Assessing Child Protection In Emergencies:
Field Experience Using the Inter-Agency Emergency Child Protection Assessment Resource Toolkit

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Objectives

- Conduct a structured analysis of learning on use of the current Resource Kit to suggest improvements based on experience of end users in the field

    - Document lessons learned from formal field learning exercises
    - Analyze strengths and weaknesses of the Resource Kit from data gathered from a sample of countries that used – or considered but did NOT use – the Resource Kit

    - Based upon the sources of data described above:
        - Produce a concise report documenting field experience of protection assessment
        - Suggest detailed and concrete revisions of the toolkit

What is the Inter-Agency Emergency Child Protection Resource Toolkit?

□ Purpose: to gather critical data on both child protection needs and resources to inform child protection programmatic response during the first phases of an emergency.

Components:

- Key Informant Interview Guide
- Focus Group Discussion Guide
- Desk Review
- Participatory Ranking Exercise
- Institutional Capacity Mapping Tool
- Humanitarian Capacity Mapping Tool
- Participatory Activities for Children and Youth
- Urgent Action and Informed Consent Forms
- Guidance Notes: basic C.P. concepts, ethics, sampling etc.

Process for Sampled Countries

- September - October of 2009: members of the CPWG and CPC Learning Network provided the names of personnel working in country offices believed to have considered using the Resource Kit.

- October 2009 – January 2010: telephone-based structured interviews were conducted with national and regional staff to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the Resource Kit

- October 2009 – January 2010: Supplementary data gathered through assessment reports and other documentary review

Summary of Use of the Resource Kit

❑ 20 sites identified where Resource Kit was considered:

- 7 used the Resource Kit for an assessment or emergency preparedness
- 1 site completed an assessment using a different tool
- 4 sites were still in the planning stages of the assessment
- 6 sites have postponed plans for the assessment
- The status of the final 2 sites was uncertain

This has changed since final analysis in January 2010.

Case Study 1: Gaza, occupied Palestinian territories (oPt)

- Context

  - December 27, 2008 - January 19 2009: Israeli military incursion into the Gaza strip 'Operation Cast Lead'

  - The child protection sub-cluster identified key child protection concerns that required assessment including:

    Psychosocial and mental health; risks posed by mines and unexploded ordnance; separated children; vulnerability of children living in shelters, with extended families or placed in institutions.

Case Study 1: Gaza (continued)

❑ How the Resource Kit was used

- *Key Informant Interview Guide* modified as a two-page household individual interview questionnaire
  - ❑ Questions not thought relevant to the current context were removed (e.g. child labor)
  - ❑ Politically sensitive issues thought dangerous to ask about at that time were also removed (e.g. CAAFAGS and others)

- A simple random sampling plan was devised, convenience sample ultimately used

- One-day training for assessment team

- Lessons Learned: Implementation
  - Sampling plan: illness of staff member lead to miscommunication regarding the strategy
    - Assessment team went instead to offices of community-based organizations
    - Much of the information overlapped
    - Resulted in considerable repetition of data and implausible estimates of magnitude, hindering ability to use assessment findings

  - Issue links back to limited amount of time for training

❑ Lessons Learned: Resource Kit

- Current format is too cumbersome and does not clearly identify "priority" sections for users

- Tools took a considerable amount of time to adapt to the local context

"In the middle of an emergency, [you] can't read a 60- page document and translate it. Emergency staff are working from 7 a.m. to mid-night every single day just responding. The Resource Kit has lots of materials and actions that you need to know, but these should be known or done in advance, especially if it needs to be translated…Even if you have done assessments before, a lot of what you know goes out the window…."

Case Study 2: Gambella Region, Ethiopia

❑ Context

- Plagued by conflict, vulnerable livelihoods base, limited capacity of local government, and recurring natural disasters.

- Recent emergencies include droughts of 2009, tensions between Nuer sub-clans, and movement of persons across the Sudanese border.

- Assessment intended to provide an evidence base for programming and to inform emergency preparedness and response.

❑ How the Resource Kit Was Used (continued)

- Purposive Sampling approach, based on risk and vulnerability mapping with local gov't, UN, and NGO staff

- *Key informant interview guide, participatory ranking exercise, focus group discussion guide*, and *desk review* tools selected for use.

- Five-day training, followed by

three-and-a-half weeks of data collection

Case Study 2: Gambella Region, Ethiopia (continued)

❑ Lessons Learned: Implementation

- Difficulties of moving contracts through the UNICEF approval channels

- Limited amount of time allotted to the assessment process
  - Planning and time constraints hindered use of more rigorous sampling plan to assess magnitude and severity of protection concerns

- Limited capacity of the assessment team

❏ Lessons Learned: Resource Kit

- Participatory Ranking exercise provided good data, assessment team quickly mastered the methodology, and data was easy to analyze

- Institutional and humanitarian capacity mapping tools were too sophisticated for the context, missed grassroots structures

- Limitations to current guidance on ethics, including addressing "assessment fatigue," code of conduct, and informed consent for parents and focus group discussion participants

Perhaps the problem is that the tools are too specific, or far too sophisticated for Gambella. I was taken aback by the examples, so advanced … there is nothing anywhere near a monitoring system. We could list on one hand the resources there and you don't need a tool for that.

