CHAPTER TWO
CAM AND REK-SUPPORTED PROGRAMMING

2.1 Role of CAM in Programs

Focus of REK Programs

Since 2006, REK has increased the focus on community-based child development programs. These are programs in which the focus is the empowerment of individuals and groups of people, of both adults and children, by providing these groups with the skills they need to effect change for children in their own communities. These programs last about 7 years and consist of 3-5 thematic projects (such as education, health, vocational training) that are being implemented in a particular geographical area. The focus of these programs is as much as possible determined by the target group and other stakeholders that contribute towards the program. To address the identified issues, we use the resources of the target group, other stakeholders such as the local government contribute and sometimes institutional donors. Institutional funding, however, is often thematically specific and only available for a limited period of time.

Backbone Support

To ensure the availability of a minimum amount of funding for the empowerment processes of individuals (including children), groups and communities, it has been decided that each core partner will make use of CAM funding. This is funding from sponsors that will be available during the life of the program to covers costs of empowerment processes (such as the participatory integrated assessment, planning and implementation process), as well as one or more projects that cannot be funded through other sources of funding such as institutional funding provided by private companies. CAM funding therefore is a key element in the child-centered community development programming.

Identity

REK's identity passport (2012) describes what we believe, promise and how we want to work. An important aspect of the identity passport is the contribution REK wants to make in the area of reciprocity between people in the Netherlands and people in Africa and Asia. CAM can make a tremendous contribution towards mutual appreciation and learning through the communications that take place between the sponsor and the community ambassador. This makes CAM not only important as a funding mechanism, but also as a way to contribute towards the ambitions of the organization.

2.2 Principles of Red een Kind Community Ambassador Model (CAM)

Below, a number of key principles are mentioned that are the foundation for the implementation of CAM in the REK funded programs:

1. *Child-Centered Community Empowerment*: REK's CAM supports, enriches and is fully integrated into REK's practice of Child-Centered Community Empowerment. REK funded programs that impact all children/families in the community, including ambassadors, in identifiable ways and treat children as active participants.

2. *Wellbeing of children*: Programs supported by CAM focus on the wellbeing of children by enabling families and communities to improve health, basic education, spiritual and emotional nurturing, protection from abuse, violence and exploitation

and development of sustainable livelihoods. Special note is taken of children affected by HIV/AIDS and disabilities. The content of programs will depend on target area assessments and what other stakeholders are already doing.

3. *Selecting children/families as community ambassadors (ambassadors)*: community ambassador children/families are selected among the primary target group of the program. During selection, attention is given to the need to meet the communication and monitoring requirements of CAM at an affordable cost. Approximately equal numbers of girls and boys are enrolled, reflecting the diversity of the community as much as is reasonably possible. In every case, it must be ensured that the community members understand and accept that the children/families selected as community ambassadors do not receive any extra benefits from the program! They are rather ambassadors of the program and assure the continuous support of the program by sponsors and thus the implementation.

4. *Parental permission*: Parents are fully informed about the nature of the child/family CAM and agree to the enrolment of their children with the understanding that it is used for the funding of a program that benefits the community as well as their children.

5. *Impact on sponsored children/families*: Measurable progress in the areas of health, education and spiritual nurturing of children/families who are community ambassadors is monitored and documented regularly. The impact of the program on registered children and families is also documented annually. Child/family community ambassadors and their families can articulate the impact of the program on their lives.

6. *Child protection*: Requirements of both REK Child Protection Policy and Standards for Reporting on Vulnerable Children are met. REK protects children and families from inappropriate solicitations from sponsors and also protects sponsors from inappropriate solicitations from child/family community ambassadors.

7. *Protection of information about children*: Requirements are met for the protection of child photographs and personal information.

8. *Funding approach*: Sponsor contributions are combined with resources from other sponsors and donors to support the programs. Ambassadors and their families are participants and among the primary beneficiaries of the program, while equity (equality) is encouraged among both ambassadors and other children and families in the community.

2.3 CAM in the Program Cycle

The sponsorship takes place during the whole life of the program. The startup activities of the sponsorship will have to take place during the year before the program starts. These startup activities involve the following key steps:

1. CAM feasibility assessment during the program assessment and design process (see appendix 1).
2. Training and formation of CAM taskforce and recruitment of CAM staff
3. Stakeholder and community awareness and acceptance process
4. Selection of child / family community ambassadors

5. Completion of sponsors relations documentation
6. Defining the CAM management in the program proposal

In the REK programming manual, we provide more detailed information on how the CAM activities fit in the overall program cycle management.

