

## Driving people and child-centred humanitarian action: Evidence, tools and lessons from Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Moldova and Myanmar

The discussion focused on enhancing people-centered approaches in humanitarian action, emphasizing the importance of involving affected communities, particularly children, in the design and implementation of responses. Participatory methods are necessary to facilitate this.

### **Keynote Address** - Charles-Antoine Hoffmann, Section Chief - Accountability to Affected Populations, UNICEF

- Children represent over 40% of those affected by emergencies.
- Inadequate attention to children's needs in humanitarian crises is concerning.
- Current mechanisms often fail to adequately include children's perspectives and participation.
- Accountability to children is necessary and UNICEF is committed to it.
- A systematic approach is needed to ensure children's views are heard.

### **Panel Discussion**

#### **Mary Ombaka - NORCAP Moldova - Capacity Building and Government Engagement in Humanitarian Action**

- For humanitarian assistance to be effective, it is essential for the host government to take the lead in inviting and coordinating external actors.
- Collaboration rather than taking over governmental responsibilities is crucial.
- Proactive government leadership can facilitate effective partnerships.
- Many governments may lack the understanding or capacity to manage humanitarian efforts effectively so capacity strengthening is needed.
- This approach not only enhances immediate responses but also prepares governments to manage crises independently, ensuring a smoother transition for humanitarian agencies as they phase out.

#### **Lemlem Abrham - Age and Inclusion Specialist, HelpAge International**

- Older people have unique insights and coping strategies that strengthen community resilience.
- Older individuals can enhance local leadership and sustainability, as they possess strong networks and trust within their communities.
- Their involvement can lead to more effective disaster risk reduction and conflict mediation, through bringing valuable insights.

## Sanjana Kuruppu - International Rescue Committee and Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action [Accountability to Children Initiative](#)

- The Inclusive and Accountable project included research in Ethiopia and Burkina Faso into the barriers and enablers for accountability to children.
- Children often do not see themselves as distinct participants in humanitarian efforts, which affects their engagement.
- There can also be challenges in children's understanding and participation.
- Cultural barriers and parental authority can hinder children's engagement.

## Cho Myint Naing - MERL Advisor - Plan Myanmar

- Child participation in Myanmar is alarmingly low.
- Importance of developing accessible resources in local languages.
- Time needs to be invested in child-friendly processes to enhance participation.
- A systematic approach is needed to ensure children's voices are heard.

## Krissie Hayes - Child Protection Area of Responsibility Myanmar

- Local actors have a unique ability to build trust and understand cultural nuances.
- A child-friendly complaints mechanism in Myanmar is being established, to improve accountability and engagement in decision-making processes.
- A task team aims to pilot various methods for engaging children, recognizing that a one-size-fits-all approach is insufficient.

## **Discussion** - Identifying Blockages in Humanitarian Action

### What needs to be in place before a response happens?



## What is holding us back?



## Discussion on Barriers

- Physical and institutional barriers significantly impede access to services.
- The importance of campaigns and sensitization efforts to encourage communities and parents to support children's involvement and access to services like education.
- Parents often make decisions that exclude children's input.
- Children often feel hesitant to participate.
- The balance between needing to protect children and facilitating their engagement.
- Children's participation in conversations about their care can empower them and improve future decision-making.
- Short project funding periods and insufficient high-level management involvement.
- Engaging with both children and adults in a culturally sensitive manner is essential.
- Despite it taking more effort to create them, shorter, more practical resources that can be easily implemented in remote locations is essential for effective communication.
- Peer support can support marginalised children's enrollment and continued education.
- It is important to recognize children's voices and build trust through collaboration with adults, such as teachers and parents.
- Context analysis and understanding children's roles within communities is crucial.

## Closing Remarks - Bonaventure Sokpo - Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance

- Highlighted the significance of child participation in humanitarian action, stressing that children should be seen as decision-makers.
- Creating an environment where children feel safe and informed about their rights can lead to more vocal and engaged participation.
- Accountability to children is linked with broader humanitarian standards, organizational attitudes and the importance of building trust between agency staff and children.