



AN OVERVIEW OF THE 2026 ANNUAL MEETING FOR CHILD PROTECTION IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

From the 9th to the 11th of June, 975 participants from across the globe came together for the 2026 Annual Meeting for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, hosted by the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action. Through **13 sessions** and an ‘Open Space’ forum, practitioners, donors, academics, policymakers, children and youth, community leaders, and advocates explored how the sector can respond to escalating needs amid shrinking resources. With **speakers representing 32 organisations (40% local and national organisations)** and **contributions from children and young people** throughout the meeting, discussions highlighted both the challenges facing the sector and the opportunities to transform how child protection is understood, financed, and delivered.

Across the meeting, several key messages emerged:

- **The need to apply a systems lens to child protection in humanitarian contexts**, recognising the importance of strengthening resilient systems that can protect children before, during, and after crises.
- **The importance of advancing locally led child protection**, with a shift from seeing local actors primarily as implementers towards recognising them as leaders and decision-makers, with greater influence and ownership over priorities, resources, and approaches.
- **The importance of meaningful child and youth participation**, moving beyond consultation to ensure children and young people are recognised as partners, decision-makers, and agenda setters.
- **The need for greater collaboration across sectors**, breaking down silos to strengthen collective action for children’s protection and well-being.

Participants also emphasised that, **while funding cuts are having profound impacts** on children and services, they also **present an opportunity to rethink current approaches and strengthen the way the sector works together**. The Annual Meeting closed with a shared commitment to build on the discussions and collective learning of the past decade to meet evolving challenges and continue advancing child protection in humanitarian action.

Facilitator and Speaker Organisations:

Ana Aqra

Athar Association for Youth Development

Asociacion Civil Tinta Violeta

Better Care Network

Brookings Institute

CECODAP

Child Guardians

ChildFund International

Children's Rights Innovation Fund (CRIF)

DG ECHO

Grow Strong Foundation

Harvard Graduate School of Education

Hold the Child

International Bureau for Children's Rights

International Rescue Committee (IRC)

International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

Investing in Children and their Societies (ICS SP)

MHPSS Collaborative

Mlezi Wa Yatima (MWAYA)

National University of Kyiv

National Council for Population and Development (Kenya)

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Palestine Counselling Center and Sumud

Plan International

Porticus

Prince Of Peace Orphans and Widow's Vision (POPOW)

Red PaPaz

Right to Play

Save the Children

Slum Child Foundation

Terre des hommes

UNICEF

University of Bath

Wilfrid Laurier University

World Health Organisation (WHO)

World Vision

Alliance Working Groups and Task Forces Represented:

Advocacy Working Group (World Vision)

Assessment, Measurement, and Evidence Working Group (World Vision)

Child Protection Minimum Standards Working Group (IRC and Plan International)

Learning & Development Working Group (UNICEF and Plan International)

Case Management Task Force (Hold the Child and Save the Children)

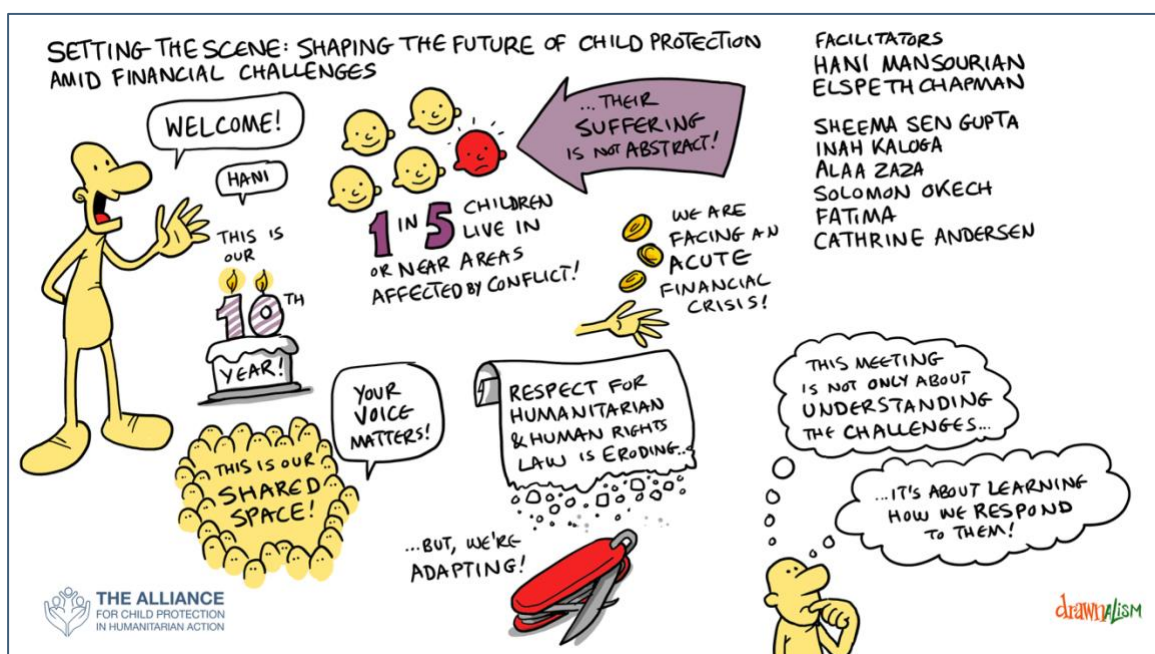
Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups Task Force (Plan International and Grow Strong Foundation)

Unaccompanied and Separated Children Task Force (IRC and Save the Children)

2026 Annual Meeting Key Materials:

Explore the links below to find the key material outputs from the 2026 Annual Meeting for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action.

- [2025 Annual Meeting Recordings Playlist](#) in [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#), and [Arabic](#)!
- [Live Drawings](#) from the 2026 Annual Meeting
- [Session Summaries and Recordings](#) from the 2026 Annual Meeting
- [Background Paper](#) from the 2026 Annual Meeting: **Child Protection in a Resource-Constrained World: From Challenges in Financing to Innovative Solutions** [[English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#), and [Arabic](#)]
- Use the [2026 Annual Meeting Agenda](#) to guide you through this report!

