Child Protection

Global Program Guidelines

Oktober 2023

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1. Introduction

Children and their wellbeing are the heart of our work. Child wellbeing can be defined as the realization of children's rights, basic needs and the opportunity for every child to have a life in dignity, with love and with a promising future. Child protection is therefore an important aspect of our work to ensure children's safety and holistic development. This document describes the child protection guidelines and the place of child protection in our programming. It answers the question on how child protection is placed in the overall Theory of Change, and what our focus areas are. In addition, it outlines our child protection approaches, activities and tools. The guidelines are applicable to both our development and disaster response programs.

1.1 What is Child Protection

Child protection is the prevention of and response to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children. Child protection promotes the well-being and healthy development of children and saves lives.[1]
With child protection, we mean the work being undertaken to strengthen laws, policies and systems, designed to protect children in their own family and community.

<u>What do we mean with 'abuse', 'neglect', 'exploitation' and 'violence against children' ?</u>

There is some overlap between the definitions. For these guidelines we use the definitions as described by The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action.[2]

Child abuse can be described as 'any intentional harmful acts towards a child, often perpetrated by those who have a relationship of trust, power or responsibility with the child'. Child abuse can take different forms and can be classified under five types:
1. Physical Abuse
2. Sexual abuse
3. Emotional or Psychological Abuse
4. Economic Abuse (Commercial or other exploitation of a child)
5. Neglect (Physical neglect, educational neglect, emotional neglect)

Child neglect is "the intentional or unintentional failure of a caregiver – any individual, community, or institution (including the State) with clear responsibility by custom or law for the wellbeing of the child – to (a) protect a child from actual or potential harm to the child's

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[1] The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (2020) 2019 CPMS

[2] The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (2019) Discussion Paper: Review of Existing Definitions and Explanations of Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Violence against Children.

safety, wellbeing, dignity and development or (b) fulfil that child's rights to survival, development, and wellbeing."[3]

Child exploitation can be defined as "a situation when an individual in a position of power and/or trust takes, or attempts to take, advantage of a child for their own personal benefit, gratification or profit. There are three main categories of child exploitation: economic, harmful or hazardous labour, and sexual."

Violence against children encompasses "all acts that involve the intentional use of power or verbal or physical force, threatened or actual, against a child or against a group of children that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harm to a child's safety, wellbeing, dignity, and development. Violence against children may be broken down into four broad subcategories: emotional or psychological, physical, sexual, or secondary (witnessing violence against others)."

<u>What do we mean with 'children'?</u>

In line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child we define a child as "any person under the age of 18". Help a Child is inclusive to all children of all genders, ages, ethnicity, religion and disabilities and adapt programming to children's evolving capacities and needs.

1.2 Why Child Protection?

Children have the right to be free from violence, including physical, emotional and sexual abuse. As Help a Child, we work in areas with a high incidence of poverty or in places where children and families are extra vulnerable due to disasters or conflicts. In these contexts, communities are disrupted which often has devastating effects on children's lives and their level of safety. Protective factors are stripped away and existing inequalities are often increasing. Children may be forced to flee their homes and be separated from their families. They may be exposed to exploitation, abuse or injury. Moreover, these situations lead to a high risk of psychosocial distress and mental issues for both the children as well as their parents. Through our child protection programming we aim to prevent and respond to these (and other) types of violence, exploitation, neglect and abuse.
In both the development projects (CCCD) of Help a Child as well as the Disaster Response (DR) projects, protecting children is at the core of all our work. Connections with other stakeholders are of vital importance. In the DR areas these will include the (local) government structures and the UN cluster (Protection Cluster with Child protection as a subcluster), and in Development areas this is mainly (local)government structures and other stakeholders.

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[3] The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (2019) Discussion Paper: Review of Existing Definitions and Explanations of Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Violence against Children.

1.3 Minimum standards

Our child protection guidelines are in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the nine commitments of the Core Humanitarian Standards. All children are entitled to full protection and enjoyment of their human rights without discrimination. To align with internationally recognized standards and good practices on Child Safeguarding Help a Child has become a member of the Keeping Children Safe alliance and is committed to meet Keeping Children Safe standards.

Help a Child has a CHS (Core Humanitarian Standard) independent verification. Using the relevant technical standards, such as the Child Protection Minimum Standards (CPMS), is part of meeting the Core Humanitarian Standard. In the CPMS, the Humanitarian Charter and the Protection Principles have been integrated. The CPMS have been developed by members of the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action to support child protection work in humanitarian settings. There are 28 standards in the CPMS, organized in the following 4 categories:
- Standards to ensure a quality child protection response.
- Standards on child protection risks.
- Standards to develop adequate child protection strategies.
- Standards to work across sectors.

In the CPMS a socio-ecological approach to child protection is applied, which means that interventions are integrated and address four levels: children, families, communities and societies. This corresponds to the holistic and participative approach of Help a Child.

1.4 Objectives of the Guidelines

As Help a Child, we want to make sure that the protection of children is at the heart of our response. Our aim is to make sure that their rights are understood, safeguarded and upheld. These Child Protection Guidelines have been developed for and by country offices and partner organizations and has four core objectives:
- It explains the focus-areas of Help a Child within child protection.
- It aims to standardize the type and scope, and ensure the quality of child protection activities, yet leaving enough space for the context of the programs.
- It serves as minimum requirements and standards for quality child protection projects.
- It is a reference and training guide for partners in how to implement child protection programming.

1.5 Structure of the Guidelines

In chapter 2 of the guidelines we start with outlining the difference between child protection and child safeguarding, and we describe our do no harm principle. Chapter 3 gives an overview of our child protection Theory of Change as well as the place of child protection in the overall Theory of Change of Help a Child. Chapter 4 elaborates on our child protection activities in the following areas: community-based child protection interventions, family strengthening interventions, sensitization and training of children on child protection and

resilience strengthening activities. Chapter 5 describes how we monitor and evaluate our child protection activities and how we ensure sustainability. The final chapter, chapter 6, gives an outline of how child protection is integrated in our other areas of activity like ECD and DRR.

1.6 Child Protection staff and support

At Help a Child Netherlands and at Country Offices, staff are appointed to take care of the child protection expertise area. The overall objective of these experts is to ensure program quality, track record, (innovative-) concept developments, fundraising, system change and visibility at country level and internationally.

Relevant child protection resources, interventions and training can be found on:
- The child protection folder on the howto portal of Help a Child;
  [Child Protection - Howto (helpachild.org)](#)
- The Help a Child Expert Teams channel;
  [Teams Expert Group CP & ECD](#)
  Included is a compilation document with links to guidelines, standards, toolkits and networks in the area of child protection;
- The Help a Child Academy; [Help a Child Academy](#)
- The website of The Alliance: [www.alliancecpha.org](#)
- The website of Keeping Children Safe: [Keeping Children Safe - Let's end child abuse in organisations](#)

2. Child Protection and Child Safeguarding

2.1 The difference between Child Protection and Child Safeguarding

Child protection and Child safeguarding are terms which are often mixed. The two terms, yet very related, do refer to different processes.
Keeping Children Safe, an umbrella organisation to safeguard children, defines it as follows:
child safeguarding is the responsibility that organizations have to ensure their staff, operations and programs "do no harm" to children and that any concerns the organization has about children's safety within the communities in which they work are reported to the appropriate authorities.
child protection is preventing and responding to all violence, exploitation and abuse against children. So these are all the activities, and laws and policies to prevent and respond to childprotection issues.

Child safeguarding refers to what Help a Child does at organizational level to keep children in our programs safe. It includes: the implementation of the Code of Conduct that all our staff, interns, consultants and volunteers have to sign and adhere to; HR policies to recruit staff who are genuine and of good conduct; and it also includes reporting mechanisms in case something happened to a child involving one of the staff.
Child protection is one aspect of safeguarding. Child Protection includes the work being undertaken to strengthen structures, systems, laws and policies, which are designed to protect children in a given country in his or her own family and community. Child protection is about Help a Child's programs addressing violence within communities: our programs in which we aim to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children. It refers to the interventions of Help a Child which aim to prevent and respond to protection issues within communities.

Child Safeguarding	Child Protection
'The umbrella'	One aspect of 'the safeguarding umbrella'
What we as **organization** do to **prevent** harm and to protect all children involved in our activities.	Our **interventions** to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children within communities.

The Child Safeguarding Policy of Help a Child, which is part of the Integrity Policy, describes our procedures to minimize risks and how to respond to allegations of child abuse in our organization.

In 2021, Help a Child became full member of the <u>Keeping Children Safe Network</u>: an independent not-for-profit, supporting us to have comprehensive child safeguarding measures in place.

2.2 Do No Harm principle

According to the Do No Harm principle, avoiding harm is our highest concern and priority. "Do No Harm" means to enhance children's safety, dignity and rights and avoid exposing them to further harm. To minimize potential negative effects of our interventions and to improve our program, we critically reflect upon our work, asking input from our partners and the communities we serve. We want to design our projects in close engagement with communities, and we desire to be trustful and transparent, as reflected in our corporate values. Through training, our staff should be aware of their responsibility to prevent harm and to report any abuse they suspect or witness, within their organization or outside. More on this can be found in the Help a Child Integrity Policy.

2.3 Communication guidelines

Communications and advocacy, such as text, images, audio and video, can support the protection and empowerment of children if used in the right manner. It can contribute to advocacy on child protection issues, but, when implemented poorly, it can also misrepresent and endanger children. That is why Help a Child developed communication tools to attribute to protective communication.

- <u>Help a Child Photography and Filming Consent Form</u>
- <u>Help a Child Picture Guide</u>
- <u>Help a Child Protection and Privacy</u>
- <u>Help a Child Storytelling Guide</u>
- In addition, 3.1 of the CPMS offers good guidance on child friendly communication, <u>CPMS 2019</u>.

Using these tools is even more crucial due to the context in which child protection projects are implemented, as well as the sensitivity of the issues dealt with. Do No Harm is always our priority. More information on our guidelines for communication and ICT, sponsorship, (group) visits and other subjects in relation to child protection can be found in our integrity and child safeguarding policy: <u>Integrity Policy</u>,

3. Our Child Protection Theory of Change

This chapter gives an overview of our Child Protection Theory of Change. It describes the general assumptions and pre-conditions, intended outcomes and activities to work towards the final goal to ensure that all children are safe and secure and capable to cope with hardship.

