

# CARE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

IN CRISIS AFFECTED COUNTRIES



A GOOD PRACTICE POLICY CHANGE INITIATIVE



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## List of Acronyms

AED	Academy for Educational Development
BPKJ	Badan Pelayanan Kesehatan Jiwa Psychiatric Hospital
CAAC	Council on Children Affected by Armed Conflict
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
CCF	Christian Children's Fund
CDC	Centers for Disease Control
CMHN	Community Mental Health Nurses
CPC	Care & Protection of Children in Crisis-Affected Countries
CPWG	Child Protection Working Group
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DCOF	Displaced Children and Orphans Fund
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICC	Indigenous Cultural Communities
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILI	International Learning Initiative
IRC	International Rescue Committee
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MRM	Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms
MSE	Multiple Systems Estimation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PCWG	Protection Cluster Working Group
PEF	Protective Environment Framework
PLG	Program Learning Groups
PSSA	Psychosocial Structured Activities
PFMH	Program on Forced Migration and Health
PFGD	Participative Focus Group Discussion
STRIVE	Supporting Transformation by Reducing Insecurity and Vulnerability with Economic Strengthening
SEFAFU	Sealing the Past, Facing the Future
SCiUG	Save the Children in Uganda
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIS	United Nations Mission in Sudan
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USIP	United States Institute of Peace

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# Building on a 'Conspiracy of Goodness'



Twelve years ago, UNICEF was just beginning to develop its division of child protection and NGOs had to “beg, borrow or steal” humanitarian funds to address gender based violence (GBV) or children associated with fighting forces. Today, dedicated child protection staff and child care and protection programs are standard features of humanitarian operations, peace-keeping missions and human rights initiatives.

Graca Machel, with her enormous energy and talent for linking people with concerns, was the catalyst for this momentous shift. Since her landmark “UN Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children,”<sup>1</sup> attention to child protection in humanitarian crises has been virtually unstoppable. The establishment of child protection units within major non-governmental organizations (NGOs); donor earmarks for vulnerable children; the Security Council’s engagement in children and armed conflict; the inclusion of the use of child soldiers and rape in the definition of international war crimes are but a few of the significant outcomes of this “conspiracy of goodness.”

To be sure, the child protection landscape has shifted—and thus our roles and responsibilities within it must also evolve. The reliance on anecdotal reports to “raise awareness,” for example, is giving way to the need for methodologies and mechanisms capable of establishing the prevalence of a range of child protection concerns. Mobilizing funds for child soldiers or victims of GBV is no longer the sole concern; rather, focus has shifted to ensuring the inclusion of female adolescents by means of return and reintegration initiatives and to scale-up education and economic opportunities for broader war-affected child and youth populations. With increased agency engagement in child protection programming, policymakers and donors are increasingly in need of solid evidence to identify and support the most efficacious programs and practices. In short, the systemization of this field of practice has emerged as a key imperative.

Commitment to the professionalization of child protection practice and policy was the driving force behind the creation of the CPC Initiative. Over the past three years, the CPC team has piloted new assessment, design and evaluation methodologies; contributed to an evidence base on effective programming; and worked with partners to mainstream these findings into practice and policy agendas. Major CPC achievements are highlighted in this synthesis report and articulated in detail in the various CPC publications listed in Section 5.

Each CPC discovery and achievement has occurred with and through our friends in United Nations (UN) and NGO agencies. Indeed, enhancing agency competence and performance is the major focus of this work. We are therefore pleased to announce the formal launching of the CPC Network: an inter-agency membership association dedicated to professionalizing the field of child care and protection through the collaborative action of humanitarian organizations, local institutions and academic partners.

*Building on the success of the CPC initiative, we believe the CPC Learning Network will serve as a significant new force in supporting the care and protection of children. What will be different? We believe children affected by crises will receive more timely and better quality care and protection because there will be:*

- A vital membership association of 50 operational agencies, local groups, and concerned academics working together to promote common standards, guidelines and practices in an organized, knowledge-based manner;*
- A cadre of CPC Learning Network agencies consistently employing assessment methodologies capable of identifying, quantifying and understanding the causes and consequences central to child care and protection concerns in emergencies;*
- A body of evidence-based good practice about community-based approaches to addressing gender-based violence, children used by fighting forces and armed groups, separated children, psychosocial support, education in emergencies including non-formal education, and livelihoods support for children and youth; and*
- A more favorable and informed policy environment for children in crisis settings, and a higher percentage of donor contributions allocated to proven good practice initiatives.*

*We hope that this report on our work of the last three years encourages you to join us in building upon Graca Machel's 'conspiracy of goodness'.*

## **Neil Boothby**

*Principal Investigator, CPC Initiative and  
Director, Program on Forced Migration & Health*

# 1 UNDERSTANDING CHILD PROTECTION PRIORITIES IN SITUATIONS OF CRISIS

## Developing Consensus on Definitions of Child Protection

The rapid developments in the field of child protection in crisis settings of the last decade have been marked by a diversity of approaches and perspectives, reflecting the different backgrounds and mandates of the wide range of agencies involved. Although such diversity is a strength, both the systematization of this knowledge and the coordination of activities require the development of a 'common language'. The lack of shared understanding of key principles and ideas is a key barrier to the maturation of the field.

The starting point for such discussions is clearly a shared definition of child protection itself. The initial inclusion of the term 'care' in the naming of the CPC Initiative, reflected a concern to ensure that children's needs in crisis settings were understood to include the provision of effective and sustained care. For some, these needs would clearly be included within an understanding of 'child protection'; for others, the term may have a more restricted use, focusing on protection from specific rights abuses.

In 2006, a multi-agency CPC Review Workshop engaged senior practitioners and policy-makers to shape the emerging CPC agenda<sup>2</sup>. These partners agreed upon the following working definition:

### Protection

- refers to actions which secure the rights and associated well-being of children;
- guided by analysis of their risks and vulnerabilities;
- and by the capacities and responsibilities of children, their families, their communities, the providers of services and the state;
- and therefore involves all sectors of humanitarian response;
- including, but not limited to, those addressing extreme violations of human rights.



This definition captures some important issues that have shaped subsequent attempts to more formally define the field of child protection. Rights are central, but include implications for children's general well-being. Identifying risks and vulnerabilities is crucial, but response must also be informed by a thorough understanding of the capacities and responsibilities of various actors. Protection is shaped by international humanitarian law, but - reflecting the breadth of the Convention on the Rights of the Child - also involves a wide range of actions beyond legal protection.

Building on earlier work by UNICEF and other agencies, in 2007, our partner, the Save the Children Alliance, proposed the definition of child protection given in Box 1.1. This clear formulation has won the support of members of the Child Protection Working Group of the Protection Cluster Working Group (CPWG/PCWG). This group, of which the CPC is member, was established in 2006 to coordinate child protection strategy as part of the UN 'cluster approach'. The acceptance of a consensus definition by this group marks a milestone in the maturation of the field

#### Box 1.1 Proposed definition of children protection

Child protection [constitutes] ...measures and structures to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence affecting children.

Although this definition is useful in summarizing child protection work, elaboration provided in the full text from Save the Children<sup>3</sup> echoes some of the complexities addressed in earlier CPC discussions. These issues include: emphasis on child protection extending beyond a sole concern with protection rights to approaches important to securing such rights, the multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approaches required for such work, and the responsibilities of various stakeholders – including the state – to provide protection. These remain central topics that must be addressed when considering child protection strategy in crisis settings, with different agencies likely to engage with them in different ways.

## Key Protection Needs in Crisis Settings

The breadth of the definition emphasizes an increasing awareness of the wide range of child protection needs in situations of crisis. The key role of family in supporting children's well-being and development is now widely accepted<sup>4</sup>, and concerns about children separated from their families now attract significant agency attention in emergencies. Children abducted by military forces, or otherwise associated with armed groups, have become another major focus of humanitarian concern.<sup>5</sup> There is increasing awareness of the exposure of many children to gender-based violence in the context of conflict and displacement. Abandoned babies, street children, children exposed to exploitation, children in detention or otherwise in conflict with the law all may commonly represent 'vulnerable groups' with major protection needs.

There is, however, a problem with this way of thinking about protection needs. Defining 'groups' in this way may make sense for advocacy purposes and, in some circumstances, for the development of targeted programming. However, such grouping runs the risk of ignoring the common fundamental root causes of vulnerability. Those identified as "child soldiers" may also in fact be "separated children" or "exposed to exploitation." Victims of GBV may become "street children" and "in conflict with the law." Indeed, political violence, conflict and displacement, harsh physical and economic conditions, and pre-existing cultural and social practices often impose a variety of negative outcomes in the lives of children. Child protection efforts need to be able to address such common causes, not just focus on the resulting 'symptoms'.

Therefore, in addition to noting the specific vulnerabilities of children in crisis settings, we need a framework that provides a means of identifying the causes of such vulnerability and suggesting strategic responses to address them. In seeking to define a clear policy framework for agency learning and the implementation of emerging best practice, the CPC Initiative has come to use the Protective Environment Framework (PEF) for this purpose.



## The Protective Environment Framework

The concept of the 'protective environment' was initially developed by the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) as a tool to guide programmatic action in support of children's protection by international and national actors.<sup>6</sup> Until recently, there has been no child protection assessment protocol adopted consistently by international agencies. Frequently, assessments have been ad hoc and as a result analyses have not been comparable across countries and regions. The PEF holds promise to remedy such concerns.

The framework specifies a range of factors that serve to protect children from risks and vulnerabilities in any given environment. It acknowledges the importance of actions targeted directly at minimizing such risks, such as peace processes reducing the exposure of civilian populations to military action. However, while such actions move forward, for the majority of humanitarian agencies the greatest impact on the protection of children will be through actions that 'shield' children from ongoing risks. Accordingly, it is on such strategic actions that the framework focuses.

There are eight key elements identified in the framework (see Box 1.2), each of which provides a basis for strengthening protection of children.