In the below table, the start-up process is described in more detail. This table is followed by a more elaborate description of the different key steps.

	Activity	Time frame	Resp.	Remark
1	Partner/ context assessment on feasibility for CAM and submission of concept paper	Months 1-3	REK/HACA/HACI	
2	Determine what type (child or family) of CAM is most suitable for the context			
3	Partner awareness of requirements and implications of CAM			
4	Seek government approval for CAM		PO	
5	Provide training to partner staff (CAM) in integrated programs, child protection, child information, child management, correspondence, visits, database management etc.)	Months 4-6	REK/HACA/HACI	
6	Set up a partner child/ family ambassador model taskforce		PO	
7	Do further field (feasibility) assessment, including more community input		PO	
8	Partner prepares a multiannual proposal that fits CAM requirements		To be reviewed by REK	This should be integrated with other thematic design activities
9	Partner agreement for multiannual program plan		REK	
10	Produce locally applicable awareness-raising/training materials for government officials at provincial, district and local level and for the community	Months 9-12	PO/HACA/HACI	
11	Set up CAM structures and systems (recruitment of staff)		PO	
12	Where necessary, produce contextualized management structures and systems and procedures		PO	
14	When necessary, do awareness raising activities among government officials at provincial, district and local level	Months 9-12 Months 12-15	PO	Based on proposal selected target areas
15	Community awareness activities		PO Monitored by HACA/HACI	1 process of 1-2 weeks

			(guidelines produced by REK)	
16	Community agreement		PO Monitored by HACA/HACI (guidelines produced by REK) PO Facilitated by HACA	1 process of 1-2 weeks 1 process of 2-4 weeks
17	Community selects and appoints community facilitators/ animators			
18	Set up CRM committee (could be part of community or child development committee)			
19	Community Ambassador (children or families) selection process			
20	Parent/ Guardian consent forms completed			
21	Production of child/family introduction sheets etc.			
22	Sending first introduction sheets		PO Facilitated by HACA To be developed by PO together with REK/HACA/HACI	1 process of 2-4 weeks
23	Set up child/ family monitoring systems			

2.4 CAM Feasibility Assessment

Before a partner organization decides to implement CAM in a program, it is required that a CAM feasibility assessment is done. This is done before the organization designs the program. The feasibility assessment is part of the assessment phase and target area selection process and is documented in the concept note. The CAM feasibility assessment is done to determine whether it is viable to do CAM in the potential target area. If the outcome of the feasibility assessment is negative, it means that no CAM can take place in the area that was identified as potential target area. The following are some key requirements to successfully implement a CAM:

a. **Population:** the target area needs to be large enough to allow the selection of 500-600 children in the age of 4 to 9 that are interested to participate as community ambassadors in the program.

b. **Communication infrastructure**: because communication between the community ambassador and the sponsor are at the heart of CAM, there needs to be a well-functioning communication infrastructure. This means that there needs to be a well-functioning mailing system and the program staff needs to have access to reliable internet.

c. **Terrain, access and concentration of population**: Ambassadors should be easy to reach throughout the year and be within a reasonable distance from the program office to allow correspondence activities, monitoring and visits by sponsors to take place without too much effort.

d. **Migration or other reasons for cancellation of CAM**: To allow longer term CAM and the development of relationships between sponsors and community ambassadors, it is necessary that the target population is stable and migration among the target group is minimal. The migration be can be seasonal or longer-term. However, there

might also be other reasons for early cancellation of CAM, such as early marriage or children moving to receive (secondary) education elsewhere. Risks in these areas need to be assessed to determine the feasibility of CAM.

e. **Stability and security:** to allow long-term CAM, the area should be secure to allow visits. Political stability and government support are also a requirement.

f. **Other CAM organizations in the area:** the presence of other sponsorship organizations in the target area is a reason not to consider doing CAM in the target area. This to avoid double sponsorship, but also to avoid expectation of handouts that cannot be met through our programs.

g. **Local capacity**: If illiteracy rates are very low amongst the adults and children in the target area, this might be an indication that the area is not suitable for CAM. With CAM/FAM correspondence, there is expected to be an exchange between the sponsors and the community ambassador. This might be hindered due to low literacy rates. The CAM will also have to be supported through local volunteers. This will be difficult if the literacy rate among the adults is very low.

h. **Community acceptance**: to allow CAM to be successful, there is a need of acceptance of the model/approach by the communities as well as the individual child ambassadors and their families. If there is too little support for the model, it might be necessary to decide not do CAM in certain communities or the target area as a whole.