### 3.1 Our Child Protection Theory of Change
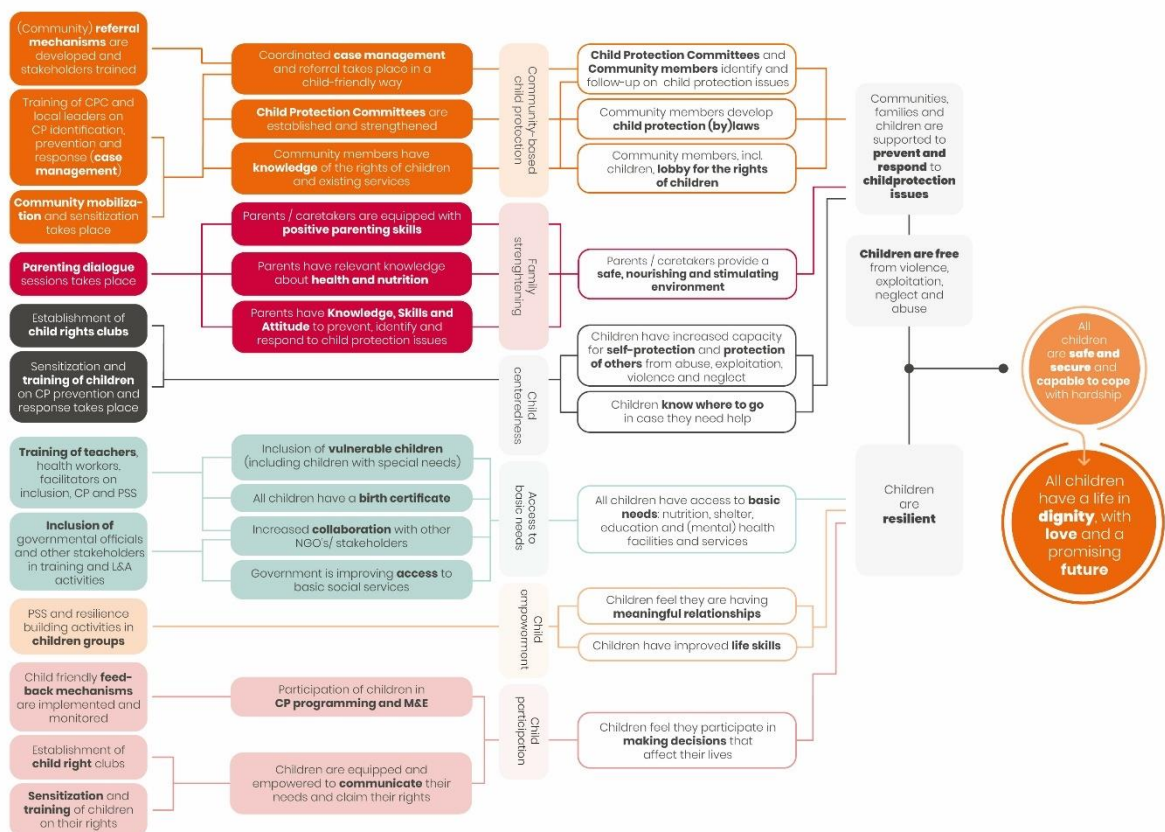
### 3.2 The place of Child Protection in our overall Theory of Change

Central in our overall Theory of Change is an integrated and holistic approach to make sure that children can grow up in a safe and supportive environment. This is also reflected in our Child Protection Programming. Help a Child sees child wellbeing as encompassing four domains: physical, socio-emotional, spiritual and cognitive. The domains are interlinked and influence each other. Children are at risk of abuse in any of the 4 domains, hence our Child Protection programming is focusing on all four domains of child wellbeing. Identification of child protection risks and child protection interventions are focused on the child, parents, the community and society (see 3.3.2).These are called the Rings of Responsibility.

As described in our main objective we aim to respond to, and prevent, child protection issues through the strengthening and establishment of community structures like child protection committees, and through the support of parents, to ensure a sustainable and participative approach. Within our Child Protection programming we use the same three strategies as in our overall Theory of Change to achieve the envisioned impact, namely: transfer of knowledge and skills, working in groups, and cooperation with external actors and systems.
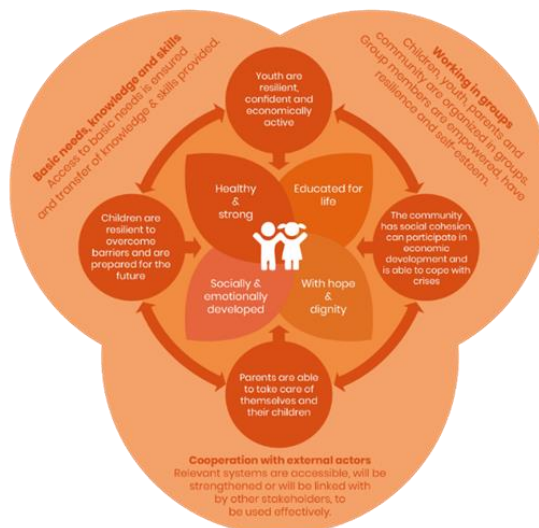
3.3 Intended outcomes

3.3.1 Strengthening resilience and minimizing risk factors

Children are free
from violence,
exploitation,
neglect and
abuse

Children
are
resilient
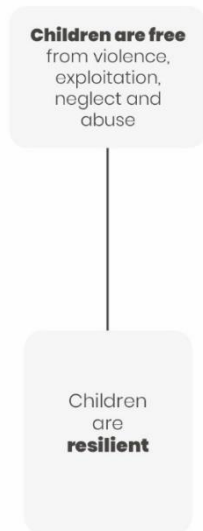
Most children are resilient and have strong coping skills that enable them to deal with stressful and threatening situations. Resilience is the capacity to overcome adversity and adapt after difficult experiences. At the same time, children are also a vulnerable group and the impact of abuse and neglect can undermine their development and have life-long consequences. The vulnerability of children depends on the available risk factors and protective factors (=sources of resilience). In our ToC we therefore focus on both the strengthening of children's resilience as well as the minimizing of risk factors through prevention and responding to child protection issues to ensure that children are free from violence, exploitation, neglect and abuse.

3.3.2 A socio-ecological approach

Communities,
families and
children are
supported to
**prevent and
respond** to
**childprotection
issues**

Children are free
from violence,
exploitation,
neglect and
abuse

Within Help a Child we use a socio-ecological approach to child protection programming with several layers of responsibility, called the Rings of Responsibility. This means that we see children as active participants in the protection and well-being of themselves and their peers, we see parents/families as the first protective layer around the child, then the community which in turn is influenced by the wider society. Our child protection interventions therefore are directed at both the child, family, community and more indirectly at society.
It is always necessary to look at the situation of the child holistically, identifying the risks and strengths both within the child and their environment. Only targeting children may have short-term or limited impact, unless we do support the family or caregivers or sensitize the community, individual interventions The effects of interventions are, therefore, stronger when child-, family-, and community-based approaches are integrated.

Four levels of the child protection socio-ecological model
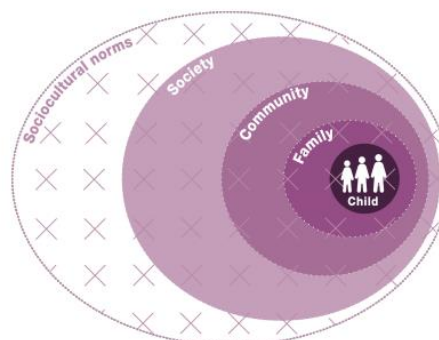
Child Protection Minimum Standards,
The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2019

3.3.3 Community-based Child Protection
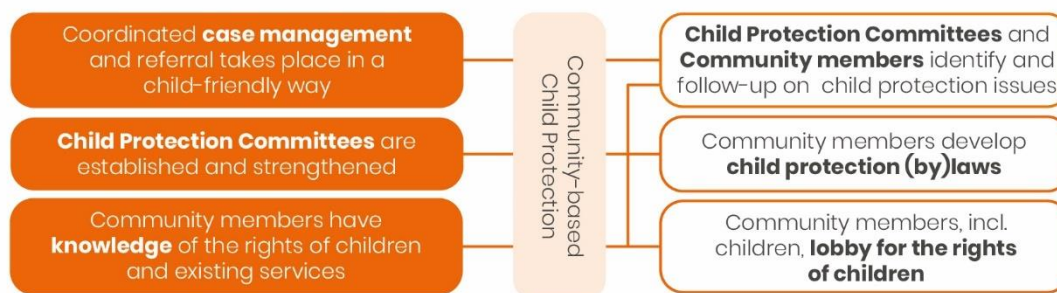
Community-Based Child Protection can be described as identification and addressing of child protection issues through community engagement and effective use of community resources. Communities are seen as active participants in the protection of their children and are involved in identification, planning and implementation of child protection strategies, the development of child protection (by) laws and lobby and advocacy activities.

Community engagement is essential to understand the root causes of protection risks, to identify capacities and resources and to prioritize child protection activities. Furthermore, it strengthens protection systems as part of a wider, collective responsibility.[4] Community-Based Child Protection therefore includes: community sensitization and taking time to build the social cohesion, resilience and capacity of the community to identify, prevent and respond to child protection issues. It means that we listen to ideas rather than giving the solution ourselves and that we approach and activate community members as being actors instead of recipients or beneficiaries.

Effective Community-Based Child Protection needs understanding of community beliefs and local practices regarding child well-being, development and protection needs, and of existing community structures and power dynamics. This includes protective beliefs, practices and structures but can also include customary practices that are harmful. Through community discussions, awareness raising and training, community-members will be empowered to take responsibility for the safety and security in their own community.

An important part is the identification, strengthening or establishing of community-based protection structures, like Child Protection Committees. These committees function as platform for awareness raising, identifying child protection risk factors and children at risk, providing family support, monitoring referral pathways and lobby and advocacy.

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[4] The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (2021) A Toolkit for Community Child Protection Volunteers

3.3.4 Family Strengthening
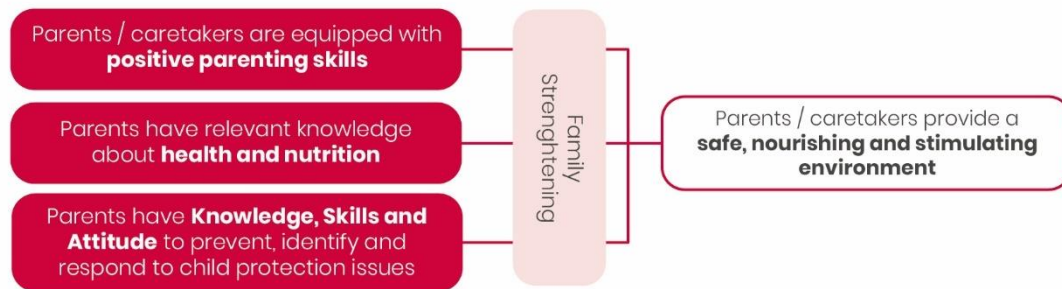
Family strengthening is a Child Protection approach that contributes to improved psychosocial wellbeing and protection of children through a positive and strengthened family environment.