## Box 1.2 The Protective Environment Framework<sup>7</sup>

The PEF was developed to identify the key areas where action can be taken to increase protection available to children. There are eight identified elements of the protective environment that when taken together form a potential protective “shield” around children – not eliminating risks and vulnerabilities, but creating protection from their full impact. The framework is comprised of the following elements:

### **Monitoring and reporting**

An effective monitoring system records the incidence and nature of child protection abuses and allows for timely and informed strategic responses.

### **Governmental commitment to fulfilling protection rights**

Government commitment to respecting, protecting and fulfilling child protection is an essential element of a protective environment. Governments need to demonstrate commitment to creating strong legal frameworks that comply with international legal standards, policies and programs.

### **Protective legislation and enforcement**

An adequate legislative framework designed to protect children from abuse, its implementation and enforcement are essential elements of a protective environment.

### **Attitudes, traditions, customs, behavior and practices**

The environment will not be protective for children in societies where attitudes or traditions facilitate abuse. Children are more likely to be protected in societies where all forms of violence against children are taboo and where the rights of children are broadly respected within both custom and tradition.

### **Open discussion and engagement with child protection issues**

Children need to be free to speak up about child protection concerns affecting them or other children. At the national level, media attention and civil society engagement with child protection issues strengthen a protective environment.

### **Children’s life skills, knowledge and participation**

Children are less vulnerable to abuse when they are aware of their right not to be exploited or of services available to protect them. With the right information, children can draw upon their knowledge, skills and resilience to reduce their risk of exploitation.

### **The capacity to protect among those around children**

Health workers, teachers, police, social workers and many others who interact with children need to be equipped with the skills and authority to identify and respond to protection abuses. The capacity of families and communities to protect their children is essential in a protective environment.

### **Services for recovery and reintegration**

Child victims of any form of neglect, exploitation or abuse are entitled to care and non-discriminatory access to basic social services. These services must be provided in an environment that fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.

The CPC team chose to make explicit use of the PEF for a situational analysis of child protection needs in Darfur in 2005-2006. Box 1.3 outlines the findings of this work, and its subsequent impact on policy and protection programming in Darfur.

This work also fed in to wider discussions regarding the role of the PEF as an organizing framework for guiding strategic response to child protection concerns in crisis settings.<sup>8</sup> The CPC formally became a member of the CPWG/PCWG in 2007. One year later, the CPWG/PCWG adopted the PEF as the overarching framework shaping its coordinated response to child protection issues in emergencies. The subsequent development of this work in relation to assessment is noted in Box 2.7. More generally, this work serves as an example of the connections the CPC initiative has aimed to form between existing concepts, field research and agency discussion in the development of tools to shape effective policy and practice.

### Box 1.3 Use of PEF in Darfur<sup>9</sup>

The PEF served to highlight the lack of many protections in the lives of children in Darfur. The conflict, along with wider economic and social conditions, has exposed children to a harsh experience of childhood, marked by many risks and vulnerabilities. With respect to each element of the framework there were clear weaknesses, all of which signaled potential areas of action by humanitarian agencies. However, our analysis suggested that there were two elements where action was particularly crucial.

The first of these issues was the lack of coordinated and reliable data collection. Without addressing this issue, humanitarian action in support of children's protection would have continued in a manner ignorant of scale, circumstance and effectiveness of response. Although not fully addressing our recommendations, we welcomed the subsequent deployment of additional child protection officers in each state by UNMIS and UNICEF subsequent to Security Council Resolution 1612, and the negotiation of shared protocols for their reporting.

The second key element concerned government commitment to protection rights. We strongly supported increased diplomatic and political pressure encouraging a clearer commitment by the Government of Sudan (and relevant rebel groups) to the fulfillment of child protection rights. We saw engagement of state-level ministries, such as the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Social and Cultural Welfare, as vital to the goal of establishing a basis for the long-term protection of children in Darfur. In this regard, the three state conference of June 2006 that brought together (national and state) governmental actors and relevant humanitarian agencies to address the findings of our report was a welcome development, though subsequent progress (as with wider peace process negotiations) has been disappointing.

## Informing Policy and Practice

From the outset the CPC initiative has been conceived as a good practice and policy change initiative. A maturing field requires shared definitions and frameworks to guide action. But it also crucially requires evidence. The field is increasingly recognizing that in order to secure resources to address needs those needs must be documented and the effectiveness of chosen interventions demonstrated.

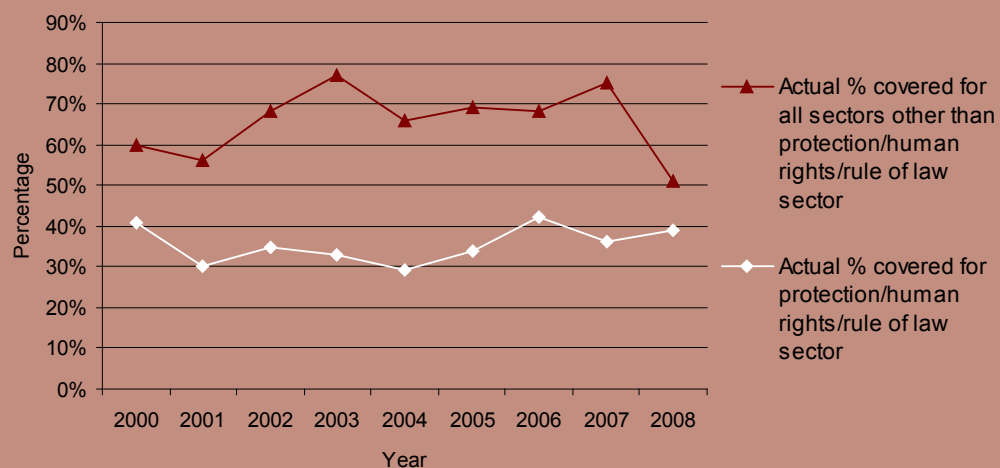
An analytic review of funding secured through consolidated appeals (see Box 1.4) suggests that the lack of an established evidence base for protection programming may be an important factor in the underfunding of protection work compared to other sectors. However, securing evidence to inform advocacy efforts is only the first step - there is an urgent need for collective reflection amongst practitioners to ensure that we are setting the right priorities and that our programs are having a positive impact on the lives of children. Do resources committed to child protection work effectively support the needs of children? Reflecting upon the principles of the 'do no harm' humanitarian imperative, is there evidence that intended program benefits outweigh unintended negative consequences?

These are difficult questions for any sector of humanitarian work to answer. In dealing with the sensitive issues of abuse and exploitation, and with a specific focus on children, they are doubly challenging. However, the CPC initiative has sought to work with partners to lay a foundation for such efforts. Early consultations with senior practitioners and policy-makers<sup>10</sup> highlighted a lack of confidence in proposing many existing interventions as “good practice.” Rather, participants articulated a number of questions that defined the required ‘learning agenda’ before such claims could be made. These questions have played a crucial role in shaping the work of the CPC initiative, as outlined in the following sections of this report.

### Box 1.4 Consolidated Appeals Analysis

The CAP established in General Assembly resolution 46/182 is a strategy that enables the UN system to set clear goals and define priorities in any given country. It provides a framework for joint programming, common prioritization and joint resource mobilization. The CAP provides a framework for humanitarian organizations – including UN offices and specialized agencies, international organizations and NGOs – to prepare appeals, and monitor the receipt and use of contributions. Upon examination of the global requirements and actual funding for each humanitarian sector within the CAP process, protection programming is often considerably under-supported by consolidated appeals in comparison to other fields.

**Percentage of CAP Coverage of Protection/Human Rights/Rule of Law vs. All other sectors (2000-2007)**



This figure indicates that generally under 40% of the appeals for protection-related programming are funded, compared to an average of over 60% for other response areas. Although there may be many reasons for this, the current lack of sound evidence and field-based impact assessments that demonstrate the effective use of protection funding will inevitably discourage investment from donors and other contributors who have a responsibility to account for their funding allocations.

## Developing Methods: Rigor and Sensitivity

Our work over the last three years has had to face up to a number of challenges. A very significant one is that crisis settings are not easy places to collect information in a systematic and robust manner. The CPC team and its operational partners have retained a belief, however, that while collecting information in settings such as northern Uganda, Sierra Leone, Gaza and Aceh is not easy, it remains essential. Further, given that poor quality data can misguide sector priorities and compromise program effectiveness, data collection must be rigorous to be of practical use.

In our collective discussions regarding this initiative, a fear sometimes surfaces that pursuing rigor in this manner can lead to insensitivity both to the primacy of the personal well-being of those interviewed, as well as to local cultural knowledge. It is most unfortunate that the aim to professionalize the field by means of strengthening our evidence base is at times seen to be at odds with respecting the needs of beneficiaries, rather than a means to respond to them more effectively. However, this fear is recurrent enough to believe that it has a basis. So-called 'extractive' research that follows the mind-set and agenda of those external to a given situation has been witnessed often enough to convince many that methodological rigor is in opposition to maintaining local sensitivity.

We believe, however, that these two processes are, in fact, in close harmony with one another. A methodology that imposes definitions of child well-being that hold little local cultural meaning can not be considered rigorous, however well-established those definitions may be in other settings. Qualitative interviews with a small, unrepresentative sample of children are not sensitive if they are falsely construed as a basis to understand the priorities and perspectives of other children too disconnected from current services (or too far from the main road) to be easily interviewed.

*There is no rigor without sensitivity; and no sensitivity without rigor.*

In the work described here, you should find us actively seeking to pursue both of these qualities simultaneously. Our interest in baseline assessments, comparison groups and sampling methodology – which exemplify our commitment to rigor – is the means by which we aim to identify the circumstances of children in the clearest and most sensitive terms possible. This attention to rigor allows us to measure and quantify our effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) in meeting beneficiary needs. Further, our work on free listing, cultural understandings, narrative methods, and concern to 'do no harm' – reflective of our commitment to sensitivity – lays a crucial foundation for the rigor of our analysis. The field needs both.