In appendix 1, we give a sample of a feasibility assessment matrix. This will have to be filled in by the organization together with the regional representative of REK.

Sponsorship/CAM Feasibility Assessment Matrix
To approve the start of CAM activities, all aspects need to be answered positively. When one of the issues is answered negatively, the proposal needs to explicitly state how the issue is addressed in order for the CAM program to succeed. (i.e. mainstreaming disaster risk preparedness).

We understand certain issues cannot simply be answered with a "yes" or "no". For example, political stability is never a given over a long period and disaster cannot be predicted. Therefore, a more in-depth reflection of the risks is required. REK will not start with CAM in the so-called 'fragile states'. In case CAM will be started in post-conflict countries, the stability of the communities needs to be looked into. Attention for peace and reconciliation in the intervention will be essential.

2.5 CAM and Organizational Aspects

Organization of CAM requires specific attention to the internal structures within organizations. This chapter describes the organizational issues regarding child and family community ambassadors.

CAM Taskforce
Initially, when implementing CAM in an organization for the first time, it is advised to assign a CAM taskforce or workgroup. These people are assigned to the guiding and monitoring of the process of introducing CAM in the organization.

CAM Officer

In each program that facilitates CAM, a CAM officer (minimum one person per 300 children/families) should be in charge of providing necessary information to the community and collecting the information from the families and the children involved in the program. This CAM officer will be in charge of carrying out the necessary activities related to the CAMs; the timely delivery of the introductions sheets, the program reports and the qualitative management of the children's letters or reports etc.

Program Organization Structure
CAM being an integral part of an integrated child-centered community development programs requires CAM officer(s), program managers and staff to function as a team. The CAM officer is perhaps mainly a clerical, administrative, data-recording official on CAM issues. Home visitations and child/ family wellbeing monitoring however touches all programmatic aspects. Overall, the program team needs to have all the qualities & competencies in dealing with child protection, child participation, community development principles and overall inter-linkages amongst other program components.

Community Ambassador Management (CAM) Committee
A CAM committee, child development or integrated community development committee is set up to oversee the different processes related to CAM that need to take place over the years (correspondence, monitoring, leaving and introduction sheet collection). Preferably, this is integrated in the activities of community-based child development management.

Internal Monitoring and Database Management
The organization should maintain a list of all registered (community ambassadors) children/ families. This list needs to be updated regularly. The partner's office needs to countercheck the list regularly with the field offices or programs. The data need to be crosschecked with REK data annually.

Lists should be checked to determine the following:
-are there any families/ children on the list who are no longer supported through the program?
-are there any families/ children registered according to the program but not on the REK list?
- are there any mistakes in names, gender of the child/family or date of birth?
- update the present level of education

Policies
CAM requires policies to be set in place (or existing policies to be reviewed) with specific attention to CAM-related issues. For example, child protection policies need to include aspects on how to deal with child information, sponsor visits, sponsor gifts etc. In chapter 5, you can find REK policies on child protection, sponsor visits and gift policy. Based on these, the organization needs to assess what policy needs be translated to their organization specifically and how to ensure that the policies are embedded in program management processes and procedures, job descriptions etc.

Networking
For the introduction of CAM in your organization, it is useful to network with other child-focused organizations and organizations that are involved in CAM. Especially in the initial phase, it is highly recommended to plan a learning visit with other CAM organizations to see how to deal with both the programmatic and the administrative side of CAM.

2.6 Community Ambassadors Selection Strategy

Scale
Initially, an organization will start with a first batch of 300 child/family ambassadors. When the organization runs this successfully and on the required scale of the program, a second batch of 300 children can be added in another area of the program. In order to spread (and therefore limit) risk over partners, REK will place max 600-900 children/families with one organization.

Systems to select children/families can be adapted based on the program design. There are different options to select children/families: randomly, through the community, through SHGs or by the children themselves. However, it is always important to include parents, chiefs and community members in the selection process.

