Lesson 1.2
Roles and Responsibilities of Mission Components and External Partners

The Lesson

Starting Lesson 1.2

For an interactive start to Lesson 1.2, ask learners:

Why is child protection considered a cross-cutting responsibility?

OVERVIEW
Lesson 1.2 covers the roles and responsibilities of different mission components working with external partners on child protection. The different components bring different capabilities in support of child protection; they must be aware of their responsibilities and must receive child protection training that would enable them to fulfil their role in the mission. External partners, host-country entities and the mission working together will ensure that impact on the ground is optimal. Everyone has a role to play. The discussion engages learners in the mandate from the outset.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
• Recognize that protecting children in armed conflict is a shared responsibility;
• Describe the roles and responsibilities of the mission components with regard to protecting children;
• Explain the coordination mechanisms in a mission.

ACTIVITIES
• Group discussion: Child Protection Coordination – Foreign Child Soldier (slide 15)
NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

- As discussed in lesson 1.1, peacekeeping mandates have increasingly included child protection. Indeed, most peacekeeping missions have full-fledged human rights, protection of civilians, conflict-related sexual violence, as well as child protection mandates, which address “protection” in different ways.

Each component of a mission has responsibilities and a role to play and must consider child protection within its core activities. All peacekeepers – military, police and civilians – must be aware of their responsibilities and must receive child protection training that would enable them to fulfil their role in the mission.
Learning Objectives

- **Recognize** that protecting children in armed conflict is a shared responsibility;
- **Describe** the roles and responsibilities of the mission components with regard to protecting children;
- **Explain** the coordination mechanisms in a mission.

**Key Message:** All mission components have a role to play in child protection: some have a direct role, others an indirect one. Only by working together can the child protection mandate be achieved.

- Understand the general role of the various mission components in protecting children, and peacekeepers’ responsibilities with regard to child protection, including the roles played by key mission components and external actors.

  Understand the coordination mechanisms in a mission and how the military can coordinate with those actors to ensure an appropriate response to child protection concerns.
Key Message: Each mission has a different structure. The structure of a mission reflects the tasks mandated by the Security Council and the operational context in the host country.

Let us begin by looking at the general structure of a multidimensional United Nations peacekeeping operation and the different components that you will encounter in the mission. Then we will discuss the key functions of some of the various mission components and external actors, and the specific roles that they play in promoting child protection.

We will also discuss the collective responsibility of all actors towards a comprehensive mission response through child protection activities, and the importance of coordinating action on child protection.

The aim of this slide is to demonstrate the complexities of a multidimensional mission that comprises a large number of actors, and requires substantial coordination, liaison and information-sharing. Emphasize that this is a sample structure; depending on different country-specific requirements and operational environments, mission structures will vary. The following slides focus on different mission components. The role of the military component will be discussed in more detail in module 3.

Point out the main components of a mission: civilian, military and police, as well as the United Nations country team.
Refer to the slide for the titles of officers and see the list of abbreviations that may be used in the field.

SLIDE 4: UNITED NATIONS FIELD OFFICE

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

Key Message: The Field Office reflects the mission headquarters in terms of structure and function.

In addition to the mission headquarters, which is normally located in the capital city, the mission will deploy field offices to other parts of the mission area, such as provincial capitals. The field office usually has representatives from the key functions within mission headquarters, such as the Head of Office (political), civil affairs and a Regional Administrative Officer representing the Director of Mission Support (DMS) and logistics.

A mission may have a number of field offices. The military component, whose force headquarters (FHQ) is located with the mission headquarters, will likely have its sector or brigade headquarters located with a field office, thereby enabling the mission components to work closely together.

In the same way, the police component will have representatives, not only at mission headquarters, but also at the regional level. It is essential that the Field Office
and the military and police components work together to achieve the mission objectives. We will see how this works in relation to child protection later on.

SLIDE 5: CHILD PROTECTION ADVISERS

Child Protection Advisers

- **Points of contact** on child protection within peacekeeping mission
- **Advise** mission leadership on child protection
- **Mainstream** the child protection mandate across mission components/sections
- **Liaise** with Protection of Civilian Advisers and uniformed components on prevention activities
- **Conduct training** on child protection for civilian and uniformed components
- **Monitor and report** on the six grave violations against children
- **Co-chair** the Country Task Forces on Monitoring and Reporting
- **Engage in dialogue** with parties to the conflict
- **High-level advocacy** for child protection needs
- **Coordinate** with UNICEF and other relevant actors

*Note: a Child Protection Unit may be a stand-alone mission section or may be embedded within the Human Rights component*

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** Child Protection Advisers (CPAs) provide guidance and advice to mission leadership and components on all matters pertaining to child protection.

