Neglected Needs?

Establishing the extent to which non-material needs of children in emergencies are met by the national disaster plans of Jamaica

“If we don’t stand up for children, then we don’t stand for much”
– Marian Wright Edelman

Authored by Jonathan Hall

Jointly supervised by Dr Lars-Åke Persson
Head of International Maternal & Child Health at Uppsala University and
Mrs Janet Cupidon-Quallo
Child Protection Specialist at UNICEF Jamaica

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Abstract

This paper seeks to review the national disaster plans of Jamaica from the perspective of child protection and wellbeing in emergencies. The focus of the review is on needs associated with education, psychosocial support and family reunification (including care of unaccompanied and separated children) as these needs are often given less priority in an emergency. These are referred to collectively as the non-material needs of children in emergencies. Providing for the non-material needs of children in emergencies is an important part of preventing children from experiencing physical or sexual abuse, psychological distress, neglect and harm and it is therefore vital that these are not an afterthought but an integral part of planning for an emergency.

In order to review these plans a tool in the form of a checklist of measures of international standards was compiled and applied to the plans. This paper finds that the national disaster plans of Jamaica fail to meet every measure on the compiled checklist. Children are not even mentioned as a vulnerable group in need of special attention nor are measures defined to prevent them from long-term or short term harm. The limited or non-existent extent to which children are considered is furthermore found to be an issue in national disaster planning of other states. This paper therefore recommends that the national disaster plans of Jamaica, as well as other states, be revised in partnership with local stakeholders (including children, the ultimate stakeholders) taking into consideration the findings presented.

Keywords

children, child protection, child wellbeing, emergency, disaster, non-material needs, family reunification, psychosocial support, education
Acronyms

CPWG  Child Protection Working Group
EC    European Commission
HCCH  Hague Conference on Private International Law
IASC  Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICC   International Criminal Court
INEE  Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
NaDMA National Disaster Management Agency of Grenada
NEMA  National Emergency Management Agency of Trinidad and Tobago
ODPEM Office for Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management
PAHO  Pan-American Health Organisation
UN    United Nations
UNDP  United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund
UWI   University of the West Indies
1 Introduction

1.1 Research question

The research question of this paper is “To what extent do the national disaster plans of Jamaica meet international standards for the provision of the non-material needs of children in an emergency?”

1.2 Purpose and aims

The purpose of this paper is to review the extent to which the national disaster plans of Jamaica provide for the non-material needs of children in emergencies relevant to ensuring their protection and wellbeing. This paper aims to identify international standards and use these to assess gaps in the Jamaican plans measures for the non-material needs and to provide conclusions on how these gaps can be better addressed in future revisions. For the purpose of this paper the term “non-material needs” will be used to refer collectively to needs associated with education, psychosocial support and family reunification (including care of unaccompanied and separated children).

1.3 Relevance to the field of humanitarian action

The subject matter of this paper is of clear relevance to the field of humanitarian action to which it will contribute. It will examine national disaster plans which form a part of the humanitarian response to an emergency, particularly the response of the organs of state and in turn the relation of the state to other actors in the field. The focus on the protection and wellbeing of children is important as children form the most vulnerable group in emergencies and are most at risk of exploitation, neglect, abuse and other forms of harm and suffering. They also are the basis on which the future will be built and failures to ensure their protection and wellbeing in emergencies will entail issues that last far beyond the immediacy of the emergency.

This paper will contribute both academically as a Master thesis to the field of humanitarian action as well as practically, with findings and conclusions to be presented to the
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Jamaica whom have provided support and supervision to the development of this thesis. UNICEF will use these findings in co-operation with their partners in the Government of Jamaica and its various ministries to revise the country’s emergency plans in order to better account for the needs to children, providing a more suitable basis for future response that will help to ensure child protection and wellbeing in future situations of emergency.

1.4 Survey of the field

The island nation of Jamaica is located in the Caribbean Sea in the island chain that forms the Greater-Antilles (for a map, please refer to Figure 2 and Figure 3 Maps showing Jamaica’s geographical location and its parishes in the Appendix). It is the third largest of the islands in the Caribbean and has a population nearing three million. Due to its geographical location, in the hurricane belt of the Atlantic, Jamaica has on several occasions in recent history experienced hurricane related disasters and storm damage (PAHO 2003). Most recently, in the last decade, Jamaica has suffered damage as a result of Hurricanes Ivan (2004), Dean (2007), Gustav (2008) and Sandy (2012). Prior to these most recent events Jamaica has experienced great damage and a large number of deaths from Hurricanes Charlie (1951) and Gilbert (1988). Hurricanes are an annual risk with hurricane season occurring through the months of June-November (Lyew-Ayee 2012).

Jamaica is also at risk of other natural disasters including those associated with an earthquake. The island is situated on the boundary of the Gonâve Microplate and the Caribbean Plate and is traversed by several geological faults including the same fault, the Enriquillo-Plantain Garden fault, which caused the catastrophe in Port-au-Prince in neighbouring Haiti in 2010 (Lyew-Ayee 2012). Approximately 200 earthquakes take place on and around the island every year with the vast majority being minor, recording less than 4.0 on the Richter scale (UWI 2013). Major earthquakes of the past include the famous Port Royal earthquake of 1962 and the Great Kingston earthquake of 1907. In the former many people died as two thirds of the unofficial capital city of Port Royal sunk below sea level with other parts of the country experiencing landslides, flooding and tsunamis (UWI 2013). In the Great Kingston earthquake every
building in the capital experienced damage, with up to 85 per cent being completely destroyed. Thousands perished and hundreds were injured with widespread damage to buildings, landslides, fires, tsunamis and flooding (Tortello 2002).

Jamaica is a nation at risk of multiple forms of natural disaster. Whilst damaging hurricanes are more commonplace, the risk of a major earthquake has recently been emphasised by seismic experts and the United Nations (Caribbean 360 2013). There is scientific agreement that an earthquake of 7.0 up to 7.5 can be expected based on the accumulating and significant strain in fault lines observable through current land deformation (UNDP 2013). Such an earthquake has been estimated by some to have the potential to cause deaths of up to 10 per cent of the islands population and injuries of up to 30 per cent (Ahmad 2001). Damage to livelihoods, property and infrastructure would most likely be large with estimations widely varying but placed at billions of dollars (Ahmad 2001).

Jamaica has also experienced security related emergencies with military incursions into West Kingston in 2010 to secure the arrest and extradition of Christopher Coke, a gang leader commonly known as Dudus, causing over 100 deaths and injuries to police, gunmen and civilians (The Economist 2012). Whilst such events are not commonplace Jamaica does have a precarious security situation with high crime rates and a proliferation of firearms (Wolfe 2012). Military incursions and civil unrest are not common, however, they clearly have the potential to lead to and contribute to an emergency situation.

Jamaica is listed as one of the top 15 most at risk nations in the world (Alliance Development Works 2012). According to the Planning Institute of Jamaica over the past 20 years natural disasters have cost the country over ten million US dollars (Brown, Ingrid 2010). As a nation Jamaica will continue to experience disasters and emergencies and as such it is important that the country has appropriate emergency planning to best protect the people present on the island during an emergency.
Introduction

In emergencies children are a particularly vulnerable group and consistently form one of the largest parts of affected populations (UNICEF 2009). Children are more at risk of being subjected to violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect in an emergency particularly as a result of family separation, lack of awareness of risks and dangers and a lack of safe places for children to learn and play (Save the Children 2006). Where there are few prevention initiatives children are at greater risk of suffering shortened lives, poor physical and mental health, educational problems, homelessness, poor social development, poor parenting skills in later life and less prospects for the future and achieving their full potential (Save the Children 2006). However, successful child protection interventions can contribute to healthy physical, mental and social development helping to improve future prospects of the child as well as making the child less likely to contribute to exploitation of children as an adult (CPWG 2012).

Whilst emergencies threaten the immediate needs of a child in order to survive, they also threaten their long term psychological and social development. In responding to an emergency it is the basic survival needs which are often given greatest priority to the detriment of other needs which are equally important for ensuring their wellbeing and protection (Wessells 2009). In particular protection efforts related to education, psychosocial support and family reunification (including the care of unaccompanied and separated children) fail to receive priority. The needs which are typically the focus of aid and assistance efforts include food, shelter, health care and sanitation (Lilley et al. 2011). This is sometimes referred to as meeting basic material needs in an emergency.

Education, psychosocial support and family reunification are all important efforts to ensure child protection in an emergency. Education can help children identify risks, give them hope for the future and provide a means to assess the needs of children (Save the Children 2007). It can provide children with greater options to achieve their potential and can provide a safe place for children separate from the stresses and dangers associated with an emergency situation (Cahill 2010). Psychosocial support initiatives, meanwhile, can help address the short and long term mental wellbeing of children, rebuilding confidence and fostering positive social development (CPWG 2012).
Family reunification is central to child wellbeing as the family is where the child is best protected from the risks and dangers they are exposed to in an emergency and where they will receive the individual love, attention and care necessary to overcome the trauma and potential development problems that are associated with emergencies (IASC 2007b). As a part of family reunification the care of unaccompanied and separated children within family type environments provide children with the protection and the support needed whilst efforts are made to identify surviving parents and caregivers (Doyle, Joanne 2010).

However, where these needs commonly fail to receive priority or the appropriate consideration, there can be a variety of resulting threats to children’s protection and wellbeing. It is not uncommon for family reunification efforts to be hampered when priority is given to inter-country adoption which can in fact increase family separation or make temporary separation permanent (Doyle, Joanne 2010). A recent example of this occurred in Haiti where early on inter-country adoption was fast tracked and many unaccompanied and separated children were moved abroad (Doyle, Joanne 2010). Whilst some basic material needs may well be met better outside of the emergency environment, the child’s protection and wellbeing is always best met in their local context (IASC 2007b). Inter-country adoption can expose the child to greater protection risks and can have long term negative implications on healthy psychological and social development (Doyle, Joanne 2010). The child’s right to an identity and means to re-establish contact with surviving family members can be compromised if important documentation is lost (IASC 2007b), which was the case for many in Haiti (Doyle, Joanne 2010).