- Lessons Learned: Resource Kit (cont.)

  - Guidance notes suggested that context was suited for a quantitative study, but existing tools and guidance on sampling thought to be inadequate for this purpose

  - Limitations to current guidance on ethics, including addressing "assessment fatigue," code of conduct, and informed consent for parents and focus group discussion participants

Strengths of the Resource Kit

- Addresses a previously unmet need for common tools suitable for assessing the needs of children in emergencies in a coherent and consistent manner

- Resource Kit appears to serve as a useful starting point for inter-agency dialogue and collaboration

- Certain tools are emerging as particularly useful
  - The *key informant interview guide* has been the most widely used tool
  - The *participatory ranking exercise* has also been well received, with users valuing the simplicity of the method, the quality of the data produced by a team that may lack experience and the ease of the analysis process.

Issues Analysis Matrix

	Issues Identified	Central African Republic	Gambella, Ethiopia	Gaza, oPT	Georgia	Haiti	Philippines	Somali, Ethiopia	Yemen	Zimbabwe
With the Tools	Focus Group Discussion Guide not in Resource Kit.				X					
	Complexity of the material made translation difficult.	X	X	X	X					
	Adaptation is difficult and time consuming			X	X	X				
	Format of tool is cumbersome.		X	X		X				
	Tools inadequate for a quantitative assessment		X							
	Code of Conduct in Resource Kit suitable for humanitarian workers but not appropriate for data collectors.		X							
	Sophistication of Institutional and Humanitarian Capacity Mapping Tools makes these difficult to adapt to local context.	X	X							
	Does not include enough systems mapping material.		X					X		X
	Samples of informed consent for parents, children and other populations taking part in assessment are not included in the Resource Kit.		X							
With Implementation	Time required to train or supervise assessment team was problematic.		X	X	X					
	Assessment fatigue on part of participants presented ethical concerns and complicated data gathering efforts.	X	X							
	Data collectors received improper or inconsistent training/supervision.			X	X					
	Not enough skilled and experienced emergency child protection personnel on the ground to lead/support assessment process.		X	X	X	X			X	
	Time available to plan and/or implement the assessment was not sufficient.		X			X			X	
	Funds required to fund another partner and the assessment process were not available.						X			
	Sensitive issues such as CAFFAGs and GBV were difficult to assess.		X	X				X		
	Humanitarian access to emergency-affected areas restricted due to nature of the conflict.			X				X		

Recommendations (Coordination)

□ 1. Clarify mechanisms for managing and monitoring use of the Resource Kit

  ▪ The research team had difficulty determining where/when/how/which version of the Resource Kit had been used

  ▪ It is recommended that one agency be appointed to take the lead in managing and monitoring the ongoing use of the Resource Kit in the field to:

    □ Make sure actors have access to the most up-to-date version of the Resource Kit
    □ Include clear information on the intended scope of the materials
    □ Support ongoing learning on the Resource Kit

Recommendations (Technical Development)

- 2. Edit and reformat the Resource Kit to address issues of accessibility for users in the field.

  - Resource Kit has proven unwieldy and not well-tailored to a timely assessment.
  - Non-essential information should be removed
  - Tools should be simplified wherever and whenever possible.

- 3. Develop new and revise existing methods for the Resource Kit.

  - Lack of quantitative tools limits ability to asses magnitude and severity of child protection concerns. It is recommended that a specific tool should be developed to fill this gap.
  - There is an interest in using the assessment process to map child protection systems. Current tools do not adequately address this need.

Recommendations (Technical Development)

- 4. Develop a decision tree to guide planning process.

    - Inclusion of a decision tree will help address some of the operational and ethical difficulties observed in other contexts to date.
    - The decision tree would serve as a starting point for overwhelmed and overworked child protection personnel to clearly and quickly identify the most important considerations to be made and the implications for each option.

- 5. Develop further concrete guidance on ethics.

    - Current gaps that should be addressed include:
        - absence of an assessment-appropriate code of conduct;
        - absence of samples of informed consent; and
        - guidance on the ethics of excluding known child protection issues from the data collection process in sensitive environments.

Recommendations (Capacity Development)

- 6a. Develop a strategy for addressing issues of capacity

  - One of the clear impediments identified in this study was the lack of skilled and trained child protection staff to lead and support an assessment.
  - Increasing the number of skilled, trained emergency child protection responders would greatly aid the future efficacy of the Resource Kit.

- 6b. Develop a strategy for integrating Resource Kit into disaster planning & preparedness.

  - A related limitation was the time required to select, adapt and translate and train an assessment team on the tools.
  - Organizations should integrate assessments into emergency planning and preparedness plans wherever possible.

Recommendations (Rapid Assessment)

- 7. Develop discrete tools for rapid assessments.

  - Current materials clearly do not meet the need for rapid assessment
  - Efforts should be made to build on and link into other relevant work strands (e.g. IASC, UNHCR, UNICEF, CU, CDC collaborations regarding methods for field assessment; and core indicators proposed for multi-sector and protection sector rapid assessments)