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**Rights-Based Programming  
for Children in Conflict-Affected Areas**  
Operational Experience from the Middle East Region



**Save the Children**  
Sweden

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# **Rights-Based Programming for Children in Conflict-Affected Areas**

**Operational Experience from the Middle East Region**

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To learn more about Save the Children Sweden's work in the MENA Region, visit <http://mena.savethechildren.se>

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This study is also a contribution to a Middle East and North Africa Region Study of the World Bank, "Reducing Conflict Risk" (December 2011) which examines how the Bank's development assistance could contribute to the mitigation of conflict risk in vulnerable countries.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMENA/Resources/WDR2011-Conflict-MENA.pdf> (last accessed 30 May 2012)





Yemeni women share ideas in Amran © Save the Children

# Abbreviations

<b>CBO</b>	Community-based organizations
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>DCI</b>	Defence for Children International
<b>ICCPR</b>	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
<b>ICESCR</b>	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
<b>INGO</b>	International nongovernmental organization
<b>MENA</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>NGO</b>	Nongovernmental organization
<b>NORAD</b>	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
<b>oPt</b>	Occupied Palestinian territory
<b>PA</b>	Palestinian Authority
<b>PLO</b>	Palestine Liberation Organization
<b>PNCR</b>	Palestinian Network for Children's Rights
<b>SCS</b>	Save the Children Sweden
<b>Sida</b>	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDG</b>	United Nations Development Group
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNRWA</b>	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

# Terminology

<b>Rights holder</b>	An individual or collection of individuals in possession of a right and who can make a claim that the right be respected, protected or fulfilled. In this study, the term usually refers to children or youth (under the age of 18) targeted in any child rights-based program.
<b>Duty bearer</b>	A body or individual with responsibilities and obligations towards rights holders, as enshrined in international law, national law and human rights instruments.
<b>Stakeholders</b>	Groups of people that may have interest or involvement in a project or program

# Executive Summary

It is only within the last decade that human rights-based approaches and rights-based methodologies have been incorporated into the practice of international development. How a child rights-based approach and child rights programming is brought from theory to tangible implementation in development programs in areas of conflict has so far been a relatively unexplored area of study.

By reviewing the operational practices and outcomes of existing development projects that use child rights-based programming in conflict-affected areas in Yemen, Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), the aim of this study was to answer two main questions:

*What are the benefits and challenges of using child rights-based programming as the overall approach for development interventions in the selected projects?*

*How can these benefits and challenges be related to the safety and security in the selected areas?*

By reviewing seven projects self-defined as using child rights-based programming, this study found that the benefits of child rights-based programming in conflict-affected areas outweigh its challenges. Moreover, three of these projects, those that were closest to an ideal model of child rights-based programming developed for this study, had clear outcomes that positively influenced safety and security in the geographical areas of the projects.

The data explored in the study included more than 300 interviews conducted with staff, children, parents, community leaders and government officials in Lebanon, Yemen and the oPt during the spring and late summer of 2011. The interviews, along with documentation gathered, explored projects run by Save the Children Sweden (MENA), UNICEF, Naba'a and Defence for Children International, as well as local partner

organizations and community-based organizations.

The study was developed to be a smaller, more in-depth and qualitative study in order to provide a deeper picture of the operational practices and outcomes in focus. It should be seen as an initial step towards better understanding the implications of the operationalization of child rights-based programming in conflict-affected areas.

For the purposes of this study, "Child rights-based programming" is defined as programming drawn from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the UN Statement of Common Understanding on Human Rights-Based Approaches to Development Cooperation and Programming. Eight key components shared by this type of programming were identified by the study's research team and used as an analytical tool to assess the benefits and challenges and possible safety/security implications of using child rights-based programming.

## Benefits of using child rights-based programming in development projects

The findings of the study showed that child rights-based programming seems to add special qualities to the planning, implementation and evaluation of development projects that move beyond the intended delivery of services and that these features may be beneficial for the development and maintenance of human security. The study shows that the key values added through the operationalization of child rights-based programming are as follows:

- The focus on children puts attention on one of the most vulnerable groups in society

- Human rights concerns are prioritized and seen as a key element to achieving social justice and economic development
- The increased use of participation and non-discrimination principles in project planning, implementation and evaluation tends to reduce tensions in the local community and contribute to a project's sustainability
- The work of organizations (whether they are INGOs, NGOs or the UN) complement the role of the legal duty bearer, i.e., the government, contributing to the fulfillment of children's rights and creating trust and security in the community
- Sustainable and positive relations with community leaders and state officials are developed, enabling advocacy towards relevant duty bearers and in turn perhaps leading to more active involvement and responsibility for necessary development endeavors
- Knowledge about the rights of the child are integrated throughout project activities, which enables awareness-raising among rights-holders and in turn strengthens agency and the ability of children to claim rights
- Meaningful activities for children contribute to their well-being and a sense of security/safety

Projects that use child rights-based programming components also managed to create durable systems focusing on duty bearers' accountability through monitoring. These structures, put in place to monitor child-rights compliance and create vertical dialogues, have the possibility of outlasting the project span and may help shape sustainable environments for the development of policies and laws and for the monitoring of public officials' performance and institutional child rights compliance. The emphasis on children further seems to be contributing

“This study argues that advocacy and awareness-raising are favorable traits of ‘doing children’s rights’ not only because they aim at creating rights-respecting societies, but because they meet the security challenges of conflict-affected areas by incorporating inclusion and non-discrimination.”

to a strengthening of social cohesion within local communities, particularly those with refugees and internally-displaced.