Likewise failure to prioritise education early on is commonplace with this often being considered an issue for long term development projects (Cahill 2010). However, this view fails to see the potential for education to act as a means of identifying children’s needs, making referrals and as a link to other sectors including those covering basic survival needs. Children failing to receive education in an emergency are likely to be less aware of the risks and dangers of their environment and this makes them more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse (CPWG 2012). Children are also more likely to
find themselves in precarious situations as the safe place education provides is replaced by unsupervised play, work or other engagements in environments where their safety is not assured (Save the Children 2007).

Equally important are the psychosocial needs of children in emergencies which have not always been given adequate priority in emergencies. Having experienced trauma a lack of support can lead to long term psychological and social development issues even leading to serious mental health issues in later life (Save the Children 2007). Psychosocial support can help children regain development losses caused by trauma and can give children the chance to be children again through the provision of safe spaces where they can take part in activities and play that encourage progress in psychosocial development (Arntson & Knudsen 2004).

The needs of children in emergencies associated with education, psychosocial support and family reunification (including care of unaccompanied and separated children) are all of clear importance for ensuring child protection and wellbeing. Yet, these needs are not always being prioritised and met by those providing aid and assistance in situations of emergency. This paper will refer to these needs collectively as “non-material needs” and will seek to determine to what extent these non-material needs are considered in the national disaster planning of Jamaica and whether this is in line with international standards.

1.4.1 Rationale for study

Jamaica is a country that experiences a variety of natural disasters. There is an annual risk of hurricanes, many of which have in past years caused severe damage to the nation. A high magnitude earthquake is forecast and the country experiences circa 200 smaller earthquakes annually. Earthquakes and hurricanes in the country have in the past led to flooding, landslides, tsunamis, building collapse, fires and other disasters. Additionally the country has experienced civil unrest, with a proliferation of firearms making emergency situations potentially more volatile.
Children are particularly vulnerable in emergencies, such as those confronted by Jamaica, with a variety of issues affecting their wellbeing. Key to their needs are the non-material needs encompassing psychosocial support, education and family reunification. These needs often fail to receive priority in an emergency but are vital to a child's protection, wellbeing, healthy development and long term prospects of achieving their full potential. The response of the state to an emergency or disaster is informed, to a large extent, by its national disaster plans. In a country such as Jamaica it is important that the national disaster plans of the state reflect the needs of children as these plans inform the emergency response of the state and hold the state to account in instances where there are shortcomings.

For a state facing the challenges Jamaica experiences it is important that the national disaster plans provide for the needs of the vulnerable, of children. Emergencies will happen and the state will be involved to varying degrees in efforts to respond. This study will seek to determine the extent to which the national disaster plans of Jamaica provide for the non-material needs of children in emergencies. It will identify necessary revisions in order to better protect the wellbeing of children in future emergencies and to pre-empt a situation where the state is forced to respond to an emergency without appropriate measures detailed in the Jamaican national disaster plans. As a nation in a position of high risk, exposed to a variety of potential disasters and emergencies, it is important that the plans detailing an emergency response be scrutinised to ensure they uphold international standards and do not contribute to making a bad situation worse.
2 Conceptual framework

This paper will employ the concept of ‘non-material needs’ which will be used to collectively discuss the issues of education, psychosocial support and family reunification. This term has been settled upon as a means of referring to all three needs without necessitating reference to each need individually and helps to make the study more coherent and easily read. The term ‘material survival needs’ is often used to discuss needs such as food, water, shelter and healthcare and hence the term ‘non-material’ has been chosen to address needs which risk being viewed as more abstract and less urgent.

For clarity to readers, whom may be unfamiliar with some of the other terms employed in this text, the key concepts and their designated definitions are laid out in Table 4 in the Appendix. Due to a wide variety of definitions, with varying emphases, employed by different actors working with children in emergencies this paper has chosen to formulate its own definitions. These definitions are based upon the authors own understanding and conceptualisation of the terms by the way in which they are collectively used by actors and practitioners in the field.

In seeking to establish the extent to which the national disaster plans of Jamaica provide for the non-material needs of children in emergencies it is necessary to determine a perspective through which to approach this study. This paper acknowledges that in times of emergency each situation will have its own challenges and demands and that these will be very much determined by the local contexts. However, this text will not seek to present a debate on whether the needs of children in an emergency are universal or whether they are context dependent. This study will approach the subject from the understanding that international legal standards, as well as guidelines for minimum and best practice, form the best basis on which to ground results.

International legal instruments are commonly agreed and act as norms of practice which in many states are also legally binding on actions of states (Novakovic 2013). For this reason international law will be examined to see what rights children are afforded, what standards are laid down and how these are reflected in Jamaica’s disaster
planning. International legal standards are the absolute minimum that could be expected to be represented in the national disaster plans, particularly in cases where the Jamaican government has ratified an international legal instrument and there exists a commitment to uphold its contents. This could then reasonably be expected to be reflected in the disaster planning of the state.

In addition the study will look at guidelines on minimum standards and best practice accepted by actors in the field of emergency response and humanitarian assistance. Guidelines in emergency response with minimum standards and best practice are useful in that they are compiled by actors with knowledge and experience in the area. Their reflection in the Jamaican national disaster plans would complement that of international legal standards as they provide minimum standards and standards for best practice relevant to the specifics of an emergency situation and developed from a position of experience. Particularly valuable are guidelines which are referred to and used by several actors as well as those which have been developed collectively by numerous actors in emergencies.

This paper will initially look to international standards, including international law and commonly used guidelines, as a perspective through which to assess the protection of children’s non-material needs in emergencies. The process in which this perspective is applied is discussed in the Method section of this text. However, this paper will also look to incorporate other relevant literature, as well as a comparison of other states disaster plans, in its discussion. This will be done in order to provide a clearer context for the disaster plans of Jamaica in relation to those of other states as well as greater insight and explanation surrounding the needs of children in emergencies and how they are best met, as well as the problems commonly encountered in meeting them.

Concepts such as international law (including human rights law) and guidelines for best practice and minimum standards will be viewed by this paper as universally applicable. However, this perspective does not mean that each emergency situation can be approached in a uniform manner as emergencies will by nature present their own unique issues in each situation with the local terrain, weather and culture presenting
opportunities as well as potential challenges. However, this being the case, international standards, such as human rights law, will be considered for the purpose of this work to be universally applicable.

This paper acknowledges that there exists a debate surrounding whether international standards, particularly human rights, are universally applicable or culturally and contextually relative. This discussion is vast and covers areas of philosophy, anthropology, international relations and economics (Cowan et al. 2001). For the purpose of this work such a discussion cannot be included to any great degree as it would deviate from the focus in seeking to establish the extent to which Jamaica’s national disaster plans ensure the non-material needs of children.

The perspective applied by this paper will be one which accepts the universal applicability of international legal standards as well as guidelines on best practice and minimum standards as means for obtaining results. The author believes this approach to be defensible as the perspective of universalism is one which has been increasingly justified by several developments in the international community which have sought to enforce the universal nature of international law. Of importance is the adoption by the international community of the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action at the World Conference on Human Rights where paragraph five reads:

All human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated. The international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis. While the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms. (United Nations 1993)
Figure 1 Visualisation of conceptual framework and method employed

- **Identify standards**
  - International legal standards
  - Guidelines used by actors
  - Other national plans
  - Related literature

- **Develop checklists**
  - Psychosocial support
  - Education
  - Family reunification

- **Apply checklists**
  - Jamaican national disaster plans

- **Results**
  - Full, partial or no compliance with checklist

- **Reasoning**
  - Discussion of results

- **Findings**
  - Conclusions

- **Revisions**
  - Updated plans

- **Long term result**
  - Children’s non-material needs better protected in future emergencies
An increasing sense of international responsibility over that of national sovereignty is evidenced in international tribunals, such as the ICC established in The Hague under the Rome Statute (Reydams 2003). As well as this the increasing use of extraterritorial justice, or universal jurisdiction, that is to say prosecution authority by one country regardless of whether the crime was committed in another, on issues such as sexual offences against children and terrorism in countries including the United Kingdom, Spain and Belgium (Reydams 2003) show a progressive move towards a universal understanding of international law and human rights (Pollis & Schwab 2000). This “reflect[s] an emerging consensus on international responsibility and accountability for the most heinous crimes against humanity, thereby restricting the claim of state sovereignty” and as such advancing the profile of the argument for universalism (Pollis & Schwab 2000).

Additionally academic literature is trending towards a greater acceptance of universality of international law. For example, Pollis and Schwab, have in earlier academic works presented opposition to the universality of human rights but in more contemporary work have sought to reconcile this stance through an understanding of culture as being incorporated within human rights (Pollis & Schwab 1979). This stance takes the view that a “new universalism” has been established by the advent of globalisation with social, economic and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights being co-dependent.

This paper deems the use of a perspective that views international standards as universal to be justified. Whilst this paper acknowledges the existence of a debate on whether rights are universally or contextually dependent, it is not in this interest of this study to pursue such a debate in great depth. This is deemed to be a separate issue which has the potential for an entirely different research paper and would dilute the focus of this study, as well as its relevance, if included. This study will not attempt to test theories of universalism or cultural relativism as this is not in line with the Purpose and aims risking abstract debate on concepts and deviation from the Research question.
3 Method

In seeking to assess the national disaster plans of Jamaica from the perspective of meeting the non-material needs of children relevant to ensuring child protection and well-being this paper will seek to determine what constitutes best practice and common standards in providing non-material needs. Once determined a checklist will be created based upon the findings. This checklist will enable a structured review of the various national disaster plans made available for this assessment by government ministries, agencies and offices in Jamaica.

In order to determine what constitutes best practice and common standards for child protection in emergencies two key sources will be consulted which will contribute to the creation of the checklist. These will include:

1. International legal instruments relevant to child protection and wellbeing in emergencies
2. Guidelines employed by humanitarian actors in the provision of child protection and wellbeing in emergencies

The most obvious source for the foundation of the checklist is international legal instruments related to child rights, protection and wellbeing in emergencies. Existing legal commitments by Jamaica to child rights and measures for their protection will be included as they are the minimum that can be expected to be reflected in national disaster plans. However, this paper will also seek to address international legal instruments that are relevant, even if they are not currently ratified by Jamaica, due to their global relevance and the way in which they create standards and norms of minimum practice.