### Alastair Ager

Research Director, CPC Initiative



# 2 DEVELOPING METHODS TO ASSESS PROTECTION NEEDS AND IMPACT OF PROGRAMMING

## From Incidents to Incidence

A key piece of evidence in deciding upon an appropriate response to a problem is its magnitude. However, child protection efforts in crisis situations frequently proceed with little reliable information of the number of children affected. Our CPC work supporting UNICEF's child protection activities in Darfur found considerable shortcomings within interagency efforts to document and report on child protection concerns:



The lack of relevant and up-to-date data means key actors are unable to identify and analyze trends, evaluate the effectiveness of protection responses, or propose improved solutions. At the same time, monitoring and reporting of individual child rights violations is episodic and incomplete. Problems within the UN family, and between UN and NGO actors, have resulted in a situation whereby most NGOs are unwilling to participate in monitoring and reporting activities; information collected is not shared; and the links between monitoring and reporting, on the one hand, and advocacy and reporting, on the other hand, are weak.<sup>11</sup>

Similar shortcomings were highlighted in the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) independent report to the Security Council on the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) for Children Affected by Armed Conflict:

The MRM has brought forth facts about a number of incidents of CAAC violations, but the reporting produced is essentially in anecdotal form. There is no systematic picture – in a statistical, aggregate sense - available on whether the extent to which CAAC, on a country by country basis, or as a global phenomenon, has improved or deteriorated. The cited estimates of 2 million children killed and continued existence of 250,000 or 300,000 global child soldiers, for instance, are entirely informal calculations that have not been derived from MRM aggregation.<sup>12</sup>

Because current efforts are focused on selective and anecdotal reporting of individual child protection violations, there are no country-wide monitoring and

reporting mechanisms that include incidence or prevalence data that permit operational organizations to ensure adequate coverage of their child protection programs, or to establish the baseline information necessary to monitor trends over time. Information provided to key agency actors, including the Security Council, is not sufficient to provide an accurate picture of the causes, patterns, scale or consequences of violations perpetrated against children within a particular country or across countries. In order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the scope of child protection violations in armed conflicts, and to improve program monitoring and reporting mechanisms, a reliable estimation of child rights violation incidence rates (the total number of rights violations in a given time period) and/or prevalence rates (the proportion of the child population that has been victimized in a specified time period) is required. In addition to ongoing data collection, the use of repeat measures, including baseline assessments and follow-up studies against which incidence and prevalence are examined over time, would enable more effective monitoring of protection trends. Additionally, data disaggregated by sex and age is essential to better understand the differing experience across the population of children and youth and thus to inform more appropriate national and international responses.

Good monitoring and reporting practices are key to the development of child protection within the scope of humanitarian action, including: (i) effective targeting of humanitarian resources; (ii) tracking trends in child rights over time; (iii) promoting informed advocacy regarding key risks and vulnerabilities; and, (iv) establishing a rigorous evidence base regarding successful interventions. Strengthening the quality and coordination of data collection and dissemination is an important means of bolstering a protective environment for children in emergencies.

In order to achieve these objectives, the protection sector must collectively establish a child monitoring and reporting system capable of capturing both short-term changes and long-term trends. Work conducted by the CPC suggests that to achieve this, the key operational challenges identified in Box 2.1 need to be addressed.

#### Box 2.1 Operational Challenges for Effective Monitoring & Reporting

- How to capture the breath of information required?
- How to ensure proper analysis of trends?
- How to communicate effectively about what information has been collected for both program and policy action purposes?
- How to ensure coverage within & beyond established internally displaced person (IDP) camps?
- How to appropriately train personnel, deploy them, and cope with security issues?
- How to address problems of retribution targeted toward reporting agencies?
- How to ensure confidentiality and prevent possible harm to victims?
- What is the role of government or other duty bearers in data collection?

There is currently a divide between protection and human rights information collection in UN field operations that reflects the global debate regarding definition of these two interconnected fields as separate entities. This divide appears to have brought few benefits to reporting and monitoring of child protection issues, which so clearly straddle the two. The former focuses on documentation of individual cases for legal follow-up and redress and requires a monitoring and reporting system based on narrative reporting on individual incidents. It is staff and time intensive — and is designed neither to achieve comprehensive coverage, nor to yield aggregate data on child rights violations. The latter seeks information for strategic planning, protection programming and political advocacy. These needs are better met through surveys designed to establish incidence or prevalence rates. To date, child protection surveys of these kinds are not standard practice. There is considerable opportunity to learn from good practice in sectors such as nutrition, where effective and efficient systems — using survey and surveillance approaches to data collection monitoring - have been developed in partnership with relevant government ministries.

## Gauging the Incidence of Gender-Based Violence

Our work developing survey methodologies appropriate to child protection concerns has focused principally on the issue of gender-based violence (GBV). GBV is a significant problem in conflict-affected regions throughout the world. However, fear, stigma, practical challenges in reporting and verifying incidents, and cultural norms of secrecy pose significant challenges for humanitarian organizations attempting to estimate the incidence of rape, domestic violence, and other forms of sexual violence within the community. If agencies are to effectively address this issue, new approaches and innovative methodologies are needed to better estimate rates of GBV on both a local and global scale.

As noted above, case reporting mechanisms are seldom, if ever, an effective means of estimating incidence. By definition, they register the number of individuals that have made contact with reporting institutions. With GBV, this means official estimates only reflect the number of individuals who have reported their experience to formal authorities. We know, however, that those who use such official reporting mechanisms comprise only a small minority of those who have experienced violence.

What is required in such circumstances is a population-based measure of incidence. This does not mean that everyone in the population needs to be interviewed. Rather it means we need to find an unbiased way of collecting information from a suitable proportion of the population to come up with an estimate that we are confident reflects the rate at which violence is occurring.

With this goal in mind, we have developed a "neighborhood methodology" in an attempt to more accurately capture population-level data on GBV. To implement this methodology a number of geographical clusters are selected at random from the population area, this is followed by visits to a number of households (again selected at random) within these identified clusters. The women in these households (if they grant consent to be interviewed) are asked about their own experience of GBV, and also about their knowledge of the experiences of women in neighboring households. These interviews are conducted in privacy, and no names are recorded. The result is an estimate of the rates of gender-based violence experienced in the area, gained by a confidential, sensitive method that involves less disruption of women's lives (and less agency resources) as a result of making use of reports of neighbors' experiences.



### Box 2.2 Estimating Incidence of GBV in Lira

In December 2006, Columbia University and Christian Children's Fund (CCF) piloted an initiative to measure incidence rates of GBV in IDP camps in Northern Uganda. The assessment utilized the neighborhood methodology, where women were asked about their own experience, as well as the experiences of their sisters and closest neighbors. Considerable care was taken to ensure the confidentiality during interviews, with subsequent follow-up to households to ensure women had not experienced discomfort or harm as a result of being questioned.

Among the 204 respondents, 268 sisters and 1206 neighbors for whom data was collected, findings suggested that over 48% had experienced some form of violence in the previous year. Over that period, 42% had experienced beatings from a partner or other family member; 25% had experienced forced sex with husbands; and just over 3% had been raped by someone outside of their household. This suggested that GBV – particularly violence occurring within the household – is disturbingly commonplace in post-conflict Uganda. This data has proven critical in influencing the subsequent development of CCF's field-based GBV response in Lira.<sup>13</sup>

Our work with the neighborhood method suggests that it stands as a rigorous, sensitive and practical methodology for assessing protection needs. The method rests on the assumption that those interviewed are able to give valid insight into the experience of their neighbors. Although this is unlikely to hold true in all settings, to date we continue to find a high degree of similarity between levels of violence reported by women themselves and for their neighbors.

### Box 2.3 Estimating Incidence of GBV in Liberia

A CPC study in Liberia in 2007 focused on females from two counties receiving humanitarian assistance from the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Study participants were randomly selected for interviews using multi-stage cluster sampling. The team sampled 30 clusters of 10 households (totaling 300 households) within each county. For every interview, information was collected on females in the respondent's household, as well as those of her four closest neighbors (for a total of approximately 20 females per interviewee). No identifying information on the respondent or her neighbors was collected. The interview assessed two main areas of violence: domestic violence and rape occurring both within and outside of marriage.

Our interviews provided information on a total of 1,687 girls and 4,586 adult females in Montserrado County and 2,070 girls and 4,167 adult females in Nimba County. Findings suggested 54.1% of the sample population in Montserrado and 55.8% of the sample population in Nimba had experienced non-sexual domestic abuse in the previous 18 months. In Montserrado and Nimba, 19.4% and 26.0% of women respectively had been raped outside of marriage in the previous 18 months. Moreover, 72.3% of married or separated women in Montserrado County and 73.8% in Nimba County had experienced marital rape in the previous 18 months.

96% of domestic violence survivors in Montserrado and 97% of domestic violence survivors in Nimba said that their husband or boyfriend had been the perpetrator of the act or acts. 93% of rape survivors (including marital and non-marital rape) in Montserrado and 94% in Nimba said that their husband or boyfriend had been the perpetrator of the act or acts. Strangers accounted for less than 2% of the perpetrators of rape in either county.

These incidents were most commonly disclosed to other family members or to friends and neighbors, and less often to formal authorities such as the police, court or community leaders. Domestic violence incidents were most commonly reported to family members, while rape was most commonly reported to friends. Rape was reported to formal audiences (police/court or community members) less than 10% of the time.

The findings of this work indicate that a substantial proportion of GBV perpetrators are, in fact, husbands or boyfriends, which has prompted a thorough re-examination of programming priorities in Liberia.<sup>14</sup>

## Developing Comprehensive Assessment

GBV is just one of many protection concerns in crisis settings. CPC is committed to developing, piloting and refining assessment methodologies capable of yielding reliable and quantifiable data on a wide range of key child protection concerns. For example, CPC has recently partnered with the Save the Children Alliance in Sri Lanka to determine whether the Neighborhood Method is an effective way to measure the sexual abuse of children.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, the CPC team is collaborating with the UN Security Council, UNICEF and the CDC to develop methods suitable for monitoring and reporting on the "Six Grave Violations."<sup>16</sup> One element of this partnership is the creation of tools by the CPC team that will enable practitioners to assess the magnitude and scope of core protection risks and concerns, including the number of children associated with armed forces and groups.

