It serves as a celebration and as a demonstration of the family's

responsibility for the child, helping to ensure that the child is protected in his or her new environment. In a community setting the community and families publicly accept responsibility for the children.

Reunification provides an opportunity for the tracing worker to discuss some of the difficulties the child and family may experience following reunification. When reunification is a public event, the tracing worker speaks publicly about the difficulties which might arise following reunification.

4.6 FOLLOW-UP

The term follow-up is often used to describe what may need to be done after children are reunited. It may be used to describe:

- general support to a family; for instance through visits by a social worker who helps the family link up with community support and resources;
- supporting the reintegration of children, for example where there are family or emotional difficulties;
- material support; assistance with school fees or other items.

It is important that everyone is clear what they mean by follow-up when discussing what it will involve, how it will be provided, by whom and for whom.

What Kind of Follow-up?

How follow-up is carried out depends on the resources available and the needs of the individual child and family. One or two visits may be all that is necessary: for example, one visit one month after reunification and another up to six months later. In other cases more frequent follow-up may be desirable. It may be possible to identify children who may need follow-up during the tracing process; for example, a child reunited with both parents after a short separation may be less likely to have problems than a child reunited with a distant relative living in difficult circumstances.

However, some problems only become apparent after reunification. Often difficulties arise within families after reunification as a result of the changes which have taken place in the family since separation, the changes to the family when a child is received back, and from the experiences of both the child and other family members during separation.

Who Should Follow-up?

Once a child has been reunited they become the responsibility of the family and community and ideally follow-up should be taken on at this community level. It is essential to involve the community as much as possible. Prior to reunification, potential sources of support and assistance such as community initiatives, local co-operatives and NGOs, should be identified for the family and child and discussions held about what to do if they need this.

However, some involvement of the tracing worker may be valuable to facilitate the process. It is important for whoever is involved in follow-up to have suitable training or experience in dealing with children and families and their problems.

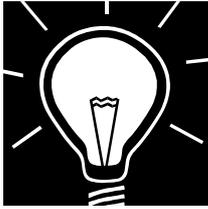
TRAINING MATERIALS FOR TOPIC 4

Overhead 4.1: Key Learning Points	Summarises the key learning points for Topic 4
Overhead 4.2: Six Steps in Family Tracing and Reunification	Presents the six steps in a family tracing and reunification programme
Overhead 4.3: Key Principles in Identifying Separated Children.	Presents the key principles in identifying separated children
Exercise 4.1: Locating Separated Children	Examines the variety of likely locations for separated children
Exercise 4.2: Identification and Documentation - The Child's Story, Part 1	Participants use case study to develop understanding of processes of identification and documentation
Exercise 4.3: Tracing - The Child's Story, Part 1	Participants use case study to develop understanding of issues around tracing
Exercise 4.4: Verification - The Child's Story, Part 2	Participants use case study to develop understanding of processes involved in verification
Exercise 4.5: Reunification - The Child's Story, Part 2	Participants use case study to develop understanding of processes of reunification
Exercise 4.6: Agency Co-ordination in Working with Separated Children	Examines key players and range of activities which would contribute to effective co-ordination among agencies
Handout 4.1: Key Principles in Identifying Separated Children	Details four key principles
Handout 4.2: Issues Arising During Verification	Details some of the problems from the viewpoint of the child, the family and the tracing worker

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAINING

Ideally facilitators should devise training materials derived from the situations familiar to participants. There are many opportunities for using techniques such as brainstorming and group discussion of issues such as identifying separated children, tracing, problems in reunification, the pros and cons of material provision for reunified families, structures for follow-up and support, and so on.

Separated Children



Topic 5

Care Arrangements for Separated Children

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- *There are a variety of care options for separated children.*
- *Children living with extended families and those spontaneously fostered should be encouraged to remain.*
- *Institutional forms of care should be avoided where possible.*
- but -
- *The risks and resources involved in fostering programmes need to be carefully considered.*
- *Some children and adolescents may need special forms of provision.*
- *The adoption of refugee children is rarely appropriate.*

INTRODUCTION

Key Reference Points in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

The family (is) the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of its members and particularly children..... The child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. (Preamble).

A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment shall be entitled to special protection and assistance... Care could include, inter alia, foster placement, Kafalah or Islamic law, adoption, or if necessary placement in suitable institutions for the care of children. (Article 20).

UNHCR POLICIES

UNHCR policies on care for separated children include the following:

- preserving and restoring family unity are of fundamental concern;
- for children without care, placement with a family within the child's own community is preferable;
- where family placements are not possible, small group care within the community can be arranged;
- children in an emergency context are not available for adoption.

CARE OPTIONS FOR SEPARATED CHILDREN

Separated children in emergency situations are cared for in a variety of ways.

- Children are taken in by members of their **extended family**. This often will happen as a matter of course in cultures where children belong to the extended family rather than to the parents alone.
- Children are cared for by **older siblings**, sometimes forming child-headed families.
- Children are **spontaneously fostered** by unrelated carers without the intervention of any other party.
- Children can be **placed in foster homes** by agencies operating fostering programmes. This is sometimes known as **formal or arranged fostering**.
- Children can be **placed in various types of residential home or centre** where it is not possible to arrange for family-based care.

This topic focuses mainly on the formal fostering and residential care.

However, it also includes a brief section on the issue of adoption, and in particular inter-country adoption which is often raised as an issue in refugee emergencies. As already mentioned, children in an emergency context are not available for adoption.

DECIDING ON CARE OPTIONS FOR SEPARATED CHILDREN

Although UNHCR and the Save the Children Alliance strongly favour family-based placements wherever possible, policy has to be established in any refugee emergency which reflects the nature and scale of the problem of separated children, cultural norms regarding substitute family care, the expressed wishes of the children themselves, and the feasibility of different forms of care. It is essential that workers in these situations undertake a situation analysis to determine:

- the characteristics of the population of separated children;
- the resources contained within the community;
- the cultural, social, legal and political context within which policy and practice need to be developed.

Placement of children in local, host country orphanages or institutions should almost **always** be avoided because this detaches the children from their own community and culture and raises serious difficulties in terms of durable solutions.

In general, institutional forms of care have some distinct disadvantages - these are considered in Section 5.5 below. While family-based care generally offers greater prospects for individualised care, integration with the local community and prospects for more normal development of the child, they may also have some disadvantages.

Acceptance of a separated child into an unrelated family may be motivated by many different factors, and not all motivated by genuine concern and care for children. These may include:

- opportunities to exploit the foster child for his/her labour;

- the potential for sexual exploitation of the child;
- perceptions that the foster child will render the family eligible for certain material benefits.

Determining the motivation of foster families - whether spontaneous or agency-arranged - can be extremely difficult. It is difficult to entirely eliminate the element of risk: moreover, some cultures sanction the preferential treatment of children born to the family and this may lead to the child's rights (for example, to food, health-care and education) being denied.

Other problems may be encountered following placement.

- Foster homes can be difficult to monitor and supervise.
- Foster families can sometimes be resistant to efforts to trace the child's family and to achieve family reunification.
- Fostered children may be vulnerable to further separation - e.g. on repatriation.
- When issues such as access to land, inheritance arise the child's place in the family may be questioned.

Whatever policies are determined in any particular situation, providing for the care of separated children has to be an **urgent priority** for UNHCR: this means not just making provision for those children who are unaccompanied but ensuring that the protection and assistance needs of children who are living with extended families or unrelated carers are met.

CHILDREN IN EXTENDED FAMILIES, CHILD-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS AND SPONTANEOUSLY FOSTERED CHILDREN

As a general rule, children who are found to be living with extended families or cared for by siblings, or who have been spontaneously fostered should be encouraged to remain, unless there is evidence that to do so is not in the interests of the individual child. However, separated children living in these circumstances may be especially vulnerable to further separation, especially if there are perceptions that they would be better off in institutions. Separated children living in family settings may require additional support (see section below) but care needs to be taken to ensure that such support can be given in a sustainable way to other families caring for a separated child. In some large-scale emergencies it has not been realistic to provide comprehensive follow-up and support to all children in these situations.

The definition of what constitutes a **child-headed household** should be clearly understood when assessing the needs of children living independently in groups. Many of these groups are in fact supported by extended family living nearby or even in the same compound. The children may be living in separate buildings for purely practical reasons: because there are too many people in the main house, or for reasons to do with inheritance. Identifying such groups as 'child-headed households' and targeting them for assistance risks encouraging more children to split from their family or extended family.

Life for those children in genuinely child-headed households can be very difficult;

older children are faced with responsibilities beyond their years and younger children may be abandoned or exploited. If the oldest child marries, younger children may be left to fend for themselves. Where separated children wish to remain together, they should generally be supported; however, there may be circumstances, for example involving very young children, when alternative arrangements should be made. In refugee communities, the members of child-headed households should be helped to gain access to the same food rations and services as the rest of the population. The households can be supervised and supported by appropriate members of the community, such as leaders, members of child-care committees or community monitors.

All separated children, regardless of their living situation, may need to be documented for family tracing, though it may sometimes be necessary to give priority to those who are not living with relatives.

Some system for monitoring these children will be important in order to provide some safeguards in the event of the child being at risk of abuse or neglect. Such risks are likely to be greater when children are living with unrelated carers, and this is especially the case if the carers come from a different ethnic group from that of the child. The involvement of community leaders and structures is usually important in monitoring and supporting separated children living in family situations.

FOSTERING PROGRAMMES

(N.B. the following section is aimed at giving an introduction to some of the key issues involved in the organisation of a fostering programme. However, it must be remembered that this is a particularly sensitive issue and should be handled by trained and experienced personnel only - mistakes could have serious implications for the child's well-being.)

In some societies, it is not considered acceptable for children to live with unrelated carers. This may not necessarily preclude the initiation of a fostering programme, but cultural norms must be carefully taken into consideration. In other societies there will be a strong tradition of community responsibilities for children, though this does not necessarily mean that fostered children will be accorded the same level of care as children born to the family. In Islamic societies, *Kafalah* is a form of care which allows an unrelated child to receive care, education and inheritance but without a change in kinship status. In many societies, there is no clear dividing line between fostering and adoption, as the latter is often not formalised by judicial procedures.

Exercise 7.1 in the **Situation Analysis Resource Pack** examines some of the socio-cultural issues that need to be taken into consideration in starting a fostering programme.

In most emergency situations, it is unlikely that it will be possible to make use of and develop an existing fostering programme: rather it will necessary to initiate a "situation specific" fostering programme. Fostering programmes need to be staffed by skilled personnel who are trained in working with children, assessing and supporting foster parents and in community work, and they need to be thoroughly familiar with family tracing principles and procedures. Although refugees themselves may be deployed as the main front-line fostering workers it is vital that

they are given a sufficient level of training and professional support.

Fostering needs to be planned in accord with any legislation and policy in the country where fostering is being developed. It is also important to consider the implications of the laws and policies in the country of origin in the event of ultimate repatriation.

Programmes of formal fostering require considerable resources and infrastructure. Agencies planning to set up or support formal fostering must consider these long-term implications:

- the administrative and programme costs;
- the infrastructure and resources required;
- the management of the programme;
- the possible handover of the programme to government or other local agencies.

Recruiting and Assessing Prospective Foster Parents

Steps will need to be taken to sensitise the population on the need for foster parents, and to work with community leaders in order to identify prospective foster parents. It will be necessary to respond individually to families who offer to foster a child. A vital role for the agency staff is to choose foster parents according to strict criteria and to carefully consider their motivation for fostering. It will be important to consider their ability to provide for the whole range of the child's needs, not just physical care. The involvement of community leaders is likely to be important in considering a family's suitability for fostering.

Deciding on a Placement for an Individual Child

The following principles should be adhered to:

- siblings should be kept together unless this is contrary to their best interests;
- foster parents should come from the same ethnic and cultural background as the child and should speak the same language;
- children should be consulted about a possible placement: they should be introduced to the prospective foster family and given opportunities for expressing their wishes and feelings about the proposed placement. This may take some time and repeated visits to the foster home;
- foster parents must agree to continuing tracing activities for the child and to eventual reunification with parents or other family members where this is possible and in accord with the child's best interests;
- there should be a written agreement between the foster parents and the fostering agency (or government as appropriate).

Support, Monitoring and Follow-up

The question of material support for fostering is a difficult and contentious one. In general it has been found preferable to institute a policy of no material support (apart from helping families to benefit from existing community-based projects), as this immediately precludes families motivated by material gain. On the other hand, the expense of caring for young children, for example requiring milk formula, can

sometimes be a major issue, and the absence of some form of material support will inevitably reduce the number of families volunteering to foster.