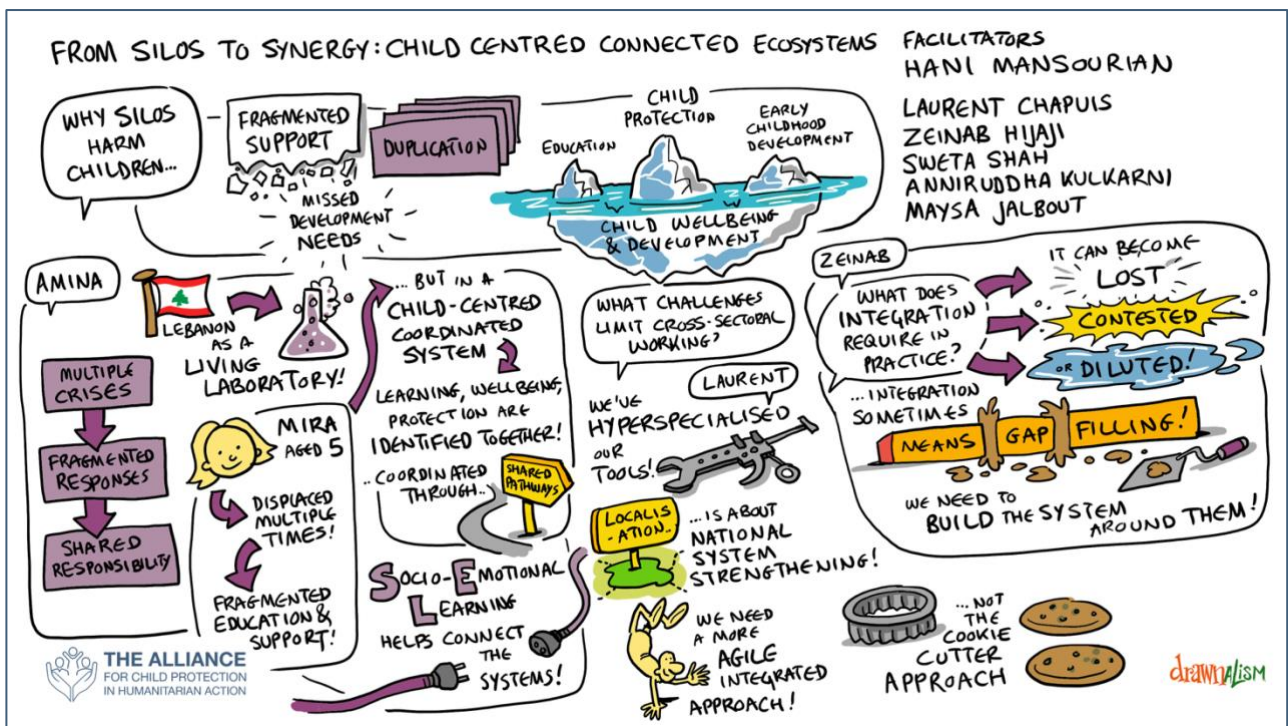


Strategic Session | From Silos to Synergy: Child-Centered Connected Ecosystems – [Watch Here](#)

What would it take to truly put children at the center of how the humanitarian system works? This session brought together practitioners from Child Protection, Early Childhood Development, Care, SEL, and other child-focused sectors to confront a shared challenge: despite working toward the same goal, our sectors too often operate in silos—rarely aligning in practice, even when serving the same children and families.

Through interactive discussion and practical examples, participants unpacked the challenges of working across sectors, with an emphasis on child-focused sectors, and began to rethink how the broader humanitarian community can collaborate more effectively towards better outcomes for children. The session sparked fresh thinking on how to shift from disconnected approaches toward more coordinated, child-centered “ecosystems” of support.

Facilitators and Speakers: Elspeth Chapman, Laurent Chapuis, Zeinab Hijaji, Sweta Sha, Aniruddha Kulkarni, Amina Kleit, Natasha Raisch, and Dieuwerke Luiten.

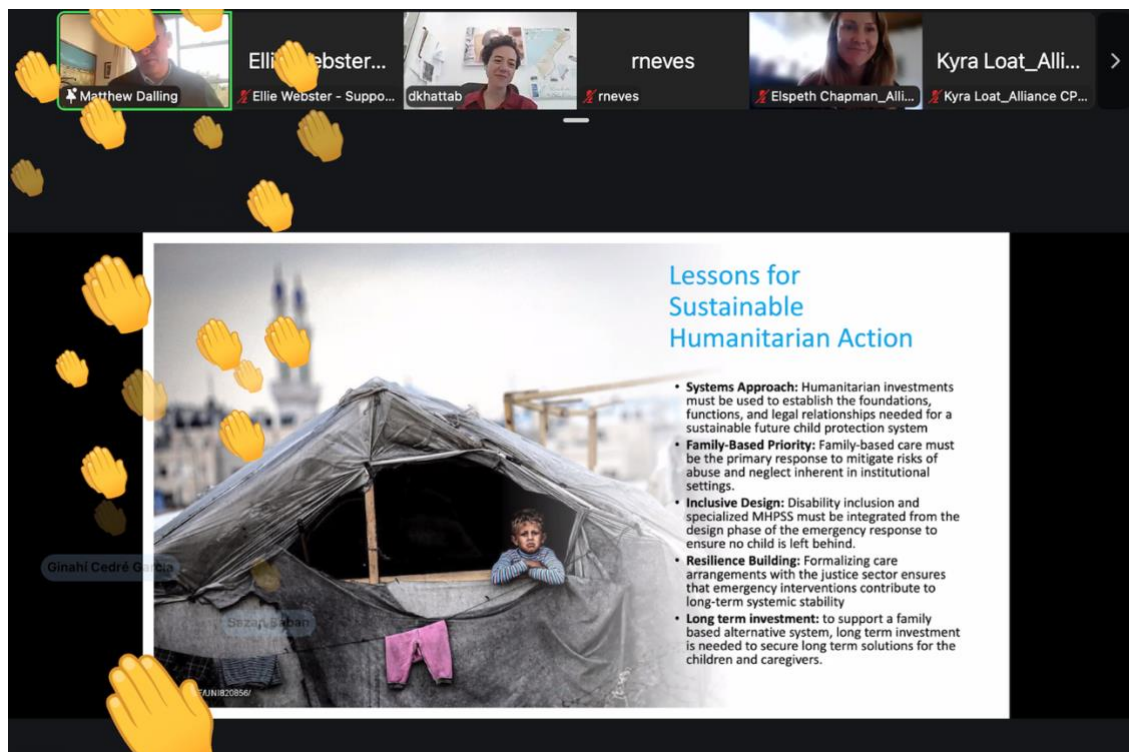


Strategic Session | Child Protection System Strengthening in Humanitarian Action – [Watch Here](#)