A recent CPC review<sup>17</sup> found that few rigorous studies have investigated prevalence of such protection concerns, highlighting the diverse set of methodological challenges researchers confront when aiming to quantify protection issues. The CPC team is currently exploring the use of Multiple Systems Estimation (MSE), a form of capture-recapture methodology, as a relevant research tool. MSE analyzes overlapping information across separately compiled data sources and case lists and subsequently uses the degree of overlap to estimate the total number of individuals that meet particular inclusion criteria. CPC is particularly interested in how comparison of imperfect 'partial' lists could result in an improved population-based estimate of the number of children associated with armed forces and groups. Such information would enable key actors to identify and analyze trends, evaluate the effectiveness of protection responses, and implement improved solutions.

CPC is committed to developing, piloting and refining assessment methodologies capable of yielding reliable and quantifiable data on a wide range of key child protection concerns.



## Understanding Local Concerns and Context

Although measuring the magnitude of specific child protection concerns is crucial, so too are methodologies that permit us to better identify local concerns and priorities. Our consultations with senior practitioners have consistently highlighted the prime importance of understanding context.<sup>19</sup> It is vital, for example, that local understandings of child well-being are used to develop appropriate indicators for judging the success of child protection programming.

The CPC initiative has made extensive use of free listing methodology to elicit local perceptions of child well-being. Using the work of John Hubbard as a conceptual foundation,<sup>19</sup> we have worked with a number of NGOs in the West Bank to identify key parameters of children's experiences that should be positively impacted by successful psychosocial interventions. Over 20 agencies and organizations participated in this exercise, gathering more than 20,000 responses from children, parents and teachers on what it means for a child to be 'doing well' or 'not doing well'. Responses were grouped into clusters, with subsequent analysis not only enabling organizations to define relevant indicators for programs but also to better understand the nature of childhood risk and resilience.

Boxes 2.4 and 2.5 outline related work conducted in Uganda that utilized a range of qualitative and participative methods suitable for agencies seeking to assess local understandings of protection needs.

#### Box 2.4 Child, Parent and Teacher Ratings of Resilience

To assess the impact of Save the Children in Uganda's (SCiUG) Psychosocial Structured Activities (PSSA) Program in Gulu, CPC developed measures of well-being using a free-listing technique during focus-group discussions with children, parents, and teachers. In discussions with children, six major indicators of child well-being were developed:

- Playful and social
- Interested in school, intelligent
- Happy
- Respectful and non-violent
- Responsible and hard-working
- Healthy

These culturally defined indicators were then employed as markers to assess the well-being of children who participated in the PSSA program. Children were asked to rate each of the six indicators on a scale between 1 and 10. Parents and teachers of these same children were also asked to score the children on similar indicators. Ratings for children were collected both at baseline prior to the start of the PSSA program and upon its conclusion to assess program impact. Baseline and follow-up data was also collected at comparison schools that had not benefited from PSSA program activities.

These locally-derived measures – directly relevant to the aims and objectives of the PSSA program – were found to be statistically reliable,<sup>20</sup> and therefore a sound basis for measuring program outcomes.



## Box 2.5 Local Understandings of Gender-based Violence

In 2006, the CPC developed an innovative participative focus-group discussion (PFGD<sup>21</sup>) methodology in order to gain a contextualized understanding of GBV in IDP camps in Lira, Northern Uganda. Across four camps, a total of 32 groups were convened, eight of each subgroup: adult women, adult men, boys and girls. A “convener” for each PFGD was identified at random from household listings, and was invited to gather a group of up to seven other discussion participants. In the case of groups targeting children, potential participants were invited following random selection from school registers. Discussion focused on “the issues facing women and girls in the camp”. For each topic that was raised, the facilitator identified, with the assistance of participants, a physical object to represent the particular issue (e.g. a stone, a household object, an image drawn on paper). As a collection of such objects was assembled, the facilitator encouraged participants to consider if new suggestions warranted a new object choice, or if existing objects already adequately represented the new suggestion. This process would continue until a maximum of ten issues and their corresponding objects were identified by participants.

Once the collection of objects was assembled, the facilitator drew a line on the ground, and asked participants to consider the relative importance of these issues in the lives of women and girls in the camp. Taking each object in turn, the facilitator invited participants to suggest its appropriate placement on the line representing “very important” to “less important”. The facilitator asked the group to verbally justify their placements, which frequently led to lively, animated discussions. Readjustment of objects by participants was promoted until consensus was reached by the group on the prioritization of issues. Throughout the process of placement and readjustment, the note-taker recorded justifications given for the proposed positioning of the various issues represented.

The results of these focus group discussions and the subsequent sorting of priorities indicated that for all groups rape was commonly identified as one of the top three issues facing women and girls. Within the groups comprised of girls, rape was rated as the issue of highest importance. Domestic violence and forced sex with a domestic partner were also frequently prioritized across groups. The group dialogues and narratives expressed during this prioritization exercise yield vivid insight into the cultural context and understanding of GBV in Lira:

“Some parents give in their children to [the] police in exchange for beer and money and if a girl refuses, she is beaten seriously by the father.”

“A girl was raped by a soldier last October...and because the parents wanted money, they had to accept 50,000 shillings and one goat. The case ended there and the girl [was] forced to go with that soldier.”

“If your husband wants sex, even when you are menstruating, you just have to give in without refusing—even when children are awake.”<sup>22</sup>

## Enabling Strategic Response

The methods reviewed so far in this section address the important issues of assessing the magnitude of a protection concern and gaining insight into how that issue is understood and prioritized locally. But methods must go beyond this. They must fit into the process of planning an appropriate intervention.

The CPC team has therefore committed significant effort to the development of tools that can support such programmatic efforts. Given the discussion in Section 1 about the importance of addressing wider systemic issues that serve to protect children - or make them more vulnerable. It is important that such tools encourage a strategic response to child protection concerns in crisis settings.

To this end, members of the CPC team have supported the work of International Rescue Committee (IRC) and CPWG colleagues in the development of an Interagency Child Protection Rapid Assessment Tool<sup>23</sup>. CPC has also led work to develop a tool based on the PEF for use in planning and evaluating child protection activities. We consider such work critical to ensuring that practice and policy are solidly rooted in rigorous evaluation and frameworks that encourage evidence to shape action.

## Box 2.6 Developing PEF Indicators for the global protection community <sup>24</sup>

The PEF has been useful for UNICEF and a range of other agencies in developing an understanding of the need for a systems response to child protection. Until recently however, the framework had been rarely applied in emergency settings, and further, has acted as more of a conceptual framework than an operational tool for planning and program evaluation.

In 2007, UNICEF commissioned members of the CPC team to consider the applicability of the PEF in emergency contexts, and to suggest a strategy to operationalize the framework as a practical field tool. The resulting report proposed several critical indicators for each of the framework's key elements, and used three case studies from Aceh, Sri Lanka and Darfur to demonstrate the framework's feasibility. In addition, the report outlined a number of PEF-based tools that could be used to identify relative priorities for action within a particular setting. Following discussions with senior child protection specialists within UNICEF, the team was asked to propose a discrete set of global indicators that would be used as "benchmarks" to assess the integrity of the protective environment in a given setting (See Box 2.7). These documents and indicators were further considered by the CPWG at its 2008 meeting, and, with modification, are being used to inform post-Tsunami UNICEF evaluations in Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Indonesia and Thailand.

### A View from the Field

*Working with CPC has provided me with a wealth of knowledge and hands-on experience in dealing with extreme cases of GBV and child protection. It helped improve my interviewing skills, so that I can interview survivors without the risk of causing further harm. It also gave me insight into the problems young girls are faced with (such as the abject poverty in communities), and some of the extreme coping mechanisms that they resort to in a bid to try to cope with the aftermath of GBV (such as the girls who resort to drinking poison.)*

*The multiple interviews conducted over a period of time also helped uncover the transitions that have taken place in a girl's life. This helped to identify some of the gaps that the GBV project was unable to bridge and highlight the poor quality of a number of services rendered by providers. Another issue identified by the research was the importance of the family support network. Whether the attitude of the family is negative or positive goes a long way in determining the healing process. Most survivors of GBV blame themselves for causing the act and this is not helped by the community's attitude that further stigmatizes the survivors and blames them for the incident.*

*For the girls, the research seems to have contributed in nurturing and supporting their healing process. The constant follow-up, emotional support rendered by the social workers and the fact that girls were confident that their secrets would not be revealed all seemed to be important. Self-worth and esteem have improved with the reassurance that they are not to blame for the incident and that it happens to many.*

*All in all, the experience has been one-of-a-kind, and I believe that I have grown both emotionally, in relation to handling very complex issues while interviewing and intellectually, because I am able to comprehend a number of issues, be analytical and empathize at the same time.*

*It has been a very golden opportunity to participate in the CPC research. I feel privileged not only because of the knowledge I have acquired, but because of the many vulnerable hearts that I have reached, touched and (you never know) saved from further harm.*