Family is the closest protective layer around a child. Supportive parents/caregivers can be a strong protective factor for children and important sources of resilience. However, the ability to offer safety and security to their children can be undermined by lack of knowledge or own stress because of:

- Economic hardship;
- Social isolation;
- Changes in family composition and roles due to death, divorce or forced separation;
- Less predictable behavior of children due to stressful experiences that children have been facing;
- The loss of protective community mechanisms;
- Etc.

This can increase children's risks of domestic violence, child marriage, child labor or separation of the family. Support of parents is therefore an essential part of our child protection programming.

3.3.5 Child Centeredness

Putting children and their protection at the center begins with recognizing children as a distinct group from adults, with unique and diverse needs and capacities that differ by age, gender, ability, and other diversity factors. To be able to define what actually is in the best interests of the child, it is essential to listen to the children themselves.

One of the basic principles in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that all children have the right to be heard, and that their opinions must be taken seriously. Studies on child participation underline that involving children and their families in defining their needs and setting up interventions improves the chances of long-term sustainable outcomes. Child participation within child protection strengthens their rights, builds their self-esteem and contributes to a sense of control over their own physical safety.[5] Children are therefore actively engaged and empowered within all phases of child protection programming to identify needs, sources of resilience and to design sustainable interventions.

3.3.6 Strengthening Children's Resilience
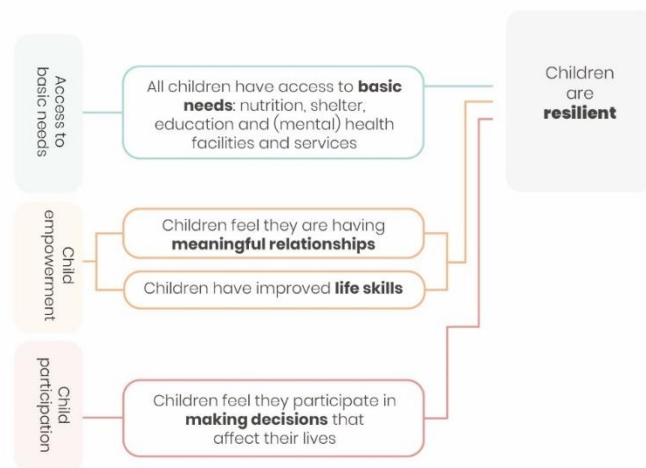
Research shows that the extent to which the resilience of children is strengthened is determined by: children's personal traits, the quality of their social environment (in which family and school play an important role), access to basic needs and services, a sense of belonging and purpose which is often interlinked with religion and faith, cultural adherence and a sense of control and agency.[6] Examples of personal traits are: social skills, empathy, confidence, creativity and being able to express and regulate emotions. Although children's individual characteristics are important, they cannot be separated from the interaction between the child and their wider social environment. Research has shown that it is at least just as important to identify and strengthen resilience factors at the family, community and cultural level. Social ties and supports, living in caring neighborhoods or schools, and belonging to youth groups are all associated with positive mental health outcomes in children. School is central to these support systems. For many children school provides a place where they not only receive education but also attention, care, structure, and the possibility to form relationships with peers.

Effective schools can function as key resilience factors by:
- Offering a safe environment and stable social support.
- Promoting their competencies, offering opportunities to create friendships, and providing a sense of achievement and hope.

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[5] The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (2020) 2019 CPMS

[6] Ungar, Michael & Liebenberg, Linda. (2011). Assessing Resilience Across Cultures Using Mixed Methods: Construction of the Child and Youth Resilience Measure. Journal of Mixed Methods Research. 5. 126-149. 10.1177/1558689811400607.

4. Our Child Protection Activities

To achieve the intended outcomes that we described in the previous chapter we linked them to our child protection activities. Our Child Protection Activities focus on four key areas:

- Community-based child protection
- Family strengthening
- Sensitization and training of children on child protection
- Resilience strengthening.

This chapter gives a global overview of the different activities per key area whereby the concrete implementation depends on the context and setting (disaster response or development).

4.1 Community-based child protection interventions

As described earlier, Help a Child is working at the grassroot level to address, prevent and respond to child protection issues. Through community discussions, sensitization and training, community members will be empowered to take responsibility for the safety and security in their own community and to build community-based protection structures by setting up or strengthening Child Protection Committees. These committees are trained to identify, prevent and respond to child protection issues and to function as platforms for further awareness raising in the community and for lobby and advocacy activities towards the government. In most cases these Child Protection Committees are connected to the local government structures.

To identify and address the needs of children with particular vulnerabilities or risks, child-friendly case management services and referral mechanisms are established and strengthened.

More information on possible child protection interventions at community level is described in Annex 1.

4.1.1 Community mobilization and sensitization

Help a Child uses different group-based methods to initiate a community conversation about child protection and child rights, to identify and discuss risk- and protective factors and to address child protection issues. The Community Challenge Phase of a CCCD-project is specifically designed to mobilize all stakeholder groups in a community, including vulnerable groups.
This phase is about getting a good understanding of the community, its strengths and vulnerabilities, including root causes, and its barriers for empowerment and child development. The CCCD-guidelines provide more information on the Community Challenge: 2021-CCCD-Manual.pdf (helpachild.org).
In Disaster Response projects a good context analysis together with the community is carried out to determine assets, strengths and weaknesses. More information can be found in the help a Child DR policy: Disaster Response Policy Also other methods like Community Conversations can be used to discuss Child Protection issues with the community[7].
Help a Child developed the group based What's Up method to discuss child protection issues. Through this method community members are empowered to regain control of happenings around them. In particular, they learn about child protection issues, and how they can prevent and respond. The What's Up method consists of practical, step-by-step manuals for facilitators and starts with a community mapping about protection risks and opportunities. There are manuals for various target groups available, like What's Up Parents?!, What's Up Children?! and What's Up Ladies?!.

4.1.2 Training of CPCs on Child Protection identification, prevention and response

To support identification, prevention and response of child protection cases and concerns, community-based child protection structures are mapped and/or established. To avoid creating parallel structures and increase sustainability, available child protection services in the area (like local organizations, local child protection committees, and child protection structures that were formed by the government) are identified and linked with. After the establishment and/or identification of community-based child protection structures strengthening of these structures takes place through:

- Capacity building activities like: training, monitoring visits, mentoring and technical support. Help a Child developed the following supportive tool: Symptoms-assessment-and-referral-overview
- Linkages to local protection structures.
- The establishment of a community-based monitoring system.
- Provision of child rights-related information to facilitate advocacy activities and community policing.
- Strengthening reporting, tracking, referral, and response on violence against children

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[7] CommunityConversations_0.pdf (wvi.org)

4.1.2.1 Child Protection Identification/Assessment

Assessments are an integral part of our child protection programming. Help a Child sees engagement of children themselves and the community as essential to understand the root causes of protection risks, to identify needs and resources and to prioritize child protection activities.
Within our CCCD-programs, child protection identification is often done through the different group structures in the community: Self Help Groups, CLAs (Cluster Level Associations), Child Protection Committees and Parenting Groups.

Through the SHGs, members are made aware of child rights (such as proper health care, access to education, and protection) and are supported to protect and lobby for these rights. Child Protection Committees, if already formed, play an important role in the identification and follow-up of child protection issues. But also other structures like parenting groups, schools, churches or children's groups can be a source of identification.

We developed the following participative interventions and tools to assess child protection risks, needs and resources:

Intervention	Goal	Target Group
What's Up People What's Up People	Knowing which places in the community are risky and which are safe(r), understanding what may cause the violent acts and what are the consequences and exploring ways to prevent and deal with risky situations	Men, women, elders, youth and children.
Community mapping: Community-mapping-1 Community-mapping-2	To create an understanding of the resources that the community has, to discuss what is important for the community to make a living and to determine what are the issues/ problems that affect the well-being of children.	Men, women, elders, youth and children.
Risks and support mapping toolsheet for children: Risk-and-support-mapping	To identify and prioritize child protection issues in the community and to identify particular groups of children that are more vulnerable than others to abuse, exploitation or neglect.	Children
Child Protection assessment toolsheet for project officers and governmental officials: Child-Protection-Assessment	To identify and prioritize child protection issues in the community. To identify particular groups of children that are more vulnerable than others to abuse, exploitation or neglect. To gain insight in existing formal and informal support mechanisms for children and youth, their linkages, their strengths and their gaps/weaknesses. To identify possible solutions for child protection issues.	Project officers, Governmental officials

The Child wellbeing matrix: Child-wellbeing-matrix	To develop a common understanding of what makes children happy and unhappy in the target area and who plays a role to address the identified issues. This can give valuable information while designing a program that aim to improve the wellbeing of children.	Children (10-18 years old), parents, and other social service providers (such as teachers).
Vulnerability ranking: Vulnerability-ranking	Identifying the most vulnerable groups in the community and understanding their needs.	Community leaders, men, women, elders and youth
Tool to prevent marginalization: Take-a-step	Critically analyse the causes and effects of vulnerability among the various groups and promote inclusive development that ensures equal opportunity for all.	All community members: community leaders, male, female, boys and girls.
Tool to identify and discuss roles and relations in the community: Venn-diagram-1	The tool enables one to understand who/which groups are of influence on the well-being of children and the development of the community as a whole. Through the exercise, circle of influence & the possible interrelations/inter-dependence between the various groups will become clear.	All community members: community leaders, male, female, boys and girls.

Besides assessment through the community, child protection needs can also be assessed through:
- Home visits
- Focus Group Discussions and interviews with children, parents/caregivers and school teachers
- Key informants and other stakeholders
- Joint cluster surveys, meetings and reports
- Data shared by local authorities

In our disaster response, child protection needs may also be assessed through multisectoral assessments or through integration of child protection questions into other individual-sector assessments. Questions relate to different factors that may contribute to children's vulnerability: household composition, food security, their sex, gender identity, age, disability, social condition, ethnic group/nationality, displacement status or other factors (such as illness or a lack of documentation).

