



Role of Child Protection Staff in United Nations Peace Operations

Module at a Glance

Overview

Module 1 focuses on the importance of having child protection staff in United Nations peace operations and introduces learners to the core functions of child protection staff members – which is explored in more depth in subsequent modules.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Describe the added value of having child protection staff in United Nations peace operations
- Explain roles and responsibilities of child protection staff in United Nations peace operations
- Adapt these roles and responsibilities to the specific mission context

Module Outline

Duration: 90 minutes (1 hours and 30 minutes)

The Module	
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The Module



This module focuses on the roles and responsibilities of child protection staff in United Nations peace operations. Understanding your roles and responsibilities helps you to stay focused and makes it easier for you to coordinate with others. Some questions we will explore are: Why are child protection staff deployed in United Nations peace operations? What are your core functions as child protection staff? What are the differences between your specific roles and responsibilities and those of staff working in other missions?

This module is intended to provide you with an 'overview' of your roles and responsibilities. We will go into more detail on each of the core functions discussed here in subsequent modules.

Slide 1: Role of child protection staff in United Nations peace operations



Module 1: ROLE OF CHILD PROTECTION STAFF IN UNITED NATIONS PEACE OPERATIONS



Slide 2: Learning objectives

Learning objectives

By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Describe the added-value of having child protection staff in United Nations peace operations
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of child protection staff in United Nations peace operations
- Adapt these roles and responsibilities to the specific mission context



At the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Describe why it is valuable for UN missions to have dedicated child protection staff
- Explain to others the core functions of child protection staff and why focusing on these core functions is essential
- Adapt your role based on your specific mission context

Learning Outcome 1.1

Key benefits of including child protection staff in United Nations peace operations

Learning Activity 1.1

Film and group discussion: key benefits of including child protection staff in United Nations peace operations

Slide 3: Film – A child's fate

FILM: A CHILD'S FATE



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The film and group discussion is intended to remind learners why their role in protecting children in armed conflict is essential. The film emphasizes child protection as a 'shared responsibility' involving mission staff and other actors. At the same time, it also highlights why it is important to have dedicated child protection specialists within the mission. Here is a link to the film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNFnRIPzSM>.

TIME: 30 minutes, including 12-minute film

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduce the film:

You are about to watch a 12-minute film developed by the then DPKO (now DPO) entitled “A Child’s Fate – Child Protection and Peacekeeping”. The film describes the violations committed against children in armed conflict and explains why peacekeepers have to take action. It shows how every mission component has a role to play in child protection.
- Give participants a ‘task’ to do while watching the film:
 - As you are watching, think about the following questions and take notes for our discussion afterwards:
 - Why are there dedicated child protection staff in United Nations peace operations?
 - What are some of the key benefits of including child protection staff?
 - What do you think would happen if there were no child protection staff in missions?
- Show the film (12 min)

Slide 4: Group discussion: key benefits of including child protection staff in United Nations peace operations

Group discussion

- What are the benefits of having child protection staff in missions?
- What would happen if there were no child protection staff?



INSTRUCTIONS:

- Before moving to the group discussion, ask learners for their initial reactions to the film: What surprised or intrigued you about this film?
- Then ask learners to share their responses to the questions you posed to them at the beginning. You can keep track of their responses on the flipchart. Encourage them to share some personal examples where they felt their work really made a difference. Note that the following slide lists some possible responses to these questions.

Slide 5: Key benefits of including child protection staff in United Nations peace operations

Key benefits of including child protection staff in United Nations peace operations

- Tangible outcomes for children
- Additional entry point for engaging with government and armed forces and groups
- Political leverage through Security Council