As the Alliance launches a new initiative on Child Protection Systems Strengthening (CPSS) in Humanitarian Action, this interactive session brought together key stakeholders to help shape its direction and priorities. Through live polling, facilitated discussion, and case studies from humanitarian contexts, including Syria, participants explored what systems strengthening looks like in humanitarian contexts and how humanitarian crises can serve as opportunities to build more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable child protection systems. The session examined key considerations for advancing CPSS in humanitarian action, including government

engagement and leadership, the role of communities and local and national actors, sustainable financing, workforce strengthening, and the continuity of services during crises. Participants had the opportunity to share experiences, reflect on emerging practice, and provide critical inputs to inform this emerging workstream from the outset.

Facilitators and Speakers: Matthew Dalling, Elspeth Chapman, Rita Neves, and Daren Khattab.

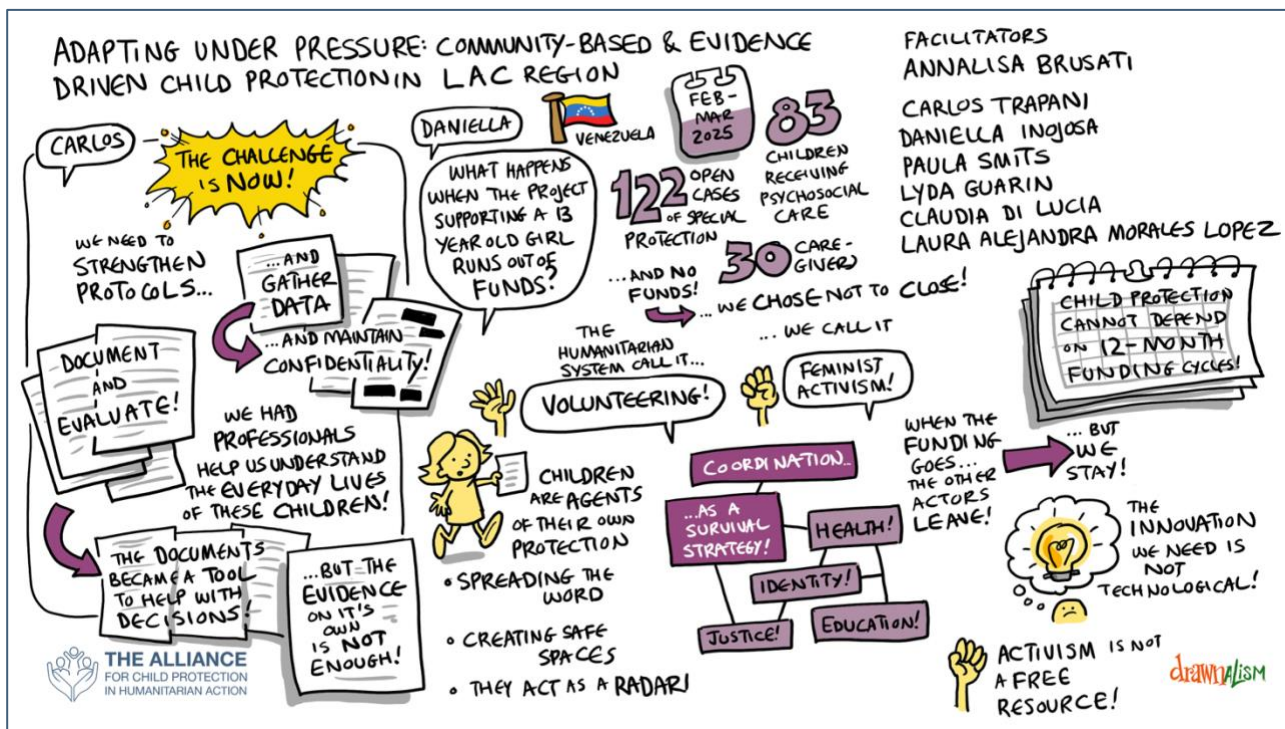


Thematic Session | Innovation and Community Action for Child Protection in Contexts with Limited Financial Resources in Latin America and the Caribbean – Watch Here in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)

In contexts of shrinking humanitarian funding and increasing operational constraints, child protection actors are being challenged to rethink how services are designed, delivered, and sustained. This session — held in Spanish — brought together experiences from across Latin America and the Caribbean that demonstrate how local leadership, community participation, operational evidence, and innovative low-cost approaches can help sustain meaningful child protection responses in resource-constrained settings.

The session highlighted practical lessons on sustainability, decentralisation, solidarity-based approaches, and the importance of community ownership in maintaining essential child protection services during times of crisis.

Facilitators and Speakers: Annalisa Brusati, Carlos Trapani, Daniella Inojosa, Paula Smits, Lyda Guarin, Claudia Di Lucia, and Laura Alejandra Morales Lopez.



