

Critical issue module 3

Children with disabilities

Topic 4 Planning and implementation

Handout 1



Addressing the challenges for a child with a disability in conflict situations

Case studies

- 1 Maria** is a 16-year-old deaf girl. She is also a single mother with a 4-month-old baby. She lost her family when their home was attacked a month ago, and she escaped to another region in the country, leaving everything behind. She is now living alone with the baby. Most nights she makes herself stay awake all night long, because otherwise she will not hear when the baby is crying to be fed. In addition to that, she has a problem when she takes the baby to the local clinic for a check-up. She cannot hear when her name is called by the receptionist, so she misses her turn and has to wait hours and hours in the unheated waiting room. She gave the receptionist a note asking her to put her name up on a piece of paper when it was her turn, or to come and get her, but the receptionist says she is too busy to do this.
- 2 Sophie** is an eight-year-old blind girl from a country in Africa which faced a sudden and violent change in government. Her father was imprisoned by the new regime and she, her mother and her little sister were left to fend for themselves in the small town they inhabited. One day, soldiers marched into the house. Sophie managed to hide in a closet from where she heard her mother's brutal killing. She also heard as the soldiers threw her baby sister against the wall so hard that she died. She was found by a neighbour who took her in temporarily. The shock had rendered her unable to speak, and she suffers uncontrollable crying, and an inability to eat or sleep properly.
- 3 Hassan**, who is 12, is affected by polio and uses a wheelchair. He and his family had to flee from their home town. His family is his 73-year-old grandmother, his mother and a seven-year-old brother. After an exhausting six-day journey, the family arrives at a refugee reception centre (a school sports hall) and is accommodated there for a week. During this time Hassan forces himself to eat and drink only the bare minimum, because the toilets are inaccessible (his wheelchair cannot pass through the narrow door), none of his family is strong enough to carry him in, and mostly the other refugees in the centre are too caught up in their own problems and trauma to help him regularly. He can't drag himself across the floor, because it is wet and filthy; the plumbing system backs up because it is not designed to deal with so many people using it. On the occasions when Hassan has managed to get someone to help him, he found it humiliating and painful, as they did not know how to lift him properly. He is also worried that he might develop a urinary tract infection, which could lead to serious health complications.