**Julie Akello Latigo**

CCF, Uganda

Box 2.7. Draft Indicators for the PEF: Proposals for Global Discussion

FRAMEWORK ELEMENT	POTENTIAL INDICATORS	COMMENTS
<b>Monitoring &amp; Reporting</b>	National estimates of numbers of separated children, children associated with fighting forces and other major protection concerns (as proportion of total population of children) with a confidence interval of +/- 20% or better are available	
	A central register is available for collation of anonymized human rights violation reports, and is utilized by more than 50% of NGOs active in human rights monitoring	
	More than 50% of child-related program initiatives under coordination by the Protection Cluster have collected baseline information of a form that will allow subsequent judgments of impact	
<b>Governmental Commitment to Fulfilling Protection Rights</b>	A national legal framework is in place which reflects the key principles of the CRC	
	Children's protection issues have been addressed by national and/or state legislation and budgetary allocation within last 12 months	
<b>Protective Legislation &amp; Enforcement</b>	Proportion of police officers and judiciary with specific training/qualification in dealing with children/child protection concerns	
	Number of charges brought against adults for abuse of children in the past 12 months and the number resulting in successful prosecution	
	Number of children currently held in adult prisons	
<b>Attitudes, Traditions, Customs, Behavior &amp; Practices</b>	Proportion of children experiencing physical/corporal punishment in the past week	
	Proportion of children engaged in 10/20? or more hours of physical labor in the past week	
	Proportion of girls experiencing vaginal intercourse before the age of 12/14?/16?	
<b>Open Discussion &amp; Engagement with Child Protection Issues</b>	Child Protection Committees established and attended (at least 6 times per year) by appropriate governmental and NGO staff in more than 50% of Districts	
	Over 20? articles addressing child protection concerns appear over a six-month interval in the three newspapers with largest national circulation	
	Community groups reliably (i.e. in over 75% of meetings) identify priority protection risks (e.g. from amongst separation; abduction; forced labor; sexual abuse; trafficking etc.) in the course of local consultations	
<b>Children's Life Skills, Knowledge &amp; Participation</b>	Proportion of children in school with access to curriculum elements actively promoting debate and participation (through regular classes, enrichment programs or youth-led activities)	
	Number of districts/communities with youth committees actively influencing decision-making (as evidenced by meeting minutes)	
	Proportion of children (a) of female-headed households (b) of grandparent-headed households and (c) who are mothers, currently in school	
<b>The Capacity to Protect Among Those Around Children</b>	The number of children under 10?/8?/6? outside of adult care and supervision for more than 6? hours in any day in the last week	
	The number of children living in households (a) with a net income of less than 1\$ per day and/or (b) sharing two meals or less per day	
	The proportion of the child population to which there is safe access by humanitarian groups and organizations (using UN security criteria)	
<b>Services for Recovery &amp; Reintegration</b>	The number of separated children (a) documented, (b) traced and (c) reunited with family in the previous six months	
	The number of children formerly associated with fighting forces (and/or trafficked children) returning to home communities in past month	
	Number of survivors of sexual violence under the age of 18 receiving some form of services to support recovery and reintegration	

## Improving Program Evaluations

Measurement is critical to identify the magnitude of problems, to understand local perceptions and context, and to support planning of appropriate interventions. As indicated earlier, however, a crucial challenge for the protection field at this time is establishing that interventions have real and meaningful impact on the lives of children, and that they represent a sound investment of humanitarian resources.

Accordingly, the CPC initiative has placed emphasis on collaboration with partner organizations to develop capacity and competence for the rigorous evaluation of current interventions. In recognition that in crisis settings time and staff capacity for evaluation can be severely limited, the CPC initiative has worked to identify tools and methods that are suited to the operational realities and needs of humanitarian response. Boxes 2.8, 2.9, and 2.10 outline three very different examples of our work in response to this issue.



### Box 2.8 UNICEF Guide to Evaluation of Psychosocial Programming

Previous work conducted by the Program on Forced Migration and Health (PFMH) on behalf of UNICEF<sup>25</sup> had highlighted the lack of coherent and rigorous evaluation of programming within the psychosocial sector. In 2006, UNICEF commissioned members of the CPC team to produce a manual providing guidance for the planning and implementation of evaluations of psychosocial programming.

The manual<sup>26</sup> addresses principles of psychosocial programming (linking to the recent Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings<sup>27</sup>), the development of indicators for program monitoring and evaluation, evaluation design, methods (including sampling issues) and the effective dissemination of findings. Currently in field-testing, the manual has been used for training purposes in a number of settings, including the West Bank, Gaza and South Africa. Initial feedback shows that it is a valuable resource for developing effective program evaluations, and a support for developing the evidence-base informing psychosocial programming.



### Box 2.9 Reconstructing Baselines Using Local Calendars

The lack of baseline information is a common challenge when seeking to evaluate the impact of programs. As part of collaborative work with Christian Children's Fund (CCF) in Sierra Leone, the CPC team used local calendars to reconstruct time-specific baseline information on girls who had received interventions to assist their reintegration into their communities following abduction by armed groups. Using PFGDs, as described in Box 2.5, we identified four markers of 'successful reintegration' for girls in the community: (i) being invited to community events and celebrations, (ii) being invited to join the local women's bondo ceremonies, (iii) marriage, and (iv) establishing mental clarity (a "steady head") following return.

In order to identify when these events had occurred in the lives of the girls interviewed, we developed a local calendar for each village, running from the time of the conflict to the present day. This calendar used established memorable events in the life of the community as reference points to assign an approximate date to personal events experienced by the girls themselves. Calendar events were selected based on discussions with a cross section of village leaders (e.g. chief, mammy queen, elders, pastors or imams), community leaders (e.g. local teachers, village mobilizers) and youth, including young girls. Events included on the calendars were occurrences that resonated with a majority of those present at such discussions and to which an accurate date (within one or two months) could be assigned. These typically included agricultural events (harvests, the building of drying floors for grain etc.), community events (major celebrations, installation of a new chief etc.), political events (elections etc.), conflict events (raids, presence of peace-keepers), and other local newsworthy incidents (capture of a leopard, a major accident, severe weather conditions etc.). The time-line constructed from listing these events in chronological order was then used during the interview process to estimate the date when events in the girls' experience of reintegration had occurred. Questioning to achieve this took the following form:

"OK, when you attended the celebration for the new chief you say you were already married, yes? What about when the UN helicopter blew the roof off the school when it left the village – were you married then?"

When asking about significant and specific experiences in the lives of those interviewed, local calendars – based upon memorable public events to which a clear date can be attached – can provide a valuable means of dealing with a lack of baseline information and making valid comparisons of present and pre-existing circumstances.





“ It is vital that,  
**local understandings**  
of child well-being are used to  
develop appropriate indicators  
for judging the success of child  
protection programming.”

### Box 2.10 Narrative Methods for Understanding Impact and Guiding Program Support

Programs providing support to girls who are survivors of GBV need to take into account the experiences of the participants about what helps or does not help survivors over time following an assault. We conducted work in partnership with CCF/Uganda, beginning in June 2006 and extending over two years, using narrative methodology to learn intensively about girls' understandings of GBV, what supports survivors, and how GBV relates to their broader life story. Extensive attention was paid to ethics, not only in respecting confidentiality and informed consent, but also in adopting sensitive interview methods. This involved avoiding extensive probing into girls' experiences of GBV, using supportive discussion methods, the provision of psychosocial support, and relating the discussion to the girls' wider life stories. The participants were 30 girls from four IDP camps in Lira, northern Uganda (Agweng, Ayami, Barr and Ogur camps). Half of the participants were survivors of sexual violence, whereas half were not known to be survivors.

The types of GBV identified by the participants included rape by the militia, relatives or prospective suitors; "defilement" or sexual abuse of young girls; domestic violence; forced and/or early marriage; and being forced to drop out of school. Almost all the participants spoke of a happy and idyllic childhood before the war and subsequent escape to an IDP camp. The importance of education and financial resilience was emphasized by the participants, who viewed education and livelihoods as pathways toward a good marriage and economic well-being. Despite the significance of education, approximately half of the girls had dropped out of school due to parental pressure to get married or the inability to pay tuition. Menstruation and lack of access to sanitary napkins was also identified as a significant source of anxiety leading to school dropout.

Participants spoke of widespread impunity and of the communal blame and stigma that was often attached to being a survivor. Many girls spoke of the burden of isolation, while some shared suicidal thoughts, indicating the need for psychosocial support. Girls also reflected on the failure of institutional response mechanisms, including those via local councils and health centers. Yet, the girls did derive support from friends and neighbors to some extent. These findings point to the need to strengthen nonformal community supports, and also formal supports at health posts, to reduce stigma and increase access to education and livelihoods. The CCF GBV program has made adjustments to build on these important insights from the girls.

## Improving Practice

*Learning is a critical element of evidence-based policy and program development. Our experiences working with child protection efforts in Banda Aceh, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Southern Sudan, Darfur, Uganda, the Ivory Coast, Colombia and elsewhere clearly shows that efficiency and effectiveness of program response and policy action relies on a comprehensive, systematic, and organizational approach to knowledge acquisition, development and sharing.*

*However, historically, the international community has not had a strong track-record on learning. Excellent and innovative new knowledge developed within a certain agency or organization tends to reside there. Existing research is often outdated or unavailable.*

*All humanitarian agencies rely on rapid assessments and participatory methods to assess emergency situations before a program intervention. In addition, the same agencies develop methods of good practice. It is, however, unusual for humanitarian agencies to enter into partnership with like-minded organizations and research institutions to improve methodologies to determine impact and assess reliable incidence rates for child protection concerns. In order to professionalize the field of humanitarian response we need to better understand the impact of programmatic interventions. Joint research and networking is one important way forward.*

*To achieve this, however, there are some critical challenges to address:*

- *The international community needs to foster a culture of inter-country, regional and global learning;*
- *The international community needs to make more use of existing program learning, and research e.g. through joint research and networking;*
- *The international community needs to improve its capacity to determine impact and assess reliable incidence rates for child protection concerns; and*
- *The international community needs a central space where country programs can store and share research, documents and tools, reducing the risk of duplication and diversity of practice quality.*

## Henrik Haggstrom

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# 3 EMERGING BEST PRACTICE IN KEY AREAS OF PROTECTION PROGRAMMING

## Consensus and Uncertainty Among Agencies

Extensive consultation with practitioners has been - alongside review of documented evidence of impact - a key strategy for identifying areas of best practice in protection programming. This consultation has been pursued in a structured manner, through a series of focused workshops together with a major Delphi review of senior child protection practitioners' judgments of emerging best practice. The views of practitioners must be tested with empirical data whenever possible to prevent comfortable orthodoxies from sustaining ineffective or, worse, harmful practice. However, in a field with scant evidence, the consolidated judgment of expert practitioners with experience across a wide range of crisis situations serves as a crucial basis for identifying emergent best practice.

In our Delphi study of best practice,<sup>29</sup> we collected views from 30 leading experts in the field of child protection in emergencies. Experts proposed various best practices, which were consolidated into a list of over 90 best practice statements. These were then rated by all participants, the overall distribution of scores calculated, and experts - presented with these composite ratings - invited to confirm or revise their initial judgments. The result was a listing of 55 statements for which there was clear consensus amongst experts. These are listed in Box 3.1. They reflect a wide range of concerns but, taken together, reflect a major commitment to the key principles of resilience, participation, cultural embeddedness, community engagement, and inclusivity.