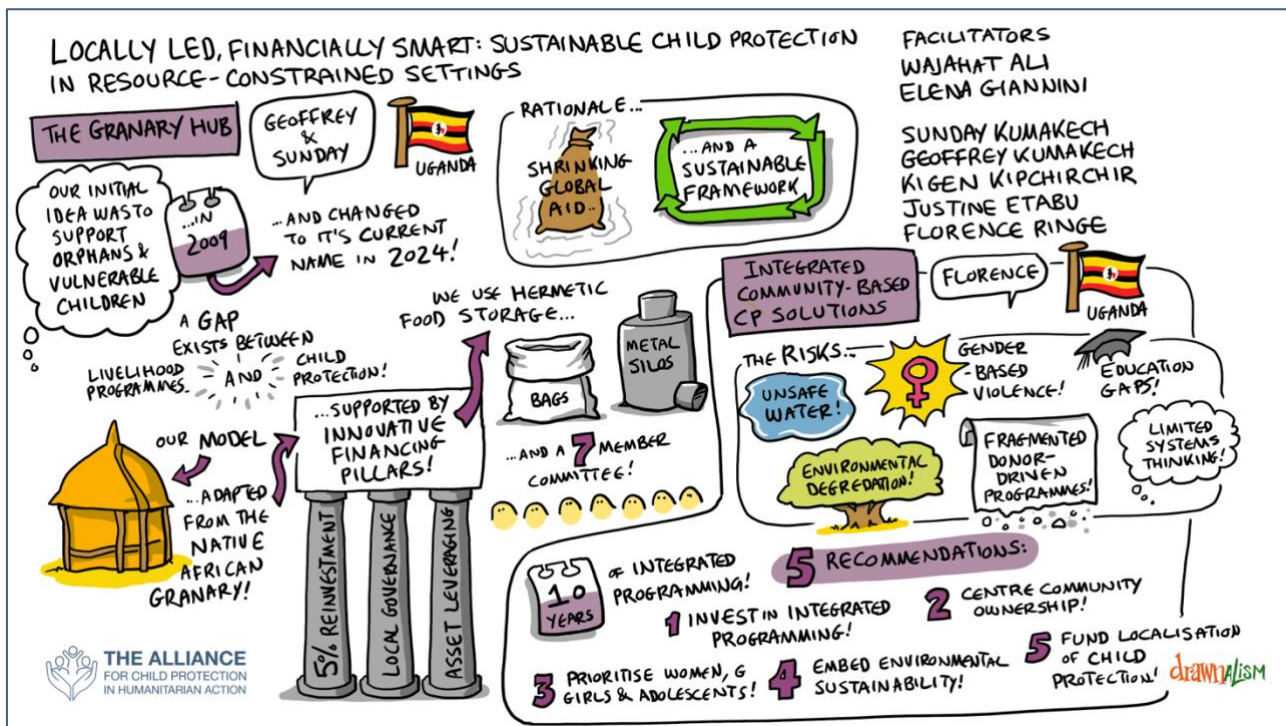
10TH JUNE: DAY 2

The second day of the Annual Meeting began with thematic sessions exploring innovative and community-driven approaches to sustaining child protection systems in resource-constrained settings, followed by discussions on family strengthening, positive parenting, and preventing child recruitment in humanitarian contexts. Participants then engaged in a session focused on meaningful child and youth participation and accountability to children, featuring perspectives and recommendations from children, young people, and practitioners. In the afternoon, participants took part in the Annual Meeting's new Open Space sessions—an interactive format designed to foster peer learning, networking, and collaborative problem-solving around emerging priorities and shared challenges. The day concluded with the Alliance Marketplace, where participants had the opportunity to connect with the Alliance's Working Groups, Task Forces, and Initiatives to learn more about their priorities, activities, and opportunities for engagement.

Thematic Session | Locally-led, Financially Smart: Sustainable Child Protection in Resource-Constrained Settings – [Watch Here](#)

This session showcased innovative, community-driven approaches to sustaining and strengthening child protection systems in resource-constrained and humanitarian settings. Drawing on diverse experiences from Uganda and Kenya, it highlighted low-cost, community-based financing models such as the Granary Hub that link post-harvest management and livelihoods to child protection outcomes, as well as women-led initiatives that enhance system strengthening, cross-sector coordination, and localised responses amid funding constraints. The discussion explored integrated, community-owned child protection solutions with a focus on disability inclusion mainstreaming. Together, these approaches illustrated how locally rooted, inclusive, and multi-sectoral strategies can build resilient and sustainable child protection systems.

Facilitators and Speakers: Wajahat Ali, Elena Giannini, Sunday Kumakech, Geoffrey Kumakech, Kigen Kipchirchir Benar, Justine Etabu, and Florence Ringe.



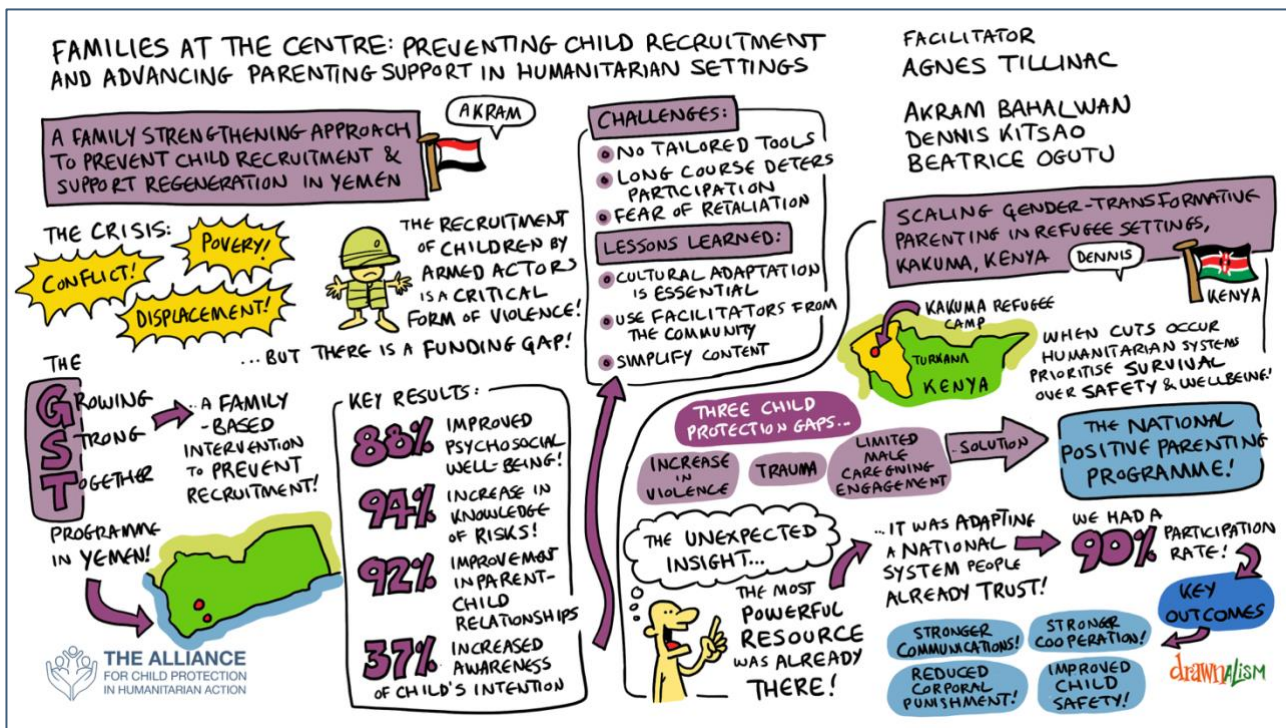
Thematic Session | Families at the Centre: Preventing Child Recruitment and Advancing Parenting Support in Humanitarian Settings – [Watch Here](#)

