**Abstract Submission Guidance 2023**

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# **Introduction:**

The **theme** of this year’s annual meeting for the child protection sector is:

**“Children and their protection at the centre of humanitarian action: Research, policy, and practice”**

This guidance should be used as you complete your [Abstract Submission Form](https://www.alliancecpha.org/en/news/call-abstracts-2023-annual-meeting) **by Friday 17 February 2023.**

We want to hear your ideas, questions, failures, and successes. Your lessons, positions, and practices. These might be core child protection issues that matter to you and the children and communities you work with. They may be issues that need strategic input from the child protection sector, humanitarian actors, and our policy and advocacy targets.

We encourage *you* to distil what you would like to say into engaging visual **infographics** or stimulating, interactive **discussions**. You will start by summarising what you want to say and submitting it as an ‘abstract,’ which will help us select the most pertinent ideas for presentation during the annual meeting. The abstracts will also be published in our meeting booklet.

You can share what you would like to say in the following ways:

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| **Knowledge / practice exchange and technical discussion** | **Strategic / advocacy-focused sessions** |
| **Infographics** for display and optional discussion during breaks**Sessions:** You share alongside others and an Alliance facilitator leads a discussion**Target Audience**-Practitioners, technical specialists -Policy makers, donors | **Sessions:** You organise, lead, and facilitate a longer session with the speakers you propose**Target Audience**-Advocacy influentials and/or targets-High-level contributors to the discussion |

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| ***Examples of each submission*** |
| Research or evaluation findings, lessons learned and good practices from a project, a theory of change, a summary of an upcoming or recent campaign or project that you would like people to input on.  | An in-depth discussion on a particular topic of strategic importance with the aim of engaging participants in discussion around it or influencing participants on a particular advocacy issue. |

## Selection Process

The Alliance Secretariat will share an anonymous version of your abstract with three members of a review committee. They will individually score your abstract against the following criteria:

* Alignment to the annual meeting theme
* Relevance / usefulness to the Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (CPHA) / humanitarian sector
* Extent to which the abstract fills a gap in knowledge in the CPHA or wider humanitarian or development sectors
* Clarity of message
* Clear lessons learned or sharing of challenges (highly desirable)
* Interactive methodologies proposed for the presentation / discussion[[1]](#footnote-1)

We will strive to prioritise abstracts from local actors, particularly youth-led organisations.

Once scoring is completed, the abstracts will be put into order. The abstract review committee will review this initial selection and have the opportunity to:

* Discuss where scores vary between the three reviewers
* Advocate for any that scored lower but could add significant value to be included

The final selection will be made based on:

* Scores as well as the deliberations of the review committee
* The total number of spaces available in the agenda
* For knowledge / practice exchange sessions this will involve identifying if the abstract can be meaningfully grouped with 1–2 other abstracts into a session

## What you will need to do if your abstract is selected[[2]](#footnote-2)

* Attend a 2-hour training on how to best to present your material / session
* Work with an Alliance facilitator / focal point to shape your material / session
* Submit your information and documents as per the deadline
* Attend a run-through session in the weeks prior to the annual meeting week

# **Shaping Your Abstract**

Abstract submissions need to focus on the annual meeting **theme**:

**“Children and their protection at the centre of humanitarian action: Research, policy, and practice”**

Over 200 of our members and key stakeholders responded to a recent survey on our annual meeting theme. We used this to shape the theme and the below guidance on how your abstract can speak to the theme.

We have also provided some guidance below on a few other areas that were suggested in the survey, which may be of interest to focus on in your submissions.

## **Shaping your abstract to the meeting theme**

### The goal of the Alliance strategy is that *the centrality of children and their protection is recognised and prioritised as essential and lifesaving across the humanitarian system.*

Children make up the majority of populations affected by humanitarian crises, but their specific protection needs are largely overlooked in response plans and appeals, translating to less attention and fewer resources. However, all humanitarian actors have responsibilities to protect children and uphold their rights. Under the [recently reviewed](https://odi.org/en/publications/independent-review-of-the-implementation-of-the-iasc-protection-policy/) [IASC Protection Policy](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-protection-priority-global-protection-cluster/iasc-policy-protection-humanitarian-action-2016) (2016) they also have a responsibility to place protection at the centre of humanitarian action. This means humanitarian coordinators (HCs), Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs), and clusters must work to ensure that “protection of all persons affected and at-risk [informs] humanitarian decision-making and response, including engagement with States and non-State parties to conflict.”