Of the statements that did not achieve this level of consensus, there is most interest in those that received strong support from some but a lack of support, or even active disagreement, from others. These indicate areas of genuine uncertainty for the field, and suggest appropriate foci for further debate and empirical research. Box 3.2 indicates the statements for which there was such a range of views expressed. While some feedback suggests that re-wording of some items may have created higher levels of consensus, experts generally indicated that contested statements reflect real issues of emphasis, prioritization and strategy that warrant further attention. The CPC initiative has, for example, used the scalability of an intervention (its potential to reach a significant proportion of affected children) as a key element in appraising the value of a given program; it is clear that many experts do not necessarily share this view. Resolution of such issues is vital if the field is to secure a coherent sense of best practice in emergencies.



## Box 3.1 Key Areas of Consensus

### **Agency Strategy**

We must establish a 'culture of learning' among agencies.

Good practice requires attention to "Do No Harm" imperative.

Child protection experts should be rapidly deployed to work with specialists in other sectors.

Agency codes of conduct must be signed and enforced.

Staff security must be considered at all times.

Those delivering services to children must receive on-going support and training.

Care & protection of children needs to be seen as concern of all agencies, working in an integrated and coordinated manner.

Coordination between agencies brings great benefits.

We need to work at many levels, not just providing direct services.

### **Community Engagement & Participation**

In enabling community mobilization, it is vital to identify and include different community sub-groups.

It is essential to not ignore or undermine existing or traditional mechanisms.

It is best practice to take a participatory approach with children and youth guiding the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs.

It is good practice to conduct a participatory assessment with affected people in coordination with other assessment processes.

We should support and foster development of pre-existing child protection support networks.

### **Understanding Children's Needs**

Programming should be inclusive and reach out to a range of affected children.

Long-term strategies are required for youth who have missed education and who need to become economically active.

First line action in protection is to limit exposure of children to traumatic events and provide activities that create a sense of normality.

Disaggregated data (by age, sex, etc.) are needed to ensure effective and appropriate programming.

Agencies need to develop their skills for working at the community level in supporting families in caring for children.

Children with extreme reactions to loss, displacement, etc. and those with severe mental illness should also be considered in program design and service delivery.

Planning and delivery of services needs to be child-focused.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation & Research**

We need to develop an evidence-base of what constitutes effective child care and protection

We need strict ethical protocols for collecting information from children.

It is good practice to evaluate program impact using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data

Evaluation should consider project impact on social dynamics and power structures within communities

Effective programs must be able to demonstrate results with respect to clearly specified indicators and outcomes

Monitoring data should be used to adjust project implementation and evaluation data should be used to inform future planning

### **Gender**

We need to provide 'girl friendly' reproductive health and GBV services.

Programs need to proactively reach out to engage girls.

It is important to use local cultural resources as one means of supporting war-affected girls; It is equally important to be critical about practices which may violate human rights.

There is a need for programming that targets and educates men and boys about gender roles and sexual responsibility.

A gender perspective needs to be applied to all programming.

### **Separated Children**

We need to put strategies in place to prevent the separation of children.

Understanding cultural norms can help protect children from exploitation.

Thorough documentation is necessary for separated children before and during a crisis.

It is best practice to monitor protection and well-being of separated children living with extended family or in foster care.

Mobilization and mediation efforts are needed to facilitate the process of reintegrating separated children.

### Box 3.1 Key Areas of Consensus (continued...)

#### **Children Associated with Fighting Forces**

Effective reintegration programs support former children associated with fighting forces and also other vulnerable children.

There is a need for planned reintegration from a long-term perspective with recognition of ongoing needs.

Efforts to support children formerly associated with fighting forces are most effective and sustainable when based on their strengths and resources.

Child protection must be addressed and prioritized within military and peacekeeping operations.

Agencies need to understand how cultural, social and political processes affect recruitment and use of children in armed forces.

Separate DDR processes are needed for children and adults.

Effective reintegration programs include supports relating to family mediation, health, education, livelihoods, nonviolent conflict resolution, spiritual well-being, and community protection.

Family tracing and reunification should start as soon as children are released from armed forces.

Children should be supported in leaving fighting forces at any time during conflict.

Substance abuse prevention, education, assessment and treatment should be part of reintegration programs.

#### **Schooling & Education**

Specific strategies need to be put in place to engage girls in education and training activities.

The re-establishment of schooling is a key protective measure for children.

Youth interventions need to go beyond formal schooling to include non-formal activities.

Provision of safe spaces, recreational opportunities and youth clubs can be valuable activities.

#### **Livelihoods**

Agencies should make income generating activities accessible for girls.

Steps should be taken to support livelihoods of families in which children are thought to be particularly vulnerable.

(Re)establishment of livelihoods plays a fundamental role in child protection.

Livelihoods programs need to target youth.

### Box 3.2 Areas of Uncertainty and Potential Debate: Statements Eliciting Diverse Responses from Experts

The following statements elicited diverse responses from expert participants:

- A rights-based approach must be continuously promoted.
- Interventions need to be scalable.
- Emergency needs should be addressed independently of long-term strategy.
- We need to avoid categorizing and labeling children to avoid stigmatization and jealousy.
- Using the term 'vulnerable' should be avoided.
- It is best practice not to provide cash settlements to children associated with fighting forces.

Workshop consultations with practitioners conducted over the past three years have generally revealed trends regarding consensus similar to those found in our Delphi study. There were commonly a number of principles on which practitioners from varied contexts and agencies could agree; while at the same time, there remained key areas of practice where participants signaled that there were significant gaps in knowledge. Workshops typically sought to define and prioritize key knowledge gaps and, from this, determine a research agenda that would establish a more effective evidence base for programming.

Subsequent sections of this report explore and analyze discussions from consultations focused on the following themes: livelihoods and protection; children associated with fighting forces and armed groups; psychosocial support; and strategies for community engagement. These themes were identified early in the work of the CPC as representing programming areas where the evidence base was considered particularly weak.

## Livelihoods and Protection

In many parts of the world, children are expected to play significant economic roles as part of household livelihood systems. In some cases, children are responsible for managing critical household assets, generally with minimal parental supervision. When a crisis occurs, households implement short term coping strategies, which often differ according to the nature of the crisis, such as natural disaster, conflict, or HIV/AIDS. It is therefore important to consider how children will be affected, not only by a crisis itself, but by the altered economic environment that impacts livelihood strategies at the household level.

Protracted crises can necessitate children and adolescents to take on economic roles and activities that pose serious risks to their security and well-being. These risks include the premature end of education, engagement in dangerous child labor and forced early marriage, living and working on the streets, transactional sex, and trafficking, among others. Can an understanding of household livelihood objectives and strategies enable the identification of risks to child protection and well-being? Can these risks be ameliorated through economic activities and livelihood interventions?

The CPC Initiative partnered with the Supporting Transformation by Reducing Insecurity and Vulnerability with Economic Strengthening (STRIVE)<sup>30</sup> Project to assemble more than 30 protection and economic strengthening experts in Kampala, Uganda in February 2008 to explore livelihood interventions and economic strengthening activities as they pertain to child protection and well-being in crisis settings. The group sought to map out the different roles children play in household economies, to identify how these roles are affected by crises, and to agree upon what we need to learn and do to ensure livelihood and economic strengthening activities better support child security and well-being.



### Box 3.3 Potential Household Responses in the Face of Economic Hardship

Short-Term Strategies	Basic needs addressed rather than long-term needs (e.g. education) More focused decisions to support particular children
Diversified Strategies	Children expected to be resourceful Increased resilience / acquisition of new skill sets
Riskier Strategies	Increased sex work and exploitation Less supervision of children
Changed Roles	Values regarding children changed (e.g. commoditization, reduced value of disabled) Intergenerational schisms Established child protection mechanisms disrupted
Migration	Sibling support disrupted Separation from parents

The meeting highlighted the fact that there is insufficient knowledge about how households “bounce-back” from adversities and which interventions enable recovery and prevent asset loss. Research needs to move away from analyses of specific economic interventions in favor of analyses of alternative strategies to promote household and community-level responses. These interventions need to take into consideration the diverse strategies that households deploy in seeking to recover economic security. There is also scant knowledge of the consequences of different household child protection strategies in the face of crisis. Operational research could enable us to better predict the specific child protection risks associated with alternative strategies. For example, such research could investigate if “diversification” tends to be a better or worse strategy than “migration” in terms of the potential risks (or benefits) to children.

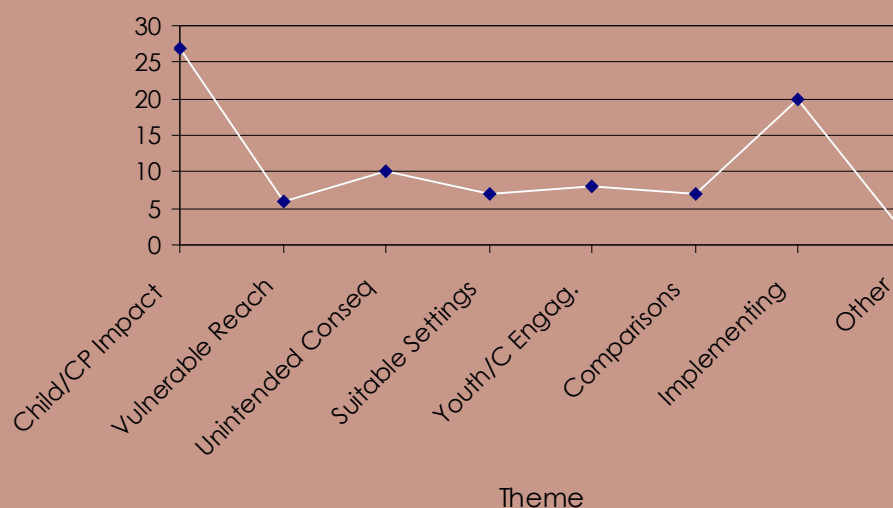
Additionally, the risk of negative unintended consequences was identified for a number of intervention strategies:

- Narrow targeting of economic activities can undermine community cohesion, create stigma, can lead to “stove-piped” programming, and can further victimize children by labeling them as orphans, former child soldiers, or victims of violence, among other potentially stigmatizing markers.
- Economic interventions (including vocational training programs) that are not market based can disturb existing markets and commit resources to the provision of goods and services for which there is no sustainable demand.
- Introduction of new livelihoods options may lead to negative as well as positive outcomes; and some livelihoods options, such as alcohol brewing and transactional sex, impose unhealthy risks.
- Microfinance programs can be beneficial, but they also have the potential to undermine childcare within the household, increase child labor and decrease school enrollment and attendance. Poor delivery of microfinance programs can also increase household debt.