This session brought together innovative and field driven approaches from Yemen and Kenya to explore how family strengthening and positive parenting can prevent violence, including child recruitment, in contexts of shrinking humanitarian funding. Drawing on experiences from IDP, refugee, and host community contexts, presenters shared how culturally adapted parenting programmes can support families under pressure while strengthening protective environments for children.

In increasingly resource-constrained environments, the session highlighted how partnerships between communities, governments, and humanitarian actors can sustain impact. From volunteer-led delivery models to integration with case management and MHPSS services, participants learned how locally anchored, scalable interventions can continue despite funding cuts.

Whether working in emergency or protracted settings, humanitarian practitioners gained actionable insights to strengthen protective family environments and sustain impact under pressure.

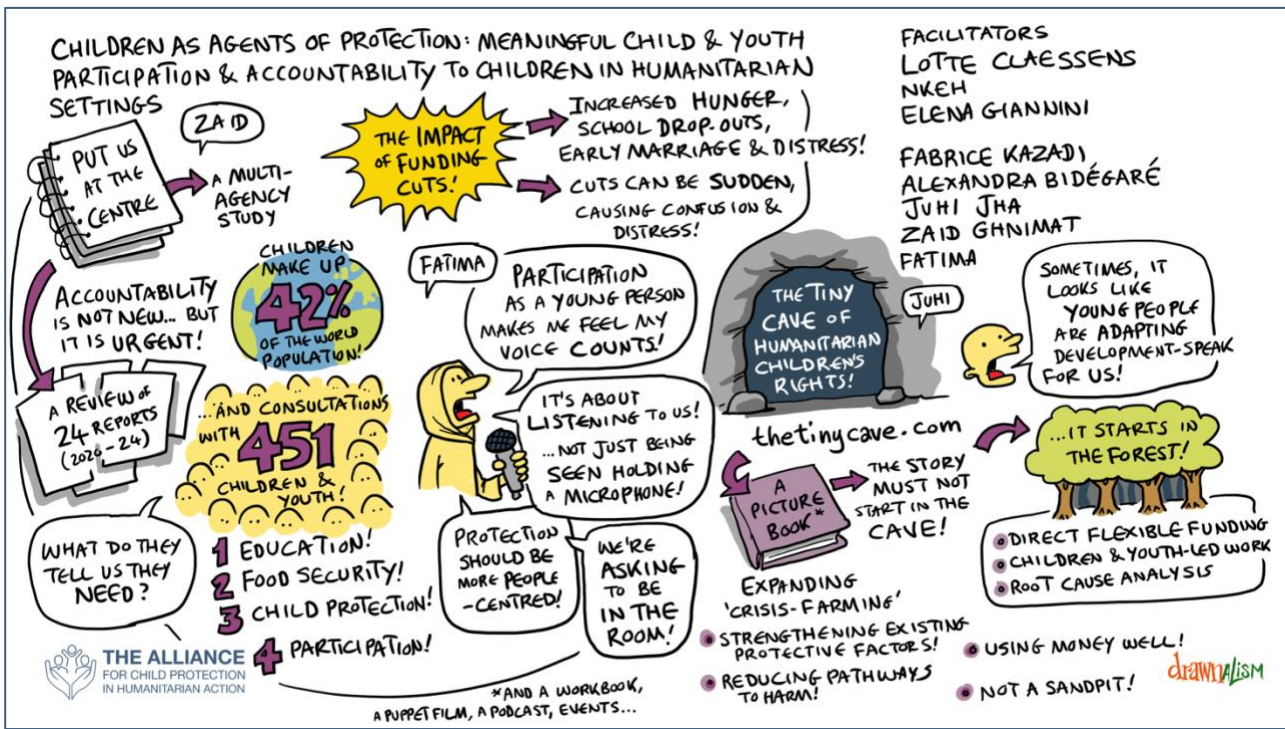
Facilitators and Speakers: Agnes Tillinac, Akram Bahalwan, Dennis Kitsao, and Beatrice Nyakwaka.



Thematic Session | Children as Agents of Protection: Meaningful Child and Youth Participation and Accountability to Children in Humanitarian Action – Watch Here in [English](#) and [French](#)

This session explored the role of children and adolescents as agents of child protection and accountability. Save the Children interviewed Fatima, a young research participant of Plan International Nigeria, about the findings from the global accountability study [Put Us At The Centre](#) and shared powerful recommendations from children and young people directed at humanitarian decision-makers. This was followed by Children's Rights Innovation Fund (CRIF), who presented the [Tiny Cave](#), a creative methods-based accountability education resource for young people, including an example of youth-led work with Haitian youth migrant workers in the Dominican Republic. The session closed with the DRC-based Bureau International des Droits des Enfants who presented practical examples that inspired the audience to approach meaningful child participation and accountability as essential elements of sustainable, locally-led child protection systems. Throughout the session, the audience was encouraged to critically reflect on their role in achieving meaningful child participation and accountability.

Facilitators and Speakers: Lotte Claessens, Youth Facilitator, Elena Giannini, Fabrice Kazadi, Alexandra Bidégaré, Juhi Jha, Zaid Ghnimat, and Youth Advocate.