The inclusion of guidelines related to child protection and wellbeing in emergencies will be identified to highlight existing standards of best practice in the field of child protection in emergencies. They will be identified through the use of internet search functions and the databases available through Uppsala University. In particular the In-
ternational Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS), Journal Storage (JSTOR), Google Scholar and to a lesser extent Google Search will be used. In addition to these searches the offices of several high profile organisations with expertise in child protection in emergencies will be identified and contacted regarding which standards they adhere to and/or consider widely used or accepted amongst other actors. Should standards and guidelines be found that are only used by one actor, and are not commonly referred to in relevant literature, these guidelines and standards will be excluded.

The standards set by other countries national disaster plans treatment of children in emergencies will also be addressed in the discussion of the results. This paper will seek to obtain the national disaster plans of other (particularly Caribbean) island states as it is anticipated that these states, facing similar issues to Jamaica, will provide the most useful comparison. However, this paper will also look to acquire disaster plans from countries which have a regular experience of disasters, particularly states with a well-developed response infrastructure, which are considered likely to have given greater consideration to the area of child protection and well-being than those experiencing emergencies in less frequency or with fewer resources to expend on planning a response. To obtain these plans the relevant national government websites will be consulted in the hope that these may be available online. It is anticipated that it will also be necessary to contact the relevant departments or offices should these plans not be accessible on their websites. Once obtained, these plans will be reviewed for their treatment of the non-material needs of children in an emergency.

Literature covering non-material needs reviewed by this paper will also be consulted in the discussion of the results. This literature will be sourced using relevant databases available through Uppsala University (specifically the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS), Journal Storage (JSTOR), Google Scholar and Google Search). References from these articles identified as being of interest will additionally be sought to be obtained through the same means. Where an article cannot be found online, or as a physical copy in the university library, the organisation responsible for its authoring will be contacted, if possible.
Literature prior to the year 2000 will be excluded on the basis that the fast pace of developments in this field make it likely that earlier literature will contain little of contemporary relevance. Whilst there is a vast amount of research in the area of children’s needs generally, for the purpose of this paper only works dealing with the specific needs of children in emergency situations will be included. This is in order to ensure the paper remains relevant and focused on the needs of children in emergencies and does not stray into a vast discussion of their needs in other situations. For example, looking into children’s general educational needs would produce an enormous discussion spanning issues including curriculum, class sizes and teacher training which would not be productive for the purpose of this work.

To locate these materials this paper will use the following search strings across the databases and search platforms employed:

- guideline* child* protection
- standard* child* protection
- child* protection standard* emergency*
- child* protection standard* disaster*
- child* protection guideline* emergency*
- child* protection guideline* disaster*
- child* protection standard* humanitarian action
- child* protection guideline* humanitarian action
- psychosocial child* emergency*
- psychosocial child* disaster*
- unaccompanied child* emergency*
- unaccompanied child* disaster*
- separated child* emergency*
- separated child* disaster*
- family reunification emergency*
- family reunification disaster*
- education child* emergency*
- education child* disaster*
4 Results

4.1 Education

4.1.1 Results from guidelines

The primary guiding documents identified are:

- *Child protection in emergencies: Priorities, principles and practices* (Save the Children 2007)

The guiding documents call for the need to prioritise education (Save the Children 2007) and to “rapidly organise” child friendly or temporary learning spaces (CPWG 2012) in the event of an emergency. In doing so access to education needs to be provided in an inclusive, equitable manner so that it is ensured for all children (Save the Children 2007). This is best guaranteed through community participation in education initiatives such as through consultation in placement of temporary schools (INEE 2010). Such involvement can aid in the recommended standards which specify “mapping schools that are at risk” (CPWG 2012) and in establishing schools with access routes that are “safe, secure and accessible to all” (INEE 2010). The recommendations require that schools should be located away from possible “protection threats” and “close to population centres” (CPWG 2012) and the “communities they serve” (INEE 2010) to ensure access to education, despite an emergency, is made available to all children equitably. In addition information should be collected at educational centres which is “disaggregated by sex, age and disability” which can help in monitoring issues related to access and proliferation of educational services. Requirements for access should be changed so that they do not create barriers, such as requirements for children to have relevant papers (CPWG 2012).

Efforts should be made to improve the awareness of educators to systems of assessment, referral and reporting, particularly on protection issues (CPWG 2012). There
should be appropriate training on “how to identify and report child protection risks” and referral systems should be set up (CPWG 2012). The guidelines recommend not just a monitoring of protection issues related to children’s protection outside of school but also regular monitoring of the protection afforded by the schools themselves and the surrounding vicinity (INEE 2010). There should be regular monitoring of the “child protection situation in schools” to ensure protection from “corporal punishment”, other “cruel or degrading punishments” and other failures in provision of protection (CPWG 2012). Included in the guidelines are the need for a “code of conduct” for teachers to be developed which can aid both in prevention and detection of protection issues. Agreement between actors, parents and the community is also identified as important in establishing “indicators” to be used “to track progress” (CPWG 2012).

The guidelines point to the need to work beyond a normal curriculum in order to address the particular needs of children in emergencies. The importance of teaching “risk reduction” and “life skills” is highlighted as central for ensuring children are equipped with the skills needed to better overcome challenges they face in an emergency situation (CPWG 2012, INEE 2010). As examples of what risk reduction and life skills teaching can include the guidelines speak of measures for the “prevention of separation” or “what to do in the event of an earthquake or tsunami”, how to cope with “dangers and injury prevention” (CPWG 2012) as well as working with “communication skills” and “risk taking behaviour”. The guidelines also point to the position education is in to shape social developments in an emergency and include recommendations that education initiatives should support “positive living, acceptance and peace” (CPWG 2012). As a part of this the guidelines identify a need to review curriculum content to ensure that it does not “discriminate in any way” (CPWG 2012) requiring that efforts be made to ensure whether education may “inadvertently be contributing” to issues such as conflict that may be associated with an emergency (CPWG 2012). As well as such measures, education is identified as a means for provision of psychosocial support with the INEE calling for “the psychosocial well-being of learners” to be promoted (INEE 2010). This is evident across the identified guidelines with activities in educational facilities needing to “ensure learners well-being” and “focus on enhancing sound development, positive social interactions and good health” (INEE 2010).
The importance of linking education with other sectors is clearly addressed in the guidelines reviewed by this paper. Schools can be used as a means of addressing and monitoring needs such as “health, nutrition, water supply, sanitation and hygiene practices” (CPWG 2012). By working alongside other sectors a clearer image of the way basic services are being provided can be given and this can aid in other sectors meeting these needs and identifying weaknesses (Save the Children 2007).

Education in an emergency needs to be coupled with minimum standards for the training of teachers and should “include the safety of the affected population as a sub-objective” of education initiatives (CPWG 2012). Issues which teachers may not previously be educated in need to receive appropriate attention including “how to identify children’s needs, child-centred learning strategies, psychosocial support, inclusive education practices and ways to make sure there are clear systems of reporting protection concerns in the classroom” (CPWG 2012). It is particularly emphasised that educators need to be given the “skills and knowledge needed to create a supportive learning environment and promote learners psychosocial well-being” (INEE 2010). Other aspects include the need to “develop and use child protection messages” (CPWG 2012) as well as giving teachers training on gender sensitive teaching approaches (CPWG 2012). Furthermore the guidelines identify a need to “limit class size” and “reduce unrealistic expectations” in order to ensure the teachers “are protected, and not just the protectors” (CPWG 2012).

4.1.2 Results from legal instruments

Legal instruments related to education are found to include:

- *Convention against discrimination in education* (UNESCO 1960)
- *International covenant on economic, social and cultural rights* (United Nations 1976)

The main articles identified in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* relevant to the issue of education in emergencies are Articles 28 and 29 which relate directly to education. Articles 3, 19 and 31 are also identified as being of relevant dealing with issues
related to education in an emergency (United Nations 1989). The convention was ratified by Jamaica in 1991 and as such Jamaica has expressed commitment to its measures.

Article 28 recognises the “right of the child to education” available “on the basis of equal opportunity” and commits state parties to “make primary education compulsory and available for all” (United Nations 1989). The same article also calls for measures to be taken “to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop out rates”. It also commits the signatories to commit to the protection of the child by ensuring “school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child’s human dignity” (United Nations 1989). Article 29 also explicitly makes reference to educational rights of the child expressing that education should seek “the development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential”. This article directs the state parties to prepare the child for “responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of peace, tolerance, equality of the sexes and friendship among all peoples” (United Nations 1989).

Article 3 is of relevance in that it refers to the “best interests of the child” being a “primary consideration” for “all actions concerning children” (United Nations 1989). It also commits signatories to ensuring facilities “responsible for the care or protection of children” conform to relevant standards “particularly in areas of safety, health and in the number and suitability of their staff” (United Nations 1989). The “survival and development of the child” to “the maximum extent possible” is also enforced in Article 6 of the convention (United Nations 1989). Article 19 commits states to “take all appropriate [...] educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse” (United Nations 1989). Another article of relevance is Article 31 which points to the right to “engage in play and recreation activities” and to “participate fully in cultural and artistic life” (United Nations 1989).

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was ratified by Jamaica in October 1975. As a signatory to the treaty Jamaica is committed to the
rights it enshrines. The main article of relevance to education is Article 13. This article commits states to “the right of everyone to education” which should be “directed to the full development of the human personality” (United Nations 1976). Additionally, Article 2 makes reference to the rights of the charter being guaranteed “without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. The document also recognises the “right of everyone to take part in cultural life” (United Nations 1976).

The Convention against Discrimination in Education was ratified by Jamaica in March 2006. As such Jamaica is committed to its contents and has made no reservations. The document emphasises that access to education should not be the subject of discrimination and that it should seek to “promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups [...] for the maintenance of peace” (UNESCO 1960).

4.2 Psychosocial support

4.2.1 Results from guidelines

The primary guiding documents identified are:
- **Guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings** (IASC 2007a)
- **Minimum standards for child protection in humanitarian action** (CPWG 2012)
- **Child protection in emergencies: Priorities, principles and practices** (Save the Children 2007)

The guiding documents point to the importance the protection a family provides a child with and that in an emergency this should be strived to be maintained (Save the Children 2007). Within a family setting the child is best placed to recover from psychosocial issues arising from the events of an emergency (Save the Children 2007). As the Save the Children document states “Once the protection a family provides is lost or seriously weakened, children are far more vulnerable to secondary stress” (Save the Children 2007). The guidelines reviewed point to the importance of efforts being
made, therefore, to support the family “for example by providing information on how
to cope with stress and carrying out activities for children” (CPWG 2012). In particu-
lar the IASC points to the need to provide support to the families of young children aged 0-8 (IASC 2007a).