*It is very important that the trainer be familiar with the distinct roles of the civilian Child Protection Adviser and the military Child Protection Focal Points, and their lines of communication and coordination.*

While all peacekeepers have a responsibility to protect children, many peacekeeping missions have Child Protection Advisers, who take the lead as experts on this matter and advise the mission on child protection requirements. Child Protection Advisers are civilians; they advise all the mission components, particularly the Head of Mission (HOM), and work closely with the military component.

The Child Protection Advisers are your first point of contact; you will work with the Child Protection Adviser in your sector.

The Child Protection Adviser advises all mission components on matters pertaining to the protection of children in the mission area. They can ensure that all mission components play their role.
In addition to advising mission leadership on child protection concerns and mainstreaming the child protection mandate into mission activities, Child Protection Advisers co-chair the monitoring and reporting mechanism (MRM), monitor and report on the six grave violations against children, engage with parties to conflict on addressing grave violations against children – including negotiating the release of child soldiers –, train peacekeeping personnel, and internal/external mission actors on child protection, and advocate for child protection in the host country.

Child Protection Advisers work closely with UNICEF child protection specialists and other relevant United Nations agencies, NGOs and government authorities or organizations on these activities.

The DPKO/DFS/DPA Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations (2017) specifically requires the Child Protection Adviser to be responsible for reporting on child protection issues and activities undertaken by the peacekeeping operation in the mission area. Also, the Child Protection Adviser collates information and reports on grave violations committed against children to the Security Council.

Missions that have a child protection mandate may have a Child Protection Section headed by a Senior Child Protection Adviser, or the Senior Child Protection Adviser and child protection staff may be embedded as a team within the human rights component.

Verify which peacekeeping missions have Child Protection Advisers. Share relevant information with learners (see http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping).
Key Message: The military component must establish military child protection duties at all levels (force and sector headquarters, battalion, military observer team sites).

With increasing demand on the military for child protection, and in order to ensure that all mission components – particularly the military component – integrate child protection into their activities, it is critical that a network of military Child Protection Focal Points be established to ensure that child protection is taken into account at all stages of planning and in operational activities at Force Headquarters, sector and contingent levels.

The Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point must interact almost daily with the mission Child Protection Section for advice and support, to maintain situational awareness and to keep the Section up to date on the activities of the military component. This key relationship must be nurtured. The Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point must also ensure that child protection is mainstreamed at Force Headquarters.

The roles and responsibilities of the Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point and the Child Protection Focal Points at sector and battalion levels will be discussed in module 3.
NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

Key Message: Child protection is a shared responsibility; each mission component has a role to play.

The following are examples of activities that peacekeeping components may carry out to protect children and promote their rights in armed conflict. The list is not exhaustive. Define the various components listed on the slides, as necessary.

1. Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and/or Head of Mission (HOM): Play a leadership role in political advocacy; responsible for placing child protection in the political and peace agenda of the country.

2. Political Affairs: Political issues are usually very difficult to resolve in post-conflict situations. No conflict is ever really resolved without effectively addressing the political/diplomatic dynamic. That is therefore an essential mission task. Key support for child protection is usually best demonstrated by adopting a child-conscious approach to all political processes – for example, by engaging in dialogue with parties to the conflict to end grave violations of child rights.
3. **Human Rights**: Some key roles of the human rights component in support of child protection include: monitoring and reporting violations against children, and illegal arrest and detention of children as identified during routine visits to detention centres; contributing to investigations by Child Protection Advisers on crimes committed against children in the context of armed conflict.

4. **Women Protection Adviser (WPA)**: Informs and advises Heads of Mission on sexual violence against women in line with the conflict-related sexual violence mandate.

5. **Civilian Protection Adviser**: Coordinates mission response in civilian protection, working closely with Child Protection and Women Protection Advisers.

6. **Civil Affairs**: Among others, supports capacity-building of local authorities and civil society, advising and training civilian officials to ensure that institutions and their officials understand human rights principles and how they apply to governance in a State; establishes conflict-management mechanisms to encourage community reconciliation; liaises with local communities and authorities on behalf of the Mission; coordinates with and facilitates the work of partners; gathers information and monitors the situation on the ground; and conducts analyses, including on civilian protection.