Open Space Sessions – [Watch Here](#)

This year, the Annual Meeting introduced a new feature: Open Space Sessions! These sessions offered a space where participants proposed and led discussions on topics that mattered most to them. Designed to be informal and collaborative, Open Space sessions created room for deeper exchange, peer learning, and collective problem-solving.

Facilitator: Bhavesh Patel

Child Protection in a Resource-Constrained World
 From Challenges in Financing to Innovative Solutions

Impact on children

- Fewer children in fewer locations receiving fewer services *
- 74%** report rising child protection violations *
- 91%** report decline in access to child protection services *
- 1 in 5** children in or fleeing conflict †

Challenges:

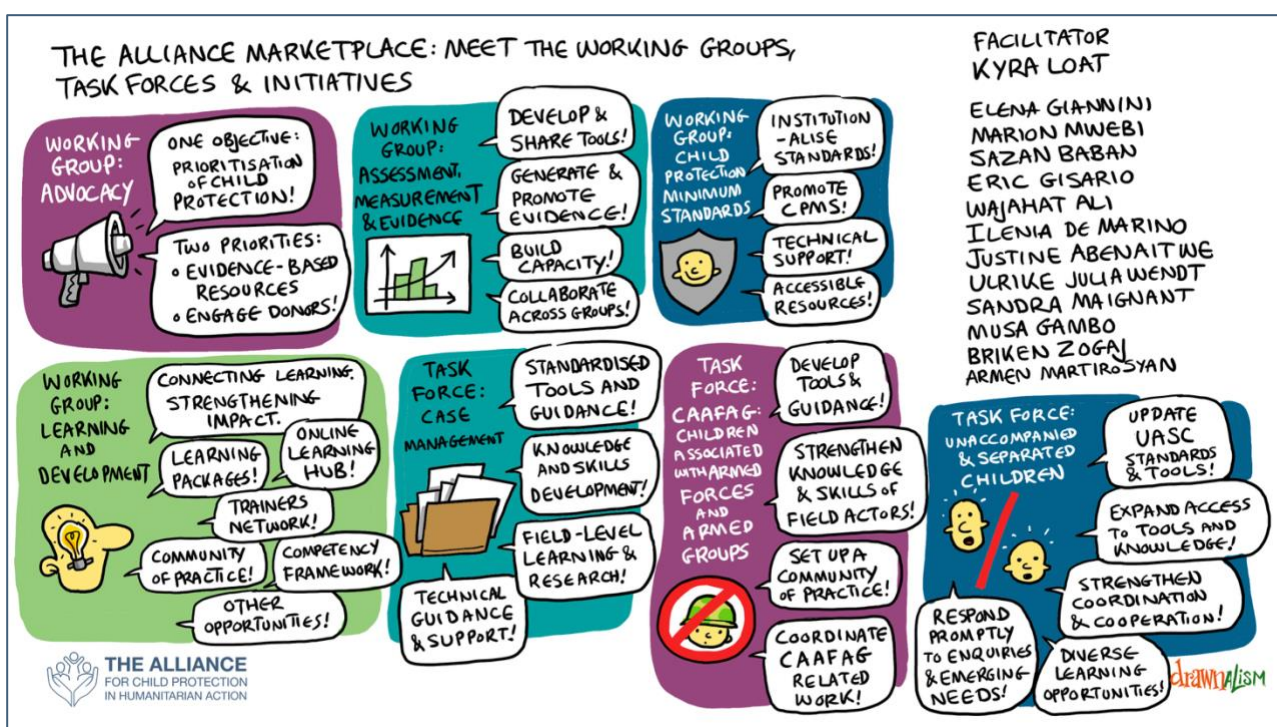
- Rising conflict, IHL & Human Rights Law violations
- Humanitarian reforms & changing operating environment
- Humanitarian funding cuts
- Contraction of child protection services & capacities

* Alliance Funding Cuts Analysis 2026 — 400+ practitioners, 68 countries
 † Save the Children, Stop the War on Children, 2025

The Alliance Marketplace | Meet the Working Groups, Task Forces, and Initiatives – [Watch Here](#)

This Marketplace-style session offered participants an interactive opportunity to connect with several of the diverse groups that make up the Alliance community. Through dynamic exchanges and networking opportunities, participants were able to engage with multiple Working Groups and Task Forces throughout the session. Attendees learned more about ongoing priorities, activities, and collaborative efforts across the Alliance, while exchanging ideas with colleagues and exploring opportunities for future involvement and partnership.

Facilitators and Speakers: Kyra Loat, Sandra Maignant, Musa Gambo, Brikena Zogaj, Elena Giannini, Marion Mwebi, Sazan Baban, Eric Gisario, Wajahat Ali, Ilenia de Marino, Justine Abenaitwe, Julia Wendt, and Armen Martirosyan.



11TH JUNE: DAY 3

The final day of the Annual Meeting began with a thematic session on integrating, localising, and sustaining quality mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in humanitarian settings. Discussions then turned to financing and localisation, exploring how resources can be allocated more effectively, how community expertise can be better recognised and supported, and how more equitable financing approaches can strengthen child protection responses. The afternoon featured a strategic session focused on reimagining child protection advocacy in a changing humanitarian landscape, followed by a thematic session examining the impacts of funding cuts on child protection outcomes, systems adaptation, and frontline service delivery. The meeting concluded with a closing session reflecting on key insights, shared learning, and collective priorities for advancing child protection in humanitarian action moving forward.