The following tools can be used to collect and share data on child protection needs in disaster context:

- The Child Protection Rapid Assessment Toolkit, CPWG, 2014. It provides baseline information and serves as the basis for initial planning.
- Child Protection in Emergencies Initial Assessment (CPIA)

Based on this community assessment of child protection needs and strengths/resources, preventive child protection activities are planned to strengthen the resilience of children and to create a protective environment for children in the community. Within these activities children at special risk are identified and linked to established response mechanisms. Through monitoring and evaluation, the quality, outputs and outcomes of the interventions, as well as changes in the child protection situation, are mapped. Results are used to adjust and strengthen the programming and for lobby and advocacy.

4.1.2.2. Case Management

Children and families with specific health or protection needs may require outreach and case management services to assist with identification of and access to services, follow-up and support. Case management is "an approach for addressing the needs of an individual child who is at risk of harm or has been harmed" (Sphere Standards). Since Help a Child and partners are very much connected to the communities, it is logic that individual cases of child protection concerns will be reported to us. Depending on the situation and the needs of the child and family, the response to the concern will be done by us or referred to other services, when needed and available.

Identification can be done by Help a Child staff, but also by community facilitators, Child Protection Committees, teachers or other community members. Help a Child, or a partner organization of Help a Child, will assess the child's situation, the problem and the needs, and will then develop an action plan together with the child. An example of an action plan is that Help a Child refers a child or teenager to one of its supportive group activities, or link with other accessible services or organizations in case the problem is beyond the scope of Help a Child. During the implementation of the action, there is regular follow-up with the child, and when the needs have been addressed, the case will be closed.
Case management is always built on existing formal and informal protection systems and protection networks and has a strong link to Mental Health & Psychosocial Services. If available, MHPSS workers can assist in this process, including by working with specialists to formulate an action plan with the child and family. Help a Child will NOT be involved in situations where specialized psychiatric support is needed e.g. medication and individual therapy (level 4 of the MHPSS pyramid, see figure below).
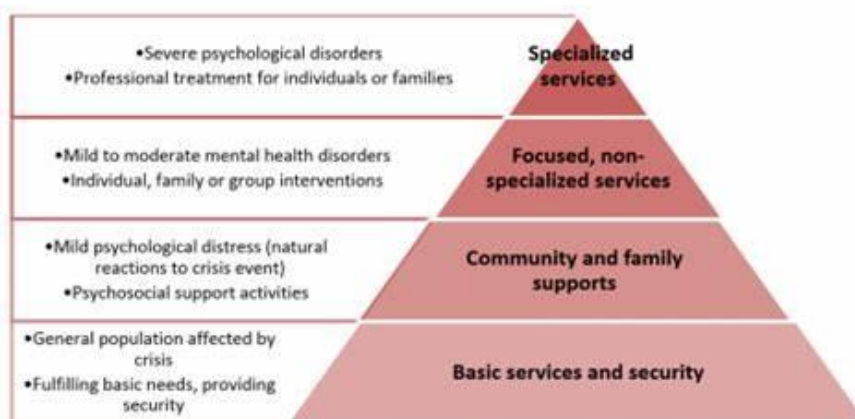
This illustration is based on the intervention pyramid for mental health and psychosocial support in the IASC Guidelines (2007).

Setting up a referral network is important from the onset of the work in communities. It is important to realize we are not alone, and we cannot do everything by ourselves. Identifying other services/stakeholders and other groups in the community is key to adequate prevention and response in child protection cases. You find an example of a mapping of (community) protection services in annex 2. Knowing the services, the contact persons, and what they can do, will ease the process of referring and will lead to effective support for the child (and family) in need.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are developed to guide protection case management processes to have a coordinated, standardized and harmonized approach: Standard Operating Procedures.

4.1.2.3 Follow-up on Child protection issues

When starting a CCCD project, the identification of Child Protection issues and structures should be part of the context analysis: what kind of issues of abuse do children face, what is already being done? who is on the ground to support? If services are available we do not need to compete for the same. If there are no services, but yet a lot of CP issues, it is necessary to set up child protection structures, like Child Protection Committees, and services.

If a child protection case has been referred to us or our partner, it is important to follow up and see if the actions planned are taking place and result in the expected outcome.

In most projects this will be done by the Child Protection Committees, in cooperation with the local government. It is important that Child Protection Committees (CPCs) and stakeholders are trained to identify and follow-up on child protection issues. This training can be conducted by our Child Protection Expert from the country offices or by staff from a partner organisation, often in collaboration with governmental workers or staff from other NGOs. Training topics are: what is child protection and how can you identify child protection cases; basic communication & counseling skills; how to establish and link to existing referral systems, reporting & monitoring of child protection issues, family strengthening & community awareness raising on topics like: early pregnancies, early marriages, GBV, child headed households and child labour. Depending on the location and project, the CPCs can also assist in financial support of families (disability fund, Cash and Voucher Assistance) and family reunification.

4.1.2.4 Lobby and advocacy

Lobby and advocacy can be used as a powerful tool to strengthen the child protection system at community, local and national level. This is important in order to ensure that children are protected even when Help a Child's projects have finished. Through advocacy, community-members are empowered to strengthen the protection of children at the long-term. A tool that will support you to develop an advocacy intervention is the Child Protection and Advocacy (CPA) project model of World Vision. It also includes an overview of partners that could be involved when planning child protection advocacy at the community level.

Help a Child objectives for community-based child protection advocacy may include:

- Formal and informal community-based mechanisms for child protection are strengthened in the targeted communities.
- Reduction in harmful practices, which violate the protective rights of children.
- Equitable access to formal and informal child protection services, especially for the most vulnerable.
- Girls and boys, especially the most vulnerable, have increased resilience, life skills and capacity for self-protection and protection of others from abuse, exploitation, violence and neglect.

For questions or additional support, please don't hesitate to email our Lobby & Advocacy coordinator.

4.1.3 Referral Mechanisms

The development of referral mechanisms, assessing of help-seeking ways and available support services, is a process that involves collaboration with the community, children and relevant actors from various sectors (health, social welfare, law enforcement etc.). In case this is not carried out by other stakeholders, Help a Child will train child protection committees and/or partners to carry out a mapping of (community) protection, health and social services and to develop a child-friendly help-seeking and referral pathway flowchart. This will help to identify and follow-up on child protection issues. A flowchart gives details of the referral process and persons/actors involved in each step of managing a child protection case. Annex 3 provides an example of a help-seeking and referral pathway flowchart and a question matrix guide for the assessment of the response capacity.

4.2 Family strengthening interventions

Parents (or caregivers) are the most essential key players in improving the wellbeing of children. Therefore, Help a Child wants to be sure that they are equipped with positive parenting skills to provide a safe, nourishing, and stimulating home environment.
In our support of parents we integrate awareness raising with interventions to improve the mental health and resilience of parents themselves. Through parent support groups, Help a Child empowers parents and caregivers (men and women) to cope with their own (psychosocial) problems so they can take care of themselves and help the children in their

family. The following curricula can be used for parent support groups: The Parenting Challenge and Connect Adults.

Based on needs in our projects, Help a Child designed a method called 'The Parenting Challenge'. The goal of the Parenting Challenge is to improve the parenting skills of mothers, fathers and other caretakers, so that they can provide adequate and relevant support to their children. In this group-based method, parents are actively involved in discussions, exercises and group-work and are sharing their thoughts and ideas. The role of the facilitator is to lead the discussion, instead of teaching.

To offer extra peer support and psycho-education to parents on dealing with stress and own psychosocial problems Help a Child co-developed with Dorcas the program 'Connect adults': [Connect Adults](). The manual contains an outline for a seven-week support group program. The sessions focus on the identification/strengthening of sources of resilience and also includes psychological first aid.

More information on possible child protection interventions at family level are described in Annex 1.

4.3 Sensitization and training of children on Child Protection
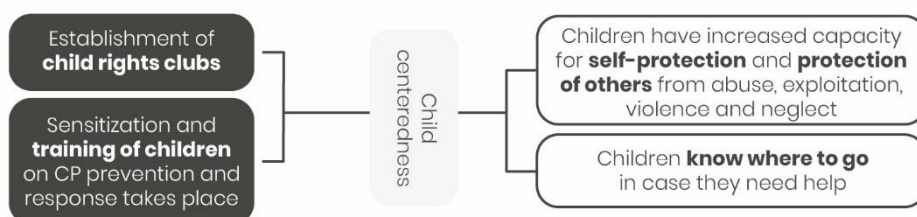
Through dialogue, group-based sessions and the establishment of child right clubs children will be empowered to know their rights and to take responsibility for the safety and security in their own community.

Help a Child developed the group-based What's Up method to discuss issues like child protection and how they can prevent and respond. *What's Up Children?!* focuses on children from 10 – 14 years. In a playful way children learn how to deal with their emotions, with conflicts, and how they can cope with daily life. Play and other creative methods are a better language for children to express themselves than words. Addressing issues through a group also contributes to social cohesion and feelings of connectedness. Facilitators play an important role in securing a safe and inclusive atmosphere in the group and in identifying the children who are in need of additional individual counseling. *What's Up Ladies?!* is developed for adolescents/young woman to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

More information on other possible child protection interventions at child level are described in Annex 1.

4.4 Resilience strengthening activities
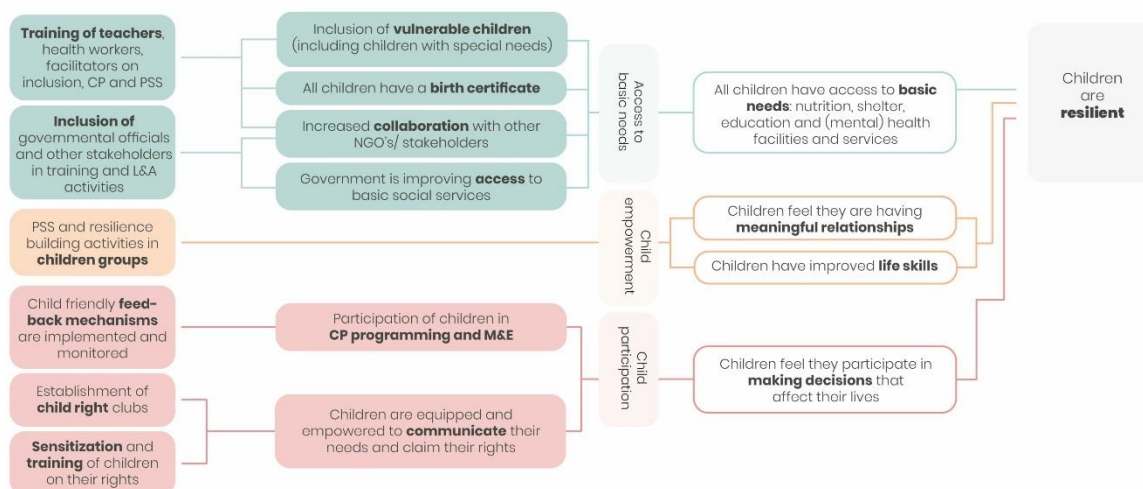
Resilience strengthening activities focus on access of all children to basic needs, strengthening of social cohesion and life skills and strengthening of children's agency through child participation.