Similarly, the issue of determining the appropriate level of monitoring and follow-up can be difficult. Long-term follow-up by project staff can be difficult to sustain on the grounds of cost. However, this may lead to a breach of Article 25 of the CRC which refers to the child's right to a "periodic review of the treatment provided to the child and all other circumstances relevant to his or her placement". The most realistic option has frequently been the setting-up of community structures charged with the responsibility of monitoring placements and referring back to the NGO or other authorities in the event of particular difficulties.

In most cases, continuing efforts will be made to trace the child's families, and the contact required by this ensures some continuing follow-up. Experience tends to show that, in longer time-scales, systems for monitoring tend to decay over time, and there is currently a dearth of empirical information on the long-term well-being of children who are fostered in situations of emergency.

As the child becomes older - and especially if the child is repatriated with his/her foster family - issues concerning the costs associated with education and possibly vocational training, and questions of inheritance and property rights will need to be carefully considered.

FORMS OF RESIDENTIAL CARE

As already discussed in Topic 2 of this Resource pack, the presence of children's residential centres can often serve to further encourage the separation of children from their families. Typical activities that may lead to further and unnecessary separation of children may include the following.

- Families may be encouraged to send their children to residential centres if they think there will be significant benefits in doing so. They may, for example, feel that their child will be better fed and clothed in a children's centre. This will also free up more resources for other members of the family.
- Residential centres may provide resources that are not available in the community. Families who have no means of providing for their children may therefore have no choice but to place them in centres.
- Centres may take in children who have not been accidentally separated from their families.
- Children's centres may not necessarily work towards returning children to their families. They may have financial, religious or personal reasons for hanging on to the children.
- Centres may not keep accurate, up-to-date records of the child and his or her family, therefore making it impossible to contact relatives.
- The centre may not encourage access by outside authorities. In particular, it may discourage family tracing or attempts to find placements for children in foster families.
- Comfortable living conditions in the centre may make children unwilling to leave or may mean that they have difficulty in living with a family again once

they leave. Access to education may be seen as one benefit of living in a children's centre.

- The centre may not behave in a responsible or protective way towards the children and therefore cause them physical or emotional harm. Children in this situation may try to run away, thus exposing themselves to yet more danger.

While these are not invariable characteristics of residential institutions, experience strongly shows that in practice it is extremely difficult to organise residential centres which avoid these problems.

If it is deemed necessary and appropriate for child care centres to be opened, it is important that key principles are adhered to in order to ensure that they meet the full range of children's needs, avoid the worst dangers of institutionalisation, and facilitate the return of the child to the care of his or her family. It is the quality of the staff that will most significantly determine the extent to which they meet the needs of children. This means that staff training will be an absolute necessity, though the personal qualities of staff and their commitment to children are of vital importance. These issues are covered in some detail in **Handout 5.1**.

Special Types of Provision for Adolescents

- **Adolescent group homes:** a group of adolescents of similar age may get together, or be placed together, in small houses, without adults living in. The houses may be given by the authorities, or land may be provided and homes built, for example with support of NGOs.
- **Community homes:** these are a cross between a small children's home and a foster home. Small groups of children are cared for by foster parents or by a "mother". The children carry out the normal household tasks and live as part of the local community. The "family" is supported with housing, land, agricultural implements and household equipment. Such homes may provide short-term care pending family tracing, or longer-term care. The aim is that they should become as self-sufficient as possible, with the support of the local community.

ADOPTION

Adoption as a Culturally-Specific Concept

Adoption within western societies is generally understood as a form of child care whereby the child's parental rights and responsibilities are permanently transferred to the adopters, who are usually unrelated to the child by birth. The child normally takes the family name of the adopters. In other countries, adoption may be understood quite differently.

- In some countries the idea of adoption is inconceivable. It is simply not considered possible for parental rights to be transferred to an unrelated person.
- Adoption may be practised but in accordance with custom rather than as a judicial process.
- Islamic societies generally do not allow for adoption, but *Kafalah* is a form of family care which does not involve a change in kinship status.
- In some cultures where adoption is practised, it is the rights and needs of the adoptive parents which take precedence over those of the child.

In refugee emergencies, if the question of the adoption of separated children is raised, it is vital that the notion of adoption is fully understood within the particular cultural context.

Adoption in Refugee Contexts

It is UNHCR's policy that children in emergency situations are not available for adoption. The following issues need to be carefully addressed:

- In emergency situations it is extremely difficult to ascertain whether a separated child has parents or other family members able to provide care. It is vital that exhaustive attempts at family tracing are made. Where parental consent is said to have been given, it is also extremely difficult to establish whether or not this has been freely given and whether the notion of adoption is fully understood.
- It is a requirement of the CRC that adoption is only carried out by "competent authorities" who determine, in accordance with applicable law and procedures and on the basis of all pertinent and reliable information, that the adoption is permissible in view of the child's status...." (Article 21 (a)). This is vital in ensuring that decisions are made in accordance with the best interests of the individual child and it is vital that any moves to place a refugee child are scrutinised very carefully.
- Any placement which uproots the child from his/her own community and culture should almost always be avoided.

Inter-Country Adoption

This term is given to the practice of adoption which requires the child to move to another country: usually it involves adoption by individuals or couples from western societies of children from other societies. In most cases, this is also *trans-cultural adoption* and in many cases it is also *trans-racial*. It is a highly contentious practice, and one in which abuses and corruption appear to be widespread. It is usually motivated by the needs of potential adopters and not those of separated children, and where it involves placing the child in an unfamiliar culture, this often creates problems and conflicts for the child, often in adolescence and early adulthood.

Inter-country adoption is regulated by the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption" of 1993. This Convention establishes a system of co-operation among contracting states and a requirement that adoptions are arranged through a Central Authority within each state. It requires that inter-country adoption must only be carried out if it is in the best interests of the child and sets out the consents that must be made. It requires that due consideration should be given to "the child's upbringing and his or her ethnic, religious and cultural background". It requires that professional work is undertaken with the prospective adopters, the child and the natural parents. In addition, the Recommendation concerning the Application to Refugee Children and other Internally Displaced Children of the Hague Convention was adopted in 1994. This Recommendation underlines the need for parental consents and emphasises the need for measures to be taken for family tracing and reunification before adoption is considered.

In refugee situations where the issue of inter-country adoption is raised, it is

imperative that *it is approached with the utmost caution* and that the advice of competent experts is sought.

TRAINING MATERIALS FOR TOPIC 5

Overhead 5.1: Key Learning Points	Summarises the key learning points for Topic 1
Overhead 5.2: Care Arrangements for Separated Children - CRC	Quotation from the CRC
Overhead 5.3: Varieties of Care	Lists varieties of care in emergency situations
Exercise 5.1: Care Alternatives for Separated Children	Identifies and evaluates a range of care options for children and raises key issues which need to be considered
Exercise 5.2: Care Arrangements for Separated Children	Explores a range of issues and dilemmas in different case scenarios
Situation Analysis Exercise 7.1: The Importance of Socio-cultural Information for Child Fostering	Examines socio-cultural issues which need to be considered in planning a fostering programme
Situation Analysis Exercise 9.1: Complex Case Study: Rwandese Children Fostered in Zairean Families	Explores a range of issues within a complex situation involving large numbers of refugee children fostered by host-country families
Exercise 5.3: The case of Kollie	Examines care options for a child who is living independently on the streets
Exercise 5.4: Inter-country Adoption	Explores some of the contentious issues involved in inter-country adoption
Handout 5.1: Key Principles in Planning and Staffing Residential Centres	Details key principles

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAINING

In deciding on appropriate group exercises, it will probably be preferable to get participants to work on situations that face them in their particular context: for example, it may be appropriate to ask them to plan a fostering programme, or residential centre, based on an actual situation.

Separated Children



Sample Programmes

Different participants are likely to have different learning needs and priorities. We have divided participants into three broad groups: senior managers, sector co-ordinators and field staff.

Senior managers are those people who have key responsibility for an NGO's operations in a country or region or a UNHCR Section. They will have overall responsibility for strategy and resource allocation within the organisation's policy framework. Senior managers' needs are likely to be best served through briefings.

Sector co-ordinators comprise those people who have responsibility for a particular aspect of their agency's work in a country or region or who have a responsibility for a particular function within an operation, such as for example UNHCR programme, protection or community services officers. Sector co-ordinators are those responsible for translating policy into practice and ensuring that programme budgets reflect the necessary resources to support good practice.

Field staff are those people working in the field who are responsible for implementing the programme activities. They often have considerable front-line experience. Field staff may value the opportunity to develop and practise new skills as well as develop their knowledge and understanding.

Training programmes should be designed with the responsibilities and learning needs of these different groups in mind. If possible, participants from different groups should be trained separately but, if this is not possible, exercises and input should be selected which will meet the needs of all groups. It may be possible to use different small group exercises to address the needs of each type of participant in a mixed group workshop.

Two types of programme are included in this resource pack. The first describes a half day Awareness-Raising Workshop. The programme makes detailed reference to materials from the resource pack and describes how a facilitator might use these materials to conduct a session lasting three and a half hours.

The second example is for a full day workshop. It is written in the form of a Session Plan which covers:

- the overall aim of the training session;
- specific learning objectives;
- a description of what will be covered and the sequence to be followed;
- the timing for each part of the session;

- who will take responsibility for the different parts of the programme;
- what inputs and exercises will be used;
- what materials (e.g. handouts, overheads, briefing papers, index cards) will be required;
- what equipment (e.g. flipchart, overhead projector, blackboard, video) is needed.

The purpose and development of session plans are described in detail in the **ARC Facilitator's Toolkit**.

Both programmes are intended as guidance examples only. It is very important that the facilitator should think carefully about the group of participants with whom he or she will be working and devise a programme that takes into account:

- the role and responsibilities of the participants;
- the learning needs of the participants;
- their existing level of knowledge;
- their interest in the subject;
- their willingness to share experience and admit to gaps in their knowledge / skills;
- current / local issues and priorities for the participants;
- the amount of time they have available;
- their position in their organisation.

Any training programme should be devised, if possible, in consultation with the intended participants. If it is not possible to consult with all participants (for example, by sending out an application form including questions about their expectations for the training), the facilitator should try to speak to a sample of participants before making final decisions about the programme.

The facilitator should also consider:

- the range of Topics to be covered;
- the order in which Topics should be addressed;
- how to encourage the sharing of experience and information between participants;
- who will carry out the training;
- what methods will be most appropriate for the participants.

More detail on the process of training can be found in the **ARC Facilitator's Toolkit**.

Remember to build in a workshop evaluation - you will find ideas for this in the **ARC Facilitator's Toolkit**.

DETAILED PROGRAMME FOR A HALF DAY AWARENESS SESSION

This programme is designed to provide participants with an overview of the causes of separation and prevention strategies to avoid family separations. It also examines how responses for the protection and care of separated children can be developed.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- develop an understanding of what defines separation; understand which articles of the CRC relate to separation and become familiar with the UNHCR Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care;
- consider various causes of separation and to assess different strategies for the prevention of separation;
- analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the IDTR process and to consider how inter-agency co-operation might assist this process;
- consider a variety of different care options for separated children and assess the strengths and weakness of the different options.

PREPARATION

The facilitator should prepare an information pack for the participants which may include:

1. copies of the relevant Handouts and Briefing Notes;
2. a copy of the Reading List and relevant Readings;
3. copies of relevant materials from the region / country / locality (e.g. research papers, monitoring reports).

If possible, this pack should be sent to participants in advance.

The facilitator should gather any locally relevant information on the Topics to be addressed in the training and identify individuals with specific expertise who could act as resource persons. All participants can be asked to bring along relevant material to display / share with others. The facilitator could, if possible, devise locally appropriate case-studies.

The facilitator should study the notes for each Exercise carefully to ensure that all the necessary materials are prepared in advance.

Introduction – Separated Children

10 mins	Introduce the agreed objectives of the workshop on Separated Children on a prepared flipchart. Using Overhead 1.0 Key Concepts introduce the relevant Key Concepts.	Flipchart summarising objectives. Overhead 1.0
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Definitions, CRC Articles and UNHCR Guidelines

15 mins	Introduce topic. Participants work in small groups to develop a definition for “unaccompanied” and “separated” children. Plenary with facilitator to verify and extend definition (see briefing Notes for Topic 1).	
15 mins	Whole group work: brainstorm which Articles from CRC are relevant. Distribute Handout H1.2.	Handout 1.1
10 mins	Short presentation introducing UNHCR Guidelines on Protection and Care (see Briefing Notes).	Overhead 1.2

Causes of Separation and Preventive Measures

45 mins	Introduce topic. Introduce Exercise 2.1 and invite participants to work through the exercise. In plenary, ensure that points raised in Briefing Notes under headings Deliberate Separation, Accidental Separation and Agency Induced Separation are discussed and summarised on flip chart. Use Overhead 2.1 to summarise Key Learning Points. Distribute Handout 2.1.	Exercise 2.1 Overhead 2.1 Handout 2.1
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Family Tracing and Reunification

15 mins	Introduce topic by presenting the 6 overlapping steps and the Guiding Principles, using Briefing Notes from Topic 3 and Topic 4.	Overhead 3.1 Overhead 4.1 Overhead 4.2
60 mins	Divide participants into small groups. Facilitate	Exercise 3.2

Exercise 3.2.