7. **Security Sector Reform (SSR)**: Helps to ensure protection of children and young people, for example, in the context of a weapons collection programme, or reform of national security forces. Security Council resolution 2151 (2014) was the first stand-alone resolution on security sector reform; operational paragraph 6 of the resolution encourages Member States, when undertaking security sector reforms, to mainstream child protection in military training, operating procedures, and guidance.

8. **Rule of Law/Judicial**: When present, this component contributes to the development of comprehensive strategies related to rule of law and reform of the justice system. Among other responsibilities, it provides advice and training to those working in the justice system; monitors developments in the justice sector and promotes the rule of law, which makes enjoyment of human rights possible, combats impunity, and prevents violations and discriminatory practices in relation to justice.

9. **Corrections**: This component deals with the operational aspects of the prison system. It provides advice on the development of policy and procedures, emphasizing the importance of alignment with international human rights standards relating to detention, and on rehabilitation of police cells and prisons; coaches and mentors national corrections officers, including on proper treatment of detainees. In recent missions, this component has been an integral part of the Rule of Law Unit.

10. **Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)**: Among other things, ensures that special attention is given to children and women during the demobilization of armed forces and armed groups, and that a dedicated programme is in place for their support and reintegration.
11. Mission Support: Provides all types of field support to mission entities and components, including logistics support to ensure the safe transport of children, and material support for the refurbishment of childcare facilities.

Since child protection is a shared responsibility, the Child Protection Adviser usually coordinates with the human rights, political affairs, rule of law/judicial components, as well as United Nations Police, DDR, SSR and military observers.

**SLIDE 8: CIVILIAN COMPONENT**

**Key Message:** The civilian component consists of a substantive pillar and a mission support structure.

Define the various components showing on the slides, as necessary. Highlight the four sections on the left (civilian protection, child protection, women protection and gender).

**SLIDE 9: POLICE COMPONENT**
NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** The police component has a key child protection role and works alongside national police structures.

The core mandate of United Nations Police is to build institutional capacity in post-conflict environments. The police can assist with child protection in the following ways:

1. Advocacy and awareness among local police;
2. Advise, mentor, guide and train local police on child protection issues, including how to deal with victims, witnesses and perpetrators;
NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** The peacekeeping mission works together with a number of actors on child protection, including the United Nations country team, host government actors, international and regional organizations, NGOs and the diplomatic community.

Although you, as peacekeepers, have specific and very important roles to play in child protection (which will be discussed in more detail in module 3), it is important to understand that your role is limited. You will encounter children who have no access to schools or clean drinking water, and you will want to help them. But, it is important to understand that you cannot do everything and that there are other actors who specialize in providing certain services.

Coordination is essential in order to share information on child protection needs and ensure an adequate response. For example, while peacekeeping missions may report a case of sexual violence against a girl, humanitarian child protection actors are equipped and able to provide the girl with timely and life-saving services, including medical, psychosocial and legal assistance.

External actors include members of the United Nations country team, such as UNICEF and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), government actors, as well as the diplomatic community.
Contact and follow-up with external actors on child protection should be handled by or done in close consultation with Child Protection Officers whenever possible. The Child Protection Section or the child protection team within the human rights component can help to identify and facilitate contact with the most relevant actors.

It is essential that child protection specialists with this particular knowledge and expertise follow up on delicate cases and situations (e.g., risks of traumatization, witness protection, etc.), and refer cases to the relevant specialized actors, who are part of the specialized child protection network.

Let us now examine these external actors in more detail.

**NOTES (FOR TRAINER)**

**Key Message:** Know your United Nations partners and their role in child protection.
It is important for peacekeepers to be familiar with UNICEF and other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes that are part of the United Nations country team with child protection mandates and roles. It is not necessary to mention in detail the roles and responsibilities of each entity, although a quick overview (if time permits) would be helpful. UNICEF is one particular organization with which peacekeepers will coordinate.

UNICEF is mandated by the General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children’s rights, help to ensure that their basic needs are met and expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. UNICEF leads child protection coordination on the ground through the child protection area of responsibility. UNICEF has a very different mandate from the peacekeeping mission. While the goal of protecting children is the same, the approach is very different. Complementarity is important in the mission area. Peacekeeping missions have the advantage when it comes to negotiating with armed groups, but UNICEF is better equipped to trace family and reunite children with their families. Therefore, it is essential that UNICEF receive relevant information from peacekeepers in the field in a timely manner. In addition, the mission must make sure that it is represented at the coordination cluster meetings so as to be informed about what is happening.

It is important for you, as peacekeepers, to understand that each entity plays a unique role in child protection. Remember that many of these actors have been in the field long before you arrived and they will be there long after you leave. They are a good source of information about the local context.
Key Message: Know the NGOs in your area of responsibility and their capabilities.

