

THE UNPROTECTED

Annual spotlight on child protection funding
in humanitarian action – 2021



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Children make up 50% of those affected in humanitarian crises and are disproportionately impacted by conflict and crisis. Throughout 2020 and 2021, COVID-19, conflict and climate change have been impacting children at unprecedented scale, putting them at risk and driving displacement, poverty and violence. Whilst funding for child protection is increasing, child protection consistently remains one of the most underfunded sectors in humanitarian action and funds not meeting increasing needs. Closing this gap will require collective action to change the way we think about children's protection and its centrality to crisis response.

Building on the findings and research methodology of *Unprotected: Crisis in Humanitarian Funding for Child Protection*¹ (2019) and *Still Unprotected*² (2020), this report highlights key areas associated with funding for child protection in humanitarian crises, including both cluster and refugee responses in 2020. A snapshot is also given for 2021 with data available as of October 2021.

KEY FINDINGS ON CHILD PROTECTION FUNDING

- Armed conflict and crises continue to take a devastating toll on children, with complex challenges increasing further in the face of climate change and COVID-19. As global and national economies took significant hits and lockdowns changed daily life, child protection actors have continued to innovate and adapt to ever increasing needs by developing new tactics that ensure children's well-being and protection from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect.
- Encouragingly, funding for child protection in humanitarian settings is increasing. US\$ 177.9 million was received for child protection specific funding in 2020, up from US\$ 156.5 million in 2019 and US\$ 144.6 in 2018. **Despite this however, the gap between child protection needs and funding received continued to grow alarmingly in 2020 and 2021.** Resources

are not meeting the increasing needs that have been only exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. These gaps must be acknowledged as part of a broader trend of underfunding across all sectors with child protection disproportionately represented. For example, **an in-depth analysis of 2020 Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs)³ along with the Bangladesh Rohingya Joint Response Plan (JRP) reveals that only 24% of funding for child protection needs were received on average, down from 42% in 2019.⁴ Also in 2020, 50% of humanitarian responses analysed (13 of the 25) received less than 25% of their child protection requirements.**

- **Furthermore, in 2020, these responses were funded at 56% overall, down from 70% in 2019.⁵ Together, these trends indicate that whilst funding gaps have increased across the sector, child protection has been hit disproportionately.** As of December 2021, only US\$ 145.6 million of child protection specific funding is currently recorded under the FTS but delays in reporting are likely to see this figure increase.⁶
- **Significant variations in funding prevent an equitable child protection response, including across humanitarian responses and within regional response plans, where unpredictability makes it difficult to build sustainable systems and effective responses.**

KEY MESSAGES FOR PATHWAYS TO CHANGE

- **Children and their protection must be placed as central to all humanitarian action.** This requires collective action along key pathways to change that prioritise children.
- **Improving children's well-being and protection is a collective responsibility** that will benefit us all.
- **Child protection is critical in keeping children safe from harm** and where we have the

resources to deliver, it leads to better outcomes for children in other sectors.

- **Much is already being done** and we know the solutions and standards to create and demonstrate impact. However, a step change is needed in how child protection is taken account of in humanitarian action.
- **Investing in shifting power and sharing knowledge and skills** with community, local and national actors, including shifting funding to them, will better integrate diverse local perspectives, expertise, and initiatives into responses that protect children.
- **Further supporting the collection and analysis of strong, evidence-based data** will help

understand impacts and amplify a narrative of life-saving child protection interventions supporting calls for the funds necessary to keep children safe during humanitarian crises.