The importance of community involvement in the provision of psychosocial support is
emphasised in the plans and particularly in “community based activities that promote
the ability of families and communities to support each other” (Save the Children 2007). The CPWG guidelines recommend efforts to strengthen “pre-existing commu-
nity networks” in order to aid in psychosocial support of children and their families
(CPWG 2012). Support is endorsed for activities that are based within the community such as “recreational activities, sports, cultural activities and life skills” (CPWG 2012). And it is not just the importance of utilising the community for psychosocial support programmes but also involving them in the decisions that the guidelines re-
commend. For an “effective and sustainable approach” the IASC recommends that
“girls, boys, women and men should be active partners in decisions” (IASC 2007a).

An important measure for psychosocial recovery as identified in the guidelines in-
cludes appropriate co-ordination and referral systems (IASC 2007a). The CPWG calls
for this to be established between all sectors “including education, protection, health
and psychosocial support providers” (CPWG 2012). This should be established in “co-
ordination” with other actors and sectors and should be coupled with a “detection and
referral system” for those in need of mental health services (CPWG 2012).

Another area of importance in the provision of psychosocial support is that of training.
Those involved in provision of psychosocial support services should be provided with
“training in psychological first aid” and should be trained to “work with other sectors”
(CPWG 2012). In addition, the guiding documents highlight the necessity of ensuring
“psychosocial support for national workers who have been affected by the emergency”
(CPWG 2012). Ideally, training should be in line with the IASC guidelines and it
should be ensured that “staff adhere to these and refer them across agencies and with
local partners” (IASC 2007a). Appropriate training, referral and co-ordination systems
need to be established alongside a monitoring of wellbeing (IASC 2007a). Monitoring can be achieved through various contextualised means but suggested tools include “questionnaires, using focus group discussions, key informant interviews and observations in the community” (CPWG 2012).

Another element is that of support given to early childhood. Early childhood covers the period prior to birth up until primary school. Support here should be given to the parents and in particular the mothers with support “for poorly nourished, frequently ill and other groups of at risk children” (CPWG 2012) being particularly emphasised. Measures include parenting interventions such as “support to pregnant women”, “promoting mother-infant interaction” and “psychosocial stimulation should be offered to improve child development” (CPWG 2012). However, warnings are made of the need for care to be taken to not “undermine the role and authority of the parents or caretakers” but that programmes should rather seek to “support them in their roles” (Save the Children 2007).

Establishing routine and normalisation of life for children is also identified as being of importance in supporting mental health and psychosocial recovery (IASC 2007a). This is something which can be done in partnership with other sectors, in particular the routine which education can provide. Save the Children point to the protective and safe environment provided for children in the form of “Safe Spaces for Children” also sometimes called Child Friendly Spaces (Save the Children 2007). Such spaces should ideally be provided and should give children a space where they have the opportunity to express “their thoughts and feelings” through programmes and activities that encourage psychosocial development and support (Save the Children 2007). Activities can include “recreational activities, sports, cultural activities and life skills” which help “recreate a routine” and build “resilience” (CPWG 2012). The structure promoted by Save the Children includes elements of “space, structure, trust, time, talking, opportunity to play, organised play and partnership with parents” (Save the Children 2007). Provision of psychosocial programmes should consider the protective and supportive environment provided through safe spaces and these elements identified as being central to their success (IASC 2007a).
4.2.2 Results from legal instruments

The main document identified and consulted was:

As previously mentioned the convention is ratified by Jamaica showing a commitment to its contents. The main articles identified in this document are articles 6, 12, 13, 24, 27, 28, 29, 31 and 39. These cover aspects of legal commitments to the developmental support of the child, educational support and the right of the child to free expression. Article 6 commits state parties to “ensure to the maximum extent possible” not only the survival but also the “development of the child” (United Nations 1989). The development of the child is a central concern in provision of psychosocial support. Articles 12 and 13 point to the right of the child to freely express their views as well as to receive information, something which is supported in psychosocial support programmes (United Nations 1989). The importance of preventative care, something which psychosocial support programmes can be considered to provide in their capacity of preventing long-term psychosocial problems, is something which is supported in Article 24 where the children are afforded the right to health care services including “preventative health care” (United Nations 1989). The right to “a standard of living adequate for a child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development” is enshrined in Article 27 and whilst this may be difficult to attain in an emergency is nonetheless a commitment that can be better adhered to through provision of psychosocial support (United Nations 1989).

The right to education is dealt with in Article 28 and 29. Education has been shown to be important in psychosocial recovery in that it helps to provide routine and can provide a means for monitoring children’s developmental progress and identifying their psychosocial needs for support. Article 31 is perhaps one of the most relevant in relation to psychosocial support programmes as it establishes the right of the child “to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities” and “to participate freely in cultural life and the arts” something which may be limited in the context of an emer-
gency and something which psychosocial support programmes can address (United Nations 1989).

Another central article is Article 39 which commits states party to the convention to “take all appropriate measure to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration” of children who have been victims of “neglect, exploitation, abuse, torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” all of which children are more vulnerable and at risk of in an emergency situation (United Nations 1989). This article is particularly relevant to psychosocial support programmes as it deals with a child’s right to physical and psychological recovery as well as social reintegration, things which psychosocial programmes are developed to support.

4.3 Family re-unification (care of unaccompanied and separated children)

4.3.1 Results from guidelines

Documents providing guidelines for the care of unaccompanied, separated and orphaned children are found to include:

- Guiding principles on unaccompanied and separated children (IASC 2007b)
- Minimum standards for child protection in humanitarian action (CPWG 2012)
- Child protection in emergencies: Priorities, principles and practices (Save the Children 2007)

Rapid reunification of separated children with their parents or customary caregivers is identified as requiring “priority” (Save the Children 2007). Residential centre-based care is also identified as being “rarely the most appropriate form of care” (Save the Children 2007).

Measures suggested to aid family reunification include the rapid establishment of reunification initiatives and identification of national and international partners with which to co-ordinate tracing efforts and information sharing (CPWG 2012). Arranging alternative care for separated children should be coupled with “regular monitoring of
their interim situation” and in line with children’s “best interests”. The CPWG guidelines also show that reunification should not be followed with the assumption that the children will be appropriately cared for but that measures should be taken to follow up on reunification including “close monitoring” until an “adequate” care situation is ensured (CPWG 2012). The guidelines also recognise the need to “prevent unnecessary family separations” through “consultation with local actors” and by targeting of “assistance at especially vulnerable family groups” (CPWG 2012).

Regarding international adoption the guidelines require “no permanent decision about a child’s alternative care arrangement as long as there is a chance of tracing family members” (IASC 2007b) and that a permanent care arrangement should “never, in any event, [be taken] within the circumstances of an emergency” (IASC 2007b). A recommendation is made of a “two year” period before long term care arrangements are determined (Save the Children 2007).

4.3.2 Results from legal instruments

The relevant legal documents are found to include:

- **Convention on the rights of the child** (United Nations 1989)
- **Convention on protection of children and co-operation in respect of intercountry adoption** (HCCH 1993)

Relevant articles regarding separated and unaccompanied children **under the Convention on the rights of the child** are identified as including article 3, 5, 8, 9, 12, 20, 21 and 25. As aforementioned, this convention is ratified by Jamaica. Articles 20 and 21 are some of the most relevant to a child “deprived of his or her family environment” entitling them to “special protection and assistance from the state” (United Nations 1989). Article 21 recognises international adoption as “an alternative means of child’s care” provided that “the child cannot be placed in a foster or an adoptive family or cannot in any suitable manner be cared for in the child’s country of origin” (United Nations 1989). Other articles in the CRC identify the “right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality name and family relations”. Signatories are also required to provide “appropriate assistance and protection” to a child “deprived of some or all elements of
his or her identity” with a view to “re-establishing speedily his or her identity” (United Nations 1989). Article 9 provides that children should not be separated from their parents “against their will” except when this is deemed by competent authorities to be “necessary for the best interests of the child” (United Nations 1989). The CRC also ensures that the views of the child should be “given due weight” in “matters affecting the child” (United Nations 1989).

Jamaica is not a party to the Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption and is not therefore legally committed to its contents. The convention is not specifically tailored to dealing with emergencies but does present international legal standards in intercountry adoption which can be considered when reviewing the national disaster plans approach to international adoption for separated and unaccompanied children. The articles identified as being of particular relevance include articles 4, 9 16 and 31.

Article 4 of the convention emphasises the importance of the child’s best interest when considering intercountry adoption requiring that it only take place in consideration of the “child’s wishes and opinions” and once “possibilities for placement of the Child within the State of origin have been given due consideration” (HCCH 1993). Furthermore the convention also stipulates under articles 9 and 16 the need to “collect, preserve and exchange information about the situation of the child” with a report to include “identity, adoptability, background, social environment, family history, medical history” and “special needs” (HCCH 1993).

The mentioned articles show that intercountry adoption should be considered only after potential placement options within the home country have been given appropriate consideration. They show that international law recognises the importance of acting in the best interests of the child, ensuring key information about the child and the adoption is maintained whilst involving the child in decisions.
4.4 Results from Jamaican national disaster plans

The checklist represented in Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3 was compiled by identifying important aspects relevant to ensuring the various non-material needs of children in emergencies from the reviewed international legal instruments and the guideline documents providing best practice and minimum standards. The checklist was applied to the Jamaican national disaster plans, nine of which were acquired for this paper. The central plan examined was the National Disaster Action Plan for Jamaica which seeks to “provide the legal framework [...] under which Government Officers can be held accountable” (ODPEM 1997). In addition to this, seven sub-plans as well as the plan of the Child Development Agency were reviewed.

Efforts were made to access other plans used by various state bodies but these were to no avail. In particular this paper had hoped to receive the Ministry of Education’s plan. Despite a good working relationship between UNICEF Jamaica (who facilitated efforts to acquire the plan) and the Ministry of Education this plan could not be attained. Efforts were made by the ministry to locate the plan but after months of pursuing this task this paper decided to proceed in its workings without the plan and work on the understanding that the plan, whilst possibly in existence, for practical intents and purposes does not exist and would not be used in an emergency situation.