4.4.1 Equal access to basic needs

Important determinant of resilience is the access to basic needs and services. This is often hindered because of poverty, disaster or conflict. That is why Help a Child doesn't only focus on the child but also aims to improve the economic resilience of families through Self Help Groups and our PIP approach (see 6.2).
Activities at this level focus on strengthening of the collaboration with the government and other stakeholders and the inclusion of the most vulnerable children and families through training of teachers, health workers and facilitators to tackle of stigma and negative attitudes on vulnerabilities such as disability, gender, child soldiers, mental health etc.
Annex 4 provides more information on the establishment and operating of a child friendly space (CFS). A Child Friendly Space can be defined as 'a place designed and operated in a participatory manner, where children (affected by natural disasters or armed conflict) can be provided with a safe environment, where integrated programming including play, recreation, education, health, and psychosocial support can be delivered and/or information about services/supports provided' .

4.4.2 Strengthening of social cohesion and life skills

Interventions focusing on identifying and strengthening the children's personal sources of resilience can be sports and play-based activities, creative modalities, supervised children clubs, theme based group sessions, and life skills education. These can be provided by trained and supervised community volunteers and peer mentors.
Help a Child (co-)developed/uses the following group-based psycho-social support and resilience strengthening interventions:

Target Group	Intervention	Description
Children 5 – 7	BOB	*BOB* is a psychosocial support group intervention for young children based on storytelling and bodywork. Build your Own Buddy was initiated, in order to support pre-school children and their parents, in dealing with the emotional consequences of growing up in a conflict-affected area. In 12 sessions children learn 6 strategies to recognize their emotions and reduce stress. A picture book about 'Bob the hare' is used in all sessions; through storytelling and exercises children identify themselves with Bob and learn about coping strategies. BoB can be used in ECE to prepare children for primary school and to reduce negative impact of stress on learning outcomes.
Children 10 – 14	What's Up	*What's Up Children?!* focuses on children from 10 – 14 years. In a playful way children learn how to deal with their emotions, with conflicts, and how they can cope with daily life.
Children aged 6 – 18	TeamUp	*TeamUp* is a psychosocial support group intervention of structured movement-based group activities developed by WarChild, Save the Children and Unicef. Four key principles that are embedded throughout the intervention are: to establish a sense of security; promote social connectedness; increase self-regulation; and foster a positive outlook on life.
Girls	BoruBoru	*Boruboru* is a sports-based intervention to empower girls, to address girls' rights and to increase social cohesion in communities. Boruboru is a traditional South Sudanese ball sport, revived and implemented by HaC South Sudan as a tool for girls' and community empowerment and peacebuilding. Girls are trained in Boruboru playing skills, teambuilding, conflict management and tolerance, communication skills and leadership skills.

4.4.3 Strengthening of children's agency

Child participation is essential in determining the best interests of children in service planning and provision. Children and young people have many good ideas about what would improve their lives, and make help more effective. Child participation thus improves quality of care by making services child-centered. In contrast, failing to listen to children can lead to ineffective and even wrong interventions. Child participation preserves not only the child's rights, but also their autonomy. When you find ways to adapt to the children's interests and capabilities, they will feel more responsible and empowered to improve their lives. Furthermore, child participation activities will allow them to develop confidence, social, cognitive and emotional skills to improve their daily functioning. More information and tools on child participation can be found in Annex 5.

4.4.3.1 Child-Friendly community-based complaints and feedback mechanisms

As part of our CHS commitment, Help a Child wants community members to be able to easily share their ideas, concerns or complaints in relation to our programming and staff behavior. To include children they should have easy access to channels that allow them to give their feedback. In addition to the Community-Based Feedback and Complaints Mechanism Guide the following manual has been developed with general guidelines and child-friendly tools that can be used to collect feedback and complaints by children: Complete guidelines for the use of child-friendly tools.pdf

5. M&E and Sustainability

5.1 Child Protection Monitoring and Evaluation

Help a Child works with several donors having their own approach towards PMEL. In many cases pre-described indicators need to be measured and monitoring frameworks are developed to include these indicators. Help a Child always takes these donor requirements seriously and follows their requirements.

For our child protection activities in disaster response Help a Child has adopted the ECHO formulated Disaster Response indicators on the sectors of implementation. These indicators need to be taken along when a project implements a project in the respective sector. We refer to these as minimum requirements in monitoring. These can be found in the Disaster Response Policy.

The following indicators are adopted by Help a Child to measure the outputs of Child Protection in our DRA (Dutch Relief Alliance) projects in Disaster Response countries:

Child Protection	KRI code (subtheme/result)	Key Result Indicators (KRI) – ECHO
Prevention and response to violence	PRO-I1	Number of persons reached by the implementation of specific prevention measures
Prevention and response to violence	PRO-I2	Number of persons who receive an appropriate response
Protection information management and monitoring	PRO-I4	Number of protection information management (PIM) products enabling evidence-informed action for quality protection outcomes produced
Protection information dissemination	PRO-I5	Number of persons with increased/appropriate information on relevant rights and/or entitlements
Capacity building (Protection)	PRO-I6	Number of participants showing an increased knowledge on the protection subject in focus
Child soldiers / Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups (CAAC)	PRO-I7	Number of concrete strategies to prevent, report and/or respond to child recruitment at individual, community and/or national level
Support to separated/unaccompanied children	PRO-I8	Number of unaccompanied and/or separated children who are reunited with their caregivers OR in appropriate protective care arrangements based on BIA
Protection advocacy	PRO-I10	Number of advocacy products produced and disseminated AND/OR number of meetings/events held

Gender based violence (Prevention, response, other)	PRO-I11	Number of persons reached by the implementation of specific GBV prevention measures
Gender based violence (Prevention, response, other)	PRO-I12	Number of survivors who receive an appropriate response to GBV
Documentation, status and protection of individuals	PRO-I13	Number of persons who obtain appropriate documentation/legal status
Tracing and reunification	PRO-I14	Number of persons separated from their family who have re-established and maintained contacts AND/OR have been reunified with their families
Child Protection	PRO-I15	Number of children that received support specified to their needs
Protection	PRO-IO1	% of targeted persons reporting an increased sense of safety and well-being after engaging in the protection activities under this project
MHPSS	PRO-IO2	% of target persons who report improvement in their mental health and psychosocial well-being

In addition, countries can use the measurement framework of the CPMS for monitoring and evaluation of child protection activities and to generate evidence of effectiveness of child protection interventions and activities: CPMS measurement framework.

For monitoring of our child protection programming in our development programs we make use of the indicators of the PMEAL CCCD Reporting framework: PMEAL CCCD Reporting Framework. Tools that are used for measurement are: the Child Status Index, the Child Wellbeing Measurement Framework and FGDs. Through the SHGs and CDCs regular updates are taken on Child Protection cases and follow-up and are recorded on regular basis by our Project Staffs.

5.2 Sustainability

A project of Help a Child is sustainable when the community is able to continuously provide for children's needs and protection after phase-out of the project. Child protection programming should therefore build on, and activate, existing resources and should lead to ownership in the community and the ability of the community to adapt (also in structures) when needed, to continuously prevent- and respond to child protection issues.

Possible actions and structures to ensure child protection in a community after phasing out are:
- Established linkages between community based child protection committees and governmental structures.
- A contextualized child protection and child safeguarding policy.
- Well-functioning Community Based Complaints and Feedback Mechanism (CBCFM).
- Well-functioning referral system.
- Implemented tools for child participation.

- Empowered parents, children and community members that can use the available structures.
- Support and training of staff is ensured through for example implementation of train-the-trainer models.

6. Integration of Child Protection in our other areas

6.1 Child Protection Mainstreaming within Disaster Response

Child Protection mainstreaming ensures that a child protection lens is incorporated into all humanitarian operations. All sectors take child protection risks and potential violations into consideration. Help a Child advocates on the importance of protection mainstreaming, and shares information with other actors so that they understand who is at risk, from what or whom, why, and what can be done about it. This way, actors can adapt their actions accordingly to ensure a holistic approach.

Help a Child mainstreams Child Protection in the following sectors:
- Food Security and Livelihoods and child protection
- Education and child protection
- Health and child protection
- Nutrition and child protection
- Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and child protection
- Shelter and child protection
- Camp management and child protection
- (Cash) Distribution and child protection

Under pillar 4 of the CPMS key actions and indicators are described for child protection and other sectoral workers related to mainstreaming and integration.

### 6.2 Food security and livelihoods and Child Protection

Food insecurity is linked to multiple child protection risks. Research shows that food insecurity causes psychosocial distress in families, resulting in increased tension and violence within the home, lack of nurturing and responsive care for, and neglect of the children. Food insecurity also increases children's risk of experiencing several forms of sexual and gender-based violence, child marriage, family separation, child labour, and recruitment and use by armed groups because of absence of parents or negative coping mechanisms in order to increase access to food and livelihood opportunities[8]. Programs which combine food security and/or livelihoods support with family strengthening were found to reduce children's experience of violence and abuse by caregivers. This underlines the importance of a holistic approach.
Within Help a Child, food security and family strengthening are combined in the PIP approach. PIP (Plan Intégré du Paysan) is one of the key approaches of the EPIC program of Help a Child.