TRACKING CHILD PROTECTION IN INTEGRATED AND MULTIPLE SECTOR INVESTMENTS

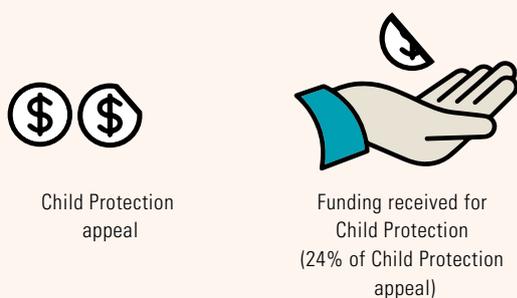
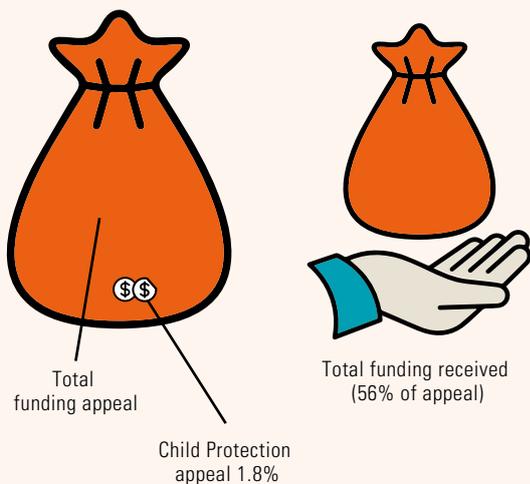
This report seeks to strengthen its findings by drawing attention to the funding contributing to child protection that can be found within broader protection and multiple sector programmes. On top of the US\$ 161.4 million reported under child protection in the Financial Tracking Service (FTS) in 2020, US\$ 16.5 million of child protection specific

Afsana* plays with her best friend Poly* the KKS school she attends in Bangladesh.

ALLISON JOYCE/SAVE THE CHILDREN



HUMANITARIAN FUNDING



OVERALL APPEAL = 100%

FUNDING LEVEL OF THE OVERALL APPEAL: 56% (70% IN 2019)

CHILD PROTECTION APPEAL AS PORTION OF THE OVERALL APPEAL: 1.8% (2% IN 2019)

FUNDING LEVEL OF CHILD PROTECTION APPEAL: 24% (42% IN 2019)

FUNDING RECEIVED FOR CHILD PROTECTION AS PORTION OF TOTAL FUNDING RECEIVED: 0.8% (1.2% IN 2019)

Based on the analysis of 25 response plans in 2020: HRPs for Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, DRC, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, oPt, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, Yemen, Zimbabwe, and the Bangladesh JRP. 2019 data is based on FTS data for 17 HRPs and Bangladesh JRP. If Syria 3RP, with data sourced from the No Lost Generation Initiative, is included in the calculations for 2019, the figures are slightly different.

funding was found under the overall Protection sector. Added to this, an additional US\$ 89.2 million has been located as potentially attributable to child protection in funding for programmes where child protection is integrated within the Protection sector or multiple sectors funding for 2020. This indicates an important investment in both dedicated child protection programming as well as integration of child protection within protection programming and other sectors which is in line with recommendations in the Child Protection Minimum Standards. Although the tracking of standalone child protection funding has increased significantly, the system is not yet able to effectively track integrated programming and attribute multiple sectors funding to individual sectors. Increased trends toward multiple sector and integrated programming means that solely tracking specific child protection funding will not give the full picture.

While we are tracking the amounts for child protection specific interventions within humanitarian responses, adding on the most generous estimations of child protection within multiple sector funding and integrated in protection programming this would leave child protection underfunded at approximately 50%.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

This report sets out a **6-point action plan** to change the framing and support for children's protection and its centrality to humanitarian action. These call for immediate urgent action to:

1. Prioritise children and their protection
2. Scale up and adapt financing
3. Strengthen tracking systems
4. Shift power and resources to implement the localisation agenda
5. Prioritise the mainstreaming and integration of child protection across sectors alongside specialised support
6. Ensure accountability through strengthened measurement, analysis of needs and impact

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Closing the significant gap between child protection requirements and humanitarian action funding requires collective action. We need to change the way we think about children's protection and its centrality to crisis response. This requires a recognition of the importance of child protection interventions, their life-saving nature and their need for prioritisation within humanitarian response plans. It also requires new humanitarian financing mechanisms, and vital funding commitments.

The following 6-point plan draws from learnings across the sector, including recommendations made from *Still Unprotected*. While we have seen some progress being made on important areas like increases in absolute funds and improvements in tracking, gaps between child protection needs and funding available are still widening at alarming rates. We are also seeing an increased gap between the levels of funding for overall appeals and comparative funding for child protection. A fundamental step change is needed to revolutionise how children's protection is made central to humanitarian action if we are to create the shifts needed to protect children in humanitarian response. Actors across the humanitarian response, including governments, donors, the private sector and civil society must:

1. **Prioritise children and their protection:**

Recognise the life-saving importance of child protection interventions, and commit to prioritising them within humanitarian response, humanitarian financing mechanisms and broader humanitarian leadership structures that guide humanitarian action.

2. **Scale up and adapt financing:**

- **Commit to fully funding appeals for child protection** across Humanitarian Response Plans and Regional Refugee Response Plans. As a start, ensure that child protection is funded at the same level as the overall appeal.
- **Continue to make funding available for multiple sector** programming that recognises both the centrality of children and their

protection as well as the need for specialised child protection programmes.