Plenary to summarise key points. Include in this plenary consideration of how inter-agency co-operation could enhance this process.

Care Arrangements

30 mins

Brainstorm and group discussion on the different care arrangements that are possible, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses in different situations (or use Ex 5.1).

In plenary, include Overhead 5.2 and 5.3.

Exercise 5.1

Overhead 5.2
and 5.3

Conclusion

10 mins

Facilitator summarises main points emerging from the session and facilitates brief evaluation.

SESSION PLAN FOR A DAY WORKSHOP ON SEPARATED CHILDREN / WORKING WITH CHILDREN

This programme has been written in the form of a training plan to demonstrate how materials from more than one Resource Pack can be combined to create a workshop that is customised to the needs of a particular group of participants. It is intended as an example only.

OVERALL AIM

To raise the awareness of participants about the effects of separation on children and introduce some of the issues involved in communicating effectively. Working with Children stresses that it can only provide an introduction to the skills required - personnel who need to communicate with children on a regular basis, particularly distressed children, should seek more specialised training. However, the reality for many staff is that they will, from time to time, find themselves in situations where they do need to communicate with children and will not necessarily have specialised support available.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- identify those Articles of the CRC that apply to effective communication with separated children;
- understand the range of skills needed when working with children in situations where they are separated from their carers;
- identify the particular challenges that working with separated children places on adults' communication skills;
- describe a number of ways in which children can become separated from their carers;
- describe guiding principles which should be applied at all stages of the family tracing process;
- plan a strategy for tracing separated children;
- understand the specific processes that need to be applied in identifying and documenting information about separated children;
- develop skills for facilitating better communication with children.

Action for the Rights of Children (ARC)

Timing	Content	Methods	Materials	Resources and Equipment	Responsibility
30 mins	Welcome and Introductions Sharing and Agreeing of Objectives	Short participatory exercise where participants can get to know each other. Sharing and refining of objectives.	As required in introductory activity	Flipchart and pens	
40 mins	The Importance of Skills in Communicating with Children	Short input by facilitator based on Briefing Notes for Working with Children Topic 1. Activity: Brainstorm Articles in CRC which are relevant to communicating with children, and specifically separated children.	Briefing Notes WWC Topic 1 WWC Overhead 1.2 SC Handout 1.1	Overhead projector Flipchart and pens SC Handout 1.1	
60 mins	The Key Skills in Communicating with Children	Short input by facilitator. Small group exercise.	Briefing Notes WWC Topic 2 WWC Overheads 2.2 and 2.3 WWC Exercise 2.2	Overhead projector Flipchart and pens	
SUGGESTED BREAK					
60 mins	Why Children become Separated from their Carers	Short input by facilitator Small group exercise.	Briefing Notes SC Topic 2 SC Overhead 2.1 and 2.2 SC Exercise 2.1	Overhead projector Flipchart and pens	
30 mins	Separated Children: Guiding Principles	Short input by facilitator. Plenary discussion on relevant issues for participants.	Briefing Notes SC Topic 3 SC Overhead 3.1 SC Overhead 4.2	Overhead projector	

Action for the Rights of Children (ARC)

Suggested Break				
30 mins	Cultural Factors in Communicating with Children	Brief input. Small group exercise.	WWC Exercise 1.2	Flipchart and pens
60 mins	Planning a Strategy for Tracing Separated Children	Small group exercise.	SC Exercise 3.2	Flipchart and pens
30 mins	Review	Short review of the morning's activities and plenary discussion about application to participants' own situations.		Flipchart and pens
SUGGESTED BREAK				
60 mins	Identification and Documentation of Separated Children	Short input by facilitator. Small group exercise. Plenary discussion.	Briefing Notes SC Topic 4 SC Overhead 4.2 SC Exercise 4.2	Overhead projector Flipchart and pens
60 mins	Facilitating Children's Self Expression	Short input by facilitator. Small group exercise.	Briefing Notes WWC Topic 3 WWC Exercise 3.6	
SUGGESTED BREAK				
15 mins	Action-planning	Small group action-planning exercise.		Flipchart and pens.
15 mins	Workshop evaluation	Evaluation exercise.	Evaluation form	

Separated Children



Overheads

1.0	Key Concepts
1.1	Key Learning Points for Topic 1
2.1	Key Learning Points for Topic 2
2.2	How Children Become Separated
2.3	Principles of Evacuation
3.1	Key Learning Points for Topic 3
3.2	Guiding principles in Family Tracing and Reunification
4.1	Key Learning Points for Topic 4
4.2	The Six Steps in Family Tracing and Reunification
4.3	Key Principles in Identifying Separated Children
5.1	Key Learning Points for Topic 5
5.2	Care Arrangements for Separated Children - CRC
5.3	Varieties of Care for Separated Children in Emergency Situations

Separated Children – Overhead 1.0

Key Concepts

1. Separation is a devastating experience for children in situations of conflict and displacement and can have serious long-term consequences for the child's well-being.
2. All work with separated children should be in keeping with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international, regional and national instruments.
3. High priority needs to be given, in all stages of any emergency, to strategies for the prevention of separation.
4. Family tracing and reunification programmes need to be developed for separated children; these are complex and specialised programmes requiring knowledgeable and well-trained staff in order to provide a high quality service for highly vulnerable children.
5. Care arrangements for separated children should, wherever possible, be based on family and community responsibilities for children. Institutional forms of care should be avoided wherever possible, but the risks involved in foster programmes also have to be acknowledged. Children in an emergency context are not available for adoption.
6. The importance of careful and co-ordinated planning amongst those agencies involved in developing programmes on behalf of separated children cannot be under-estimated. This includes ensuring that any activities do not in themselves lead, be it inadvertently, to further separations.

Separated Children – Overhead 1.1

Key Learning Points for Topic 1

- There is an important distinction between unaccompanied and separated children, but both are likely to require family tracing.
- Separated children must be identified as soon as possible.
- Separation can have a far-reaching impact on children's development.
- Separated children may be at greatly increased risk of exploitation and of recruitment into armed forces or groups.
- Programmes for separated children should have a clear child rights focus.
- Wherever possible, care arrangements should be provided in a family/community based setting.

Separated Children – Overhead 2.1

Key Learning Points for Topic 2

- It is essential that activities aimed at limiting separations are established as quickly as possible.
- Children become separated from their families in various ways and the response should reflect the cause.
- Agencies need to take great care to ensure that their own activities do not lead to accidental separations.
- Children who are alone are not always “separated”.
- The evacuation of children should only be undertaken under particular conditions.

Separated Children – Overhead 2.2

How Children Become Separated

- **Accidental
Separation**

- **Deliberate
Separation**

Separated Children – Overhead 2.3

Principles of Evacuation

- Protect and assist in place
- Preserve family unity
- Evacuate only under proper conditions

Separated Children – Overhead 3.1

Key Learning Points for Topic 3

- The process of family tracing and reunification is a complex one. Close collaboration is required between all parties involved.
- Any decisions and actions on behalf of separated children should be informed by the guiding principles of Best Interests, Participation and Family Unity.
- Confidentiality and the protection of data needs to be ensured at all stages of the tracing and reunification process.

Separated Children – Overhead 3.2

Guiding Principles in
Family Tracing and Reunification

- **Best interests**
- **Participation**
- **Family unity**

Separated Children – Overhead 4.1

Key Learning Points for Topic 4

- The overall process has six distinct but overlapping stages.
- The various tasks and activities within each stage need to be clearly understood.
- Difficult decisions on the child's best interests have to be taken on a case-by-case basis by skilled child care professionals.

Separated Children – Overhead 4.2

The Six Steps in
Family Tracing and Reunification

- Identification
- Documentation
- Family Tracing
- Verification
- Reunification
- Follow-up

Separated Children – Overhead 4.3

Key principles in Identifying Separated Children

- Identifying separated children should not disrupt existing care arrangements.
- Information campaigns may be needed to raise awareness of the issue of separated children.
- Active searches for separated children may be needed.
- Priority should normally be given to children whose tracing needs are most urgent.

Separated Children – Overhead 5.1

Key Learning Points for Topic 5

- There are a variety of care options for separated children.
 - Children living with extended families and those spontaneously fostered should be encouraged to remain.
 - Institutional forms of care should be avoided where possible.
- but -
- The risks and resources involved in fostering programmes need to be carefully considered.
 - Some children and adolescents may need special forms of provision.
 - The adoption of refugee children is rarely appropriate.

Separated Children – Overhead 5.2

Care Arrangements for Separated Children
- CRC

“The family (is) the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of its members and particularly children..... The child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.
(Preamble).

Separated Children – Overhead 5.3

Varieties of Care for Separated Children in
Emergency Situations

- Members of their extended family
- Older siblings
- “Spontaneous” fostering by unrelated carers
- Formal or arranged fostering
- Various types of residential home or centre

Separated Children



Exercises

1.1	Separated Children: Definitions	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
1.2	Separated Children: Sensitisation Exercise	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
2.1	Causes of Separation and Preventive Measures	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
2.2	Raising Awareness in the Community	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
3.1	Decision-Making Regarding Family Reunification	Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
3.2	Planning a Strategy for Tracing Separated Children	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
3.3	When Guiding Principles are not Applied	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
4.1	Locating Separated Children	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
4.2	Identification and Documentation - The Child's Story, Part 1	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
4.3	Tracing - The Child's Story, Part 1	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
4.4	Verification - The Child's Story, Part 2	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
4.5	Reunification - The Child's Story, Part 2	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
4.6	Agency Co-ordination in Working with Separated Children	Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators.
5.1	Care Alternatives for Separated Children	Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

Action for the Rights of Children (ARC)

5.2	Care Arrangements for Separated Children - Issues and Dilemmas	Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
5.3	The Case of Kollie	Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.
5.4	Inter-Country Adoption	Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

Separated Children



Exercise 1.1: (Facilitator's Notes) Definitions

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- understand a number of definitions related to separated children;
- differentiate between similar terms which have different implications.

TIMEFRAME

30 minutes

METHOD

Invite participants to work in small groups.

Write the following words on the whiteboard:

Carer, family, orphan, minor, separated child, unaccompanied child.

Ask participants to work in their pairs and to decide upon a definition for each term. Allow 15 minutes for this.

Plenary session: Ask participants to share definitions. Develop these definitions using the material in the Briefing Notes for Topic 1. Provide participants with correct definitions (either using the whiteboard or by preparing a handout to give them at the end of the session).

RESOURCES

Whiteboard and marker pens.

Separated Children



Exercise 1.2: (Facilitator's Notes) Separation: Sensitisation Exercise

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVE

By the end of this session, participants will:

- have become more sensitised to the effects of separation on children, drawing on their own childhood experiences.

TIMEFRAME

30 minutes

METHOD

Note: This exercise may not be appropriate in situations where participants are known to have had traumatic histories.

Ask participants to work in pairs. Ask each pair to take it in turn to share one memory with their partner about a time when they were separated from their family. Ask them to share with each other answers to the following questions:

- How did you feel at the time?
- How long was this separation? How long did it feel *to you*?
- Did you find anyone or anything helpful in this situation? Who or what? Can you explain why it was helpful?

Allow 15 minutes for this sharing activity. While they are working in pairs write the following three headings on the whiteboard: *Feelings, Sense of Time, Help*.

Plenary: Ask the participants to share their answers under the heading on the whiteboard (this avoids participants from telling their situations to the whole group).

RESOURCES

Whiteboard and marker pens.

Separated Children



Exercise 2.1: (Facilitator's Notes)

Causes of Separation and Preventive Measures

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this exercise, participants will be able to:

- understands the various ways in which children might become separated from their families;
- identify and prioritise measures for preventing separation.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Introduce the topic of separation by explaining very briefly the different ways in which a child might become separated from his/her carer(s). Give one example for each of the following: *accidental separation, deliberate separation, agency induced separation*.