Participants were asked to identify what they considered to be key questions that needed to be addressed in developing a better evidence-base for intervention. The chart below indicates that documenting the impact of livelihoods interventions on child protection and improving our understanding of effective means of program implementation were viewed as the two key areas of work, though a number of other areas were also identified.

### Box 3.4 Key Themes of Proposed Livelihoods and Protection Research Agenda

Key Themes of Proposed Learning Agenda



This workshop provided the foundation for an ongoing learning agenda that participants, together with the CPC Network and STRIVE projects, are committed to pursuing over the next three years. New hands-on efforts to address protection concerns through livelihood strategies (including analysis of the role of girls and boys in household economies) and economic strengthening activities that include specific child well-being objectives will be required to promote learning as well.

## Children Associated with Fighting Forces and Armed Groups

The protection of children from recruitment into armed forces and their subsequent reintegration into civilian society have emerged as central priorities on the UN and humanitarian agenda, yet considerable gaps remain in our knowledge of how best to achieve these priorities. To address this, the CPC organized a global workshop to clarify what is known and what is not known within the field of child protection and to define a collective research agenda. To support discussions at the workshop, a literature review on effective practice was also compiled<sup>31</sup> taking stock of what has been learned since the establishment of the Cape Town Principles in 1997.

Convened in February 2006, the workshop brought together a group of 28 participants comprised of experienced practitioners from a broad range of geographical regions, officers from UN agencies, academic partners and donors. Individual reflection and group consensus ranking were used to identify key indicators and outcomes with which to measure social reintegration. The identified domains included: social functioning, livelihoods, health, emotional well-being, and enhanced protection in the community. This collective definition is a valuable step forward in a field that has previously lacked consensus regarding outcomes and the breadth and social emphasis of these articulated outcomes caution against individualized approaches to reintegration.

Working in small groups, participants further identified 'what we know' (well evidenced), 'what we think we know' (less well evidenced) and 'gaps' (lack of evidence). Combining judgments across groups produced the listing in Box 3.5.

Box 3.5 Combined Ratings of Current Knowledge Supporting Programming with Children Associated with Armed Groups

	What we know	Think we know	Gaps
Reintegration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key elements are health, psychosocial well-being, education, livelihoods, family integration;</li> <li>• More focus on girls and youth is needed;</li> <li>• Community involvement is key for sustainability;</li> <li>• Social, cultural and religious aspects are crucial.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community approaches are more effective &amp; sustainable than clinical approaches;</li> <li>• Livelihoods must consider local economies and markets;</li> <li>• Inclusive programming is most effective;</li> <li>• Family reunification is not always the best strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can we take livelihoods programs to scale?</li> <li>• Good practice around girls, including those who wish not to self-identify;</li> <li>• Need for better assessment methodologies regarding protection concerns;</li> <li>• Lack of programming that builds on the strengths of formerly recruited children.</li> </ul>
Disarmament/demobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal disarmament can exclude children, especially girls;</li> <li>• Interim care centers are not always necessary and can prompt protection concerns;</li> <li>• Through normal activities most children will regain normal psychosocial functions;</li> <li>• Released children need to have formal documentation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychosocial support relies too much on Western models;</li> <li>• Indigenous cultural communities (ICCs), where appropriate, should be of short duration;</li> <li>• More vigorous advocacy with governments may help get children out of armed groups;</li> <li>• Material assistance and formal documentation is needed, but what kind and when should they come into play?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can we better integrate children's demobilization and disarmament into the wider peace and security process?</li> <li>• How do we handle a military presence at transit centers?</li> <li>• What do children need (e.g. public ceremony) to mark demobilization?</li> <li>• How do we support the children of formerly recruited girls?</li> </ul>
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separated children are at greater risk of recruitment;</li> <li>• Border areas and refugee camps are major recruitment zones;</li> <li>• Children join groups for various reasons (push &amp; pull factors), and root causes that need to be addressed;</li> <li>• Legal and political frameworks regarding protection are currently not strong enough.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education can protect, though schools can also be points for recruitment;</li> <li>• Community-based activities aid prevention;</li> <li>• Prevention is more cost effective;</li> <li>• There needs to be constant dialogue with leaders of armed groups to guard against the recruitment of children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can we strengthen and sustain existing child protection systems already present in communities?</li> <li>• Documentation on lessons learned;</li> <li>• How to develop a multi-disciplinary prevention approach at the country level?</li> <li>• How do role models and concepts of gender contribute to recruitment?</li> </ul>

After a thorough review of existing models and programmatic practice, progressive consensus ranking was employed to develop a prioritized research agenda to inform interventions.<sup>32</sup>

The four priority questions identified by this procedure were as follows:

- What are effective approaches for supporting the integration of formerly recruited girls?
- How can livelihoods support be taken to scale?
- What are effective monitoring and evaluation strategies for identifying protection risks and evaluating interventions?
- What is the comparative effectiveness and sustainability of community-based psychosocial support versus clinically focused approaches?

The outputs from the workshop and the literature prepared for it both fed into the global effort to develop the Paris Principles in the fall of 2006, as a successor to the Cape Town Principles established ten years earlier.<sup>33</sup> The technical points put forward, together with recommendations regarding funding and methodology, are currently being moved forward by the Paris Principles Steering Group, which works in collaboration with governments to promote effective policies and implementation efforts.

In addition to supporting such policy development, the CPC team has engaged with fieldwork relevant to the identified research agenda. Box 3.6, for example, outlines a study that measured the impact of a program designed to support the reintegration of girls formally abducted by armed groups in Sierra Leone.

#### Box 3.6 Sealing the Past, Facing the Future: Formerly Abducted Girls in Sierra Leone Reintegrate More Swiftly As a Result of Targeted Support

Using the method of local calendars described in Box 2.9, we determined the length of time it took for girls to achieve outcomes they had agreed as marking “successful integration”<sup>34</sup> following their return from abduction. We worked in partnership with CCF staff who had implemented the “Sealing the Past; Facing the Future” (SEFAFU) program, which involved a varying package of services including a traditional cleansing ceremony, a health check-up, vocational training and a monetary loan. Seventy-four girls who passed through the program were interviewed, as well as 68 girls from neighboring villages (who also experienced abduction, but had not received any similar form of support).

Findings indicated<sup>35</sup> that, some six years after the cessation of hostilities, the majority of girls in villages where SEFAFU had been active, and also in those where it had not, had attained a high degree of reintegration. However, matching girls who had received the intervention and those who had not, based upon their age at return from abduction, indicated that the former were significantly more likely to have been included in community events, to have been invited to women's bondo ceremonies and to report mental clarity (“steady head”). The SEFAFU program appears, therefore, to have accelerated some processes of community reintegration for girls returning from abduction.

Policy advocacy has also been a very active focus of the CPC. The profiling of CPC work in the *New Scientist*,<sup>36</sup> for example, provided a very strong foundation for advocacy regarding the needs of war-affected children in the broadest sense, not only those who had assumed the role of child soldiers. The appropriate strategy for investment in the support of such children has been the recent focus of a congressional initiative.<sup>37</sup>

## Psychosocial Support

The February 2007 release of the IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support<sup>38</sup> (MHPSS) was a significant milestone for humanitarian aid as the guidelines embody the first global, inter-agency consensus on the necessary preliminary steps to be taken in response to emergencies. The Guidelines recommend primarily social interventions as the minimum response, and they outline a set of practical suggestions for program design, assessment, coordination and policy advocacy.

To support the implementation of the Guidelines, CPC, working in conjunction with the IASC Reference Group on MHPSS, initiated and oversaw external documentation efforts in Peru, Colombia, Kenya and Jordan. These documentation activities intentionally spanned countries that have experienced or are experiencing diverse kinds of emergency and crisis situations. Using participant observation methodologies and working closely with teams on the ground that support the appropriate use of the Guidelines, the external documenters collected information relevant to questions such as:

- Are the Guidelines being used, by whom and how?
- What steps were taken to contextualize the Guidelines?
- Are there specific cases or examples of situations in which the Guidelines have been particularly useful?
- What challenges are there to the implementation of the Guidelines?
- What strategies have been used to address those challenges?
- What tools and training materials have been developed to support the implementation of the Guidelines?

The information collected by this effort will be used by the IASC Reference Group on MHPSS to promote mutual learning across countries and regions about how to support effective implementation of the Guidelines. These implementation efforts have been complemented by recent CPC work to facilitate the formation of a new global network on psychosocial support that brings together partners from around the world to strengthen practice.<sup>39</sup> This network will support the implementation of the new Guidelines and enable collective learning across areas that are typically isolated in efforts to strengthen global humanitarian capacities for psychosocial support.

Again, such work has been complemented by field-based activity developing the evidence base for interventions. Work has included study of the impact of a school-based psychosocial curriculum in Northern Uganda (Box 3.7) and evaluation of an innovative mental health intervention in Aceh, Indonesia (Box 3.8).

### Box 3.7 Psychosocial Structured Activities

Save the Children in Uganda (SCiUG) has piloted and implemented a wellness-focused program to address psychological distress among war-affected children and youth in northern Uganda. The Psychosocial Structured Activities (PSSA) Program is managed by the Child Resilience Team at the Gulu office of SCiUG. The program involves 15 highly structured one-hour sessions over a five-week period, facilitated by two trained teachers in each school.