You will encounter non-United Nations and non-governmental child protection actors in your area of deployment. Slide 12 shows a few of them.

Civil society groups, local charities and clinics are often an important asset in areas where national or local government institutions lack capacities. Military units are often deployed in areas where State authority is weak or non-existent and should work with these entities to ensure children affected by conflict are provided with medical care and assistance where local capabilities exist.

Non-governmental entities play significant roles in promoting child protection in the mission area. Save the Children and other NGOs have specific capacities to protect children and can sometimes respond to violations which have occurred. (Provide other relevant examples.)

Close coordination with these entities is important. As mentioned earlier, contact and follow-up with these actors on child protection matters should be handled by or done in close consultation with Child Protection Advisers whenever possible.
Peacekeepers have started to cooperate with NGOs and help them with their programmes. It is important to not indiscriminately support an NGO, but rather to work with legitimate NGOs.

**Key Message:** Working with and supporting the host country’s authorities and entities is essential in order to build national child protection capacities.

- The protection of civilians, including children, is primarily the responsibility of the host Government; however, in armed conflict or post-conflict areas, owing to weak or unwilling government authority, or – in worst-case scenarios – absence of any governance, it may not be so. In such cases (e.g., in Somalia, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo), the United Nations and the international community, under the authority of the Security Council mandate, step in and assume the responsibilities of protection.
Close coordination with Government (at mission headquarters level), local authorities (at provincial and Head of Mission levels) and other governmental organizations is required, and the local police need to be involved. Local authorities have the most relevant information, especially with regard to local culture and customs, and their voice is most heard in such situations. For that reason, close coordination with local authorities is very important for raising awareness among the local population, advocacy, monitoring, ensuring adequate legislative amendments from a child protection perspective, and ensuring protection and promotion of child rights.

Long-term sustainability and local ownership are related and important. The United Nations and the international community cannot assume responsibility forever, and the host country must be empowered to assume its responsibilities. When the mission closes, the local authorities will have to assume those responsibilities. Therefore, close association with local governmental agencies is important from the outset.

**SLIDE 14: CHILD PROTECTION COORDINATION**

**Key Message:** The military component is often the first point of contact with children in need of protection. By working effectively with the mission Child Protection Adviser, UNICEF and other actors, the impact on children’s safety and well-being will be significant.

Review and familiarize yourself with the slide carefully before presenting it. The arrows indicate the flow of reporting.
As mentioned earlier, each mission component has a role to play in protecting children and promoting their rights. Child Protection Advisers, serving as experts, are responsible for collecting information on violations against children, referring cases to and securing a response from the mission, an NGO or the United Nations country team.

The flow of information between the military Child Protection Focal Point and the civilian Child Protection Advisers must be secure.

Therefore, if a violation against children is observed, the unit must report it through the chain of command utilizing the military child protection focal point network. The chain of command must then channel the information to the military Child Protection Focal Point, who then reports it to the nearest civilian Child Protection Adviser.

Once informed of a child-related incident, the Child Protection Adviser liaises with UNICEF, the relevant child specialist actor and possibly the Government (e.g., advocacy with the Government or armed forces for the release of a child held in detention). UNICEF will usually provide assistance to the child or the family.

See slide for an example of coordination with UNICEF.

UNICEF often traces the family and ensures that the child receives assistance (e.g., in an interim care centre).

Lastly, the Child Protection Adviser verifies the information, transmits it to the MRM, and reports the violation to Headquarters in New York through the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General includes MRM-verified information on violations in his report to the Security Council, which can take action through sanctions, referral to the International Criminal Court or other accountability measures.

Example (UNMISS): In Jonglei State, South Sudan, the different tribes had abducted many children during the inter-communal conflict. United Nations military liaison officers found children living with the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) away from their villages/towns, because the soldiers and the children were from the same tribe. Although the soldiers were taking care of the children, it was not a good situation for the children – they needed to be at home with their families. The United Nations military liaison officers informed the mission child protection team of the situation; the child protection team then informed UNICEF, which initiated the family tracing process. Together, the child protection team and UNICEF drew the Government’s attention to the need for the children to be returned to their families. The Government willingly cooperated as family reunification was part of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. UNMISS child protection team arranged for helicopters to take a child protection specialist and a UNICEF expert to the village to identify the children and bring them back to Bor, where UNICEF arranged for them to be placed in an interim care centre, as their families had not yet been identified. It was better for the children to be in the care centre, than to live with SPLA soldiers in their barracks. After one week, the children were reunited with their families.
Key Message: Although you may not always see the end result of your child protection action, remember that the military component’s child protection action on the ground really matters. Working with your civilian partners is essential.