The centrality of children and their protection highlights a greater need to prioritise children, broadly, and their protection and well-being, specifically, across the humanitarian system. We know how to protect children, and much is already being done. To be truly effective, protecting children requires engaging collectively with local actors and across sectors to achieve meaningful and sustainable child protection outcomes. It requires ensuring a focus on prevention and accountability to children.

**Focus questions:**

* What can the child protection and humanitarian sectors do to better reach out to non-protection actors in efforts to better align work around children and provide integrated services?
* What does good look like in terms of the centrality of children and their protection? Are there examples of when and where we have ensured that children’s needs, including their protection, are centrally prioritised in a humanitarian response, and consistently incorporated in the work of other sectors? What factors helped this success? How were barriers tackled? Did this lead to any capacity to leverage additional funds for child protection?
* What role can advocacy play in strengthening commitments to the centrality of protection and ensuring that children are central to all humanitarian responses?
* How to *meaningfully* and *effectively* engage community, local, and national organisations and governments in ensuring the centrality of children and their protection as an integral part of policy making, planning, budgeting, and implementation?
* What is needed to foster the centrality of children and their protection: Are there strategies to induce accountability, transparency, and an increased role of leadership for the protection of *all* children in humanitarian action?

### **Shaping your abstract to other issues our community raised**

You may find these interesting to think about in relation to the Annual Meeting theme.

### **Accountability to children.**The Alliance strategy’s goal for accountability to children is that *all humanitarian programmes are accountable to children and ensure their meaningful and equitable participation.*

Accountability to affected populations within humanitarian action centres around [IASC commitments](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-11/IASC%20Revised%20AAP%20Commitments%20endorsed%20November%202017.pdf) intended to strengthen the culture of accountability towards delivery of more ethical, principled, and dignified humanitarian response. All humanitarian actors have a duty to children, to contributing to their protection, ensuring their [safeguarding](https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global/) and [protection from sexual abuse and exploitation](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/protection-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-3), and including them within humanitarian accountability and refugee protection procedures. Children must be meaningfully engaged, consulted, and partnered with through age- and development stage- appropriate processes. They must be addressed in communications in child-friendly and accessible ways. Their rights, views, and protection needs and capacities must be incorporated throughout the humanitarian programme cycle. Effective and meaningful participation is a process. Upholding this right for children requires that all processes in which children are heard and participate must be done in a quality manner. However, accountability to children goes beyond their meaningful participation. It includes promoting their competencies, nurturing their resilience and agency, and shifting power dynamics that enable children to hold stakeholders and duty bearers accountable.

**Focus questions:**

* What good practices are we seeing amongst donors, decision makers, and humanitarian actors in terms of requiring accountability mechanisms to systematically include children, with direct consultation on their views? What barriers remain? What are the consequences of inaction?
* How can the child protection sector increase resources and capacity of humanitarian actors to effectively support diverse children and young people to meaningfully and equitably participate in the programme cycle and decisions that affect their lives? How might this impact on ensuring holistic interventions that place children at the centre?
* Are humanitarian assessments and risk analyses actively identifying and seeking to understand the risks and protective factors children experience? Are the findings able to leverage the humanitarian programmes, funding, and decisions we need?
* What examples do we have of *including children’s voices* in prevention and response efforts to enhance children’s well-being and protection, and what were the outcomes?
* What accountability procedures are we using that are child-friendly / child-led, beyond complaints and feedback mechanisms (e.g., post-distribution monitoring tools, referral pathways). What practical steps are involved? What resources are required?
* How are we engaging children and communities we work with to have *community-designed and driven* child protection programmes? What are the obstacles? How can we best communicate complex child protection issues?

### **Prevention.** The Alliance strategy’s goal for accountability to children is that *prevention is understood and prioritised as a critical element of child protection across humanitarian action.*

Prevention is rooted in a more dignified and ethical approach to humanitarian action, as humanitarians have an ethical duty to both do no harm and prevent harm where possible.

The Alliance has been championing the cause of prevention in general, and primary prevention in particular, for the past four years. It has developed [a number of technical products, including learning materials,](https://alliancecpha.org/en/series-of-child-protection-materials/prevention-initiative) to support the child protection sector in becoming more focused on preventing harm before it occurs. However, the child protection sector remains primarily focused on response to harms after they occur.