Other ministries’ plans which were sought include the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. These would have been very interesting for the purpose of this study but problems attaining these plans were encountered here too. The Ministry of Health did not wish to provide their plans as they are currently in the process of revision. It is understood that the plan held by this ministry is very much in the same style and format of the other plans although this cannot be confirmed. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security were also contacted although efforts, including those undertaken by UNICEF Jamaica staff members, were not fruitful and the plans could not be attained.
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Table 1: Assessment of national disaster plans by education

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Table 2: Assessment of national disaster plans by psychosocial support
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Table 3 Assessment of national disaster plans by family reunification

Key

\(x\) = not met    \(✓\) = met    \(p\) = partially met    \(*)\) = plans were not attained, no results could be recorded
Results

The disaster and emergency plans which were obtained and reviewed share a similar format which primarily delegates responsibility and authority over various sectors to various positions. There is little detail as to what actions should be taken in the event of an emergency. There are no guidelines for best practice or minimum standards and no reference to any such guidelines existing in other documents. The documents make no mention of vulnerable groups, such as children, and their specific needs. Nor is there any mention of children’s rights under international law or national law.

In application of the checklist to the national plans each plan could be awarded one of three measures for assessing the extent to which a plan met the checklist criteria. If a plan failed to meet a point in the checklist entirely then it would be awarded “not met” for this point. When a point was met to some extent but not the extent identified by the guidelines and legal instruments it would be rewarded “partially met”. Where a plan met a point in the checklist to a great extent it would be rewarded “met”. As can be seen in Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3 all the plans failed to be awarded “met” or “partially met” in every single point of the checklist.

Regarding education in an emergency the plans make a few mentions of education but only as to which department is responsible for this, in this case the Ministry of Education. No mention is made of the priority that should be afforded to education. Neither are issues related to equity, access and safety of educational programmes referred to. The plans do not refer to the curriculum to be used nor to additional needs for risk reduction and life skills to be taught. The importance of using education to monitor, assess, refer and report on children’s needs and wellbeing is also excluded from mention. In sum, none of the educational measures of the checklist are met even partially; the plans reviewed fail to meet every point on the checklist regarding education.

Psychosocial support measures receive no mention whatsoever in the plans reviewed. The plans fail to highlight the psychological and social development issues that children in emergencies face and fail to set out a response. The threat to child protection that is faced without safe spaces for children is not expressed nor are actions to ensure children have opportunities for play, expression and cultural activities. The plans make
no mention of the need for psychological first aid training or the importance of providing families with support. Overall the plans exclude the psychosocial needs of children in emergencies and fail to meet any of the points on the checklist.

Family reunification and care of unaccompanied and separated children also fails to receive mention. The plans do not prioritise rapid reunification nor are any measures prescribed as to how alternative care will be provided for children who are separated. The plan does not make mention of the need to ensure inter-country adoption does not take place before efforts for reunification have been exhausted and there is no reference to other means of preventing separation such as family support and targeted assistance of vulnerable groups. The plans summarily fail to meet every aspect of the checklist in this area.

The results from the plans show that there is a failure to consider the non-material needs of children in emergencies in emergency planning. None of the plans make much more than a brief reference to any of the non-material needs or rights of children in an emergency and fall far short of prescribing standards, guidelines and actions to be taken to ensure child protection and wellbeing.
5 Discussion

The checklist compiled and applied to the national disaster plans of Jamaica in the Results section has shown these plans to not have met a single point identified as being of importance for ensuring the non-material needs of children in emergencies. Application of the checklist found the national disaster plans to be summarily lacking in content aimed at addressing children in an emergency. The following discussion, grounded in the perspective and definitions laid out in the Conceptual framework, will seek to expand upon the significance of the various non-material needs identified in the results. Relevant literature will be used to explore the issues of the non-material needs raised by the results and has been identified in accordance with the process laid out in the Method. In addition, the discussion will look to incorporate a comparison of the Jamaican plans with those of other nations, which will help provide an insight into the context of the situation of national disaster plans globally and will be achieved in line with the process explained in the Method. Attempts will also be made to identify and discuss limitations to the paper and its findings.

5.1 Education

Education is “often considered an indulgence that can be postponed until the development phase of reconstruction” (Cahill 2010). Commonly, there are a lack of teachers which are almost an “endangered species” and this compounds the problem with providing education soon after an emergency (Cahill 2010). Yet, there are many reasons why this forms a relevant and necessary need in the direct aftermath of an emergency.

The provision of education creates an opportunity to aid measures of child protection. An educational area can provide a safe space for children, a space where the children are not open to exploitation and abuse as they might be if there was to be no specially designated area for children (Madfis et al. 2010). A crisis environment is likely to create situations in which children are at increased risk of being “sexually or economically” exploited, something which the safe space of education can help to address and prevent (CPWG 2012). In an educational environment the needs and threats faced by
the children in this emergency context can be addressed through structured educational activities which help to ensure that children are themselves equipped with tools needed to provide them with better protection (Sinclair 2007).

Provision of accurate information alongside “basic skills in literacy and numeracy” can aid children in making safer decisions outside the protective environment of the school (Save the Children 2006). So education can also be seen as a tool for providing children with urgent and important “life skills” leading to “informed” decision making and empowering the children in an oftentimes chaotic environment (INEE 2010). Children can learn to care for themselves but additional protection can be provided as children learn to care for others (Martone 2007). The messages taught in schools oftentimes are reiterated to the parents and caregivers which helps to reinforce positive messages across other groups as well (Save the Children 2002). Examples of protection issues which could be taught in an educational environment include “how to avoid landmines, how to protect oneself from sexual abuse, how to avoid HIV infection and how to access health care and food” (INEE 2010). Such measures seek to inform and empower children and prevent them from exploitation and abuse of which they are much more at risk in an emergency. Education about such issues is one of the things that is needed most to ensure child protection and even save lives, yet it does not always receive the priority it should be afforded (Sinclair 2007). Education can help build an environment and culture of “safety and resilience” and as such can also become central in community disaster risk reduction initiatives (Martone 2007).

Another need which education can fill in an emergency is the need for psychosocial support (Madfis et al. 2010). Children will have experienced traumatic events that may impact their development and may even lead to long term mental health and developmental problems if not addressed. Education can therefore help to “mitigate risks” associated with psychosocial and cognitive” aspects of a child’s needs (Save the Children 2006). Education can be used as a means to provide for the individual social and psychological needs of children “to help them overcome the negative experiences they have had” (Save the Children 2006).
Education provides children with coping skills by working on strengthening these in individual children and providing them with the support and encouragement they need to overcome the psychosocial issues that are developed following an emergency. By providing education the resilience of children is strengthened and “they can grow into healthy caring adults” (Cahill 2010). The individual and social development of children can be appropriately identified and addressed in an environment such as that available through the provision of education (Madfis et al. 2010). Education can also help contribute to a sense of routine which in an emergency has been disrupted. The routine helps reassure children by providing a familiar activity upon which they can rely when so much around them may be unfamiliar and they are beset by feelings of bewilderment and stress (Martone 2007). This sense of routine can contribute to a “semblance of normality” and can give children the opportunity “to be with their peers”, which can help alleviate the stresses placed on them and their families by the chaos of an emergency (Save the Children 2007). “Healing activities” such as “recreation and creative self-expression” can provide children with additional means for “coping with distressful events” and these require a safe and structured space for their provision which can be met in educational centres (Save the Children 2007).

Education can also provide a means of monitoring and identifying the varying needs and situations of individual children. It can provide the opportunity to detect and report on situations where there are cases or suspected cases of domestic violence and child abuse (Sinclair 2007). It can also be “an effective way to identify and reunite separated children” (Save the Children 2007). In both detecting potential abuse and working towards family reunification education can be used as an important means of reaching children and providing for their protection and wellbeing in a time when they are at greater vulnerability (Martone 2007). Children who need further assistance, protection or support with aspects such as health or nutrition can also be identified at educational facilities and then registered and referred to relevant sectors for the necessary support (INEE 2010).

Education is a means of investing in a future of development and greater prosperity, what Cahill refers to as a “proven path to growth, development and peace” (Cahill
2010). An investment in education in an emergency helps to re-engage children with learning before there has been a substantial break in education (Save the Children 2007). Education can help provide children with the critical skills they need to deal with the setting of an emergency, to rejoin peer groups (CPWG 2012) and to ultimately regain their hope and confidence in the future (Cahill 2010). It can act as a means to contribute to social economic and political stability of societies by challenging discrimination and social injustice (INEE 2010). Education ultimately gives children the opportunity to fulfil their potential and become well-adjusted and accomplished adults.

5.2 Psychosocial support

Emergencies negatively affect normal social support systems which protect social health and well-being. According to the IASC “at every level, emergencies erode normally protective supports, increase the risks of diverse problems and tend to amplify pre-existing problems of social injustice and inequality” (IASC 2007a). Following an emergency children are particularly at risk of increased suffering both psychologically and socially. Efforts to tackle the arising issues are termed measures for psychosocial support. At an early stage of an emergency, social supports are “essential to protect and support health and psychosocial well-being” (IASC 2007a). Typically, this has meant a medical response from organisations with a focus on mental-health issues. However, increasingly there is an emphasis on the need to move towards responses in the emergency phase including a “non-biological” response with a focus on social support (Arntson & Knudsen 2004).

There is a close relationship between the psychological state and social capacity and behaviours of an individual (Save the Children 2007). As such, children in need of psychosocial support often display symptoms such as acting lonely, aggressive, dependent, shy, anxious and/or anti-social in their behaviour commonly having difficulties concentrating and focusing whilst behaving in a withdrawn and sad manner. They can display fear, laziness, forgetfulness and may be disinterested in eating properly (Madfis et al. 2010). Small children can also “lose developmental gains” such as bladder control and speech (Save the Children 2007). The impact of an emergency and the
stress upon the child can be “toxic” and can impact the development of a child’s brain (Madfis et al. 2010). Some studies have shown that the impact of an emergency can cause children to develop smaller brains. In addition, a child’s way of processing this stress can cause the stress system to become more sensitive leading in turn to a stressful response to events that might otherwise not be considered stressful. This “increases the risk of stress related physical and mental illness” (Madfis et al. 2010).