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[8] Plan International and the Global Child Protection Area of Responsibility (2022) Child Protection and Food Security, An Evidence Review of the Linkages in Humanitarian Settings

The EPIC program, Economic Empowerment with impact on Children, is based on a sequential implementation of activities which take (mostly rural) households from a stage of vulnerability to resilience and eventually to economic development.
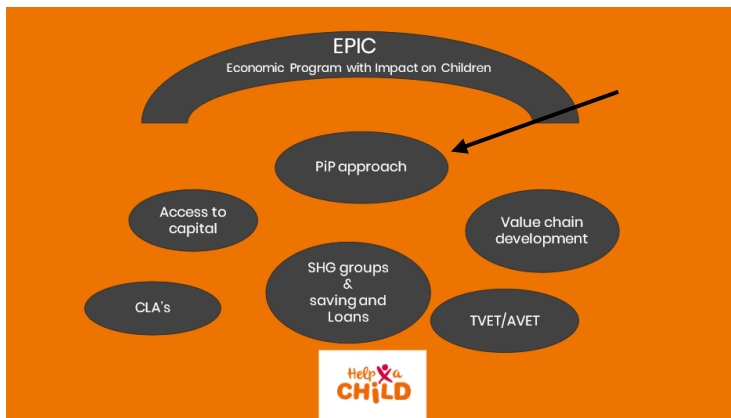
At the heart of the PIP approach lies the creation of the integrated farm plan by the whole family. Through this joint household planning, collaboration and communication between household members is improved. Household members complement each other beyond the agricultural production, thus PIP contributes to the holistic needs of all members of the family. PIP also improves household resilience in terms of economic stability, which enables children and youth to grow up in a safe environment. Furthermore, increased profit may be used for basic needs (health care, clothing, housing, etc.) and education. To ensure that the EPIC program and its PIP approach is implemented with a focus on improving child well-being, the basic parenting course will be offered complementary to the PIP approach. More information on PIP can be found via the following link: Manual PIP

6.3 ECD and Child Protection

Being exposed to risk factors and adversities at a young age, can negatively affect the socio-emotional, cognitive, and sensory-motor development of children. What happens in the early years of a child's life is crucial for his/her future health, education, and economic outcomes (source: childhood development | UNICEF). It is the period in human development when brain development is at its most rapid, and when humans are the most sensitive to environmental influence, so the developing brain is exquisitely sensitive to both enriching environments and adverse environments (McCoy et al., 2018a).
Investing in early childhood is more effective and less costly than addressing problems at a later stage, so specific considerations for this age group should always be included in child protection interventions.[9]

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[9] The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (2020) 2019 CPMS

Help a Child subscribes to the International Nurturing Care Framework, developed by WHO and UNICEF, as it fits well with the holistic approach of Help a Child. Safety and Security is one of the five components of nurturing care and refers to safe and secure environments for children and their families. It focuses on physical dangers, emotional stress, environmental risks, and access to food and clean water. Among others birth registration is an element of it, as well as good hygiene, protection from physical punishment, abuse and neglect, and safe spaces to play.

Another important component that Help a Child focuses on is responsive caregiving. Nowadays there is an increasing focus on the interaction between attachment and trauma theory. Some researchers even state that the psychological effects of violence on children may be more dependent on the availability of close, reliable attachment figures to provide support during and after the period of violence than the degree of violence witnessed. From pregnancy through the newborn period, infancy and toddlerhood, extreme poverty, insecurity, violence, environmental toxins, and parental ignorance or poor mental health detract from the capacity of families and caregivers to protect, support and promote the development of young children. Involving and supporting of caregivers, therefore, is an essential part of child protection prevention and response.

Interventions to address and prevent child protection issues can be divided in home-based interventions and interventions at ECE-centers.
Examples of home-based interventions:
- Education of community members on the negative effects of violence and harsh treatment in the home.
- Establishing child-protection committees.
- Stimulation of parents to join SHGs to gain social and economic support.
- Ensuring physical safety in and around the house (open fire, sharp objects, rubbish etc).

Examples of interventions at ECE-centers:
- Ensuring that ECE teachers understand the Child Safeguarding Policy and signed the aligned Code of Conduct.
- Training of ECE teachers on how to identify and respond to child protection issues.
- Supervision of children at all times.
- Training of teachers in positive discipline and banning of corporal punishment.
- Organization of learning events for parents where they can learn about positive discipline and children rights.

In our ECD guidelines we further describe minimum requirements and standards for our ECD projects. ECD-Global-Guidelines

6.4 Sexual and Gender Based Violence

In disaster and high poverty contexts, there is an increased chance of violence as families and communities are put under immense strain and the protective environment of children is weakened. There is a higher risk for violence – sexual abuse, physical violence, corporal punishment - in and outside households.
According to UNICEF, sexual and gender-based violence is the most pervasive yet least visible human rights violation in the world. At least one in three females, which starts at a young age, will experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime, simply because they are female. In humanitarian emergencies, existing forms of SGBV (like child marriage) tend to increase, while new forms of SGBV – such as conflict-related sexual violence – may also emerge.
Children are to be protected from violence, and also from the fear for violence or abuse. Addressing Sexual and Gender Based Violence at a domestic- and community-level is one of the ways Help a Child aims to have large impact on the safety and wellbeing of children and their family.

Our group based intervention What's Up Ladies?! is focusing on the empowerment and awareness raising among girls and women. Via this group based therapy, women feel supported and learn how to cope with the situation.
Help a Child developed also another successful group-based intervention methodology, Empowered 2 Protect (E2P), to realize intrinsically driven attitude and behavior change at community level in the area of SGBV. E2P is a community-based SGBV protection awareness intervention which includes an innovative, non-violent prevention tool: the Invi Bracelet. The bracelet, when activated, spreads a foul smell, that deters aggressors and can alarm others. The E2P awareness package brings together men and women to discuss and react on gender differences, SGBV and ways to support each other. The community sessions are led by trained facilitators, who also explain the use of the Invi Bracelet to provide rapid protection and to boost self-confidence.
More information can be found via: Empowered2Protect

6.5 Nexus and Child Protection

Help a Child operates in both developmental and humanitarian settings. Children in humanitarian settings are especially vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse. Our Child Protection activities in humanitarian settings aim to address the immediate needs after a crisis. In general, this help is more short-term, directed to save children's lives, ensure their recovery and prevent them of further harm, while child protection activities in developmental settings are more long-term, aiming to improve economic, political and social development to ensure sustainable change.

Due to climate change, population growth and poverty the vulnerability of populations to (the impacts of) humanitarian crises is increasing. To collectively reduce fragility, address insecurity and decrease the vulnerability of children living in crisis-prone contexts more emphasis is now placed on collaboration between humanitarian, development and peace actors, which has been referred to as the 'humanitarian-development nexus'.

Help a Child acknowledges the importance to work more 'cohesively' to address underlying vulnerabilities of children and their supportive networks. In Disaster Response Projects, Help a Child's vision is to provide life-saving external material inputs when needed and move towards recovery and resilience activities as soon as possible. This increases ownership, dignity and resilience of affected individuals, families and communities. By increasing the resilience, communities are better prepared for potential future disruptions.

Help a Child uses its experience in development work to address root-causes of problems in contexts of crisis. At the same time it empowers communities to work on its current and future protection issues by creating awareness and working on both prevention and response. By linking Child Protection in development- and disaster response work, Help a Child can more effectively mitigate and respond to the child protection risks children face.

6.6 Disaster Risk Reduction

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is essential to mitigate child protection risks. Children are vulnerable and in general disproportionately affected by disasters. The extent to which these risks occur and impact children's lives depend on several factors, among which the disaster preparedness of communities, and the extent of pre-existing child protection risks. To ensure successful DRR, all threats to children caused by disasters must be considered in risk assessments, including protection threats such as family separation and sexual violence.

Other examples of DRR and Child Protection actions are:

- Disaggregation of data by age, sex and disability in risk assessments for targeted interventions while preventing stigmatization.
- Addressing underlying causes of identified threats through for example interventions that focus on family strengthening and social cohesion.
- Specific measures to prevent and prepare for child protection threats that are likely to arise during an emergency.
- Active participation of children and youth in both risk assessment and programming,
- Collaboration with the government and other NGO's to ensure that DRR for children, including those with disability, is a national and local priority.
- Emphasizing the importance of safe schools and DRR education.
- Strengthen community-based child protection structures and use them for the promotion of community awareness on preparedness.
- MHPSS-activities to increase mental resilience of children and parents.
- Support and establishment of social and economic safety nets through for example Self Help Groups.

Within our CCCD program we also include Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) elements to boost the resilience of communities and make them disaster-smart and risk-informed. We use a Participatory Assessment of Disaster Risk (PADR) to address community vulnerabilities and capacities by facilitating a process in which the community itself identifies main risks, underlying and immediate causes, makes a community level risk management plan and a contingency plan.

Children, parents and youth are involved in this, and therefore Child Ambassadors are involved in this as well. An example is to train communities to create village escape routes and exercises to prepare for flash flooding.

By involving children within the PADR components of participatory integrated community development they learn to think about risks from natural hazards and disaster from an early age. This increases their preparedness and resilience. Children are often also adversely affected by disaster impact and their views on risks and measures to mitigate the risks are important to take into account to prevent avoidable disaster impact.

Parents are involved in the community PADR process and learn how to address disaster risk with their children. Parents are made aware of risks from natural hazards and disasters in their environment, their vulnerabilities and capacities. Parents learn how to be prepared and respond to disasters on household level and make children aware of risks. Examples are how and where to store valuable household items, strengthen their house structure and roof and create escape routes.

Children at ECDC and school are made aware of risks and hazards in their environment through plays, games and lessons that are included in the CCCD methodology. Schools in program areas are encouraged to address lessons on risk of natural hazards and disasters and to have contingency drills.

Annex 1: Child Protection Activities

Level	Activities
Child	**Prevention:** • Sensitization on child protection issues (child marriage, child abuse) • Involvement of children in mapping of risks- and protective factors • Mapping of help seeking patterns of children themselves • Establishing and strengthening of child right clubs and children parliaments • Training of children on children's rights and risk reduction • Child protection through peer to peer education • Teaching life skills and resilience building (through children's groups) • Child friendly feedback mechanisms like Happy and Sad boxes in schools • Advocacy via children's clubs **Response:** • Information provision on reporting procedures and access to response services • Participation of children in child protection programming and M&E • Case management for children with urgent protection needs • (MH)PSS-interventions like BOB, TeamUp, BoruBoru • Support of separated children, unaccompanied children, children associated with armed forces and groups and survivors of GBV, (identification, linkage with response services, family tracing and support for family reunification) • Support of children in obtaining birth certificates • Establishment or strengthening of child friendly referral mechanisms
Family	**Prevention:** • Sensitization on child rights and protection, prevention and reporting • Equipping parents with knowledge, skills and attitudes through parenting groups and the parenting challenge program • Awareness creation on positive parenting and discipline **Response:** • Cash transfer to follow up on child protection cases • MHPSS-support to children and parents • Strengthening of parent's/caregivers' social networks by establishing SHGs or parenting groups
Community	**Prevention:** • Community mobilization and sensitization on child protection and children rights to call their actions in prevention and report on child abuse • Identification of child protection risks and protective factors through community dialogue (including identification and addressing of root causes of child rights violations) • Identification and strengthening of appropriate, local strategies and resources to strengthen child protection.

