

BRIEFING NOTE:

Guidance Note on the Protection of Children during Infectious Disease Outbreaks

Introduction

Why this guidance note?

The 2014 Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) epidemic in West Africa highlighted the existing gap in available guidance to support child protection responses in public health emergencies such as infectious disease outbreaks. It was the first infectious disease outbreak recognized by the Security Council as a threat to international peace and security. The Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (CPMS), a key reference document for humanitarian practitioners, does not currently reference infectious disease outbreaks such as epidemics and pandemics.

Who is it for?

Therefore, this Guidance Note aims to provide child protection practitioners, particularly child protection advisors and program managers, with guidance on how to ensure children's protection needs are taken into account in preparedness for, and during responses to, infectious disease outbreaks. The Guidance Note draws upon lessons learned during the West Africa EVD epidemic and other outbreaks such as Zika virus, cholera, lassa fever and rift valley fever.

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Alliance for
Child Protection in
Humanitarian Action

The Child Protection Minimum Standards Working Group of the Alliance provided technical support for the development of this guidance note, under the management of Plan International and in cooperation with Proteknon Consulting Group, LLC.



Epidemic- and pandemic-prone infectious diseases disrupt the environments in which children grow and develop, and can directly and indirectly impact children's well-being and protection.

Structure of the Guidance Note

1. Introduction

2. What are infectious disease outbreaks?

This section outlines the types of outbreaks, the causes of outbreaks and the means of transmission..

3. What do different infectious disease outbreaks means for humanitarian responses?

This section broadly presents the different types of infectious disease outbreaks and their implications for the overall humanitarian response and the child protection response in particular. The public health responses to epidemics and pandemics differ in terms of scope, scale and the responsibilities for action. In addition, direct and indirect modes of transmission of infectious diseases have implications for interventions to promote children's protection during the response.

4. How do infectious disease epidemics affect children's well-being and protection?

This section presents some of the impact of epidemic- and pandemic-prone infectious diseases on the well-being and protection of children, such as family separation, physical violence and harmful practices, mental health and psychosocial well-being, stigmatisation, and sexual violence and abuse.

5. How do we ensure the protection of children during infectious disease epidemics through the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action?

This last section provides concrete recommendations for prevention and response measures, based on the CPMS, to help ensure that the protection of children is a key component of humanitarian responses to infectious disease outbreaks."