A response is clearly needed to re-establish psychosocial support and allow for issues to be dealt with at an early stage before they risk becoming long term and established. Children receive better support when they are not separated from their families, however, children within their families can often lack the necessary level of support (Save the Children 2006). Parents may have experienced traumatic events and may themselves be struggling with psychosocial trauma in addition to being busy re-building their lives (Arntson & Knudsen 2004).

Often a child’s response is a reflection of the response of a parent (Save the Children 2007). The preoccupation of parents can leave less attention for children than they may require in order to facilitate a healthy psychosocial recovery. It has also been recognised as potentially contributing to a child’s psychosocial problems as they can be unintentionally denied the opportunity to express feelings or be punished for their changed behaviour (Save the Children 2007). This means that the comfort, closeness and support they need may be denied them at the time when the need it most. As such psychosocial interventions are increasingly focusing on the involvement of the family.

Helping children express themselves to parents and facilitating constructive communication can be a successful means of encouraging psychosocial recovery (Madfis et al. 2010). Save the Children have had success in “debriefing” and “defusing” programmes (Save the Children 2007). In such programmes children are given the opportunity to express their feelings with a child protection worker in family or group settings. Such a situation enables concerns for the future and the present to be addressed and for children and parents communication and understanding to be enhanced therefore helping
alleviate some of the psychosocial issues affecting the child (Save the Children 2007). Other successful means of support for family psychosocial recovery can include home visits and groups for mothers and young children to discuss issues in raising children within the new context (Mandalakas et al. 2005).

A common error in provision of psychosocial support is to focus on the problems inherent to the situation of an emergency without regard for the capacity of the community and the resources of the community to be engaged in psychosocial projects (Wessells 2009). Affected communities provide resources which can be considered “social resources” in the form of families, community leaders, government employees, health workers, teachers etc. (IASC 2007a). The community therefore has an incredible capacity to be positively engaged in psychosocial recovery. The local community is also well placed to provide a culturally relevant input in a psychosocial engagement which can help actors provide a more contextualised and sensitively tailored response (Wessells 2009).

The psychosocial response of children in emergencies varies according to the individual and is “contingent on factors such as age, gender and the meaning given to the event” (Save the Children 2007). As such programmes delivering psychosocial support have found that these factors need to be considered in delivery of a psychosocial support programme. Children particularly within different age groups (and therefore different stages of development) will need a response which is tailored to their psychosocial needs (Wessells 2009). However, it is also important that children receive attention as individuals and that the support offered takes into account the individual needs of the child. The child is after all an individual developing within “a system consisting of multiple contexts” (Murray & Hudson-Barr 2006) and therefore needs to be considered as such.

### 5.2.1 Child friendly spaces or safe spaces for children

One means of addressing psychosocial issues facing children is through the use of child friendly spaces also called safe spaces for children. These spaces provide an environment where children can take part in structured and non-structured play activities and
can give children an atmosphere in which they can be expressive and active (Madfis et al. 2010).

When providing psychosocial support in a group setting the ratio of children to those providing the support system is increasingly a consideration with a suggestion of 2 adult workers to every 20 children (Madfis et al. 2010). These spaces can help rebuild a sense of normality allowing children to be children. At the same time it can provide safe spaces staff with an opportunity to assess what support children require and, in contact with parents and health services, can help provide a child with the necessary support early on. This may help to alleviate problems from becoming long term in nature or from going unrecognised and untreated (Save the Children 2007).

The benefits of safe spaces can be difficult to measure as they are often preventing problems from developing negatively. However, in one work reviewed by this paper 80 per cent of children in safe spaces “showed improved capacity to form relationships, able to enter new social situations most of the time and showed trust, respect and desired companionship most of the time” (Ager et al. 2011).

5.3 Family reunification (care of unaccompanied and separated children)

Children are best protected and cared for within their own families. Priority should therefore be given to family reunification initiatives for unaccompanied and separated children. Where children are separated from their families their needs are best met within a family type setting in their local context. Large group environments and international adoption harm efforts for reunification and can even generate more cases of separation.

5.3.1 International adoption

In emergencies there can often be a tendency to assume that unaccompanied and separated children may be better cared for away from shattered communities and devastated infrastructure. This assumption is matched by the assumption that the majority of
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children who are found to be unaccompanied are not separated, but in fact orphaned. In situations of crisis these assumptions have oftentimes been translated into the relocation of children abroad through international adoption, sometimes this process is even fast-tracked by national governments as was the case in Haiti following the earthquake in January 2010 (Doyle, Joanne 2010).

However, review of reports and studies of the subject show that international adoption is an emotional response which ignores the evidence that this is the least appropriate response in the short term and is also undesirable in the long term (Doyle, Joanne 2010). Whilst these children may be transported into more prosperous environments it does not detract from the fact that this is a misplaced kindness and in the vast majority of cases is not in the best interests of children (Doyle, Joanne 2010). Children’s interests are best met within their families, an environment where they receive love, care and protection. As Save the Children write in a report on the subject:

“Without their families to protect them from the negative social and psychological impacts of emergencies, children are at risk of physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as exploitation, illness, injury and even death” (Save the Children 2007)

Priority should be given to reunification efforts but in many emergencies adoption and international relocation is turned to early on as a viable solution to separation. The reality is that less children have lost all parents and guardians than is usually assumed and, in spite of the situation, can be reunited (UNICEF 2007). Infrastructure and service disruption presents a considerable obstacle to the task of reunification and in emergencies means there is great difficulty in speedy family verification efforts. The fact is that family verification is often impossible to implement immediately (EC 2008).

In turning to international adoption and relocation of children early on in an emergency, such as was done in Haiti, several undesirable outcomes are likely to arise. The first is that children whom are separated are identified as orphans, whilst often retaining at least one surviving parent or guardian (IASC 2007b). International adoption in such a
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case makes family reunification difficult to achieve with children abroad under different jurisdictions. Should it be achieved there is risk for additional suffering of the child with feelings such as grief and confusion over another loss and relocation (UNICEF 2007). Another risk is of permanent separation. Hasty adoption has led to situations where basic information about the child is lost making any future efforts for reunification near to impossible and also erasing the identity of the child preventing future efforts of the child to come to terms with the experience and their own sense of identity (Doyle, Joanne 2010). This can lead to emotional, social and mental development issues. Apart from the risk of permanent separation there is also the risk of voluntary separation occurring when parents and guardians may voluntarily give children up for adoption with motives such as a hope for them to have better opportunities and a more prosperous life (UNICEF 2007).

Separation is, in and of itself, a traumatic experience. In emergencies it is often sudden and coupled with the death of a parent or guardian. Such an experience alone can result in “life-long consequences” for children, but together with a hastened international relocation is likely to cause far more harm (Doyle, Joanne 2010). Summed up:

“At best, evacuating or adopting children out of a country at the height of an emergency is an expensive way of helping a relatively small number of children that forces them to make a drastic cultural adaptation. At worst, it is abusive and exploitative and diverts much-needed money away from families and communities caring for separated children within the country.” (Doyle, Joanne 2010)

5.3.2 Orphanages, children’s homes and large group care facilities

Another commonplace practice in an emergency is the proliferation and expansion of large group care facilities for separated children such as children’s homes and orphanages (UNICEF 2007). There is an understanding that communities are too devastated to cope with separated children and that the best means of tackling the issue is through the establishment of orphanages and care institutions. Yet, findings indicate that this is contrary to the best interests of the child and even incurs greater financial expense (Doyle, Joanne 2010).
A rise in children’s homes, orphanages and other group care facilities has taken place in emergencies from Liberia to Sri Lanka and Indonesia to Haiti (Doyle, Joanne 2010). However, group care facilities such as orphanages do not, contrary to perception, facilitate protection or serve the best interests of the children that they are responsible for. In fact, group care facilities exacerbate issues of separation and can provide negative and exploitative environments for children (UNICEF 2007). Save the Children report that the very existence of a group care facility can in fact increase separation (Save the Children 2006). This is due to parental placement whereby parents voluntarily place children in a group care facility for reasons including food, education, to relieve pressure or for other benefits. In the example of Aceh, Indonesia following the 2004 tsunami, 97.5 per cent of children in orphanages were a result of parental placement, primarily for education (Doyle, Joanne 2010).

Additionally group care facilities such as orphanages may have little incentive to facilitate family reunification. Salaries of staff and funding from donors may be linked to the number of recipients (children) and this may in fact provide a negative incentive to enforce separation and frustrate reunification efforts (Doyle, Joanne 2010). Facilities are expensive requiring large sums of money to found and continual labour and resource funds (EC 2008).

Large group care facilities are often ill equipped to provide the individual love, care and nurture a child needs. Children in such care experience emotional neglect and inadequate care and even delays in healthy brain development which is summed up in the following:

“As a rule of thumb, for every three months that a young child resides in an institution, they lose one month of development.” (Doyle, Joanne 2010)

5.3.3 Community care and family-type environments

Often overlooked is the capacity of the community to provide care for unaccompanied and separated children in the form of substitute families and caregivers. This can take various forms such as care from a relative, foster care or small group care (UNICEF 2007). The damage and disruption caused by an emergency is often perceived as an
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unattractive setting for meeting a child’s best interests. However, in a family-type setting within the culture with which the child is familiar, children can receive the individual attention and care that is essential to their healthy development.

Placement within the community has psychosocial benefits for children separated from their parents or whose parents have died and can help minimise the impact of the loss (Doyle, Joanne 2010). Placement in an orphanage and international adoption deals with material well-being but fails to consider emotional, mental, social aspects, the psychosocial needs of children. The costs associated with such care are lower than other options and the benefits are sound. However, community solutions require resources be channelled to host families to aid and incentivise the care of separated and orphaned children and is not devoid of its own problems with a need for periodic review to ensure children are in appropriate care and are not subject to exploitation or harm (UNICEF 2007).