Annex 1: Child Protection Activities

	• Community-level interventions to promote social cohesion and prevent stigma and discrimination. • Formation and or strengthening of community based structures on child protection • Making communities and their leaders aware of cultural or traditional behavior that affects the wellbeing of children Response: • Establishing community-based child-friendly spaces • Development and monitoring of community protection action plans to improve the protective environment • Improvement of safety and accessibility of routes/transport to, from and within the community, school and other spaces where children receive services. • Training of child protection committees and local leaders on identification, monitoring, follow-up and reporting • Training of teachers on how to identify, prevent and respond to child protection issues. • Training of the community on reporting children concerns. • Community based complaints and feedback mechanisms • Supporting communities to develop child protection (by)laws to link communities to government bodies involved in child protection • Mobile justice courts • Strengthening of referral pathways in addressing child protection matters. • Dissemination of laws and policies on child protection issues • Implementation of child protection policy at grassroot level • Child-adult forums
Society	Prevention: • Training of stakeholders on child rights and child protection identification, prevention and response. • Participation in relevant inter-agency, multisectoral coordination mechanisms and working groups. Response: • Child Protection Mainstreaming • Collaborate with other stakeholders to integrate services • Inter-agency referral systems • Lobby and Advocacy

Annex 2: Example of mapping of (Community) Protection Services

Mapping of (Community) Protection Services

Name of Community: ----_____

Service provider	Kind of services	Criteria for services	Name contact-person	Contact details
General Services				
Police	Child & family unit Community Police			
Health Clinic	First Aid Genealogical support Mother-child care Mental Health support services			
?? (country specific services)				
Govt Services				
Probation office				
Community Development office				
?? (country specific services)				
NGOs/CBOs				
Dorcas				
Women Development Group				
?? (country specific NGOs/CBOs)				
Community Services				
Chief				
Child Protection Committee				
Church				
Women's Union				
Youth group				

Annex 2: Example of mapping of (Community) Protection Services

School				
?? (country specific community services)				

Annex 3: Establishing referral mechanisms

From/Based on: (Strengthening Community-based Child Protection Referral Pathways: A resource manual, ChildFund International

Example of a help-seeking and referral pathway flowchart

1. Recognizing or learning about a child protection issue can begin with a report, overhearing an argument, witnessing beating, seeing a child at work during school hours or not seeing a child going to school. Not all children will seek help	
TELLING SOMEONE AND SEEKING HELP (REPORTING)	
Child tells family, friend, community member; Abuse is witnessed and reported to parent, other community member	Child self-reports to any older person

<div align="center">⬇</div>

2. Suspected problems need to be brought to the attention of the Child Protection Committee or other (in)formal Child Protection Structure	
PARENT or OTHER PERSON REPORTS TO CPC The CPC must convene to a) provide a safe, caring environment for the child based on the best interests of the child; b) learn the child's immediate needs; c) weigh out honest and clear options available with parent or caretaker if possible	
CPC determines if a law was broken: if no law was broken decide with the family and child on the best way forward.	If a law was broken immediately contact police.
Enter specific information about how a meeting is convened; how the rules for deliberation work	*Enter specific information about the police contact – including where to go and/or how to contact them*

<div align="center">⬇</div>

3. Based on the findings/results of the CPC deliberation and/or meeting with families involved, either a solution is agreed upon or further steps need to be taken through referral. List names and contacts for each category of referral.			
IMMEDIATE RESPONSE The CPC or parent must provide a safe, caring environment and respect the confidentiality and wishes of the survivor/family; learn their immediate needs; give honest and clear information about services available. If agreed and requested by survivor or family or elders, obtain informed consent and make referrals; accompany the survivor to assist in accessing services.			
Locally Managed	Medical/Health care entry point	Psychosocial care entry point	Legal support entry point
Follow community tradition of deliberation to resolve a temporary or manageable problem	[Enter name of the health centre(s) in this role and contact information]	[Enter name of the psychosocial care centre(s)/person in this role and contact information]	[Enter name of the police or legal service provider(s) in this role and contact information]

<div align="center">⬇</div>

4. Cases that are in conflict with the law will require police contact. Write the names and contacts of trusted and known police and legal service providers here:	
IF THE SURVIVOR WANTS TO PURSUE POLICE/LEGAL ACTION – OR – IF THERE ARE IMMEDIATE SAFETY AND SECURITY RISKS Refer and accompany survivor to police/security – or – to legal assistance/protection officers for information and assistance with referral to police	
Police/Security	Legal Assistance Counsellors or Protection Officers
Enter specific information about the security actor(s) to contact – including where to go and/or how to contact them]	[Enter names of organisations and contact information]

<div align="center">⬇</div>

5. Over time, cases need follow-up action, either from CBCPC or community members who monitor the situation with support to the family or through the preferred social service agency. Problems faced by one family are rarely unique. Is there a pattern of issues that needs to be solved through external support?				
AFTER IMMEDIATE RESPONSE, FOLLOW-UP AND OTHER SERVICES Over time and based on survivor's choices can include any of the following:				
Health Care	Psychosocial Services	Protection, Security and Justice Actors	Basic Needs such as shelter, children's services etc.	Government Ministry, CBO or NGO to support with income generation or other
[Insert contact information for each link in this pathway]	[Ensure contact information is up to date]			

Annex 3: Establishing referral mechanisms

From/Based on: (Strengthening Community-based Child Protection Referral Pathways: A resource manual, ChildFund International

Activity 4: Guided Questions for Assessing Response Capacity

How your child protection committee/volunteers are able to respond depends on how strong your pathway is and what response capacity is available in your community. Table 7 provides a question matrix guide for assessing what support services or choices are available to your child protection committee via the pathway just studied above.

In your groups, answer as many of the following questions as you can. Then, discuss the answers together.

Table 8: Service Delivery - Response Mechanisms

GUIDING QUESTIONS	SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS	METHOD(S) FOR DATA COLLECTION
• What is being done to prevent child abuse, exploitation and/ or neglect in the community? (surveillance, prevention)	• How are cases of abuse, violence, or exploitation reported? By whom and to whom? • What types of cases are reported and what types are not? Why? • Are there any mechanisms to refer children to appropriate services and assistance? • What are the formal or informal processes for dealing with cases of violence against, abuse and exploitation of children in the community: • Who is informed of cases of violence/abuse/exploitation and why? • Who makes the decision what will happen to the child and to the perpetrator?	• FGD with children • FGD with adults • Key informant interviews
• What processes or mechanisms (formal or informal) are normally used by families or children when a child has been abused or exploited? (response, coordination) • What services exist in the community (formal and informal) to protect and provide support to children who are at risk or have experienced abuse, neglect, or exploitation? (response, coordination) • Do children and their families who are vulnerable or have been affected by abuse, violence and/or exploitation have access to these services? (response, coordination)	• Psychosocial care/counseling? • What are the main obstacles in accessing these services? • What are the main problems in providing these services? • How are cases of violence, abuse, exploitation, trafficking usually resolved – what happens to the child and to the perpetrators? Is that good for the child? • Who else gets involved in resolution of child protection cases and in which way? • What types of mandated services exist in support to vulnerable children and those that are victims of violence, abuse and exploitation at village, community and provincial/district levels? • What types of social benefits are provided for vulnerable families and children? • Which institutions are providing these services? • Are there any services/strategies/measures applied to prevent abuse, exploitation and abuse including supporting families and children at risk in the community? • What is needed to support families and children at risk better? • What could be done to better prevent and respond to child protection issues in this community?	• FGD with children • FGD with adults • Key informant interviews

Annex 3: Establishing referral mechanisms

From/Based on: (Strengthening Community-based Child Protection Referral Pathways: A resource manual, ChildFund International

Activity 5: Mapping Responses to Priority Child Protection Issues

Purpose of the Activity

- To clarify how, when and why to respond to a child protection concern[20]

Steps

- Divide participants into groups and give each group one of the priority issues discussed.
- Ask participants to answer the questions below and record key points – they can also use previous experience with one of the priority issues and describe what happened according to the points below.

1. Who can a child who has been affected by this issue go to for help? Who is told about this issue? Make a list of all the people and places that may be told about the issue or that may respond.

2. What are the key steps in responding? Probe with the following questions:
   - Describe what would happen step by step
   - Who could the child go to for help?
   - What would the family do?
   - What would the community do?
   - Who would be involved?
   - What supports would actually be provided for the child and family?
   - Who would be involved?
   - What role would be played by people/services outside the community?
   - Who makes the final decisions?

4. What would be the likely outcomes of the responses to the problem?
   - What would likely happen to the child?
   - What would likely happen to the family?
   - What would likely happen to the perpetrator?

5. How satisfied with this outcome would various stakeholders (Child, family, community, people outside the community) be with this outcome? Why?

6. Is there a legal responsibility related to this problem?
   - Who would it be reported to? (for example, Police? Family Services Unit? Social workers?)
   - Who would report this problem?
   - What would be the response of the agency/person it was reported to?
   - If not reported, why not?

7. On the same problem/issue, repeat for one other person or place, in order to trace out a second response pathway, repeating the questions above.

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20 Adapted from "An Enthographic Study of Community-Based Child Protection Mechanisms and Their Linkage with the National Child Protection System of Sierra Leone". The Columbia Group for Children in Adversity (July 2011).

Annex 4: Child Friendly Spaces

Child Friendly Spaces

Child-friendly spaces (CFS) are widely used as a key child protection strategy.
Main objectives of Child-friendly spaces are to:

- Give children a safe place where they are protected from physical harm and psychosocial distress. Besides safety, it creates a sense of normalcy and continuity in the midst of chaos and changing circumstances.
- Foster child development, and to offer children opportunities to develop, learn, play and strengthen their resilience.
- Identify and address children's specific needs and threats, and develop or connect to suitable interventions or more specific (such as mental health) care.

Child-friendly spaces can improve children's psychosocial wellbeing, by:

- Providing a safe and supportive environment for children.
- Offering socializing and structured play activities with peers.
- Offering awareness raising and educational activities.
- Enhancing the capacity of caretakers and community through family and community involvement and support.

Help a Child supports communities to create such safe, structured and child-friendly spaces. The design and implementation is in close engagement with the entire community, including the children. The children can plan the activities together with some community-members who will become responsible for running the activities. Ideally, existing buildings and structures are used. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene needs are addressed and safety measures such as fences and first-aid kits ensured. We use the Unicef Guidelines for Child Friendly Spaces in Emergencies.