In May 2007, SCiUG and CPC partnered to monitor and evaluate the PSSA program, with the aim of effectively evaluating the program outcomes and outputs, and where necessary, making recommendations to support the effective implementation of Phase II of the resilience program.<sup>40</sup> Overall, the evaluation found that the PSSA program was making positive changes in the lives of war-affected children. At the time of the evaluation, SCiUG had successfully implemented the direct, classroom-based component of the program. However, the evaluation showed that gaps remained in regards to the implementation of parental support programs and post-PSSA participatory activities for children, the lack of which have the potential to undermine the progress made by the intervention and threaten the long-term sustainability of the program. The evaluation determined that it would be in the best interest of the program to work on filling these gaps before expanding the program into new schools. From August 2007 through August 2008, SCiUG and CPC have been engaged in a more extensive evaluation of the PSSA program; results from this broader evaluation are forthcoming.

### Box 3.8 Beyond Emergency Response: Restoring Human Dignity and Consolidating Peace in Aceh, Indonesia

As the emergency phase of the tsunami response in Aceh, Indonesia began to draw to a close, there was wide consensus that strengthening the government's ability to deliver quality services through capacity building at all levels was an urgent priority in order to secure long lasting peace. Indeed, Aceh presents a unique opportunity for the international community to demonstrate its ability not only to respond to a major disaster, but to consolidate peace and effectively support a resource-rich province with a very high prevalence of poverty to achieve human rights and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A CPC evaluation of the Health Service Program's (HSP's) Community Mental Health Initiative — a collaborative effort between government, university, UN, NGO and multi-lateral actors - found that this decentralized approach to mental health care and treatment was enabling responsible duty barriers to fulfill their commitment to providing quality services to one of the most disenfranchised groups in Indonesia.<sup>41</sup>

What is different? Prior to this program, Aceh's two psychiatrists and sole mental health treatment facility were located in Banda Aceh. The mental hospital, Badan Pelayanan Kesehatan Jiwa (BPKJ), was notorious for its overcrowded, under-resourced, and inhumane conditions. There was no mental health expertise at the district or sub-district level. Medications were available only in Banda Aceh, and there was no community support for individuals or families with serious psychological disorders.

The HSP effort has enabled three new levels of mental health and psychosocial care and support:

**Puskesmas:** The program calls for Community Mental Health Nurses (CMHN) in all of Aceh's sub-district health clinics (puskesmas). Nurses attend rigorous, highly structured beginning, intermediate and advanced courses, and receive a high level of support and supervision from senior mental health nurses from the University of Indonesia Faculty of Nursing. Quality program standards are well established for caseload management, community outreach, home visitations and referral procedures. The training is competency-based, and includes classroom learning, fieldwork, and two to six months of supervised case management, depending on the level of training.

**Village:** The program calls for the establishment of volunteer psychosocial and mental health volunteers (cadres) at the village level. Cadres receive training on psychosocial issues for women and children, including modules on how to address issues such as domestic violence and child neglect as well as on mental health problems. The topics covered during these sessions provide participants with skills on how to raise awareness and reduce stigma about mental illness, to provide referral advice to CMHN services and to conduct home visits and outreach efforts to families that require extra support for individuals who are mentally-ill.

**District:** The program calls for the creation of an intensive acute care unit at the district level. A 10-bed unit, adjacent to the Jantho Hospital was completed in 2008, and represents state-of-the-art standards for inpatient care facilities, with interactive workstations, tranquil spaces for patients, as well as safe and secure contained spaces to manage responses to care crises. Staffing includes CMHNs who have completed the advanced training program and a psychiatrist who was initially supported by the Asian Development Bank. In addition to work at the acute care unit, these seven staff will provide regular support to puskesmas staff and offer continued in-service training for student nurses and other mental health workers.

Qualitative interviews indicated high levels of satisfaction amongst patients, family members and staff regarding the new service. One CMHN noted:

“About five months ago, this particular patient was hallucinating a lot. He walked around the village naked and would eat feces. After regular visits and medication the patient improved significantly. He started dressing properly, taking a bath and doing other things like that. I think that the reason for this was that the patient was able to take his medication regularly and had full support from his family during his recovery. I also think that it helped

that we told him how to deal with his hallucination and reintegrate into the community."

While the sister of another patient remarked:

"She used to just cry and cry, now the nurse comes and she's happy. She does dishes and prays."

The CPC evaluation found that HSP's mental health program is achieving significant results in Aceh Besar. 90% of the patients and caretakers surveyed reported positive outcomes, ranging from patients being less disruptive to significant improvements in the quality of life for both the patients and the caretakers. Sixteen percent of households reported that the program enabled patients to secure employment.

Currently, no global inter-agency principles or guidelines exist on how to engage effectively with communities around issues of child protection and well-being, and much remains to be learned across agencies about how to promote effective practice and avoid violating the "Do No Harm" imperative. To address this gap, CPC, together with the Interagency Learning Initiative (ILI) and the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF), conducted a workshop in June of 2008 that included participants from 14 agencies and diverse parts of the world. The goals of the workshop were to examine the ways in which external agencies engage communities to improve children's well-being, to identify key issues through a collaborative learning process that could help improve external agency practice, and to plan a way forward. The workshop was facilitated by a South-North team that worked through a participatory process to surface issues and approaches from different parts of the world.

Workshop activities included plenary and small group discussion of key issues such as:

- how to build the staff competencies, attitudes and values that are needed and how to strengthen the evidence base regarding effective practice;
- discussion of an ILI typology that outlines four ways of engaging with communities that afford varying levels of community ownership and power;
- presentation and discussion of exemplars from different categories of the typology;
- presentation and discussion of findings from The Listening Project;
- group discussion of diverse tools and methods for learning about community engagement;
- and small group planning to agree how to move forward in regard to three areas: (1) strengthening the evidence base regarding effective practice; (2) attitudes, values and competencies; and (3) developing a conceptual framework, including strengthening the typology and encouraging the development of theories of change.

The main outcome of the workshop was the creation of three working groups, each of which is co-chaired by one Southern and one Northern partner, that will focus on one of the three areas outlined above. Each group will develop a plan for moving forward and working with different agencies to implement specified priorities. The group focusing on strengthening the evidence base, for instance, is planning a multi-context study of the effectiveness of Child Welfare Committees.

## A View from the Field

*After nearly three years of networking and collaborating with CPC, I am glad to share my experience and opinion of how partnership has enriched my work with children and widened my perspective of psychosocial programming for children affected by armed conflict in northern Uganda.*

*Since April of 2006 the Gulu office of Save the Children in Uganda has been implementing a child-focused resilience building program that aims to enhance the emotional wellbeing and psychosocial functioning of children affected by armed conflict. This involves (i) implementation of structured psychosocial activities with children in primary schools, (ii) support of child-led initiatives and participation in development activities, and (iii) working with parents to improve parenting, care and protection of children in IDP communities.*

*Columbia University, through its the CPC program, has significantly enriched my work in northern Uganda through capacity building, technical guidance, sharing resources and our work together on baseline studies and evaluations. I have benefited immensely from trainings on methodology and have gained valuable insights into new research methodologies suitable for children.*

*I view the CPC approach to global networking as the way forward as it promotes interagency learning, cultivation of best practices, validation of program approaches and the pooling of financial and human resources in pursuit of the shared aim to effect change. In Gulu, the PSSA methodology of supporting children affected by crisis has undergone crucial testing that will help to improve future programming.*

*As a person based in the field, my contribution to CPC work has largely been through the provision of evidence-based information for CPC documentation, providing opportunities for CPC members to come and learn about our grassroots program activities, as well as occasionally providing supervision support to students for practica and internships.*

*I look forward to a sustained future partnership for the benefit of children.*

## Braxton Okot

*Save the Children in Uganda*



# 4 AN AGENDA FOR PARTNERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

The previous pages summarize progress of the CPC Initiative towards improved care and protection of children in emergencies. This includes progress in the conceptualization of protection needs and response; progress in developing methods for assessing protection needs and the impact of programming; and, crucially, progress in identifying emerging best practice in key areas of protection programming.

Although such progress represents significant achievement, we see it, most importantly, as a foundation on which to build towards a more effective and sustained response to the protection needs of children in emergencies. Accordingly, Columbia University's Program on Forced Migration and Health at the Mailman School of Public Health and five international organizations - the international Rescue Committee, Save the Children, the Women's Refugee Commission, UNICEF, and CCF - and several local organizations - including, PULIH Indonesia and the Institute for Development Studies in northern Uganda - have come together to establish an Agency Learning Network on the Care and Protection of Children in Crisis-Affected Countries (the 'CPC Learning Network').

We have defined the shared goal of the CPC Learning Network to "strengthen and systematize child care and protection in crisis-affected settings through the collaborative action of humanitarian organizations, local institutions, and academic partners". We aim to do this primarily by promoting the use of evidence-based findings to inform practice and policy for children, including adolescents and youth, impacted by crisis.

Specifically, we aim to:

- **Develop community protection program knowledge:** Promoting an organized, evidence-based process for examining NGO experience and generating global standards, strategies and practices to guide child care and protection programs.
- **Foster organizational collaboration:** Facilitating open, inclusive partnerships and collaboration at the global, regional, national and local levels to promote effective, scalable, community-focused care and protection programs.
- **Promote effective programming and policies:** Identifying and disseminating NGO-tested innovations and local experiences to inform program models, and hence influence national, regional and global policy dialogues affecting children and their developmental outcomes in crisis-affected settings.
- **Mobilize resources:** Mobilizing significant public and private financial resources to support child care and protection programs.

The CPC Learning Network's structure - comprising Program Learning Groups (PLGs) at the local level and Global Technical Groups (GTGs) to assist and synthesize learning across locations - is designed to address the learning network's dual local and global mandate.

PLGs, already established in northern Uganda and Indonesia, focus on field-level learning and developing the evidence-base for good policy and practice. Each PLG consists of five to ten member organizations, including national organizations, field offices of international NGOs, and local universities and research institutions.

GTGs provide technical assistance, synthesize learning across locations and, through this, identify proven and promising practice. Bringing together leading practitioners and academics, GTGs seek to capture, consolidate and extend learning about effective practice by leveraging existing knowledge and disseminating effective program design and evaluation methodologies.

The CPC Network Secretariat, based at Columbia University, works to support and promote the work of the network at all levels of operation by facilitating collaboration, knowledge sharing, dissemination, and resource mobilization. For more details visit: [www.cpclearningnetwork.org](http://www.cpclearningnetwork.org)



# 5

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