Beyond the need for further investments in research and evidence, gaps exist within the child protection sector in understanding and awareness of prevention levels, approaches, and strategies; on how to apply these and integrate these throughout the programme cycle; and on identifying the entry points and pathways to support prevention through multi-sector and integrated programmes.

The Alliance defines prevention, based on the public health model of prevention, under the categories of “primary prevention,” “secondary prevention,” and “tertiary prevention.” To learn more about this, consult the “[Primary Prevention Framework For Child Protection in Humanitarian Action](https://alliancecpha.org/en/primary-prevention-framework).”

**Focus questions:**

* What programmatic models have been successful in primary prevention?
* How to balance/spend humanitarian funds across prevention and response efforts?
* Practical components of prevention programming, for example: highlighting the evidence-based programmes that are available; how to incorporate prevention into programmes that have been traditionally response-focused; where do behaviour change methods fit in with prevention efforts; and how and when to measure impact.
* How do we ensure that decision makers, donors, and other actors across the sector have increased awareness on the lifesaving nature of prevention interventions?
* How do we convince donors to increase funding for prevention actions in humanitarian response across child protection and other sectoral actors?
* How do child protection actors work with other sectors on addressing root causes of harm to children?
* How do we measure prevention? How do we show that prevention works and saves lives and dignity?

### **Learning and Development.***This is a core function of the Alliance that has an ‘elevated status’ during the 2021–2025 strategic period.*

The CPHA sector has developed substantially over the course of the last three decades and is continuing to develop approaches, strategies, and methodologies to better ensure the protection of children in humanitarian contexts. CPHA practitioners often must manage scarce resources and make tough choices on the basis of rapidly changing contexts. The Alliance supports the efforts of humanitarian practitioners to achieve high quality and effective child protection interventions in these challenging circumstances. Learning and development efforts facilitate the strengthening and sharing of knowledge, skills, and attitudes of humanitarian child protection practitioners, working at various levels and in different settings, in line with competencies set through the [CPHA Competency Framework](https://alliancecpha.org/en/child-protection-online-library/guidance-child-protection-humanitarian-action-competency-framework) to ensure the [Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (CPMS)](https://alliancecpha.org/en/CPMS_home) are met. Learning and development is often equated with the design and delivery, or attendance, of training courses, but this is just one way in which learning and development activities can manifest. The CPHA sector needs, and the Alliance promotes, a shift from a training mindset to a learning mindset, and to encourage a capacity-sharing approach, avoiding top-down approaches and encouraging peer-to-peer approaches.

**Focus questions:**

* How can we better understand and assess learning needs? Have you used methodologies that have been successful at local, regional, and international levels?
* What does a capacity-sharing approach to learning and development really mean? Are there examples of when and where we have successfully used a capacity-sharing approach or examples of successful co-creation of learning and development initiatives? What factors helped this success? How were barriers tackled?
* How can the child protection sector enhance the involvement of local actors, including youth organisations, from a variety of contexts?
* How can we ensure Learning and Development opportunities have the widest reach possible with limited budget and resources? How can we balance this with ensuring they are learner-centred and strengthen CPHA competence? Are there any examples of successful initiatives? What factors helped this success? How were barriers tackled?
* How can we sensitise the donor community to the need for investing in learning and development to deliver qualitative CPHA programmes and better protection outcomes for children and young people?
* Are there any successful advocacy initiatives in favour of learning and development? What factors helped this success?
* Have you been successful in sensitising other practitioners to allocate enough time during working hours for self and team learning and development needs? Can you share examples?

**Other core child protection issues and areas** that survey respondents shared their interest in are listed below. You may find these interesting to think about in relation to the Annual Meeting theme.

Other areas of the **Alliance strategy:**

* **Localisation** (as per our strategy’s expanded understanding of localisation)
* **Multi-sector and integrated programming and collaboration**
* The **climate crisis, climate justice, and child protection**

**Core child protection issues** linked to the [Minimum Standards for CPHA](https://alliancecpha.org/en/CPMS_home):

* **Abuse, exploitation, neglect, and violence**
* **Mental health and psychosocial support**
* **Alternative care, family strengthening,** and **reintegration**
* **Unaccompanied and separated children**
* **Children associated with armed forces and armed groups**
* **Child protection systems**, **justice for children,** and **case management**
1. See [these tips for adding interactivity to your session and different facilitation methods you can use](https://reesmccann.com/2023/01/25/easily-adding-interactivity-to-online-sessions/). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See specific dates in the Abstract Submission Form. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)