Advanced Child Protection Programming in Humanitarian Action

Four-and-a-half-day in-person programme
Four days of applied learning + one half-day capstone simulation

Designed for experienced child protection professionals who need to design stronger programmes, improve implementation quality and defend strategic decisions in complex humanitarian settings.

ADVANCED PROFESSIONAL TRAINING • IN PERSON

Why this course?

Experienced child protection practitioners are routinely expected to turn complex protection risks into coherent, feasible and accountable programmes. They must set priorities when needs exceed available resources, translate inter-agency standards into operational choices, improve interventions that are not delivering as intended and explain their decisions to communities, senior management, coordination bodies and donors.

Technical knowledge of child protection standards is essential, but it does not automatically lead to strong programme design or effective implementation. This advanced course closes that gap. It helps participants move from identifying child protection risks to making evidence-informed programme decisions: defining priorities, selecting an appropriate intervention approach, building quality and accountability into implementation, and adapting programmes as contexts and evidence change.

The course draws on current inter-agency standards and guidance, including the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (CPMS), and uses realistic operational scenarios throughout. Mental health and psychosocial support, case management and children on the move provide demanding fields of application through which participants practise advanced programme judgement.

Who should attend?

The course is intended for experienced professionals who hold, or are moving into, operational or technical responsibility for child protection programming, including:

- Child protection specialists and experienced child protection officers seeking to deepen their programme design and quality-assurance practice.
- Programme managers and technical advisers responsible for designing, reviewing, adapting or assuring the quality of child protection programmes.
- Protection coordinators, case management managers and supervisors responsible for systems, service quality and complex operational decisions.
- Professionals from UN agencies, international or national NGOs, and coordination mechanisms with responsibility for child protection strategy and programme performance.

Entry requirements

Participants should have:

- Prior foundation-level child protection training, or equivalent professional knowledge.
- Relevant humanitarian or displacement-context experience.
- Familiarity with the CPMS and the main components of the child protection programme cycle.
- A current or recent programme challenge that can be used during exercises and post-course reflection.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the programme, participants will be able to:

- Translate a contextualised child protection risk analysis into defensible programme priorities and a coherent response strategy.
- Choose deliberately between dedicated child protection programming, integration and mainstreaming, based on risk, capacity, feasibility and intended results.
- Use the CPMS and relevant inter-agency guidance to define programme quality, select meaningful indicators and identify corrective action.

- Design MHPSS integration and referral arrangements that are appropriate to available services, risks and operational limitations.
- Oversee and quality-assure case management systems, including supervision, staff care, information responsibility and complex-case escalation.
- Assess programme choices for unaccompanied and separated children and other children on the move, including identification, family tracing, reunification and interim or alternative care.
- Adapt a child protection programme when needs, access, resources, evidence or service capacity change, and communicate the rationale for key decisions.

Programme structure at a glance

Day	Applied focus	Principal output
Day 1	From risk analysis to strategic programme design	Programme strategy and design decision note
Day 2	Integrating MHPSS and building functioning referral pathways	Service map, referral criteria and integration plan
Day 3	Case management oversight and quality assurance	Case management quality-improvement and supervision plan
Day 4	Children on the move: UASC, care pathways and complex programme decisions	Caseload strategy and documented decision rationale
Day 5 — half day	Focused child protection capstone simulation	Prioritised decision brief and oral defence

TRAINING MODULES

Day 1: From Child Protection Risk Analysis to Strategic Programme Design

Strategic Programme Design

The first day establishes the strategic foundation for the programme. Working with a realistic humanitarian scenario, participants move from contextual analysis to programme design by prioritising child protection risks, selecting the most appropriate intervention approach and developing a coherent response strategy. Throughout the day they examine how evidence, feasibility, operational constraints and the CPMS influence programme choices. The emphasis is on making well-reasoned decisions that can be justified to donors, coordination bodies and affected communities while defining realistic indicators, assumptions and measures of programme quality. Participants are encouraged to decide whether a concern is best addressed through dedicated programming, integration with another sector, mainstreaming or a combination of approaches.

Day 2: Integrating MHPSS and Building Functioning Referral Pathways

Integrating MHPSS into Child Protection

Participants explore how mental health and psychosocial support can be integrated into child protection programmes without exceeding available capacities or services. They analyse service availability, identify referral gaps and design practical pathways that are safe, ethical and context appropriate. Particular attention is given to supporting caregivers, strengthening community-based approaches and protecting staff wellbeing. By the end of the day participants develop an integration approach that reflects operational realities while improving access to quality support.

Day 3: Case Management Oversight and Quality Assurance

Leading Quality Case Management

This module focuses on the leadership responsibilities required to ensure safe and effective case management systems. Participants review supervision arrangements, identify quality and safeguarding risks and determine practical actions to strengthen accountability, staff support and programme performance. Using realistic operational situations, they learn how to prioritise improvements, manage complex cases and use information responsibly while maintaining service quality across the case management process.

Day 4: Children on the Move: UASC, Care Pathways and Complex Programme Decisions

Programme Decisions for Children on the Move

Participants work through complex scenarios involving unaccompanied and separated children and other children on the move. As new information emerges, they reassess programme priorities, review care options and adapt operational decisions in response to changing risks and capacities. The day emphasises evidence-based judgement, safeguarding, family tracing, alternative care and programme adaptation, ensuring that significant decisions are documented and can be clearly justified.

Day 5: Half-Day Child Protection Capstone Simulation

Capstone Decision Simulation

The final half-day brings together all course components in a realistic simulation. Teams respond to an evolving humanitarian scenario by integrating programme design, referral systems, case management and protection decision-making into a coherent operational response. Participants are required to justify priorities, explain trade-offs and defend their recommendations before receiving structured technical feedback that supports future professional practice.

Learning methodology

The programme is delivered in person and uses adult-learning methods appropriate for experienced professionals. Short technical inputs are followed by guided analysis, scenario-based exercises, decision drills, peer review, role play and facilitated reflection. One evolving case context links the four applied learning days to the final simulation.

Participants work with practical templates and selected inter-agency resources rather than receiving standards as lecture content alone. Exercises require participants to explain why a proposed approach is appropriate, what evidence supports it, which assumptions remain uncertain and how quality will be monitored and improved.

Pre-course preparation

Participants receive a focused learning package before the course. Preparatory work refreshes essential concepts and reserves classroom time for advanced application. Participants also submit a short description of a current or recent programme challenge. Completion of the required preparation is an entry condition for the in-person programme.

Assessment and completion

Learning is assessed through daily applied outputs, participation in decision exercises and performance during the capstone simulation. Assessment criteria include technical reasoning, use of evidence and standards, feasibility, attention to risk and accountability, adaptation, and clarity in communicating programme decisions. The course assesses professional application rather than memorisation.

Certification

Participants who meet the attendance, participation and assessment requirements for the in-person in-person programme receive a Certificate of Completion and a digital badge through the international **HPASS** platform.