5.4 Other national disaster and emergency plans

This paper sought to acquire other nation’s national plans for the purpose of drawing a comparison with those of Jamaica with a view to set the Jamaican national plans within the context of other nation states plans for an emergency. Due to the nature of the problems faced by Jamaica this paper sought to gain access to plans from other island states, particularly those in the Caribbean. Unfortunately despite contacting relevant authorities of these states and searching for the documents online only the plans of Grenada (NaDMA 2005), the Bahamas (Government of the Bahamas 2008) and Trinidad and Tobago (NEMA 2000) were received. Additionally attempts were made to acquire plans from states of the USA (particularly Florida, Louisiana and Hawaii) as well as from other countries experienced with disasters and emergencies. Of these efforts the only plan which could be acquired was that of Bangladesh (Government of Bangladesh 2010).

Reviewing these documents it is apparent that the Jamaican plans are not exceptional in their lack of consideration of children’s needs, particularly the non-material needs, in an emergency. Without exception these four plans all fail to address the important
needs and furthermore fail to make significant mention of children at all. The disaster plan of Bangladesh is the most progressive with a few mentions of children as a “vulnerable” group in need of special treatment (Government of Bangladesh 2010). This plan also goes some way to address equity and inclusion in education, for example, mentioning the need to consider gender in education. Furthermore the Bangladeshi plan does make reference to “education and awareness” of disaster issues as well as the need for a “resumption of educational institutions” (Government of Bangladesh 2010). However, this is the limit of the extent to which this plan goes to address children; no other mention is made of the special needs of children even within their basic material needs for survival.

The plans from the Caribbean states of the Bahamas, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago are equally void of substance regarding the needs of children, both material and non-material. The national plan of Grenada makes mention of the need to “assist unsupervised children” (NaDMA 2005), however, this falls very short of prioritising psychosocial support programmes such as child friendly spaces or even education programmes. The rest of the document makes little reference to children at all and they are not identified as a particularly vulnerable group. The plan of the Bahamas is also lacking with few of the issues identified in this paper receiving any coverage. However, the plan does promote education and public awareness on “response and recovery from emergencies and disasters” (Government of the Bahamas 2008). Additionally, it does mention the need for “public participation and community involvement in the disaster management system” (Government of the Bahamas 2008). Whilst this does not directly address children or the particular non-material needs discussed it does contain elements of the needs for educational curriculums to include risk and life skills as well as measures for community participation.

Of the plans from the Caribbean the plan of Trinidad and Tobago can be considered to go the furthest in meeting the non-material needs of children in emergencies. Children are explicitly identified as a “special population” (NEMA 2000) which goes some way for their vulnerabilities to be given special consideration in all sectors in an emergency. The plan also makes mention of family reunification citing the need for a plan to be
developed “for reuniting after the disaster” (NEMA 2000) which at least acknowledges the need for family reunification. Additionally, the plan does make mention of education without going into much detail. This plan is by no means exemplary and the fact that it is one of the most developed (of those seen by this paper) is telling as to the state of national disaster planning.

In looking at other national plans a clear picture emerges where Jamaica is not exceptional in failing to incorporate the non-material needs of children. Nevertheless, all other plans identified make some mention, however brief, to the needs of children and/or to children as a special or vulnerable group, something which the Jamaican plans do not. The Jamaican plans are not alone in their style, primarily delegating areas of responsibility to various posts and containing little in the means of actionable content such as guidelines for response. The other nation’s plans have a similar style suggesting that this may be common amongst national disaster plans. The issue with such a plan is that it potentially leaves a lot down to the competence and personality of individuals holding particular posts. This also leaves little room for the consideration of legal standards or commitments, guidelines or minimum standards and best practice.

Even with experienced and strong personalities there is no guarantee that their ability to perform in an emergency will not be compromised by other factors, it is highly likely that a large portion of staff will be affected by an emergency themselves. In such a situation documents need to be readily available that provide actors with the best possible means to respond appropriately, to avoid common mistakes, so that the affected population will not be exposed to further risk and suffering. However, this paper had great difficulty acquiring any plans, few of those accessed were available online and some government departments that were contacted responded that they were unable to locate their plans. In an emergency these plans should be easily accessible online in order that humanitarian actors, as well as state actors, be equipped with the information on how to co-ordinate and execute an effective and appropriate response. This not being the case certainly poses questions as to the effectiveness of national plans and their consideration in the wider humanitarian response.
None of the plans come close to meeting the points of the checklist nor do they make reference to the rights or guidelines identified as central to ensuring the non-material needs discussed in this paper. They were difficult to obtain which suggests that in an emergency they may be unavailable and therefore the few measures regarding child protection and wellbeing are at risk of not being considered. Additionally, the plans rely heavily on individual personalities which, even if highly experienced and competent, are likely to be affected by an emergency and may therefore not be available. This suggests that national plans of many nations, potentially the vast majority, have serious limitations particularly where their consideration of child protection and wellbeing is concerned.

5.5 Child participation

Child participation is identified as being a cross cutting issue deserving of special consideration by all sectors It is common for children in emergencies to be considered as mere helpless recipients of assistance and aid (Wessells 2009). However, children’s involvement and input into issues which affect them is a part of their rights and moreover provides many benefits. Whilst children’s views are often dismissed as inconsequential or less well formed than adults the involvement of children in programmes aimed at them can give fresh insight and perspective into their particular needs (Yacat, Jay A 2011). Ensuring child participation not only guarantees rights afforded children by the Convention on the Rights of the Child but also can help the child rebuild confidence and self-esteem and give them a greater sense of hope for the future (UNICEF n.d.).

Adults priorities are not always synchronised with the needs of children and can in cases neglect issues important for ensuring child protection and wellbeing. In such instances child participation can be central to safeguard children’s wellbeing. An example of such a case in Philippines highlights this point. A school placed in an area deemed to be at risk of a landslide in the event of an earthquake was identified but parents to the schoolchildren provided opposition to moving it somewhere safer. This was as many local businesses were centred around providing the school with services. However, the decision was left to the school’s children who opted to move the school
to a safer location (Yacat, Jay A 2011). In this example the children were able to make a decision about their own safety and protection which could not easily have been taken by local adults due to interests conflicting with those of the children’s wellbeing.

Child participation in issues that concern them is important to ensure their wellbeing and as such should be represented in emergency planning. The failure of the national disaster plans of Jamaica to incorporate child participation not only fails to safeguard children’s rights but also puts their protection and wellbeing at risk of other interests and priorities. As a vulnerable group they should be listened to and they should be heard, particularly in issues affecting them.

5.6 Limitations

The process and findings of this paper encountered several limitations which are important to highlight as they will have influenced its direction and outcome. Amongst the limitations were issues with locating relevant literature, issues in the relevance of the legal findings and a lack of statistics and figures to explicitly support findings.

5.6.1 Legal instruments

One of the main limitations is the importance given to the international legal documents identified in forming the checklist. Whilst the majority have been signed and ratified by Jamaica this does not automatically make them legally enforceable in the country. Jamaica is a dualist country in its implementation of international law. This means that application of international law requires national law to be drafted and ratified in the national parliament. Courts do not have the authority to use international commitments when making judgements. They can, however, use international law as a means of guiding judgements, but only alongside national law. As such this paper could have opted to look at the state of Jamaica’s national laws regarding children and also regarding emergencies. However, whilst this option was explored early on it was concluded that only international legal instruments would be referred to.
Jamaican national law was not consulted as initial attempts to locate relevant laws were frustrated by lack of response from contacted authorities as well as lack of availability online. In addition, exploring this area would require a vast amount of research into how this law has typically been applied and how it may be applied regarding emergency situations. For the purpose of this paper this was considered to be too momentous a task to be achieved and it is the opinion of the author that this would be better suited to a whole separate study.

Additionally, the importance of international law as guiding standards was considered as making international legal instruments of value to this study regardless of whether they have been signed, ratified and transcribed into national law in Jamaica. This is as international legal instruments provide the minimum rights and to some extent minimum standards that can be expected from a country internationally. Whilst not all countries may implement the documents to their full extent or choose to sign them they do create a norm of operating which oftentimes translates as a norm or expectation upon all states. As such this paper felt the use of international legal instruments to be most relevant, particularly in situations of emergencies and disasters which are almost certain to elicit a lot of international attention and action.

5.6.2 Guidelines

Another limitation is identified as being the limited extent to which this paper has been able to present all the issues covered in guideline documents and standards. Many of the documents identified as guiding or standard setting were over 100 pages in length making it difficult to address all the issues raised by the papers. In addition, not all the documents held a specific focus on children. As such this paper sought to explore the points of the documents which were most relevant to the protection and wellbeing of children. This of course entails that this paper’s findings are to some extent limited in scope. However, this paper could not have explored every issue in detail as this would have essentially resulted in a document several hundred pages in length which would be unlikely to be much more than a paraphrase of standards and guidelines; a reproduction that would be both undesirable and unnecessary. In order to
remain concise the most relevant and important issues were identified for inclusion in this paper, its checklist and the subsequent results.

5.6.3 Literature

Literature proved to be another limitation to this paper. The search methods mentioned previously (see the Method section) resulted in very few relevant works. Much of the literature was produced by a few organisations, primarily Save the Children, the United Nations Children’s Fund as well as the Child Protection Working Group. Several works had to be excluded as they were replications of the same information by the same organisation and therefore added nothing to the strength of the discussion. Few peer reviewed journal articles were found and this no doubt weakens the discussion somewhat. In addition, the literature proved to contain little in the way of measurable results of the effectiveness various interventions and programmes had in ensuring child protection and wellbeing. These issues can be explained by the fact that the area of child protection, specifically meeting non-material needs, often are financially costly with a lot of costs in personnel (teachers, psychosocial workers etc.) and few measurable results as programmes are preventative (Lilley et al. 2011). This means that child protection efforts have historically had difficulty in attracting funding as donors often prefer initiatives where clear results can be presented. This perhaps goes some way to explaining the lack of literature in the area as well as the few contributors to literature in this field.

Literature reviewed was also often researched and conducted months and even years following the acute phase of the emergency. This undoubtedly impacts some of the findings of these papers, particularly regarding issues related to initial response. However, this also means that literature on recent emergencies is sparse entailing limited amounts of literature that has been recently produced about recent emergencies. As this is a field where each emergency response brings new knowledge leading to new practices, information that is decades old was considered less useful for the purpose of this study and was excluded, further narrowing available literature.
A further limitation related to literature was the way in which some literature used the word emergency to primarily refer to complex humanitarian emergencies, particularly conflict related emergencies. Such articles were often dealing very specifically with African contexts of armed conflicts and the issues faced for child protection efforts in such cases. As an island state in the Caribbean primarily faced with natural disasters such as earthquakes, flooding and hurricanes it was difficult to find much applicable to the Jamaican context. Whilst some of the issues raised should be considered in emergency planning it was not deemed to be of significant relevance to the work of this paper. Therefore, such sources were, for the most part, excluded.