Divide participants into three groups. Give each group a piece of flip chart paper and a marker pen. Assign one of the three types of separation (above) to each group. Ask them to think of other examples or situations where children might become separated under their heading. They should write their answers on flip chart. Allow 20 minutes for this.

Plenary: Each group to present their answers. Other groups to add or comment. Discuss with participants ways they might consider prevention of separation under each heading, using information from Briefing Notes from Topic 2 and **Handout 2.1**.

Distribute copies of **Handout 2.1**

RESOURCES

Flip chart and large pens.

Copies of **Handout 2.1**.

Separated Children



Exercise 2.2: (Facilitator's Notes) Raising Awareness in the Community

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- understand the importance of involving the community in the prevention of separation;
- identify key features of a community awareness-raising programme which would encourage the prevention of separation.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

Introduce the idea that the involvement of the local community is an essential component in preventing the separation of children from their carer(s), especially in situations where communities are in transit or fleeing. Brainstorm with the participants reasons why this is the case.

Put the participants into groups. If there are existing teams or groups that should logically work together, use these, if not, then select random groups of 4 or 5 participants per group.

Ask the groups to discuss and prioritise key features of a campaign which aims to raise awareness – both in the local community and among local organisations – of what can be done to prevent separation. (The campaign must reflect the local situation and the resources available, and must work through the local structures.)

Plenary. Use information from Topic 2 and also the Checklist for Facilitators (below) to inform the plenary session.

CHECK LIST FOR FACILITATORS

- Families and communities must be made aware of how children can become separated and of how these separations can be avoided
- Encourage families to identify possible meeting-points when deliberate separation occurs.
- Institutions and agencies must be made aware of how outside interventions – whether in the form of children’s centres or badly organised relief assistance – can contribute to separations.
- Where possible, prevention of separation activities should be undertaken by local communities and organisations, such as schools and churches.
- Disseminate information about communication systems - the role of ICRC message systems, UNHCR officers, tracing agency offices etc.
- Use the mass media such as newspapers and radio to disseminate information - especially important in non-camp situations.

Separated Children



Exercise 3.1: (Facilitator's Notes) Decision-Making Regarding Family Reunification

TARGET GROUPS

Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- consider the issue of family reunification in a difficult situation;
- discuss dilemmas in determining the child's best interests;
- consider the role of child participation in decisions.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Introduce the exercise by giving a short presentation on principles which should guide decision making in all processes of family tracing. Use information from Briefing Notes in Topic 3 to inform the presentation.

Ask participants to work in small groups. Distribute copies of Participants' Notes for this exercise, and copies of the CRC for each group. Ask participants to read the following case study. Explain that their task is to provide a response to the father's request based on the following Articles of the CRC:

- Article 3: the child's best interests.
- Article 12: the child's opinion/participation.
- Articles 5 and 18: parental rights and responsibilities.

Allow 30 minutes for this. Each group should then share and discuss their response in plenary with the other participants. Provide further information as relevant from Briefing Notes from Topic 3.

RESOURCES

Copies of the CRC.

Copies of the Case Study for each participant.

Separated Children



Exercise 3.1: (Participant's Notes) Decision-Making Regarding Family Reunification

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- consider the issue of family reunification in a difficult situation;
- discuss dilemmas in determining the child's best interests;
- consider the role of child participation in decisions.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

In your small groups, read the following case study. Refer to your copy of the CRC, studying Article 3, best interests; Article 12, the child's opinion; Articles 5 and 18, parental rights and responsibilities.

Develop a response to the boy's father which takes into account these Articles.

You will be asked to share your response in a plenary session.

CASE STUDY

In A..... (a country in Eastern Europe), there is a sporadic civil war between rebels fighting for independence and the government. Many refugees have fled to a neighbouring country which is sympathetic to the rebel cause. After a long lull in the fighting, some refugees are spontaneously returning to their homes and UNHCR is facilitating return on a case-by-case basis, with some basic assistance provided.

A refugee father approaches UNHCR in A..... . He is looking for assistance to secure the return of his 16 year old son who fled to the neighbouring country and has been living in rather unsatisfactory conditions with a group of adolescent boys in an urban setting, with minimal support from UNHCR. The rest of the family has fled to another neighbouring country and have no plans to return.

As a result of the father's representations, a Community Services Officer (following discussion with the Protection Officer) decides to interview the boy. He confirms his wish to return but his manner during the interview leads the CSO to feel that he has some fears which he is unable or unwilling to express verbally. It is learned from reliable sources in A..... that social and political pressure is mounting within the refugee community; and that they plan to send young men back to fight for their independence.

Separated Children



Exercise 3.2: (Facilitator's Notes)

Planning a Strategy for Tracing Separated Children

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- identify those elements that are key to the development of a situation analysis for tracing separated children;
- plan a strategy for tracing separated children in this situation.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

Divide the participants into small groups. Give each group a copy of the case study.

Explain to the participants that they have arrived to work in the situation described in the case study. Their task is to develop an outline plan to trace the separated children in this situation. Explain that they need to find out *who* is separated, prioritise which groups of children are vulnerable, and identify methods that they will use in these processes. Suggest that they note key points on a flipchart so that they can present their plan to the rest of the group

Allow 45 minutes for this.

Plenary: invite groups to share their plans. In discussion, include information from Briefing Notes for Topic 3, and from the **Checklist** below.

RESOURCES

Participants' Notes for this exercise.

Flip chart paper and pens.

CHECKLIST FOR THE FACILITATOR

The following issues should emerge from the exercise.

- The importance of understanding local definitions, e.g. of concepts such as “orphan”, “separated child” etc.
- The importance of finding out about cultural norms about the care of separated children. Is it a traditional practice for parentless children to be cared for by particular relatives? By unrelated adults? In either case, how are children treated in comparison with other children in the family? Reference may be made to the ARC Resource Pack on Situation Analysis (see particularly Topics 7).
- Institutions or centres can readily exert a “pull-effect” and encourage unnecessary separations unless very great care is taken to document children and assess their family circumstances carefully.
- The relative priority of the more visible unaccompanied children as compared with other separated children who, although living with families, may have significant protection needs and may benefit from family tracing.
- Different approaches to finding out more about the phenomenon of separated children: groups should consider the possibility of using the UNHCR refugee registration system, modest surveys, “walk and talk” techniques, focus group discussions etc., involving community structures where appropriate. Reference may be made to the ARC Resource Pack on Situation Analysis (see particularly Topics 5 and 8).
- One part of the strategy needs to be the prevention of further separation.
- Gender issues may be significant: separated girls *may* be more vulnerable to sexual exploitation (though sexually abused boys may be a significant hidden problem) while separated boys *may* be more vulnerable to recruitment into armed services.
- It may be important to consider how material conditions in the camp impact on the phenomenon of separation: lack of food security and inadequate shelter may contribute to the abandonment of children.

Separated Children



Exercise 3.2: (Participant's Notes)

Planning a Strategy for Tracing Separated Children

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- identify those elements that are key to the development of a situation analysis for tracing separated children;
- plan a strategy for tracing separated children in this situation.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

Work in small groups.

Imagine that you have arrived to work in the situation described in the case study. Your task is to develop an outline plan to trace the separated children in this situation. You need to find out *who* is separated, prioritise which groups of children are vulnerable, and identify methods that you will use in these processes.

Note key points on flipchart so that you can present your plan to the rest of the group.

CASE STUDY SCENARIO

Following a severe outbreak of genocidal fighting, approximately 100,000 people flee their communities and seek refuge in a neighbouring country. By the time a Community Services Officer is deployed within the UNHCR team – two months after the initial emergency – it is apparent that there are significant numbers of separated children. During the first few days of the deployment, the following are drawn to the attention of the CSO.

- Food rations are minimal.
- Many people still lack even basic shelter.
- A local NGO has decided to open an “unaccompanied children’s centre”, and immediately many children either found their way there or were abandoned there by their parents or other carers, including small infants.
- When the CSO asked community leaders about separated children, they brought in six “orphans” who turned out to be children who had lost their fathers and who were living either with their mother or relatives of their father.
- There are believed to be large numbers of children of all ages living with extended family and unrelated adults. Some children are living with very elderly carers. At this stage it is not entirely clear to the CSO whether living with unrelated adults is a culturally common practice. There are many reports of abuse and exploitation, including sexual abuse, of children taken in by other families.
- There appear to be many children, including quite young children, sleeping in groups or individually without adult supervision and without proper shelter.
- Many children are coming forward looking for their parents, and many parents are looking for separated children.
- There is anecdotal evidence of boys, aged 13 – 15, being recruited into armed forces, especially boys not living with their own families.
- A camp committee has been formed, comprising block leaders (all men).
- ICRC is offering to develop a regional family-tracing programme, but within the camp, resources are extremely limited.

Separated Children



Exercise 3.3: (Facilitator's Notes) When Guiding Principles are not Applied

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- identify guiding principles which should be applied in working with separated children;
- understand the importance of ensuring the understanding and co-operation of local and government institutions in the process of protecting the rights of separated children.

TIMEFRAME

45-60 minutes

METHOD

Introduce this exercise by giving a short presentation, based on the information provide in Topic 3, about guiding principles, long term solutions, and material assistance.

Ask participants to work in small groups. They should read the case study provided, and answer the following questions:

1. What has gone wrong in this case: which principles have not been applied, and what effect has this had on the boys in question?
2. What course of action could you now propose on behalf of these two boys?

Allow 30 minutes for this. Facilitate a plenary session.

RESOURCES

Participants Notes for this exercise.

Separated Children



Exercise 3.3: (Participants' Notes) When Guiding Principles are not Applied

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- identify guiding principles which should be applied in working with separated children;
- understand the importance of ensuring the understanding and co-operation of local and government institutions in the process of protecting the rights of separated children.

TIMEFRAME

45-60 minutes

METHOD

Work in small groups. Read the case study below, and answer the following questions.

1. What has gone wrong in this case: Which principles have not been applied, and what effect has this had on the boys in question?
2. What course of action could you now propose?

There will be a plenary session.

CASE STUDY FROM EASTERN EUROPE

A few weeks ago the deputy head of the Aliens Police in K... (a region in a country in Eastern Europe) asked our local NGO partner to provide emergency humanitarian assistance to two 14-year-old boys (a Bangladeshi and a Sri Lankan) who were detained with a group of other illegal aliens. The deputy said that the two boys were accompanied by adult relatives and that he wanted to release the boys and put them in the care of the NGO pending expulsion. I spoke with the deputy on the phone and suggested instead that he should release the adult relatives as well so as not to split the family, at which point the deputy said there weren't any accompanying relatives. So I said to the deputy that the State has a special duty towards unaccompanied children and, while I would work with him to find a solution, it was not necessarily the right solution to place these children in the care of the NGO. I said I was sure there had to be a temporary State solution pending a more durable solution. I asked whether these children were asylum-seekers and the deputy said they were not, although he then admitted they had not been interviewed because there was no interpreter. He then lost patience with the telephone discussion and said that unless I authorized the NGO to care for these unaccompanied children he would dump them in the street in the next hour.

So, the NGO tried to provide emergency assistance while I took up the matter with central government. However, the home that the NGO found for these children refused to take one of them in because he had a skin disease (I had already recommended medical examinations) and he ended up being transferred to quarantine in hospital. The other child followed him into hospital shortly afterwards.

Meanwhile, I discussed the case with the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs which informed me that indeed the State is responsible towards these unaccompanied children and that the Aliens Police should have referred the case to the Ministry's social workers in the regional office in K..... I obtained an undertaking from the Ministry that its social workers would, with the co-operation of the NGO, obtain social histories of the children using the UNHCR forms designed for this purpose. The Ministry also undertook to take over the case from the NGO and to discharge the State's legal responsibility to ensure the care of the children until family reunification was arranged.

However, the social workers never went to see the children because the hospital records indicated that they were not minors but were 18 - information provided by the Police (still without having interviewed them!) and uncritically copied into the records by the hospital staff. The NGO could not at first get access to these children because they were in quarantine but, once it did get access, one of the boys (the NGO was unable to communicate with the other because of the lack of an interpreter) said he was aged 16, i.e. a minor. The two boys were then transferred to a nearby Detention Centre.

Separated Children



Exercise 4.1: (Facilitator's Notes) Locating Separated Children

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- explore the range of possible places where separated children might be in a number of situations;
- to consider approaches to identifying these young people.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Divide the participants into small groups. Give each group three of the case studies provide in the **Participants Notes** for this exercise. For each case study, ask the groups to:

- identify possible locations of separated children;
- discuss means of identifying them and possible areas of difficulty in doing this.

Allow 20 minutes.

Plenary: Use the **Check List for Facilitators** to inform this session.

RESOURCES

Participants Notes.