Some pre-conditions for successful child-friendly spaces:

- Ensure physical safety (through, for example, code of conduct or emergency protocol; and accessibility, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized children).
- Supervision of adults/facilitators who receive sustained training and supervision.
- Adequate supervisor-to-child ratio.
- Nurturing, child-focused and child-friendly environment, which involves children in ensuring that activities are relevant and effective.
- Free and structured play and learning activities.
- Involvement of parents and community, local ownership, connection with local community resources and activities. For example, using a school, community or religious space for CFS activities.
- Accessibility of and integration with other (such as mental health) services.

Annex 5: Child Participation

Child participation

Child participation is essential in determining the best interests of children in service planning and provision. Children and young people have many good ideas about what would improve their lives, and make help more effective. Child participation thus improves quality of care by making services child-centred. In contrast, failing to listen to children can lead to ineffective and even wrong interventions.

Child participation preserves not only the child's rights, but also their autonomy. When you find ways to adapt to the children's interests and capabilities, they will feel more responsible and empowered to improve their lives. Furthermore, child participation activities will allow them to develop confidence, social, cognitive and emotional skills to improve their daily functioning.

> *"I was too nervous and very scared at the beginning when my friends pointed at me to read the speech. I was not confident that I would make it through as a girl. But after getting training and rehearsing for eight hours, I was able to deliver the speech to the best of my ability and attracted the attention of the audience and the media. Thanks to Help a Child and thanks to Boruboru. I am now a different person who can represent my fellow girls effectively and create an enabling environment for children and girls specifically"* Girl, 16 years

However, implementing *the child's right to be heard* and to be taken seriously is not easy. Engaging children can be challenging, because the value of children taking part in decision-making processes is often not recognized. Creating awareness on the importance of children's active involvement is, therefore, the first step towards achieving meaningful child participation.

Another challenge is not only to talk about child participation but to actually take on board the ideas they have. Children will have their own views on what is relevant, and this may differ from adult priorities. Their voice must be listened to, and they need to experience that their views have been taken into account in following actions and planning interventions. Most children are not used to being consulted and to think about decision-making as a way by which they may exercise control over their lives. If a child has never been asked what he or she thinks about issues concerning their lives, it is likely that they will need encouragement in expressing their views. It is thus important to consider ways to make it comfortable and fun for them to join and to express their views.

Child participation in development programs

The participation of children will help to address their needs and to develop sustainable interventions. They should thus be involved in the identification and prioritization of their needs (mapping process), as well as in the development, implementation and monitoring of the activities.

Involving children should pay attention to their perspectives, what decisions and choices they make in order to cope with hardship and child protection issues, how they mobilize and access resources, and what sources of resilience they define. Recognizing social relationships that are supportive to children is essential, as these can be further cultivated and nurtured.

Annex 5: Child Participation

The Child to Child approach[10] is an approach that promotes the child-led community development through the development of skills to critically identify problems, outline possible solutions and interventions. It supports children in age of 9-13 and possibly up to 15 in developing and initiating community projects and awareness campaigns about issues that concern them. It is not about learning "expert knowledge" from others. Instead it is about building on the knowledge that children already have to address issues that are relevant to the children.

Figure 17: steps children follow in the process of analysing and addressing issues in the community
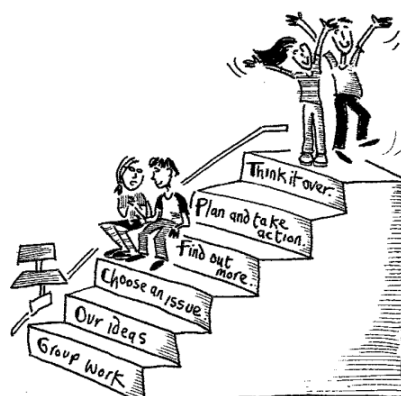
The approach recognizes that children are able to form and express opinions, to participate in decision-making processes and to influence solutions. recognizes that children have the right to be involved

This

in decisions that affect them. This means that community development programmes need to learn from and engage with children on issues of concern to them. The process involves children identifying problems in their community and working to solve them.
This view, that children have a valuable contribution to the improvement of their communities, underlies this approach. Adults have a crucial role to play in the promotion and facilitation of child participation.

The ladder of child participation

Hart (1997) developed the ladder of child participation to help us better understand child participation. It is a typology that can help us understand the way in which participation is a process rather than a product. It has turned out to be a powerful tool for the evaluation of child participation initiatives.
The upper levels express increasing degrees of initiation by children. However, they are not meant to imply that a child should always be attempting to operate at the highest level of their competence. The figure is rather meant for adults facilitators to establish the conditions that enable groups of children to work at whatever levels on different projects. An important principle is to avoid working at the three lowest levels, the rungs of non-participation (Hart, 1997, 410).

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[10] www.child-to-child.org

Figure 16: Ladder of children's participation (Origin: Hart, 1997)

Rung 8: Young people & adults share decision-making
Rung 7: Young people lead & initiate action
Rung 6: Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people
Rung 5: Young people consulted and informed
Rung 4: Young people assigned and informed
Rung 3: Young people tokenized*
Rung 2: Young people are decoration*
Rung 1: Young people are manipulated*
Note: Hart explains that the last three rungs are *non-participation*

Created by The Freechild Project – http://freechild.org

Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship.* Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
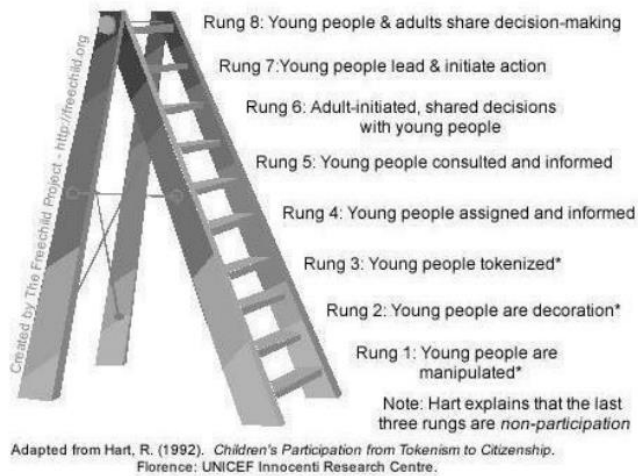
Figure 16: Ladder of children's participation (Origin: Hart, 1997)

The ladder of participation is often used to represent levels of children's participation. However, it is important to be aware of the fact that what it depicts are not levels of children's participation but the varying roles adults play in relation to children's participation.

The Nine Basic Requirements for Meaningful and Ethical Children's Participation[11]

Save the Children developed the nine basic requirements for children's participation based on extensive experiences. These requirement are a helpful tool for ensuring safety, quality and meaningful participation and should function as starting point for all activities that involve participation of children.

According to these requirements children's participation should be:
1) Transparent and informative
   ✓ Provide child-friendly information in appropriate and accessible languages/formats
   ✓ Define roles and responsibilities, opportunities and limitations
2) Voluntary
   ✓ Ensure children have time to make an informed decision about their involvement
   ✓ Ensure children can withdraw at any time
   ✓ Address adult/child power imbalances to ensure a truly voluntary process
3) Respectful
   ✓ Take into account children's other commitments/rights (e.g. school/ work/play)
   ✓ Ensure ways of working are culture and gender sensitive
   ✓ Key adults (parents, teachers, etc.) are supportive and informed
4) Relevant
   ✓ Ensure the issues are of real relevance to the children
   ✓ Support child defined initiatives and topics
   ✓ Ensure adults have not pressured children
5) Child-friendly
   ✓ Use child friendly methods and approaches
   ✓ Ensure meeting places are child friendly and accessible
6) Inclusive

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[11] Save the Children, 2021, The Nine Basic Requirements for Meaningful and Ethical Children's Participation

Annex 5: Child Participation

- ✓ Engage children of different genders, ages, backgrounds and abilities
- ✓ Provide safe space for different groups of children to explore issues relevant to them (e.g. girls working separately from boys, if needed)
- ✓ Ensure the process is nondiscriminatory and inclusive
- ✓ Ensure those most impacted by discrimination and inequality have equal access
- ✓ Ensure methods and tools are accessible and promote equal access

7) Supported by training
- ✓ Ensure staff and partners have the knowledge and skills to facilitate child participation processes

8) Safe and sensitive to risk
- ✓ Undertake conflict sensitivity and risk assessments
- ✓ Develop a child safeguarding plan
- ✓ Ensure all children know where to go for help if needed

9) Accountable
- ✓ Develop a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strategy
- ✓ Engage children in M&E processes
- ✓ Define communication and follow up mechanisms with children
- ✓ Ensure children see the results of their participation

Some additional tips for effective child participation:
- Meet parents/caregivers to explain the aim of child participation and ask permission for their children to join.
- Take enough time for children to participate and invest in building a relationship. Investing in establishing a nurturing and positive relationship contributes to them feeling safe and valued. Even very young children immediately feel if someone is genuinely interested and cares.
- Children are more likely to participate when they feel valued and empowered. The environment should be child-friendly (putting children at ease), welcoming/inclusive, fun/engaging and encouraging.
- Use simple language and activities/exercises.
- Validate what children say. Do not judge them but accept and support them to express their emotions and opinions.
- The purpose of the activities/meetings is clear to children, as well as their expected roles and responsibilities.
- Children experience a sense of ownership.
- Activities should build on personal knowledge, skills, experience and issues that routinely affect, hence matter to children. Their own experience is the starting point for reflection on issues concerning their lives.
- Acknowledge children's other responsibilities (like school or assisting parents) in the planning of activities.
- Appeal to what children like and know by using pedagogical tools such as visual aids, games, stories, drawing, sports, music, peer interviews, group discussions, or children's meetings.
- Involve key adults in children's lives in the activities.

Annex 5: Child Participation

In conclusion, child participation should acknowledge both the child's autonomy and their potential vulnerability. It is, therefore, important to provide safety, care, support and structure throughout this process.

More information about child participation
- ❖ On our Howto portal you'll find several participatory tools that can be used to include children in mapping and child protection programming: [Participatory Tools - Howto (helpachild.org)](helpachild.org)
- ❖ Child to Child is an international child-rights agency with extensive experience in promoting children's participation and child-led approaches: Child to Child
- ❖ Safe the Children developed a toolkit for monitoring and evaluating children's participation at: toolkit monitoring and evaluating childrens participation
- ❖ Other information about child participation and examples of participative activities developed by Unicef can be found at: https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/insight6.pdf