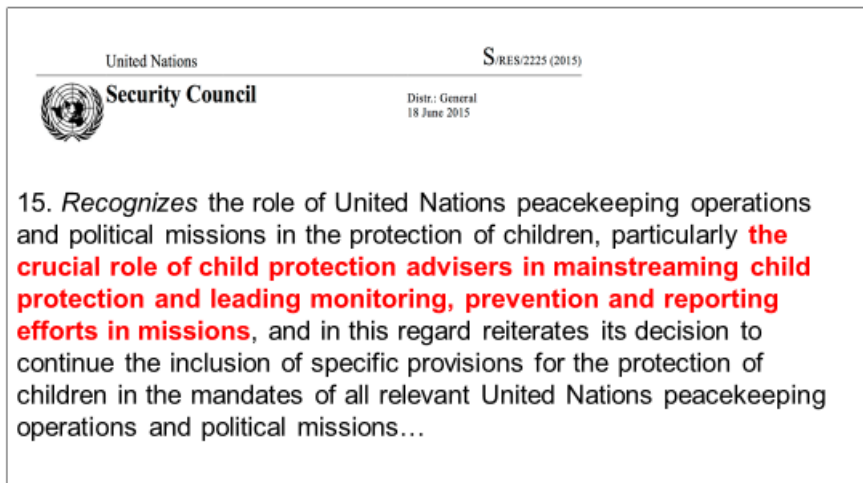
- As child protection staff, you should be able to advocate for and clarify your role in the mission. Consider the following benefits that child protection staff bring to United Nations peace operations.
- Having in-house child protection expertise allows missions to:
 - Deliver tangible outcomes for children, families and communities (e.g., release of children from armed forces and groups; implementation of action plans).
 - Utilize additional entry points to engage with governments and armed forces and groups on broader concerns such as human rights issues and other concerns. These actors are often more willing to engage on child protection issues because of the specific vulnerability of children in armed conflict.
 - Trigger political actions by the UN Security Council through its unique Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, including imposing sanctions against persistent perpetrators.

Learning Outcome 1.2


Roles and responsibilities of child protection staff in United Nations peace operations

Slide 6: The Security Council Mandate

The Security Council Mandate



United Nations S/RES/2225 (2015)

 **Security Council** Distr.: General
18 June 2015

15. *Recognizes* the role of United Nations peacekeeping operations and political missions in the protection of children, particularly **the crucial role of child protection advisers in mainstreaming child protection and leading monitoring, prevention and reporting efforts in missions**, and in this regard reiterates its decision to continue the inclusion of specific provisions for the protection of children in the mandates of all relevant United Nations peacekeeping operations and political missions...




- Let's take a closer look at the child protection mandate for United Nations peace operations, which is the foundation for your work as child protection staff.
- In the past few decades, the international community has increasingly recognized the devastating impact of conflicts on children and acknowledged the protection of children as both an ethical obligation and a matter of international peace and security. The UN Security Council has adopted a series of resolutions focused on children in armed conflict starting with UNSCR 1261 in 1999. As you can see from the excerpt from UNSCR 2225 (2015), the mandate for child protection staff in United Nations peace operations comes directly from the UN Security Council.

Slide 7: Foundations of the child protection mandate

Foundations of the child protection mandate

- Security Council resolutions on
 - children and armed conflict
 - mandate of United Nations peace operation
- 2017 Child Protection Policy



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- The foundational documents that define the mission's child protection mandate are the Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict and the mandate of your respective United Nations peace operation, as well as the *2017 Child Protection Policy*. All of these are key resources that can help you understand your role and communicate it to others. It is essential that you read and fully understand these documents.

Learning Activity 2.1

Small group exercise: UN Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict



The goal of this small group exercise is to convey to learners the importance of having a good understanding of Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict and being able to use them for your advocacy and other work as child protection staff.

TIME: 10 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Put learners into small groups of 4-5 people and distribute the handout.
 - Handout: Overview of Security Council Resolutions on Children and Armed Conflict
- Give learners 10 minutes to discuss the significance of at least one aspect of each of these resolutions for the evolution of the child protection mandate in United Nations peace operations and the work of child protection staff (e.g., advocacy, monitoring and reporting, engagement with parties to conflict).
- During the debrief, emphasize to learners the importance of using these resolutions as tools for their advocacy with host governments, parties to conflict, partners and other relevant actors.
 - Before moving to the next slide, ask a few learners what they believe to be the core functions of child protection staff in missions: What are their main roles and responsibilities? You can reflect on some of their responses in your presentation of the next slide.