If the program is carried out in various communities/regions, it is a possibility to consider only a few communities/regions for the CAM system for logistic reasons. The child/family ambassadors should be fairly easy to reach in order to avoid long journeys, which could complicate the administration. A big advantage of concentrating only in fewer villages is that you might be able to register ALL children in a certain age group there. This could prevent possible disparity problems within the community.

When the time for the actual selection comes, the program will prepare a plan on when and where children will be selected. This selection plan will try to be appropriately based on the demography and geography balance.

> **! Naming the CAM**
> To avoid misunderstanding, it can be important to spend extra time to think through the name of the program In all cases, we should avoid talking about 'financial adoption'. Partner organizations will have to think of a good term that best explains the model to the locals, such as 'sponsor child/family', 'child/family ambassador'. From here on in this document, we will refer to them as "child and family ambassadors".

2.7 Community Awareness Raising

The program proposal already describes the target group and beneficiaries of the program. Among this target, group children/families are selected for CAM. When selecting them, it is very important to keep in mind that the children, parents and guardians are to be well-informed about the meaning of 'CAM'. At the same time, we have to make sure that the children who are selected experience real impact of the program.

The system to select children/families can be adapted, based on the program design. When the time for the actual selection comes, the program will prepare a plan on when and which children will be selected. This plan will be discussed with REK.

Before the implementation of the CAM, it is very important to explain the objectives, principles and practice of this particular form of CAM, as well as the reasons for the interviews with the children/families, to the community. It should be made clear to the community that the activities carried out for them and the benefits they receive are made possible through the donations of private donors, also called sponsors. In the communication with the community, it is also important that there is a sound understanding of the purpose of CAM activities: sponsors want to be assured and informed

about the wellbeing of the children in the program. This is guaranteed by the reports on the status of the child/ family as well as an annual updated photo and mutual communications.

Depending on the cultural context or existing community structures, it might also be essential to pay specific attention to sensitizing local government, traditional leaders and/or heads of the village on the concept of this CAM program.

> **In every case, it must be ensured that the community members understand and accept that the children/families selected as community ambassador do not receive any extra benefits from the program. They are rather the ambassadors of the program and assure the continuous support for it.**

The first training should be well in advance of the actual selection of children/families and the process of filling in child/ family introductions sheets. At a later stage, another in-depth study, orientation and intensive training can be provided on the selection of sponsor children/ families, the correspondence involved and the monitoring of the sponsor children/ families. Refresher trainings should be continuously and frequently conducted during program implementation.

The orientation and training are an opportunity to introduce or refresh the program's goals, the CAM concept and strategy to related government offices, local authorities and the children/ families and community people. The more understanding and participation from partners, children/ families and community, the likelier the success and the better the implementation of CAM in the area.

2.8 Actual Selection

Selection Committee / CAM Committee

After the community orientation and training the community is advised to form their own 'Local Selection and Recruitment Committee' which consist of different ambassadors in the community. This committee will use the agreed selection criteria to fairly select children/families.

Another option is the selection of a CAM committee with a broader role than only selection. This committee can look into each and every stage of the child/family CAM process. This body can also serve as advisory board on behalf of the community, playing a role in monitoring the program and signaling misunderstanding or skepticism in the community. Such a committee needs to be trained more thoroughly on the CAM community ambassador model and their role in the process.

Parents' Consent Form
Parents are fully informed as to the nature of the child/family CAM and agree to the enrolment of their children/family with the understanding that it is used for the funding of a program that benefits the community as well as their children. During the selection of ambassadors, this should be secured by parents' consent forms. In appendix 2 a format for a parent consent form is included. This consent form can be adjusted for the local context. However, the elements with a star are mandatory.

Regulation Regarding Information and Communications about Children
Communications about children should use pictures that are decent and respectful, not presenting them as victims. Children should be adequately clothed and poses that could be

interpreted as sexually suggestive should be avoided. Language that implies a relationship of power should also be avoided. However, we also recognize there are times when children are in reality victims, for example of famine. In such cases, the child's dignity should still be preserved whilst presenting the reality.

An ambassador's child or family history, picture folders and photographs need to be stored in locked and secure facilities to which a limited number of people have access. Confidential information (such as HIV/Aids status of a person) should never be disclosed to sponsors without very specific permission and only when persons themselves decide they want to be publicly open about it.