CHECK LIST FOR FACILITATORS

Orphanages

These exist in many countries. Following conflict, separated children may be taken to orphanages, but the need for tracing teams to look at these orphanages is not always recognised. In Liberia, for example, teams visiting orphanages were told that the military had brought in children.

Living independently

Children can often be found living and scavenging in places such as the city dump. One such group of children were found to be quite young and with no idea where their families were. Some may be living in slums or other sites around the city. Some may be highly resistant to any form of intervention in their lives.

Street children

Children sometimes work on the streets as vendors. It turned out that Joseph, who was living on the streets selling cigarettes, was from the north and didn't know if his family were alive. His father was traced and a visit organised.

Hospitals, health centres, emergency medical sites

Separated children, especially babies, are often found in hospitals and health centres following conflict, hence tracing teams need to set up contacts with these places. Medical agencies are often the first to reach an emergency, and they may therefore come across separated children.

Prisons

In some situations women may be put in prison. They may take their children with them, especially breast-feeding babies, or they may leave them with relatives, older children and friends. When tracing teams visit prisons, they can often obtain information about separated children. Tracing teams can also check for members of the family who might be in prison; separated children are sometimes picked up from the streets and imprisoned.

Communities

When visiting local leaders, members of the community can often identify children who are not living with relatives. Remember that community structures may still exist, even though they may be on the move. During and after conflict, children are often taken in by families, some of whom may be previously unknown to the children.

Separated Children



Exercise 4.1: (Participants' Notes) Locating Separated Children

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- explore the range of possible places where separated children might be in a number of situations;
- to consider approaches to identifying these young people.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Divide into small groups. You will be assigned three of the case studies below. For each case study:

- identify possible locations of separated children;
- discuss means of identifying them and possible areas of difficulty in doing this.

There will be a plenary session.

THE CASE STUDIES

Situation one

Refugees are flooding into a medium-sized regional town, driven by fighting in the countryside between a group of rebels and the national forces. The town, which usually has about 100,000 inhabitants, is a market and administrative centre for a large area. However, its population has swelled to nearly a quarter of a million because of the refugees and the arrival of NGOs and other organisations.

Situation two

The refugee camp is situated 2–3 kms from the edge of the national capital and spreads over several square kms. Run by UNHCR and several local and international NGOs implementing programmes, the camp is well established and provides a full range of facilities.

Situation three

The refugees are in transit from one camp to another that is considered to be more secure. They are being supported in their journey by an international NGO. A major road junction outside a small town has become a natural stopping-place both for those being transported and for those moving under their own power. As a result, a disorganised site has developed.

Situation four

A refugee camp has grown up in the countryside, far from any town or city of any size. It is on the banks of a river, which is being used for drinking water and other activities. The camp is well run, but is growing quickly. The organisations involved are struggling to keep things properly organised.

Separated Children



Exercise 4.2: (Facilitator's Notes) Identification and Documentation - The Child's Story, Part 1

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- understand what needs to be included in the process of identification and documentation;
- have considered the range of skills needed to carry out these tasks effectively.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Divide participants into small groups. Ask them to read the case study . Explain to them that their task is to handle the identification and documentation for this child. In their groups they should answer the following questions.

- What do you need to find out about Jean-Claude?
- How are you going to find answers to these questions?

Ask them to note their answers on a flip chart. Give them 15 minutes for this part of the exercise.

Plenary: Ask them to share their answers. Build up a full picture with them, using information from the Briefing Notes in Topic 4. Provide copies of **Handout 4.1**

Once these questions have been answered, ask the whole group to consider what skills may be needed to carry out this work effectively. Facilitate a group discussion to answer this.

RESOURCES

Copies of the **Participants' Notes** for this exercise.

Flip charts and pens.

Handout 4.1.

Separated Children



Exercise 4.2: (Participants' Notes) Identification and Documentation - The Child's Story, Part 1

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- understand what needs to be included in the process of identification and documentation;
- have considered the range of skills needed to carry out these tasks effectively.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Work in small groups. Read the case study. Your task is to handle the identification and documentation for this child. Answer the following questions.

- What do you need to find out about Jean-Claude?
- How are you going to find answers to these questions?

THE CHILD'S STORY

My name is Jean-Claude and I am eight years old. Before the war I lived with my parents, my two sisters and two little brothers up on a hillside. On a clear day you could see the mountains in the far distance from our house.

One day there was fighting all around our house. I didn't know what was happening. I was afraid and I couldn't see my parents. I managed to pick up my three-year-old brother Emile, who was on the ground crying. I also grabbed one blanket, a mat, a pot, a plate and a few heads of corn.

We headed in the direction that I thought the rest of the village would have taken, but we found ourselves on our own. We didn't know where our parents, sisters or brother were. We were particularly worried about our brother Pascal, who was only two years old and might be lost.

Eventually we arrived at a river, where you could pay to get a boat across. We were told that on the other side, 10 km further on, there was a camp where you could get food from the Red Cross. Since we had no money, we had to give up our only saucepan to be able to get across.

By the time we got to the other side there were thousands of people, some sick, some walking very slowly, others rushing around frantically. We kept asking about our family, but no one knew them. Emile would often cry and I would try to comfort him.

A few kilometres on there was a narrow bridge that everyone was trying to cross at the same time. It was the rainy season and the ground was slippery with deep mud. We were all squashed together – men, women, children and even some goats – trying to edge forwards. I tried to hold on tightly to Emile's hand.

Suddenly there was panic because someone heard shooting. Some people pushed forwards, others backwards. Emile's hand had slipped from mine. I shouted his name many times, but I could not see or hear him. I ran backwards to see if he was there. I then ran in the other direction, but there was no sign of him. In the panic some people had jumped into the river and drowned. I prayed that Emile was not among them, and that some kind family had found him and comforted him.

I climbed a small tree, hoping that I would be able to see Emile if he went by. Eventually I decided to make my way towards the Red Cross camp. When I got there I was so exhausted that I just found a corner and went to sleep.

Early the next morning, just as it was getting light, an adult came up to me and asked me if I had lost my family. At first I was scared to answer, since I didn't know who this person was. Then I saw that they were wearing the badge of an organisation, and they explained that they were looking for children on their own so that they could help them find their families again.

Separated Children



Exercise 4.3: (Facilitator's Notes)

Tracing - The Child's Story, Part 1

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- identify the steps that they need to take in family tracing;
- make decisions about prioritising greatest needs;
- consider the range of skills needed to carry out these tasks effectively.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Divide participants into small groups. If they have already completed Exercise 4.2, explain that you are using the same case study for this exercise. Ask them to read the case study (again). Explain to them that they are working in this camp. Their task is to trace the families of the children that have arrived and have been separated from their families. Jean-Claude and Emil are included in this group. Participants should answer the following questions.

- What steps would you take in order to try to trace Jean-Claude's family?
- What factors may hinder you in this tracing process?
- If resources are limited how would you prioritise activities?

Ask them to note their answers on flip chart. Give them 15 minutes for this part of the exercise.

Plenary: Ask them to share their answers. Build up a full picture with them, using information from the Briefing Notes in Topic 4.

Once these questions have been answered, ask the whole group to consider this question:

- What skills do you need to carry out this work effectively?

Facilitate a group discussion to answer this.

RESOURCES

Copies of the **Participants' Notes** for this exercise.

Flip charts and pens.

Separated Children



Exercise 4.3: (Participants' Notes)

Tracing -

The Child's Story, Part1

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- identify the steps that you need to take in family tracing;
- make decisions about prioritising greatest needs;
- consider the range of skills needed to carry out these tasks effectively.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Work in small groups. If you have already completed Exercise 4.2, you are using the same case study for this exercise. Read the case study (again).

You are working in this camp. Your task is to trace the families of the children that have arrived and have been separated from their families. Jean-Claude and Emil are included in this group. Answer the following questions.

- What steps would you take in order to try to trace Jean-Claude's family?
- What factors may hinder you in this tracing process?
- If resources are limited how would you prioritise activities?

THE CHILD'S STORY

My name is Jean-Claude and I am eight years old. Before the war I lived with my parents, my two sisters and two little brothers up on a hillside. On a clear day you could see the mountains in the far distance from our house.

One day there was fighting all around our house. I didn't know what was happening. I was afraid and I couldn't see my parents. I managed to pick up my three-year-old brother Emile, who was on the ground crying. I also grabbed one blanket, a mat, a pot, a plate and a few heads of corn.

We headed in the direction that I thought the rest of the village would have taken, but we found ourselves on our own. We didn't know where our parents, sisters or brother were. We were particularly worried about our brother Pascal, who was only two years old and might be lost.

Eventually we arrived at a river, where you could pay to get a boat across. We were told that on the other side, 10 km further on, there was a camp where you could get food from the Red Cross. Since we had no money, we had to give up our only saucepan to be able to get across.

By the time we got to the other side there were thousands of people, some sick, some walking very slowly, others rushing around frantically. We kept asking about our family, but no one knew them. Emile would often cry and I would try to comfort him.

A few kilometres on there was a narrow bridge that everyone was trying to cross at the same time. It was the rainy season and the ground was slippery with deep mud. We were all squashed together – men, women, children and even some goats – trying to edge forwards. I tried to hold on tightly to Emile's hand.

Suddenly there was panic because someone heard shooting. Some people pushed forwards, others backwards. Emile's hand had slipped from mine. I shouted his name many times, but I could not see or hear him. I ran backwards to see if he was there. I then ran in the other direction, but there was no sign of him. In the panic some people had jumped into the river and drowned. I prayed that Emile was not among them, and that some kind family had found him and comforted him.

I climbed a small tree, hoping that I would be able to see Emile if he went by. Eventually I decided to make my way towards the Red Cross camp. When I got there I was so exhausted that I just found a corner and went to sleep.

Early the next morning, just as it was getting light, an adult came up to me and asked me if I had lost my family. At first I was scared to answer, since I didn't know who this person was. Then I saw that they were wearing the badge of an organisation, and they explained that they were looking for children on their own so that they could help them find their families again.

Separated Children



Exercise 4.4: (Facilitator's Notes)

Verification -

The Child's Story, Part 2

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- identify when and where verification should be carried out;
- understand how to carry out the verification process;
- consider some of the issues that might arise as a result of this process.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Divide participants into small groups. If they have already completed Exercise 4.2, explain that you are using the same case study for this exercise, but that this is the second half of the same story. Ask them to read the case study. Their task is to use this story to describe the process of verification. In doing so they should address the following questions.

- When and where should verification be carried out?
- How should verification be carried out?
- Consider some of the issues that might arise from verification which will require further action.

Ask them to note their answers on flip chart. Give 15 minutes for this.

Plenary: Ask them to share their answers. Build up a full picture with them, using information from the Briefing Notes in Topic 4. Use in the information in **Handout 4.2**. Provide participants with a copy of this handout at the end of the session.

RESOURCES

Handout 4.2.

Flip charts and pens.

Separated Children



Exercise 4.4: (Participants' Notes)

Verification -

The Child's Story, Part 2

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- identify when and where verification should be carried out;
- understand how to carry out the verification process;
- consider some of the issues that might arise as a result of this process.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Work in small groups. If they have already completed Exercise 4.2 or Exercise 4.3, you are using the same case study for this exercise, but that this is the second half of the same story. Read the case study. Your task is to use this story to describe the process of verification. In doing so, please answer the following questions.

- When and where should verification be carried out?
- How should verification be carried out?
- Consider some of the issues that might arise from verification which will require further action.

Note your answers on flip chart.

There will be a plenary session.

THE CHILD'S STORY, CONTINUED:

I was put in a tent with children from the same area that we came from. Some were very young and didn't know which village they came from. I did see, sitting quietly in the corner, one little girl, Rosette, from our home village, who my brother used to play with. I excitedly told the woman who was looking after us that I knew the girl. But the woman said that it was better for her to stay there at the camp, since the girl hadn't said herself which village she was from, and they didn't want to send her to the wrong place. I was upset that the woman didn't believe me. But at least I could tell the girl's family back home that I had seen her and that she was alive.

The people in the camp told me to wait, since each day children arrived who had been found along the road. The next morning I waited eagerly as more and more people came to the camp. Finally, in the afternoon I spotted Emile holding the hand of a young boy who had just reached the camp. I shouted his name and ran up. At first he just looked straight ahead, as if he wasn't aware of anything around him. Suddenly he looked up, realised it was me and jumped into my arms.

The older boy with him saw that I was clean and had nice clothes on, so he asked where he could also get help. I said that the foreigners organising the place for separated children gave out biscuits, clothes and soap. I wanted to help this boy, called Michel, who had helped my brother.

