

Summary of Global Protection Forum Session 4

Contributors: Global Child Protection Area of Responsibility, The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, Plan International, Street Child UK, UNICEF, DG ECHO, and the German Federal Foreign Office.

Prevention plays a critical role in child protection in humanitarian action. This session highlighted the importance of the lens shift required to effectively protect children from the devastating impact of humanitarian crises, conflict, and violence, stressing that much of this harm is preventable. Anticipatory action is also key in addressing the root causes of harm to children. UNICEF's [Child Protection Strategy](#) for 2020-2030 places a strong emphasis on prevention. There is considerable focus on secondary and tertiary prevention, for example through case management, rather than primary prevention and we need to add this lens to our work to effectively prevent harm to children. Further investment in preventing harm to children at the population or sub-population level, in addition to responsive actions, is needed for humanitarians to fulfill their ethical duty to prevent harm when possible, to uphold the rights, including the best interests, of the child and to potentially be more cost-effective in our programming.

The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action shared their increasing body of work to develop tools, build awareness, and generate evidence, to support the uptake and prioritisation of the Primary Prevention Approach as a critical element of child protection across humanitarian action. This includes the development of core resources such as the '[Primary Prevention Framework for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action](#)' and '[Identifying and Ranking Risk and Protective Factors: A Brief Guide](#)' amongst others.

Plan International shared experience in piloting a primary prevention framework in South Sudan, highlighting the participatory approach adopted, the development of a monitoring plan, and the identification of key risk and protective factors in South Sudan and Niger.

Street Child UK emphasized the importance of engaging local organizations and understanding the root causes of violence and highlighted the significance of research into prevention mechanisms and the need to incorporate these strategies into ongoing and future programs. We cannot do prevention work without the community. They need to lead the assessment of the protection risks and the protective factors. We need to make the engagement meaningful. Community-based protection should not be only project-design, but should be part of a broader prevention strategy.

Donors also stressed the importance of evidence-based research, multi-sectoral approaches, and community involvement, also emphasizing the need for a continuum of care and sustained interventions in prevention. They also reflected on the challenges faced in engaging in prevention due to the short funding cycle.

Furthermore, discussions emphasized the need for systemic changes in the way humanitarian work is done, stressing the importance of integration, coordination, and early prevention across the protection spectrum. Donors highlighted the need to implement prevention

through capacity strengthening. They also flagged the importance of including children and young people in accountability procedures and creating safe spaces for their participation.

The session concluded with a focus on strengthening collaboration with other sectors on prevention and the importance of using language that facilitates cross-sectoral engagement. The participants agreed that prevention is a crucial element of child protection and broader humanitarian action, and that further efforts are needed to integrate preventive measures into humanitarian programs and policies.

Key takeaways from the session:

- Prevention is a critical component of child protection in humanitarian action.
- A coordinated multi-sectoral approach is essential for effective prevention, particularly primary prevention.
- Investing in evidence generation is crucial to support the uptake of prevention approaches.
- Systemic changes are needed in the way humanitarian work is done to prioritize primary prevention.
- Collaboration with other sectors is vital for strengthening prevention efforts.