Slide 8: Child protection staff core functions

Child protection staff core functions

Mainstreaming

- Advising senior leadership
- Training
- Organizational reform

Monitoring and reporting

Advocacy

Engaging with parties to conflict

Coordination

- Child protection staff have five primary functions:
 - Mainstreaming child protection throughout the mission, including advising senior leadership, training mission staff and instituting organizational reforms (e.g., developing/implementing mission policies or standards).
 - Monitoring and reporting on grave violations that armed forces and groups perpetrate against children in the context of armed conflict.
 - Advocacy to ensure the host government, the United Nations and others account for children's concerns throughout the peace process.
 - Engaging with parties to conflict to end violations against children, including the development and implementation of Action Plans to end grave violations.
 - Coordination on behalf of the mission with external actors to ensure strong child protection interventions.
- Depending on the situation, child protection staff also engage in other related activities, such as capacity-building of national counterparts (e.g., police, justice officials, civil society actors), legal reform and awareness-raising efforts.

Slides 9: Every mission is a different experience

Every mission is a different experience

"In a traditional mission, sometimes it can be a struggle to introduce new concepts of Peacekeeping such as child protection."
- Svetlana Jovic, Lebanon



"Because of the extreme security situation, a prison is the only setting I have to chat with children. These interactions ... remind me of what we are doing and why are doing it."
- Dee Brillenburg Wurth, Afghanistan



"I met one former child soldier, while visiting a school... The student ... said, "this man helped me by removing me from the army when I was very young."
- James Gatgong, Sudan



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- Some of you may have worked or will be working in other missions. Your work may look quite different depending on your specific mission context. As child protection staff, you need to be able to know how to adapt the child protection mandate to your specific mission context.



Invite three learners to read aloud the three quotes on the slide before you tell them more about the background of these child protection staff members.

- The demands on each of these three child protection specialists are vastly different:
 - Svjetlana Jovic (also depicted in the photo) talks about her experience as a child protection adviser in Lebanon. The mission (UNIFIL) had no mandate for active child protection such as the monitoring of child rights violations. Her work was therefore focused on developing an understanding of the role of peacekeepers in protecting girls and boys given the post-conflict environment and its effect on children.
 - Dee Brillenburg was a child protection adviser working in Afghanistan, arguably one of the most difficult missions for child protection due to the security situation. However, she found ways of directly engaging with formerly associated children in detention facilities.
 - James Gatgong was a child protection officer in the Sudan, where the mission had one of the biggest child protection units at the time, with 25 staff members. This unit was actively involved in the release and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups.
- Just like these colleagues, it is important for you as child protection staff to reflect on your mission context to determine how best to use your technical expertise and resources to carry out the child protection mandate effectively.




Before moving to the next slide, ask learners to name some of the reasons why the work of child protection staff may look different in various mission contexts. What are some of the factors influencing how you define your role? If you or other learners have worked on child protection (or related areas) in other missions, this would be a good opportunity to share experiences of the types of child protection work you were able/not able to do and why.

Slide 10: Key influencing factors

Key influencing factors

- Conflict context
- Operational setting
- Mission priorities and set-up
- Child protection mandate and capacities