5.6.4 Jamaican national plans

A clear picture of the entirety of the disaster plans of Jamaica could not be gained as several plans were unavailable. In particular the Education Ministry were unable to locate their plans despite attempts to do so. This limited the results, particularly regarding the state of educational needs in an emergency. However, whilst a limitation it also gives insight into the reality that whilst a copy of this plan may exist, it is not readily available during normal operations and as such would not be available in an emergency. This means that in practice there is no education plan and this is in itself revealing. With no education plan it would seem unlikely that the educational needs of children would be appropriately met in an emergency and certainly any elements of best practice contained in the document would be at risk of not being implemented appropriately or at all.

It was also not possible to obtain the plans of some other ministries. Particular effort was directed towards receiving the plans held by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. However, the plan held by the Ministry of Health is currently in the process of review and no draft could be provided. After communication with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security a plan could not be accessed but the reasons for this remain unclear. This does mean the review is somewhat incomplete and that there is potential that the results would be very different had there been access to all plans. However, the results do show the plans to consistently follow a pattern of prescribing areas of responsibility to various roles without detailing guidelines
for action. It is therefore likely that these plans, had they been available, would have been similar in style and would potentially have given similar results.

5.6.5 National plans of other states

Another limiting factor was the scant availability of other nation’s national plans. Whilst efforts were made to contact relevant authorities and examine the various web presences of these authorities few texts could be acquired. This certainly presents a limitation to the discussion although it does suggest that the problems identified in the Jamaican plans may be widespread amongst other plans. It also poses questions about these plans relevance if they are not widely available in times of normal operation it is somewhat questionable as to how available they are in an actual emergency and how much they are in fact referred to and used by actors including national governments.

5.6.6 Applied perspective

This paper has chosen to avoid a detailed debate about the perspective from which the author has chosen to approach the topic. However, acceptance of the perspective employed by the author, namely that international legal norms as well as guidelines on best practice and minimum standards are universally applicable, has been justified and explained in the Conceptual framework section. The author does acknowledge that expanding this debate may be of interest to some readers. Nonetheless, a detailed discussion has been avoided as the author has judged this to fall outside of the Research question.

Debates about universalism and cultural or contextual relativism pose very large questions, such as whether the international humanitarian response employed by all actors is appropriate for the protection of children or whether it is a construct imposed by outsiders at a time when nations are vulnerable. Whilst such questions are of great interest to the author, inclusion of such debates in this paper would greatly shift the focus of the text towards an examination of the extent to which the international community meet the needs of children in emergencies in their response to disasters and
away from the national disaster plans of Jamaica. This has the potential for an entirely different research paper.

The author believes the use of the perspective applied in this paper to be justified. However, the author accepts that the Results in this work are based to a large extent upon the acceptance of international legal documents as well as guidelines on best practice and minimum standards. This potentially provides a limitation to the findings of the paper, although it also helps provide the paper with clarity, focus and relevance in regards to its Purpose and aims as well as its Research question.

5.6.7 Previous examples

No previous examples of the kind of review carried out by this paper could be found. Despite efforts to search and contact organisations with experience and expertise in this area, such as Save the Children, UNICEF and the Child Protection Working Group, no previous efforts to examine other states national plans from a perspective of child protection and wellbeing could be identified. Some few examples of national plans being assessed from other perspectives, such as from a disaster risk reduction perspective, were referred to by some of the contacted organisations but nothing with a focus on children was unearthed. This is perhaps a limit to the work of this paper in that no clear and specific literature dealing with this particular subject matter could be referred to or used as guidance in assembling this paper. It also makes it more likely for the results to contain an element of personal interpretation regarding application of legal instruments and guidelines which could otherwise have been informed to a greater extent by previous reviews. However, this means that this paper has also had some measure of success as it has identified an area which should be given greater attention for a better future response to ensure child protection and wellbeing in emergencies globally.
6 Conclusions

In emergencies children are one of the largest affected groups, and the most vulnerable, in need of care and assistance. Literature and documentation presented in this paper have demonstrated that measures aimed at meeting the non-material needs of children in an emergency are vitally important for securing their protection and well-being. Failures to meet and prioritise these needs has been shown to place children at a greater risk of a variety of threats including permanent family separation, psychological and social developmental problems as well as exposure to various other forms of harm, neglect, abuse and suffering. After identifying relevant international rights, standards and guidelines this paper has found that the Jamaican national disaster plans contain none of the measures prescribed to provide a response that will meet the non-material needs of children in emergencies and as such are in need of revision.

Family reunification and the care of unaccompanied and separated children have been shown to be of great significance to the wellbeing and protection of children. Failures in emergency documents to adequately consider these needs in advance of an emergency can lead to misguided actions that seek to protect children but in reality expose them to more harm. In particular, revisions of the plans need to consider the issue of inter-country adoption which should only ever take place in instances where all efforts at family reunification have been exhausted and local solutions have been considered. Plans should also make clear reference to the type of temporary care which unaccompanied and separated children should receive. There should be an explicit emphasis on local family type settings taking priority with schemes to provide assistance. Care needs to be taken to prevent proliferation of large group care facilities, such as orphanages, which can compound separation and facilitate further separation. As the family of the child is best placed to provide him or her with protection, revisions to the national plans need to include a prioritisation of rapid family reunification efforts. However, whilst this paper has addressed some of the core issues any revision should look to incorporate the principles of international legal standards such as the Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption and the Con-
Conclusions

*Convention on the Rights of the Child* as well as the important guiding documents, particularly the *Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children*.

With regards to educational needs this paper has shown that programmes can aid in identifying needs of children across sectors and can provide safety and routine in a bewildering period. The lack of an education plan and the lack of attention given to education by the national disaster plans make Jamaica ill prepared to respond to emergencies in a manner that takes account of these needs. Revisions will need to consider education as a priority rather than an issue for longer term development. Measures to make education in an emergency accessible to all in an equitable and safe manner need to be addressed. It will be important to consider an appropriate curriculum that helps promote both values which will provide a good basis for societal progression as well as education in risk reduction and life skills. There should be clear reference to the opportunity of educational centres to contribute to assessment, referral, reporting and monitoring actions. Ultimately revisions should consider the valuable information contained in guiding documents such as the Minimum standards for education: Preparedness, response, recovery as well as international legal instruments.

Psychosocial support programmes serve to aid psychological and social development problems arising from the emergency offering safe places for children to express themselves and overcome the trauma and fear of an emergency event. In not addressing the psychosocial needs of children, the national disaster plans of Jamaica place children at greater risk of harm. Revisions need to consider the provision of safe spaces where children are given the chance to be children again and to express themselves. There should also be measures for psychological first aid assistance including training. The plans need to give consideration to the importance of family support including support in early childhood. The in depth detail of guidelines, particularly the Guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings as well as international legal instruments need to be investigated and employed in any future revision of the national disaster plans.
Conclusions

This paper finds that the Jamaican national disaster plans are in need of thorough revision to take account of the needs of children in times of emergency. A revision should look to the guidelines identified by this paper as well as the relevant international legal standards. The format of the plans should be addressed by making the content more actionable and accessible to those seeking to implement initiatives rather than the current pure focus on which job title carries which area of responsibility. Revisions will need to highlight the right of children to be heard on issues that affect them and as such this paper would advise that the best results for children of any revisions are likely only to be achieved in partnership and consultation with children.

Beyond the national disaster plans of Jamaica this paper has identified serious deficiencies in other states emergency planning, not only in addressing the non-material needs of children in emergencies, but also in addressing children to any significant extent at all. Additionally no trace has been found of previous similar studies addressing the needs of children in the area of emergency planning making it highly likely that this area has not previously been explored. This paper therefore concludes that there is a great potential for further investigation to be pursued in this area, not just in Jamaica, but globally. The national disaster plans of Jamaica, and those of other states, are in dire need of revision if they are to stand up for the rights, protection and wellbeing of children in emergencies. Ensuring the protection and wellbeing of children in emergencies should be a high priority of any national disaster plan. Children are the basis on which the future is built and in an emergency it is of utmost importance that they are not left unprotected, with their non-material needs being subject to neglect. After all, “if we don’t stand up for children then we don’t stand for much”.


References


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Figure 2 and Figure 3 Maps showing Jamaica’s geographical location and its parishes
| **Child protection** | The prevention and response to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence affecting children (including the measures and structures employed for prevention and response). |
| **Child wellbeing** | The physical, psychological and social state of children affecting their health, happiness, sense of security and opportunities for development. |
| **Children Education** | Anyone under the age of 18 in accordance with the definition provided by the *Convention on the rights of the child*. The systematic transferral of knowledge and skills through various forms of instruction, teaching, training and other knowledge disseminating methods. |
| **Emergency / Disaster** | These two words will be used interchangeably to mean a serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action that causes, or has the potential to cause, great damage or loss of life. |
| **Family reunification Intercountry / International adoption Large group care facility** | The connexion of separated and unaccompanied children with their parents and legal guardians. Adoption of a child located in one nation by an individual or couple located in another nation, who become the legal and permanent parents of the child. A locale typically housing unaccompanied and separated children where for each responsible adult the number of children exceeds a reasonable number for ensuring each child receives an appropriate level of care, attention and love. Often also referred to as an orphanage or children’s home. |
| **National disaster plan** | The country level frameworks defining the states response to an emergency or disaster. |
| **Non-material needs Psychosocial support** | Referring to the needs of children in emergencies for education, psychosocial support and family reunification (including care of unaccompanied and separated children). Programmes aimed at aiding psychological and social development, particularly with a view to offsetting the potential negative short and long term effects of a disaster. |
| **Safe spaces / Child friendly spaces** | A space where children’s physical protection is ensured which can also cater to needs such as psychosocial support and education. |
| **Separated and unaccompanied children** | Referring to children whom are separated from their parents and legal guardians, which may or may not be alive. The use of the term orphaned children is avoided as this makes an assumption about the status of the parents and legal guardians which cannot often be determined until the later stages of humanitarian response. |

Table 4 Description of key terms and concepts