The number of children/families to be selected will be discussed at the start of the program. There is no automatic replacement of children/families leaving the program. In case the numbers will drop below a certain level to raise enough funds for the program, REK will request the partner to do another selection of child community ambassadors.

Selection Criteria of Community Ambassadors

Based on the context, selection criteria for the program will be agreed upon in consultation with REK.
Basic criteria are below.

Child / Family Community Ambassadors criteria:
- A boy or a girl between the age of 4-9 is given priority.
- A child from a poor or vulnerable family is given priority
- The child and his or her parents/guardians agree and are able to participate in both the CAM and development activities and abide by REK policies
- The child (if of school going age) goes to school or is willing to go to school (formal or informal education)
- The child has a permanent address in the program area.
- One child (boy or girl) per family
- Children are selected without any discrimination, according to ethnic and/or religious background
- Children who have been abandoned by their families will be recruited for the CAM program by seeking agreement from their official guardian(s)
- Children with CAM from any other NGOs/INGOs should not be considered for the CAM program.
- Children with a disability are considered

Who selects the children for CAM?
The partner organization selects children or families for CAM. Selection is preferably done in cooperation with trustworthy people from the local community, such as church leaders, teachers, heads of villages, heads of women's groups, etc. In many cases, selection is made from Self Help Groups (SHG) that consist of the more vulnerable members of the community. Selection is made based on the nature of programs as assessed by the partner organization and approved by REK.

Children not to be selected:
- Children of staff members or relatives of staff members
- Children of committee/board members
- Children of relatives of committee/board members.
- Children of pastors and missionaries.

> **Family Community Ambassadors Selection Criteria:**
> - Preferably select smaller families (as they will be easier to come together for taking pictures
> - Preferably select families with younger children because they will more likely to be at home during monitoring visits

2.9 Motivation for Community Ambassadors

Our aim in the program is to empower the community to be able to care for the wellbeing of their children. When we see the children/families as ambassadors of the program, it is important that they are not benefiting in different ways than others and that handouts are avoided. Therefore, the program cannot include school fees or health policies that are only beneficial for those child/family ambassadors.

When the child ambassador drops out of school or has health problems, this will be immediately visible in the individual child progress reports. Sponsors therefore ask us time and time again whether we are missing out on addressing issues affecting the lives of children. When reading progress reports or letters on individual children/families we will regularly come across: a child fell ill, what did we do to prevent/ address it? Did children become orphans due to HIV/AIDS or other illnesses? How can we respond? We need to incorporate strategies in our overall program strategies and activities to make sure these kind of problems are being addressed.

Secondary Education
The first years of the program, the community ambassadors will be in primary education. However, several years after the start of the program, children will reach secondary school age. Providing school fees to only the selected children clearly does not fit with the approach in which we want to create access to secondary school for ALL children in the community in a sustainable way. School fees can never be provided for all children and are only a temporary solution to the problem.

Relevant alternative activities are:
- Awareness among parents about the importance of secondary education for boys and girls
- Economic development activities are essential to enable families to financially support their children in secondary school.
- Lobby, advocacy and involvement of local government and education officers, for bursaries for OVC, better access, transport etc.
- It is important to involve children, parents, community leaders, education officers and schools in looking at structural improvement of access to secondary education. Next to financial barriers and accessibility, there can be many other factors related to secondary education, such as: gender difference, child marriage, child protection issues when schools are far away and other factors.

Medical Costs
REK as an organization cannot take the responsibilities for the medical costs of community ambassadors. At the same time, it is important that the program's strategies and activities do give attention to prevention, awareness-raising and creating access to healthcare. In some countries, there are insurance schemes for the poor. In this case, the program can raise awareness on the importance of such schemes and help people get access. In other

cases, the program might consider to set up their own a medical fund through community or SHG savings and loans systems. Such activities need to be integral part of the program proposal and sustainability strategies.

Better conditions for children as indicators
The reports sponsor get on the wellbeing of the ambassadors are an indicator of the contribution of the program towards the improvement of the wellbeing of the children in the target area. As children are the main focus of REK in community development initiatives, indicators of community development success are how well communities have been enabled to address factors underlying poverty, helplessness and dependency, self-reliance and how well children survive and have access to nutrition, education and health services among other basic needs.