Thematic Session | Integrating, Localising, and Sustaining Quality MHPSS in Humanitarian Settings – [Watch Here](#)

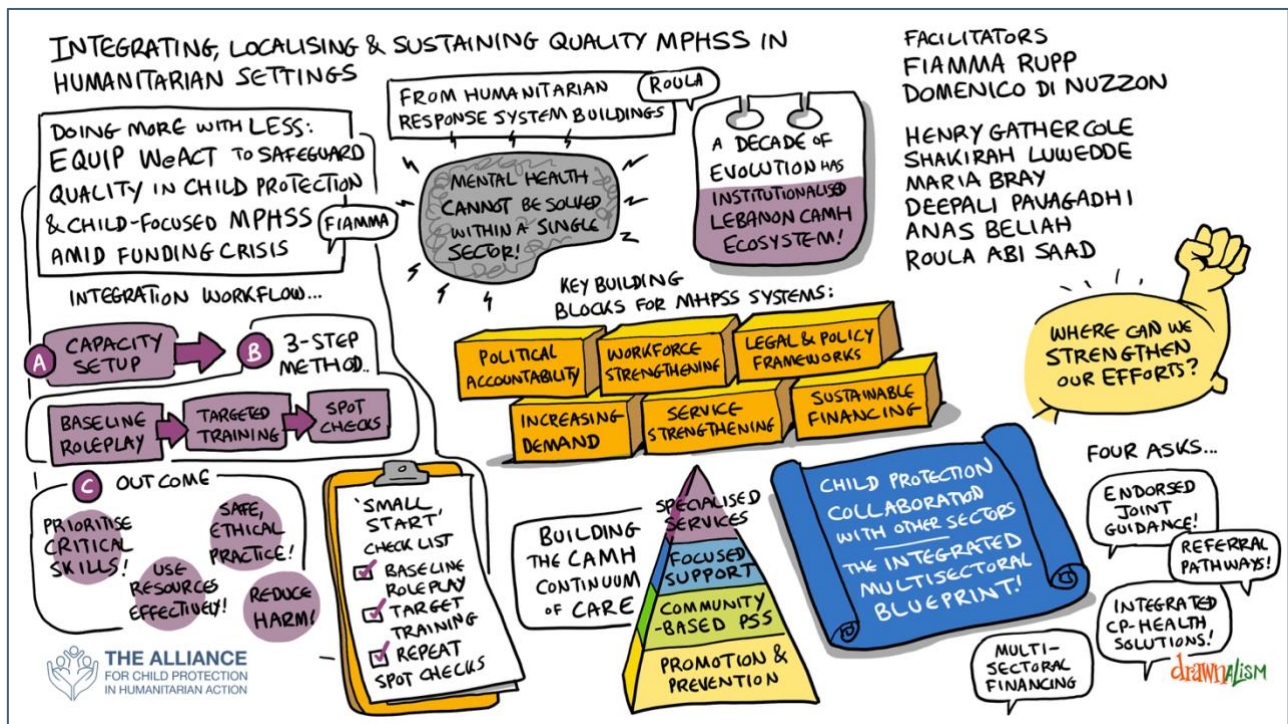
This session explored how child protection and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) actors can redefine and sustain quality programming in the context of shrinking funding, increasing needs, and evolving humanitarian challenges.

Bringing together global evidence, critical reflections on localisation, and concrete country experiences, the session moved from co-defining quality and demonstrating how it can be operationalised in practice.

Participants engaged with diverse perspectives—from evidence-based programming and competency-building tools to system strengthening and locally led approaches—and reflected on key questions around power, sustainability, and effectiveness.

As the session took place on 11 June, the International Day of Play, it also allowed participants to experience the vital role of play through active participatory methods.

Facilitators and Speakers: Domenico di Nuzzo, Fiamma Rupp, Henry Gathercole, Shakirah Luwedde, Maria Bray, Deepali Pavagadhi, Anas Beliah, and Roula Abi Saad.



Thematic Session | How Are Resources Allocated? Rethinking Financing and Community Expertise in Child Protection – [Watch Here](#)

As humanitarian funding becomes increasingly constrained, child protection actors are being challenged to do more with less while ensuring that resources reach the children and communities most in need. This

session brought together three complementary perspectives to explore how financing decisions can strengthen locally led responses and transform the way resources are allocated.

Hugh Salmon from the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance and Martha Bragin from the International Association of Schools of Social Work, led by Oksana Boyko from Ukraine and a practitioner from Gaza, highlighted the critical role of local social workers, family, and community-based systems in delivering effective protection services when international support is limited.

Pedro Gallido from Child Fund Philippines shared how blended financing models combining community resources, local government support, private sector contributions, and NGO funding can enable rapid, child-focused responses to crises.

Gabrielle Bailey, from Children's Rights Innovation Fund examined the politics and power dynamics of grantmaking, challenging participants to reflect on who gets funded, why, and what innovative financing approaches are being explored.

These presentations offered practical examples and critical reflections on how child protection actors can mobilise resources differently, strengthen local expertise, and build more equitable and sustainable financing approaches in humanitarian settings.

Facilitators and Speakers: Sandra Maignant, Gabrielle Bailey, Pedro Gallido, Oksana Boyko, and Hugh Salmon.

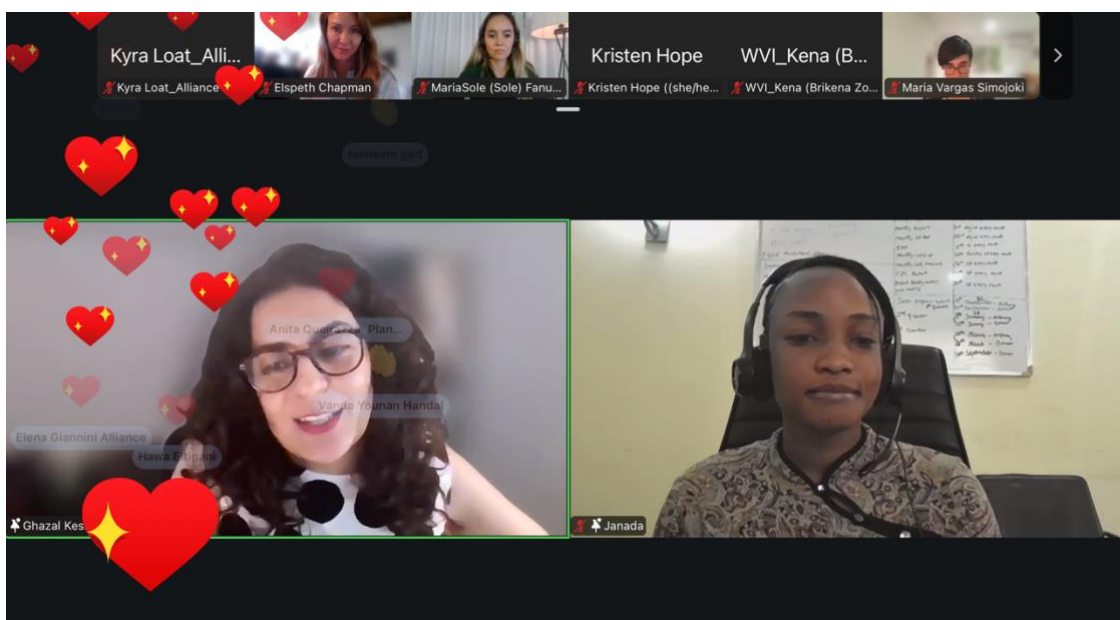


Strategic Session | Reimagining Child Protection Advocacy in a Changing World – [Watch Here](#)