Group Discussion

This is an interactive build-up scenario to help learners understand child protection coordination.

ASK the question, solicit responses, then EXPLAIN and INFORM learners of the possible action. Present the scenarios in dialogue with the learners.

The most important lessons to be learned are:
1. Child protection is a team effort;
2. Child protection responsibilities differ but are complementary;
3. Coordination is essential for optimal child protection;
4. Reporting incidents through the chain of command is crucial to triggering an appropriate response.
**QUESTION 1**

*Ask:* You are with the United Nations Military in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and find out that the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) has captured and detained two children from the 23 March Movement (M23), which FARDC claims is from Rwanda. What would you do?

*Explain:* As soon as possible, report the information. The military Child Protection Focal Point will then inform the civilian Child Protection Adviser. Depending on the mission’s relationship with FARDC, you, the military officer, can request that the children be handed over to a Child Protection Officer.

*Inform:* Some missions (e.g., MONUSCO), have standard operating procedures (SOP) for the handover and detention of children. This will be dealt with in a subsequent module.

**QUESTION 2**

*Ask:* Assume that the children stay with FARDC. What happens next?

*Explain:* The Child Protection Adviser will inform UNICEF, which will find an interim care centre for the children, as well as the Director of Mission Support (DMS) and the military component. The Child Protection Adviser will arrange for the handover of the children to social workers, and their transportation to the interim care centre. You, the military officer, might be asked to assist in the process with FARDC.

**QUESTION 3**

*Ask:* The children are now in the interim care centre. What happens next?

*Explain:* The children need to be reunited with their families. UNICEF will inform the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which will set about tracing the children’s family in their country of origin (in this case, Rwanda). Once the families have been identified, the mission might be requested to transport the children to Rwanda: the Child Protection Adviser would be responsible for facilitating the process for the mission, but the military might be asked to provide protection and security along the way. Lastly, the Mission is responsible for monitoring and reporting grave violations against children to headquarters. If the children were indeed initially recruited by M23, the mission would have to report it. Together with UNICEF, the Child Protection Adviser will draft a report for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Head of Mission to send to headquarters in New York to be included as MRM-verified information in the Secretary-General’s annual report on children and armed conflict. The information will eventually be reported to the Security Council, which may
take action against the perpetrator (e.g., sanctions against a Government, referral of the case to International Criminal Court, among others).

SLIDE 16: TAKEAWAYS

Takeaways

- Child protection is a team effort and everyone has a role to play.
- Component responsibilities differ but are complementary.
- Coordination is essential.
- Reporting is crucial to triggering action.
- The military should establish Child Protection Focal Points at Force HQ, sector, battalion and company levels.
- Child protection information requirements and mechanisms for sharing information with the Child Protection Adviser should be established.

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

Key Message: Child protection is a shared responsibility, and everyone has a role to play.

Each mission component has a role to play in protecting children and promoting their rights. While most peacekeeping missions have Child Protection Advisers serving as experts, child protection is a shared responsibility.

The roles of military and civilian mission staff differ; UNICEF’s role is complementary to the role of the mission.

If all actors are coordinated, the appropriate response can be implemented.

It all starts with your report of a situation that is inappropriate for children.

The military should establish Child Protection Focal Points at all levels (headquarters to at least company level). This would facilitate coordination and information-sharing between the military and civilian child protection actors. With the support of the Child Protection Adviser, the military component should establish child protection information requirements. This would enable military units, at the tactical level, to
collect and share information with internal (mission) and external child protection actors, and facilitate a cohesive approach within the force to collect information for child protection purposes.

External child protection actors include UNICEF, other United Nations agencies, such as UNHCR, relevant international and national NGOs, national ministries (e.g., social affairs, health, education and youth), and other institutions.

**Summary**

**Takeaways from Lesson 1.2:**

- Child protection is a team effort, and everyone has a role to play.
- Component responsibilities differ, but are complementary.
- Coordination is essential.
- Reporting is crucial to triggering action.
- The military should establish Child Protection Focal Points at Force Headquarters, sector, battalion and company levels.
- Child protection information requirements and mechanisms for sharing information with the Child Protection Advisers should be established.
References

- United Nations, DPKO-ITS, Core Pre-deployment Training Materials (Lesson 2.7: Child Protection), 2017
Allow sufficient time for questions to be asked/answered. Actively encourage questions from learners.