He said that his aunt was on the other side of the camp, but that he wasn't with his parents. So I said that he should say that he is separated, and then he could join us and be taken home in a bus. So he did that, and was able to get some nice new clothes like us.

For a few months Emile and I stayed at the camp, along with our new friend Michel. Finally we were able to return to the provinces we came from. All the children from our province were taken in a big truck to the same children's centre. There we bumped into other children from our village, who had also lost their families.

Every day social workers from organisations would come and collect children and take them back to their village if their relatives had been found. No one knew whose turn it would be the next day, so we just hoped it would be ours. We were happy to see other children go home, but didn't understand why it took so long for us. Maybe all our relatives had been killed, or they didn't want us back in the village.

Eventually, after five weeks we were told that, although our parents had not been found, there was an aunt and our sisters who were back in the village. We were happy to know that we would soon be back with our sisters, but worried about where our parents and little brother Pascal might be. Also, my aunt was very sick and I didn't know how she would be able to look after us two and my sisters.

Before we went to the village, the social workers showed us a photograph of our aunt and asked if we recognised her and wanted to go and stay with her. Of course I said yes, since I wanted to see my sisters again, although I didn't know how my aunt would cope.

After a few weeks back in the village, we were told by the local district leader that there would be visits organised to special children's centres for people who had lost

very small children. Eventually the day came when the bus came to our village. I went off with my aunt to see if we would be able to find Pascal.

We arrived at the centre and were asked many questions about my brother, such as his age and what he was wearing when we got separated from each other. We were then asked to look along a row of several children of similar age to Pascal. Towards the end of the line we eventually saw him. At first he didn't realise it was us, but then we began to sing his favourite song to him and he began to cry and hold on to us very tightly. We were then asked to put our thumbprint on a special form to show that we had found our brother. I don't know who the form was for – maybe for the children's centre – and then we went home in the bus.

Separated Children



Exercise 4.5: (Facilitator's Notes)

Reunification - The Child's Story, Part 2

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- identify what preparation is needed for both the family and the children before reunification takes place;
- what is involved in carrying out reunification;
- what follow-up might be necessary.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Divide participants into small groups. If they have already completed Exercises 4.2, 4.3 or 4.4, explain that you are using the same case study for this exercise, but that this is the second half of the same story. Ask them to read the case study. Their task is to use this story to develop a plan for the reunification of Jean-Claude's family. In doing so they should address the following questions.

- What preparation for the family and for the children will be necessary for this reunification to take place successfully?
- What key elements should be included in the actual reunification of the family with the children?
- What sort of follow-up might be required for the children and for the family?

Ask them to note their answers on a flip chart. Give them 15 minutes for this part of the exercise.

Plenary: Ask them to share their answers. Build up a full picture with them, using information from the Briefing Notes in Topic 4.

Separated Children



Exercise 4.5: (Participants' Notes)

Reunification - The Child's Story, Part 2

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- identify what preparation is needed for both the family and the children before reunification takes place;
- what is involved in carrying out reunification;
- what follow-up might be necessary.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Work in small groups. If you have already completed Exercises 4.2, 4.3 or 4.4, you are using the same case study for this exercise, but this is the second half of the same story. Read the case study. Your task is to use this story to develop a plan for the reunification of Jean-Claude's family. In doing so you should address the following questions.

- What preparation for the family and for the children will be necessary for this reunification to take place successfully?
- What key elements should be included in the actual reunification of the family with the children?
- What sort of follow-up might be required for the children and for the family?

Note your answers on a flip chart.

THE CHILD'S STORY, CONTINUED:

I was put in a tent with children from the same area that we came from. Some were very young and didn't know which village they came from. I did see, sitting quietly in the corner, one little girl, Rosette, from our home village, who my brother used to play with. I excitedly told the woman who was looking after us that I knew the girl. But the woman said that it was better for her to stay there at the camp, since the girl hadn't said herself which village she was from, and they didn't want to send her to the wrong place. I was upset that the woman didn't believe me. But at least I could tell the girl's family back home that I had seen her and that she was alive.

The people in the camp told me to wait, since each day children arrived who had been found along the road. The next morning I waited eagerly as more and more people came to the camp. Finally, in the afternoon I spotted Emile holding the hand of a young boy who had just reached the camp. I shouted his name and ran up. At first he just looked straight ahead, as if he wasn't aware of anything around him. Suddenly he looked up, realised it was me and jumped into my arms.

The older boy with him saw that I was clean and had nice clothes on, so he asked where he could also get help. I said that the foreigners organising the place for separated children gave out biscuits, clothes and soap. I wanted to help this boy, called Michel, who had helped my brother.

He said that his aunt was on the other side of the camp, but that he wasn't with his parents. So I said that he should say that he is separated, and then he could join us and be taken home in a bus. So he did that, and was able to get some nice new clothes like us.

For a few months Emile and I stayed at the camp, along with our new friend Michel. Finally we were able to return to the provinces we came from. All the children from our province were taken in a big truck to the same children's centre. There we bumped into other children from our village, who had also lost their families.

Every day social workers from organisations would come and collect children and take them back to their village if their relatives had been found. No one knew whose turn it would be the next day, so we just hoped it would be ours. We were happy to see other children go home, but didn't understand why it took so long for us. Maybe all our relatives had been killed, or they didn't want us back in the village.

Eventually, after five weeks we were told that, although our parents had not been found, there was an aunt and our sisters who were back in the village. We were happy to know that we would soon be back with our sisters, but worried about where our parents and little brother Pascal might be. Also, my aunt was very sick and I didn't know how she would be able to look after us two and my sisters.

Before we went to the village, the social workers showed us a photograph of our aunt and asked if we recognised her and wanted to go and stay with her. Of course I said yes, since I wanted to see my sisters again, although I didn't know how my aunt would cope.

After a few weeks back in the village, we were told by the local district leader that there would be visits organised to special children's centres for people who had lost

very small children. Eventually the day came when the bus came to our village. I went off with my aunt to see if we would be able to find Pascal.

We arrived at the centre and were asked many questions about my brother, such as his age and what he was wearing when we got separated from each other. We were then asked to look along a row of several children of similar age to Pascal. Towards the end of the line we eventually saw him. At first he didn't realise it was us, but then we began to sing his favourite song to him and he began to cry and hold on to us very tightly. We were then asked to put our thumbprint on a special form to show that we had found our brother. I don't know who the form was for – maybe for the children's centre – and then we went home in the bus.

Separated Children



Exercise 4.6: (Facilitator's Notes)

Agency Co-ordination in Working with Separated Children

TARGET GROUPS

Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- identify the key players in working with separated children/family tracing;
- identify the range of activities that will assist co-ordination between agencies;
- identify the main activities that can be used to assist and improve co-ordination;
- identify and discuss the main barriers to good co-ordination.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

Introduce the exercise by asking participants to brainstorm key players working with separated children and/or family tracing in their area. Write their suggestions on flip chart.

Ask participants to work in pairs and to consider a range of activities that will assist co-ordination between agencies. Give them 10 minutes to do this.

Plenary: Identify and discuss the main activities that can be used to assist and improve co-ordination. Identify and discuss the main problems and issues involved in improving communication.

Use the **Check List** below to inform this plenary session.

RESOURCES

Flip chart paper and pens

CHECK LIST FOR FACILITATORS

- Co-ordination is essential to avoid duplication of effort and waste of time and resources: the interventions of all agencies working with separated children should be co-ordinated.
- The principles of co-ordination apply both to work in acute emergencies and to work in more stable situations.
- The roles and responsibilities of all agencies working with separated children should be clearly defined, and the role of each agency should be understood by all the others. If there is a co-ordinated approach to work with separated children, responsibility can be shared among many organisations, both local and international.
- National, regional and district authorities should be involved in inter-agency collaboration as far as circumstances allow and agencies should keep government informed of their activities.
- There should be a clear framework for co-ordinating activities, decision-making and sharing information at local, national and regional levels.

Separated Children



Exercise 5.1: (Facilitator's Notes) Care Alternatives for Separated Children

TARGET GROUPS

Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- identify the range of care options for separated children;
- consider some of the advantages and disadvantages of each;
- identify some of the key issues which need to be considered in planning care for separated children.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Introduce this exercise. Ask the participants to brainstorm different ways in which care can be provided for separated children. Ask participants to work in groups of three or four. Give each group a copy of the chart in the **Participants' Notes** for this exercise. Ask them to use the ideas that the group have developed in the brainstorm to consider the advantages and disadvantages for each care option. Tell them that there may be other considerations that they wish to note too. Give them 20 minutes for this.

Plenary: Go through each care option and ask participants to contribute advantages and disadvantages for each. Use information in Topic 5, Sections 5.1 to inform this discussion. Record the results of the discussion on flip chart.

Discuss with the whole group the issues that must be considered when *planning* interim care for separated children. Refer to Topic 5, Section 5.2, to inform this discussion.

Use the **Check List** below to inform the discussion.

RESOURCES

Flip chart paper and pens.

Participants' Notes for this exercise.

CHECK LIST FOR FACILITATORS

- Consider the whole range of children's needs - not just physical needs.
- Consider the particular needs of children and adolescents at different stages of their development.
- Children may need care over very different timescales - from a few days to indefinite care. How sustainable are different forms of care?
- Issues of child participation.
- Cultural norms regarding care.
- Structures for assessing and supporting foster homes.
- Should foster parents receive material support?
- Centres have the danger of attracting children who do have families, and may cause children to become institutionalised.

Separated Children



Exercise 5.1: (Participants' Notes) Care Alternatives for Separated Children

Care Option	Advantages	Disadvantages	Other Points to consider
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

Separated Children



Exercise 5.2: (Facilitator's Notes)

Care Arrangements for Separated Children – Issues and Dilemmas

TARGET GROUPS

Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- identify some of the key issues raised by selecting different care options for children;
- apply guiding principles to their decision making processes;
- navigate a way through some of the dilemmas that they will face in making decisions.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

Divide participants into small groups. Ask each group to study three of the case scenarios presented in the Participants' Notes for this exercise. For each scenario, ask them to consider what care options are possible and decide which would be most appropriate, giving reasons.

- Which protection issues should you be considering in this case?
- Based on this, what care options are possible?
- What course of action would you recommend, bearing in mind the three key guiding principles in this work: best interests of the child, participation of the child and family unity?

Plenary session: Use information in Topic 5, and the Check List below to inform this session.

RESOURCES

Copy of the Participants' Notes for each participant.

CHECK LIST FOR FACILITATORS

- There may be urgent need to promote a strategy for the prevention of separation. Awareness campaigns may need to involve the military, local authorities, NGOs as well as the community at large.
- Encourage family care: where possible, seek a family environment for children, but acknowledge that group care is sometimes both appropriate and unavoidable.
- Avoid special treatment: the assistance given to separated children should be broadly similar to that given to the general population.
- Cater for a variety of needs: be prepared for the whole range of children's needs, ranging from the feeding of young babies to the protection of vulnerable adolescent girls. Ensure that care arrangements don't just concentrate on meeting physical needs.
- Individual protection issues need to be responded to promptly and sensitively.
- Particular circumstances may demand unusual and creative decisions on care arrangements, especially for adolescents.
- Care arrangements for individual children should be made in consultation with the children themselves, especially in the case of adolescents.
- **Urgent** issues should not always take precedence over **important** issues: children fostered in host-country families, for example, may not present urgent problems but to ignore them may create a huge and growing problem in the future.
- Child-headed households may need support - by other members of the community or by NGOs - but care needs to be taken that any support given - especially material support - does not raise expectations from other families which cannot be met.

Separated Children



Exercise 5.2: (Participants' Notes) Care Arrangements for Separated Children – Issues and Dilemmas

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- identify some of the key issues raised by selecting different care options for children;
- apply guiding principles to your decision making processes;
- navigate a way through some of the dilemmas that you will face in making decisions.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

Work in small groups. Study three of the case scenarios below. For each scenario, consider what care options are possible and decide which would be most appropriate, giving reasons.

- Which protection issues should you be considering in this case?
- Based on this, what care options are possible?
- What course of action would you recommend, bearing in mind the three key guiding principles in this work: best interests of the child, participation of the child and family unity?

There will be a plenary session.

THE CASE SCENARIOS

1. Refugees, amongst them separated children, are repatriated to their country of origin. The children's centres are reluctant to take adolescents as they say they cause problems. Two young girls of fifteen arrive at a transit site. The parents of both were killed in the fighting, and they aren't sure where their other relatives might be. One centre agrees to take them. The next week, the tracing agency is asked to remove one girl as she is "making trouble". When the tracing worker interviewed the girl, it emerged that she had been raped by the night watchman.