The humanitarian landscape is shifting — funding is shrinking, political will is faltering, and the tools and strategies we have relied on to advocate for children protection in humanitarian action are being tested like never before. This session invited the child protection community to pause, look critically at our advocacy efforts, and ask honest questions: What is actually working? What assumptions are we still clinging to that no longer hold? And what does meaningful, effective advocacy look like in this new reality?

Through interactive reflection, diverse panel perspectives, and facilitated group dialogue, we heard from a range of voices — including a young advocate — bringing different vantage points on what needs to change and why. Together, we moved from honest diagnosis toward action, identifying concrete next steps that our community can own and carry forward.

Facilitators and Speakers: Elspeth Chapman, Brikena Zogaj, Kristen Hope, Ghazal Keshavarzian, Sabine Rakotomalala, and Youth Advocate.

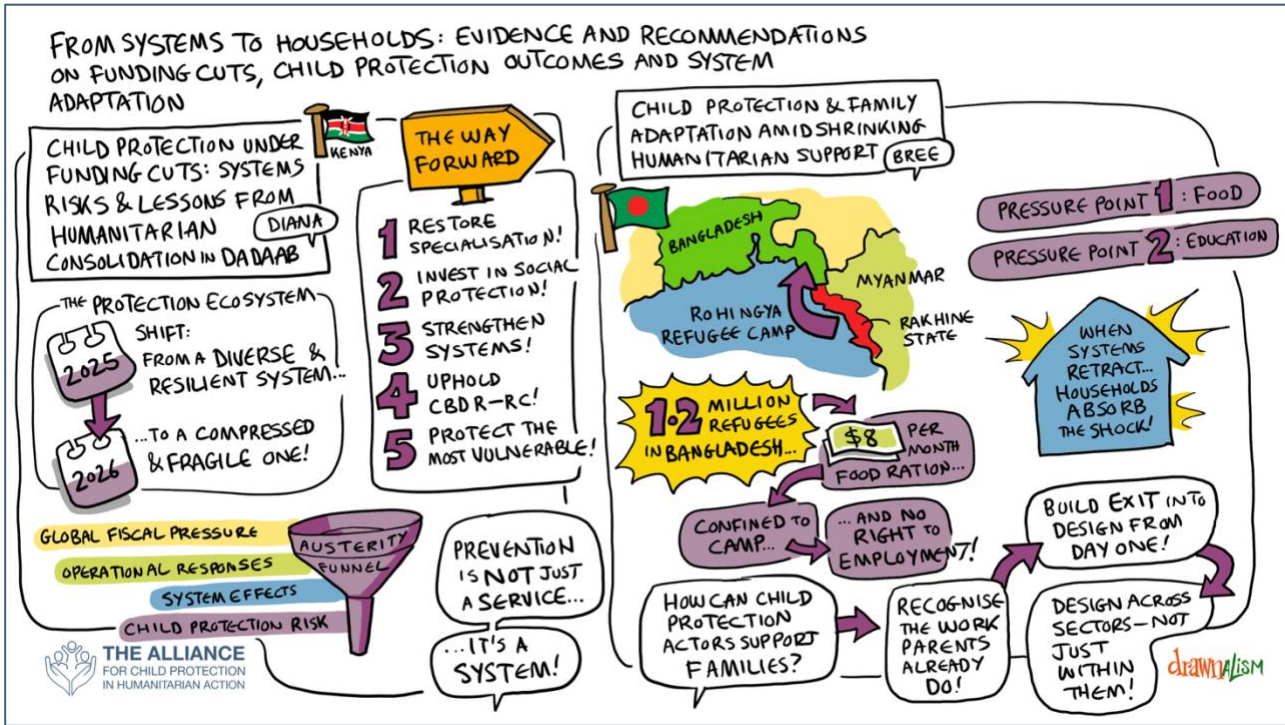


Thematic Session | From Systems to Households: Evidence and Recommendations on Funding Cuts, Child Protection Outcomes, and System Adaptation – [Watch Here](#)

During this session, a range of speakers from local to international actors, academics to policy-makers, took participants on a journey from current evidence to practical recommendations. The session kicked-off with findings of a global rapid evidence review on the impact of resource constraints on programming for unaccompanied and separated children, to adapting initiatives for children in fragile urban settings in Kenya following funding cuts.

After a half time energiser, we zoomed into the refugee contexts of Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh and Dadaab, Kenya to explore the impact of cuts on child protection standards and outcomes. Recommendations for practice including adapting child protection systems and funding models were explored.

Facilitators and Speakers: Camilla Jones, Irene Wali, Hannah Thompson, George Ochieng Odalo, Diana Imbiti, and Bree Akesson.



Closing Session of the 2026 Annual Meeting – [Watch Here](#)

After three days of discussions, strategic workshops, open space sessions, and presentations from across the child protection community, this closing session provided an opportunity to reflect on key insights, emerging themes, and the collective direction of the child protection in humanitarian action sector. Through a facilitated conversation and interactive reflection, participants considered what challenged their thinking, what gave them hope, and what actions they will take forward in their own work. The session also explored priorities for the Alliance and the wider child protection community looking ahead, helping to translate learning and connections from the meeting into shared commitments and momentum for future action.

Facilitators and Speakers: Hani Mansourian, Elspeth Chapman, Yvonne Agengo, Alaa Zaza, Laurent Chapuis, and Gunvor Knaf Fylkesnes.