- **Require proposals to adhere to the Child Protection Minimum Standards** ensuring these are costed and funded accordingly.
- **Move towards more equitable funding** across responses as well as predictable, flexible, and multi-year funding models to strengthen stable programming.

3. **Strengthen tracking systems:**

- **Ensure tracking of child protection in funding mechanisms** so that funding is clearly identifiable, including for multiple sector interventions. This covers the tracking of funds going to local and national actors as part of commitments to the Grand Bargain and efforts to strengthen tracking of child protection within the Financial Tracking Service.

4. **Shift power and resources:** Facilitate meaningful engagement of local and national actors in humanitarian decision making processes. This includes action to:

- **Increase humanitarian leadership** both at national and global level to strengthen systematic support and implementation of localisation initiatives through a multi-pronged approach.
- **Invest and advocate for building capabilities** for the humanitarian Child Protection sector, with a particular focus on local and national actors and investment in systems building.
- **Actively and meaningfully engage children** to ensure their voices are heard and given due consideration.
- **Reduce administrative barriers of access to partnerships** for local and national organisations and particularly for refugee-led organisations.
- **Support changes to pooled fund requirements** to better allow for institutional capacity strengthening at local and national levels. This is so we can strengthen the ability of organisations to meet due diligence standards, particularly in financing systems, human resources and governance.

5. **Strengthen the focus on the integration and mainstreaming of child protection across sectors** in line with the Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action. This includes:

- **Increasing the use of Pillar Four of the Child Protection Minimum Standards** in donor programme selection. This includes monitoring processes to ensure specific, prioritised support for funding and capacity strengthening initiatives for integrated and multi-sector responses.
- **Increased prioritisation of child protection risks**, data needs, and interventions by other sectors as part of the obligations to the Centrality of Protection.
- Promoting, supporting and facilitating opportunities for learning and development to facilitate **better working across sectors**, including through the use of Pillar 4 of the Child Protection Minimum Standards.

6. **Strengthen accountability in measurement, analysis and impact:**

- Ensure Humanitarian Needs Overviews, Humanitarian Response Plans and Regional Response Plans **clearly outline how child protection interventions meet identified needs**, adhere to the Child Protection Minimum Standards, and are costed accordingly.
- **Increase investment in the capacity to analyse child protection data**, including drivers of child protection risks and analysis of impact. This will allow us to identify prevention and response pathways whilst communicating the life-saving importance of child protection.
- **Strengthen the use of standardised tools and approaches** to define the cost-per-child of delivering quality interventions and support quality reporting on the impact made.

CALL TO ACTION

“Let it not end with us. Leaders, you have to ensure you protect children’s rights so that we have a better tomorrow! We are the generation that matters now, and we are tomorrows generation- protect our future!”

– Lucky, 18 years old, Uganda⁷

We can ensure an effective humanitarian response by placing children’s protection at the core. Urgent change is needed and possible, but requires deliberate, concrete and holistic engagement. We must work together to achieve these 6-points of action that will enable us to keep children safe and protected in humanitarian action.

ENDNOTES

1. <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/15501/pdf/child-protection-funding-report-web.pdf>.

2. https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/stc_still_unprotected_repport_high_sg-1.pdf.

3. Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, DRC, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, oPt, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, Yemen, and Zimbabwe. Colombia HRP is excluded due to lack of data on child protection requirements.

4. 2019 figure is based on the analysis of 17HRPs and the JRP. The figure of 47% presented in Still Unprotected includes 17HRPs, the JRP plus the Syria 3RP in the calculations.

5. 70% for calculations based on 17 HRPs and Bangladesh JRP for 2019. 67% for calculations based on 17 HRPs, Bangladesh JRP and Syria 3RP.

6. Figure sourced from the FTS 9 December 2021.

7. Quote comes from preparation for a youth panel on Ending Violence Against Children for the UNICEF Child and Youth Forum 2021 supported by agencies from the CSO Forum.

Front cover:

Shadi, 6-years-old, washing his head and face with water in Hamam Al-Alil camp in Ninawa. Through the programme, 140 latrines and 130 showers have been constructed, along with a water treatment plant that supplies safe drinking water (60,000 litres per day) to the families who live inside the camp. Thousands of litres of water are delivered daily.

AHMAD BAROUDI/SAVE THE CHILDREN