2. There are large numbers of displaced children in a camp, including groups of teenage boys who are separated from their families. The boys refuse to accept foster care, saying that they are made to work all the time. No centre will accept them. They drift into the local village, seem to be sleeping in the market place and are becoming a nuisance to the inhabitants.
3. During the forced closure of a camp people flee in all directions. Mothers are deliberately leaving their babies with relief workers. A large number of babies have been abandoned: some whose family fled, others whose family were killed in the shooting that broke out. Agencies set-up an emergency care centre for the babies. Babies are traditionally breast-fed in this community.
4. During the population movements following a conflict, the local military were picking up babies who had survived and asking families to take care of them. Once the relief workers arrived, the families began to bring the children in, claiming that they couldn't manage to feed another child.
5. An emergency children's centre is set up in a transit camp to care for separated children. Many are malnourished and receiving supplementary feeding. However, the rest of the population is similarly malnourished.
6. A well-known personality has raised money for emergency care for children. The NGO which he is supporting is insisting on publicity for the centre, including signs on the building, and has flown out large quantities of bottled milk, toys, luxury food and clothing.
7. A refugee camp contains an unusually large number of separated children, mainly boys. Within their country of origin it was traditional for boys to spend long periods of time in groups tending cattle away from their homes. It was partly for this reason that they strongly favoured a group-living arrangement in the camp. However, some have been profoundly disturbed by their experiences of conflict and flight and were felt by Protection and Community Services staff to be in need of more personal family care.
8. In a large-scale refugee emergency, many separated children are taken in by host-country families. Because of the pressing problem of other children having nowhere to live, and the urgent need to establish a family-tracing programme, the situation of these children is not assessed on the basis that at least they have families to care for them.
9. Because the refugee population was previously the target of genocidal attacks, the camp contains a significant number of child-headed households. Many children (some as young as 11) seem committed to caring for younger siblings, but there are many difficulties in arranging house-building, ensuring food security, maintaining the health of younger children and so on.

Separated Children



Exercise 5.3: (Facilitator's Notes) The Case of Kollie

TARGET GROUPS

Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session participants will be able to:

- identify the effects of multiple separations on a child's development;
- discuss the causes of separations and possible strategies for the prevention of separation and preventing separations from becoming permanent;
- consider strategies for protecting and assisting a separated child living on his own in the street.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Ask the participants to work in small groups. Distribute copies of the **Participants' Notes** for this exercise. Ask participants to read the case study and answer the question at the end of it.

Plenary: Use information from **Topic 5** and the **Check List for Facilitators** to inform this discussion.

RESOURCES

Participants' Notes for this exercise.

Flip Chart paper and pens.

CHECK LIST FOR THE FACILITATOR

The Effects of Separation

- Consider both short-term and long-term effects: see Topic 2 in the Fundamental Principles of Child and Adolescent Development Resource pack
- Second and subsequent separations may trigger emotional responses stemming from previous experiences of separation.
- Repeated separations may leave the child with a profound sense of abandonment and may inhibit his/her ability to trust other people and to form new attachments
- Early adolescence may be a stage where young people have a particularly strong need to re-discover their mother or father.
- Repeated change has a wide impact on children - consider the effects of constant disruption to schooling, peer-group relationships etc.

The Care and Protection of Separated Children Living Alone

- The need for careful assessment of Kollie's situation in order to devise a strategy for offering support and protection.
- It may be helpful to carefully weigh the advantages and disadvantages of supporting Kollie to live alone and placing him in a residential institution. Institutional care should usually be avoided unless there is a clear assessment that this is the best of the available options.
- Consider what support might be provided to enable Kollie to live safely and independently.
- What options might there be for tracing Kollie's parents, other relatives or other possible carers such as the family he lived with in Guinea?

Separated Children



Exercise 5.3: (Participants' Notes)

The Case of Kollie

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- identify the effects of multiple separations on a child's development;
- discuss the causes of separations and possible strategies for the prevention of separation and preventing separations from becoming permanent;
- consider strategies for protecting and assisting a separated child living on his own in the street.

TIMEFRAME

45 minutes

METHOD

Work in small groups.

Read the case study and answer the questions at the end of it.

There will be a plenary session

THE CASE STUDY

Background Information

Kollie was a five year old boy living with his parents in Monrovia, Liberia. As a result of the war they fled to Sierra Leone in 1990 and lived in Kenama, a moderate-sized town. The following year they were forced to flee again because of the civil war in Sierra Leone, and went to Guinea where they lived in a village close to the Liberian border.

His father decided to return to Monrovia in order to ascertain whether it was safe for the family to return, and to find a secure place to live. By now Kollie was seven. While the father was gone, there was an attack on Monrovia which prevented the father from returning to the family. Early in the following year, there was an attack on the region where Kollie was living with his mother - they became separated as people fled in different directions. The boy ended up living with an unrelated family in another region of Guinea.

At the age of 12, Kollie decided to return to Monrovia in the hope of finding his father: on his own initiative he established contact with a driver who took him to Monrovia. However, on arrival he failed to make contact with his father and could find no information about his whereabouts. He had nowhere to live and had no alternative but to live on the streets and fend for himself.

GROUP TASK

Consider this brief case study and discuss the questions below.

1. What impact do you think each separation and each experience of displacement might have had on this boy's development, and why?
2. What strategy could now be used to protect and support this child and prevent further harm?

Record your conclusions on a flip chart so that you can present your key findings to the plenary session.

Separated Children



Exercise 5.4: (Facilitator's Notes) Inter-country Adoption

TARGET GROUPS

Senior Managers, Sector Co-ordinators, Field Staff.

OBJECTIVE

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- explore the complex and contentious issues involved in inter-country adoption within a refugee context.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

Divide participants into two groups or, if the course is a large one, into an even number of groups which are then paired for the second part of the exercise.

In the first part of the exercise, ask the small groups to read the case scenario.

Ask half of the groups to prepare an argument from the point of view of the NGO. Give these participants a copy of the **Briefing Notes for Groups Representing the NGO**. Ask the other groups to prepare an argument from the UNHCR point of view. Give them a copy of the **Briefing Notes for Groups Representing UNHCR**.

Allow 20 minutes for this.

Each group should then appoint a delegate for the second part of the exercise.

In the second part of this exercise, invite the two delegates to step forward and debate the case presented in the case study. All other participants will act as observers.

Allow 10 minutes for this debate. Ask the "delegates" to come out of role. Facilitate a plenary discussion where participants can share their views about issues around inter-country adoption.

RESOURCES

A copy of the **Participants' Notes** for each participant.

Briefing Notes for Groups Representing the NGO.

Briefing Notes for Groups Representing UNHCR.

Flip chart or white board for recording key points in the plenary.

Copy of the Hague Convention, the Recommendation and Explanatory Note.

CHECK LIST FOR FACILITATORS

- Issues around residential care practice - the admission of children without ascertaining a real need for institutionalisation, contact with parents, planning for children's individual futures.
- Poorly considered evacuation of children.
- Issues about parental consent to adoption.
- The potential cultural conflicts which individual children will experience if moved to another cultural environment after an already seriously disrupted childhood.
- No attempt has been made to trace the families of the children.
- Possible alternatives to inter-country adoption might be voluntary repatriation (under appropriate circumstances), local fostering (while repatriation is considered and steps taken to trace the families of the children).
- Issue of child participation in decision-making: what techniques might be used to discuss the options with these young children?
- What criteria might be used to determine the best interests of the individual child?

Separated Children



Exercise 5.4: (Participants' Notes) Inter-country Adoption

OBJECTIVE

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- explore the complex and contentious issues involved in inter-country adoption within a refugee context.

TIMEFRAME

60 minutes

METHOD

In the first part of the exercise, you are asked the small groups to read the case scenario.

Half of the groups will then prepare an argument from the point of view of the NGO, using the **Briefing Notes for Groups Representing the NGO**. The other groups will prepare an argument from the UNHCR point of view, using the **Briefing Notes for Groups Representing UNHCR** (you will be given these by the facilitator).

Each group should then appoint a delegate for the second part of the exercise.

In the second part of this exercise, the two delegates will debate the case presented in the case study. All other participants will act as observers.

There will be a plenary session.

CASE SCENARIO

During a prolonged period of civil conflict in this Eastern European country, large numbers of people had to flee to other parts of the country and to neighbouring countries. In addition, a number of institutions were evacuated to safer areas or to neighbouring countries.

One of these institutions was the Sunshine Home, a children's home, run by a Christian organisation which provided a range of child care options, including inter-country adoption. The home has now been in a safer part of the same country, which has its own *de facto* government, for two years, with no prospects of returning and no contact with any of the families of the children. Conditions in the home are barely satisfactory, but many of the original staff have left for resettlement in other countries and increasingly local staff are being hired.

It is understood that children were originally placed in the home for a variety of reasons: some were the children of single parents, while others are thought to have been placed there by families concerned at their ability to provide care during the deteriorating economic and security situation in their country.

The director of the organisation running the home feels that the children's needs would now best be met by placing them for adoption in third countries: the organisation operates in several countries in which there are approved adopters awaiting placement of children. They have no programme of approving adopters in the country where the home is located. Although many of the children had been placed in the home by parents - often single mothers unable to provide care themselves - he feels that the children have, in effect, been abandoned and that their best interests would best be served by adoption.

He has been advised by the host country Department of Social Welfare that these children can legally be deemed to have been abandoned, hence they can use a procedure for adoption without parental consent, but that the agreement of UNHCR should be gained before any moves are made to place them for adoption. The country is not a Contracting State in respect of the Hague Convention on Inter-Country Adoption.

EXERCISE SC EX5.4: BRIEFING FOR GROUPS REPRESENTING THE NGO

Not to be given to the other group

You feel strongly that these children should now be placed for adoption. There seems no immediate prospect of returning to their original community, there is no contact with either of their parents. However, your organisation has no personnel in the area of origin and your records show that most of the children were placed in the home by parents. The philosophy of your organisation is to rescue children from deprived backgrounds and to place them in good Christian families, and you are not convinced that inter-country adoption creates cultural conflicts for children. You feel that it would be in the best interests of the children to grow up in Christian families in third countries. You are also concerned that you have lost many of your original staff and there is pressure from your organisation to close the home for financial and administrative reasons.

Your organisation has the capacity to arrange adoptions in a way that complies with the Hague Convention and the CRC.

EXERCISE SC EX5.4: BRIEFING FOR GROUPS REPRESENTING UNHCR

Not to be given to the other group

You are extremely concerned at the prospect of these children being placed for adoption overseas. Your information is that the home accepted children with few questions asked, that most of the children have parents who would **not** expect the children to be placed for adoption. Before the evacuation, many of the children had contact with their parents, but this was not actively encouraged by the home. You feel that the evacuation of the home was unnecessary and poorly carried out, and you believe that the parents do not know where the children are. You feel that the move to have them placed for adoption is motivated by the NGO's convenience rather than for the benefit of the children. However, you also have some concerns about the quality of care being offered in the home.

You also feel concerned that these children have been disturbed by the evacuation, and that yet further moves to place them outside of the country will make the situation worse. Some of the children attend local schools and have integrated reasonably well.

Although you are aware of the legal argument that the children are technically available for adoption on the grounds of abandonment, you are not satisfied that it is appropriate to go ahead with legal adoption without making strenuous attempts to contact the families, to discuss adoption with them and seek their informed consent. In any case, the home does not seem to value involving children themselves in important decisions, and you have doubts about the capacity of the home's staff to prepare the children psychologically for such moves.

You feel that consideration should be given to finding foster homes for these children, preferably from within the refugee community.

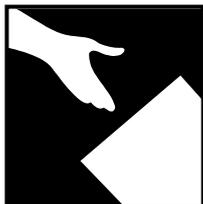
Separated Children



Handouts

1.1	Key Points Relating to Separated Children from the CRC
2.1	Specific Measures to Avoid the Separation of Children
4.1	Key Principles in Identifying Separated Children
4.2	Issues Arising during Verification
5.1	Key Principles in Planning and Staffing Residential Centres

Separated Children



Handout 1.1

Key Points Relating to Separated Children from the CRC

All children have a right to their own **name and nationality**; the right to know this and to be aware of their family, cultural and national heritage (Articles 7 and 8).

All children have a **right to a family and families have a right and responsibility to care for their children**. Early efforts should therefore be made to protect family unity and avoid family separation. Separated children have a right to be reunited with parents, relatives and guardians. Those working with them should encourage family tracing, family contact and reunification as quickly as possible. If reunification is not immediately possible, care of the child should be as consistent and continuous as possible to enable the child to build up relations with those who care for him or her (Preamble, Articles 5, 9, 18, and 27).

