

CHILD PROTECTION STRATEGY

Critical issues

- **Psychosocial distress.** Emergencies cause psychosocial distress to people but more so children. Children have expressed their fear of rain and the possibility of another cloud burst. It has been observed that some children are playing aggressive games, are pulling at the hair of other children, are keeping to themselves and not wanting to interact with others. Reduced concentration levels are seen in many children
- **Separated children** – Children who are not living with their biological parents but with relatives or customary care givers. This is not necessarily a problem as it is a tradition of the Ladakhi people to care for children who are not biologically theirs. However, due to reduced resources and opportunities and general stress on families, separated children may not be treated as well as biological children of the family they are staying with.
- **Inadequate or lack of (traditional or conventional) sanitary towels.** Towels have been provided in some locations but not all.
- **Lack of privacy** is more of a challenge to girls when they are menstruating as one tent is shared by more than one family.
- **Orphans and 'semi orphans'.** There are children who lost one or both parents before and during floods.
- **Child headed families.** There are cases of children as head of families where they are fully responsible for taking care of younger siblings. In Basgo, a 12 year old boy is taking care of his two sisters (11 and 9). Their parents who are Nepalese are labourers in Leh.
- **Child labourers.** Cases of children working in houses/homes, at construction sites and at businesses (garages, cyber cafes) have been observed.
- **Children in conflict with the law.** For one year, one boy under 18 years has been in detention in an adult detention facility in Leh.
- **Discrimination** based on ability, caste and nationality.
- **Differently abled children or children with disability.** Reports of some of these children not accessing education were reported during assessments Pyang and related villages.

Strategies

- Running of Child Friendly Spaces which are safe environments, where integrated programming including play, recreation, education, health, and psychosocial support can be delivered, to help children come to terms with their difficult experiences.
- Individual Case Management. This involves identification, assessment, documentation, and referral for the appropriate intervention such as education, psychosocial, nutrition, shelter, medical, legal services or facilities.
- Strengthen existing community based structures that are supportive to children and establishing new ones (where they do not exist). Examples of new structures are Child Protection Committees, Children's Groups and Foster Care Arrangement). It is in the best interest of the child to be in a family environment. Ladakh community has a strong

support system that ensures that children are properly taken care of. This should be strengthened as opposed to institutionalization of vulnerable children like orphans.

- Lobbying and Advocacy for the government departments in charge of child welfare to ensure the implementation of the Juvenile Justice Act which will look into among other issues, the right to education, eradication of child labour and proper parental care.
- Awareness creation through training, discussions at meetings on child rights especially the right to protection from discrimination and child labour.
- Provision of warm clothes in preparation for winter.

NGOs Involved

- Leh Nutrition Project
- Save the Children India
- Child Rights and you