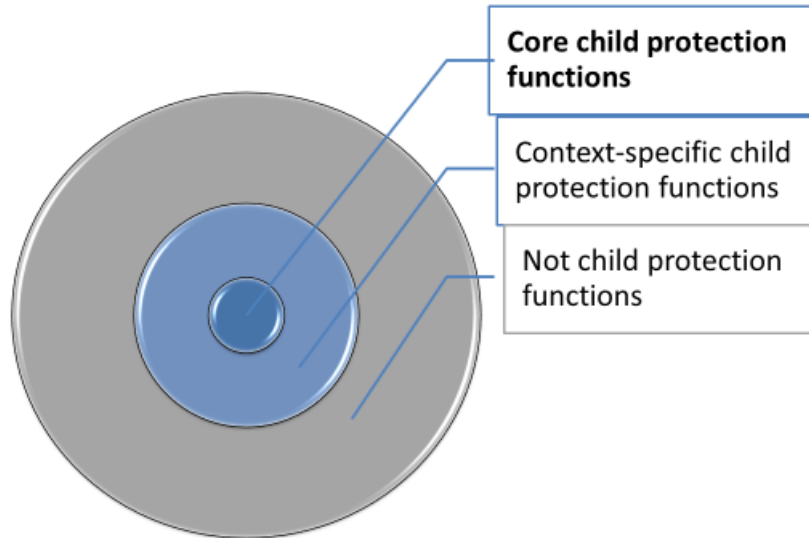
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- Here are some of the key factors that may influence how you define your role as child protection staff:
 - Conflict context e.g., influences the extent to which child protection staff can leverage ceasefire or peace processes or engage with parties to conflict.
 - Operational settings, e.g., influences the extent to which child protection staff have access to areas where violations are being perpetrated against children.
 - Mission priorities and set-up, e.g., influences the extent to which the mission leadership can deliver on the mandate.
 - Child protection mandate and capacities, e.g., influences the extent to which child protection staff can deliver on the mandate.

Slides 11: Determining when to act

Determining when to act



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Ask participants to share an experience where somebody within the mission, a government authority, an NGO or another entity asked them to do something that was not within their area of responsibility. What did they ask them to do? And how did they respond to the request? Alternatively, you can also share some of your own experiences.

- Even if you have a clearly defined role within your mission, governments, UN agencies, NGOs and sometimes even staff within the mission may not know who you are or what you do. As a result, you may receive requests that fall outside your area of responsibility or are not directly related to your work. Even though it may be difficult to say “no” to such requests, it is critical for you to stay focused on your mandate, especially given your limited resources.
- The diagram on the slide (above) depicts three types of requests that you may receive as a child protection staff member:
 - **Work that is part of your core child protection functions** (depicted in the inner circle). This includes the roles and responsibilities we have just discussed, such as monitoring and reporting grave violations against children in armed conflict, mainstreaming child protection, engagement with parties to conflict, etc. This should constitute most of your daily work.
 - **Work that falls outside your roles and responsibilities** (outer circle). This includes managing or funding child protection programming or dealing

with violations perpetrated against children that are not directly related to the armed conflict (e.g., domestic abuse of children). If others approach you with these types of requests, make sure that you explain your role and, where possible, refer them to other actors who may be able to help.

- **Work that may be a child protection responsibility** in your mission context (middle circle). This may include requests where your decision on whether and how to engage is more complex, such as requests for organizing events with or for children. In these instances, you should ask yourself three key questions to decide whether or not to engage:
 - 1) Does this task fall within the mission's child protection mandate and strategic priorities?
 - 2) Does my child protection team have the resources to engage in this activity, given our other obligations?
 - 3) Are there other colleagues within the mission, partners or other actors that have a specific mandate to assume this role and/or are better positioned to take this action?
- You can also use the 'decision-making tree for child protection support requests' to help make your decision and explain to others your rationale for accepting or rejecting the request (see handout below). Ultimately, you want to make sure that you are able to focus on the core functions of the child protection role (the innermost circle) – mainstreaming, monitoring and reporting, advocacy, engaging with parties to conflict, and coordination.
- Handout: Decision-making tree for child protection support requests



Before moving to the final slide, ask participants about their own takeaways from this session.

Slides 12: Takeaways

Takeaways

- Having child protection staff brings numerous benefits to the mission
- Child protection staff derive their mandate directly from the Security Council
- Child protection work may differ depending on the mission context
- It's important to focus on the five core child protection functions



Review these takeaways.

Learning Activities

Additional information for each learning activity is in a separate file. It includes:

Number	Name	Methods
Learning Activity 1.2	Overview of Security Council Resolutions on Children and Armed Conflict	Handout
Learning Activity 2.1	Decision-making tree for child protection support requests	Handout