All children are entitled to **provision for their basic subsistence**. Assistance for separated children must meet their basic needs in a way which is comparable with what children can expect in the surrounding community: it should not encourage further family separation (Articles 6 and 20).

Separated children are entitled to **care appropriate to their age and developmental needs**. In most cases this is best met by family care. If it is not possible to provide care in the child's immediate or extended family, alternative care such as foster placement or, if necessary, placement in suitable institutions for the care of children, shall be provided (Article 20).

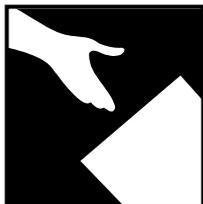
Children have a right to **participate in decisions about their future**. They have a right to express their opinions (Articles 12 and 13).

Children have a right to **physical and legal protection**. Separated children may have particular protection needs. Protection should be needed extended to those at risk from armed conflict, military recruitment, sexual assault, prostitution, torture, exploitative work, or any other form of violence, abuse or neglect. Children outside their own country are entitled to care, protection and representation regardless of their legal status (Articles 19, 20, 22, 32, 33, 34, 35 and 38).

Communities and authorities have the prime responsibility for ensuring children's survival and well-being. Where there is external assistance, it should aim to increase the community's capacity to meet the needs of all children, including separated children (Article 5, 18, 20).

The **best interests of the child** should guide all decisions and actions concerning the separated child (Article 3).

Separated Children



Handout 2.1

Specific Measures to Avoid the Separation of Children

Specific Measures during Population Movements

Children are especially vulnerable to separation during large population movements. Some specific measures which can be taken to avoid separations are listed below.

- Ensure that families know of the precautions they can take to keep their family together - e.g. holding the hand, attaching string to children's clothes, using name-tags, necklaces or bracelets.
- Ensure that people know what to do when children become separated.
- Encourage families to ensure that young children know their names and addresses.
- Identify particular locations where separations are most likely - e.g. border crossings, checkpoints, transit sites, health facilities, and focus preventive activities at these points.
- Identify particular categories of children who are most vulnerable to separation - e.g. fostered children, those with disabilities, children whose parents are in hospital, children with elderly carers etc.
- Avoid measures which are seen to specifically target separated children and provide them with special care which may encourage further separations.

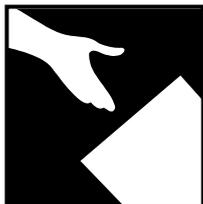
Specific Measures for Health Centres and Hospitals

- Health workers should take note of any children who need to be cared for, and should help the parent(s) to make appropriate arrangements.
- Parents should be encouraged to stay with their sick child, but if this is not possible (for example, when the parent is unable to arrange for other children to be cared for), full contact details for the family must be recorded.
- Health centres and hospitals treating parents should be responsible for ensuring that care for the children has been arranged and that records are kept of their whereabouts.
- Health workers could raise awareness of the risks of family separation among the people attending the health centre, particularly for services that affect children such as immunisation, mother and child clinics and nutrition programmes.

Specific Measures for Child Care Centres and Institutions

Children who are perceived to be "orphans" or "abandoned" children are frequently seen by some aid agencies as groups deserving special treatment. Experience demonstrates that the presence of children's residential centres can often unwittingly serve to further encourage the separation of children from their families (or other carers). Agencies providing centres need to be fully aware of UNHCR policy, and their staff may need training if they are to avoid increasing the numbers of separated children.

Separated Children



Handout 4.1

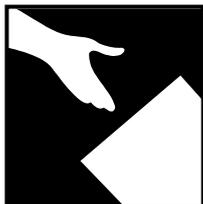
Key Principles in Identifying Separated Children

The following are key principles to be observed in identifying separated children:

- **Identifying separated children should not disrupt existing care arrangements.** There may be a danger that carers give up the child's care to others in the belief that he/she will be better off: conversely, the presence of separated children may be concealed for a variety of reasons.
- **Information campaigns** may be needed to raise awareness of the issue of separated children among government, military, local authorities, community leaders, schools etc., and to inform people of the procedures which should be followed in respect of a separated child.
- **Active searches** for separated children may be needed, in places such as:
 - emergency accommodation and centres;
 - hospitals, medical and feeding centres, police stations etc.;
 - on the streets (e.g. in market places) where children may find food, work or shelter;
 - residential homes;
 - in substitute families among the refugees or local community.

Priority should normally be given to those children whose tracing needs are most urgent - e.g. children who are totally alone, or very young children.

Separated Children



Handout 4.2

Issues Arising during Verification

The Family has Concerns about Reunification

The following are possible reasons the family may feel unable to look after the child:

- the family's circumstances may have changed greatly since separation: births, deaths, marriages and separations frequently mean that the child's family is constituted differently from before.
- often, the person claiming the child is not the parent, but an aunt, uncle, or other member of the child's extended family who did not previously care for the child;
- sometimes a parent has remarried (or older brother or sister has married) and they or their partner may be reluctant to take in the child;
- the family may be experiencing serious hardship and may be worried about their ability to care for another child.

The tracing worker should try to find out how other people in the household feel about the child returning. The tracing worker can discuss concerns with the family, and discuss possible ways they could be overcome: for example, by encouraging contact between the child and family through letters, visits etc; gradual reintegration of the child; looking for additional means of support for the family, help from other relatives or neighbours, or from other forms of assistance in the community.

The Child has Concerns about Reunification

If the child is reluctant to be reunified with his or her family, the reasons should be explored. The child should be allowed to speak about these concerns on an individual basis with a tracing worker or carer. The child may find it difficult to talk about these things.

Reasons the child might be reluctant to return include:

- the child may have feelings of guilt about surviving, anger at being abandoned by the family, or the memories of separation may just be too painful;
- the child may be returning to a family situation which was difficult before separation, for example, there may be a past history of abuse;
- he or she may no longer have both parents; brothers and sisters may not be there;

- the child may have to consider living with a relative he or she hardly knows;
- the child might not want to leave his or her present home: maybe the child is in a town where living conditions are easier; it may be easier to continue schooling, or the child may have made friends where he/she is now.

Usually initial fears can be overcome with individual preparation such as discussion between the child and the tracing worker or carers and by family contact through letters, photos or visits.

Where there are serious concerns, for example a previous history of abuse, the situation must be carefully assessed and alternative arrangements made if necessary. Keeping the child informed of progress in tracing helps prevent the prospect of reunification coming as a shock. If the child feels that she is included and is involved in decisions made, this can help her feel that she has some control over her future, and is not simply a passive recipient of people's help. This is particularly true for older children.

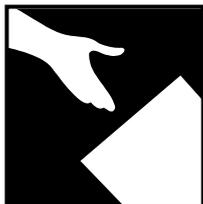
The Tracing Worker Has Concerns about Reunification

During verification the tracing workers may have picked up information which they feel may affect the chances of successful reunification. These may be to do with the family or with the child.

If verification took place at the family home, the tracing worker will have had the opportunity to observe the family's situation and to talk to other family members about reunification. Often, verification will have taken place away from the family home, so if the tracing worker has concerns these will be based on the interview and on their impression of the person claiming the child.

- The person wanting to care for the child may be elderly or infirm or the tracing worker may identify possible problems such as alcohol abuse.
- The child may have become separated from his or her family because of existing problems such as poverty or violence. The potential for these to affect the chances of successful reunification may still be there.
- The child's experiences since separation may have made it more difficult for him to return to a family environment. For example, children may have special health, disability or emotional problems.
- Some children face particular problems. For example, child soldiers and children who have been in other countries and cultures during separation, particularly where they have learnt to speak another language and may have forgotten their own. In these cases preparing the child, family and community is very important.

Separated Children



Handout 5.1

Key Principles in Planning & Staffing Residential Centres

Measures to Ensure that Centres Meet the Whole Range of Children's Needs

If it is deemed necessary and appropriate for childcare centres to be opened, it is important that the following measures are taken:

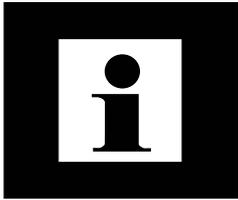
- Only children who have no one to take care of them should be admitted to the centre. Very strict criteria should apply to the admission of children who have families.
- If there are serious reasons why a child cannot stay with his or her family, the centre should work with local authorities to see if the difficulties in the family can be resolved and the child returned home.
- Admission to the centre should be regarded as temporary. The centre should become actively involved with the authorities in maintaining family contacts and tracing the families of separated children. Brothers and sisters should be kept together. Home visits and visits to the centre by a child's relatives (or other friends or neighbours) should be encouraged.
- Each child must have a file. This should contain: full details of the child, the immediate family and other relatives who could be involved in the child's care; records of contact with the family; regular reports about the child's development. If the whereabouts of a child's family are unknown, the circumstances of the child's admission and any information known at that time about the child and his or her family must be recorded; the file should be updated by adding any new information acquired about the child or family. Ideally, the file should also contain a photograph of the child; a new photo should be taken each year, but all the previous ones should be carefully kept.
- Living conditions for the children in centres should not be significantly different from those in the surrounding communities. Children should live in small groups of mixed age and gender. They should perform domestic tasks, as they would at home, they should be brought up in accordance with the local culture, and their family religion should be recognised. The children should attend school in the community rather than be educated separately in the centre.
- There should be local regulation of children's centres. The centres should observe accepted standards of childcare, and if a child leaves a centre, the relevant local authorities should be informed.

Staffing of Residential Care Centres

If residential centres are deemed to be necessary, it is the quality of the staff that will most significantly determine the extent to which they meet the needs of children. This means that staff training will be an absolute necessity, though the personal qualities of staff and their commitment to children are of vital importance. It is particularly important that staff training emphasises the following:

- The whole range of children's needs, not concentrating on just physical needs: in particular the need to provide individualised personal care consistent with cultural norms
- The importance of integration with the local community
- The importance of centres providing care that is temporary
- The need to co-operate actively with family tracing programmes. Care staff have a vital role to play in documenting children, encouraging their participation in planning for their future and preparing them for reunification.
- The need to provide special care for children with particular needs - e.g. children with disabilities or those who have been psychologically affected by their experiences.
- The importance of understanding the particular developmental needs of children and adolescents at different ages and stages.

Separated Children



Further Readings and Websites

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Separated Children in Europe Programme (October 2000). Statement of Good Practice, Second Edition. The Separated Children in Europe Programme is a joint initiative of some members the International Save the Children Alliance in Europe and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The programme aims to realise the rights and best interests of separated children who have come to or across Europe by establishing a shared policy and commitment to best practice at national and European levels.

Uppard, Sarah and Petty, Celia (1998): Working with Separated Children - a Field Guide. London, Save the Children.

Uppard, Sarah, Petty, Celia and Tamplin, Mary (1998): Working with Separated Children - Training Manual. London, Save the Children.

UNHCR (1997). Guidelines on Policies and Procedures in Dealing with Unaccompanied Children Seeking Asylum. Geneva, UNHCR.

UNHCR (1994): Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care. See Chapter 10.

UNICEF and UNHCR: "Priority Action Handbook for UNICEF/UNHCR Field Staff". Geneva, UNICEF and UNHCR.

FURTHER READINGS

Separated Children in Europe Programme Training Guide (2001). This training guide has been developed as a comprehensive introduction to the Separated Children in Europe Programme Statement of Good Practice. It has been designed to encourage and enable officials and professionals to examine the implications of the Statement of Good Practice for their roles and responsibilities within a workshop setting.

Save the Children (UK) (1997): Keeping Children with Families in Emergencies - Presentations and Background Papers. London, Save the Children. Session one - prevention of separation, session three - fostering, session four - reunification and reintegration.

Save the Children (UK) (1997): Keeping Children with Families in Emergencies - Report of an Interagency Meeting. London, Save the Children.

Tolfree, David (1994): *Roofs and Roots: the Care of Separated Children in the Developing World*. Aldershot, Arena.

Bonnerjea, Lucy (1994): *Family Tracing: a Good Practice Guide*. London, Save the Children. Also available in French.

Ressler, Everett (1992): *Evacuation of Children from Conflict Areas: Considerations and Guidelines*. Geneva, UNHCR, UNICEF.

Ressler, Everett, Boothby, Neil and Steinbock, Daniel (1988): *Unaccompanied Children: Care and Protection in Wars, Natural Disasters and Refugee Movements*. New York and Oxford, OUP.

WEBSITES

Save the Children - UK

www.savethechildren.org.uk

The Save the Children - UK Field Guide and Training Manual can be obtained via this site.

International Committee of the Red Cross

www.icrc.org

UNICEF

www.unicef.org