In a region with weak governance and regime transitions, the creation of locally-owned sustainable structures appears to be especially important. This study argues that advocacy and awareness-raising are favorable traits of “doing children’s rights” not only because they aim at creating rights-respecting societies, but because they meet the security challenges of conflict-affected areas by incorporating inclusion and non-discrimination. Awareness-raising of duty bearers is important and necessary to bring about systematic changes and practices

that incorporate child rights. The coordinated and simultaneous capacity-building of duty bearers and rights-holders in the child rights approach makes possible the development of common objectives and priorities.

### **Challenges of using child rights-based programming in development projects**

The study identified a number of challenges for development work using child rights-based programming in conflict-affected areas. These were:



A Palestinian girl in the Shatila refugee camp, Lebanon © Save the Children

- The mainstreaming of human rights knowledge and rights language in all aspects of the development process is challenging. Practitioners expressed fears of politicizing development work by using an explicit human rights agenda. While governments in the MENA region have shown great interest in complying with the CRC, the Convention challenges traditional and cultural norms and existing structures in some aspects. Also, the existing formats for some donor applications force organizations to compromise their human rights language and/or explicit human rights goals to be able to access funds; organizations often adopt a pragmatic perspective on this, believing that the allocation of resources will indirectly help them to meet their rights agenda.
- Child rights-based programming is a comprehensive work method that demands long-term commitment and sustainable practices and funds. Short-term projects and funding streams hinder the creation of sustainable solutions and the building of trust between involved actors; sustainable solutions and trust are in turn integral components of child rights-based programming.
- Effective advocacy can be hindered by lack of clarity among rights holders as to who are legal duty bearers. Among refugee/displaced children, for example, the study found that it was sometimes problematic to identify duty bearers, mainly due to the 'absence' of the state, and that sometimes responsibility was applied to the implementing NGO or to parents (whose rights also had been violated) and not towards the legal duty bearer.

### **Model Projects and Their Impact on Security in Conflict-Affected Areas**

Those projects in the study where operational practice most closely mirrored the theoretical model for child rights-based programming developed by the research team also had a greater impact on security in the area where the project was implemented.

The study showed that:

- The creation of sustainable systems focusing on duty bearers' accountability can be seen as part of institution-building, and as a means to strengthen the relationship between community and state
- Thorough training of children and youth in structured and peaceful participation in local development creates new and engaged agents for change. Children, youth and local community actors develop skills to work actively against discrimination, which in turn is necessary to ease tension between different groups and strengthen social cohesion and equality
- The investment of knowledge among children, youth and local community actors about their human rights and where to claim them has the potential to strengthen the social contract between a rights-respecting state and its inhabitants.
- Putting human rights on the agenda of local and national authorities can contribute to the rule of law which in turn strengthens safety and security

To conclude, there are a number of benefits to using child rights-based programming in conflict-affected areas, both of a more general nature and with specific relevance for security. These benefits are common to all the projects in focus, although to varying degrees. At the same time, some challenges also manifest themselves in all projects. These, however, are outweighed by the benefits.

While this study is an initial step towards a better understanding of the implications of the operationalization of child rights-based programming in conflict-affected areas and has made it possible to make some clear recommendations to organizations, governments and donors in favor of the child rights-programming approach, it also calls for further and expanded studies on the topic and the undertaking of long-term comparative studies.

# Introduction

Human rights-based approaches and rights-based methodologies have only been developed and applied in international development practice over recent decades. Interest in human rights-based approaches has grown and the number of actors using different versions of rights-based approaches has also increased. There is today a wealth of manuals, both general and for specific sectors, describing how an organization should implement a rights-based approach to its work.<sup>2</sup>

With this increase, questions have grown over the benefits and challenges the use of a rights-based approach brings to the development practice of an organization and development results in general, as well as the approach's usability under different conditions. Little research has been done in this area. Studies on human rights-based programming usually take the form of project evaluations and thus tend to focus on project outcomes, making it difficult to evaluate the methodology as such, i.e. if a specific human rights-based approach was operationalized and how it in this case might have contributed to project outcomes. This study is therefore designed to be able to discern the influence a certain programming (child rights-based programming) has on selected projects' operations and outcomes during specific circumstances (projects in areas affected by conflict).

## About the Study

The kinds of questions the study aimed to address called for a comparative study design. While a longitudinal study (where an area is studied before, during and after a child rights-based development project has been carried out) would have allowed for a chronological comparison, such studies were considered beyond the scope of this project. However, considering the dearth of related research, it was determined that a smaller more in-depth qualitative study provides a deeper picture of the operational practices and outcomes in focus. This, in turn, should be seen as an initial step towards better understanding the implications of the operationalization of child rights-based programming in conflict-affected areas.

The study specifically seeks to discern what child rights-based programming brings to a project's operational practice and outcome, besides the delivery of services that are the focus of the individual project, such as education or health. While the provision of health care to the children of a community will very likely be positive regardless of the kind of programming used, the impact and experience of the service may differ quite substantially.

At the center of this study are projects selected by four organizations as representative of their work using their unique model of child rights-based programming in the Middle East and North Africa region. The study analyzes and compares these development projects as to the degree that the characteristics of child rights-based programming are present in each project's operational practice.

The greater the number of key components of child rights-based programming that are found in a project's operational practice, the closer

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<sup>2</sup> In this study human rights based and rights based are used interchangeably and is an umbrella term for a range of approaches and methodologies that use human rights norms and principles to achieve transformative change and development outcomes.



the project is said to follow the intent of child rights-based programming in its work processes. This in turn makes it possible to compare the projects on the basis of their adherence to the approach in focus.

In order to analyze the impact projects employing child rights-based programming may have on safety and security in their areas of operation, the study hypothesizes that:

If child rights-based programming has a positive influence on safety/security, the projects studied that incorporate more of the key components of child rights-based programming will also be those that have a more positive influence on safety/security in their respective environments.

The following chapters trace the study's methodology and reasoning before moving on to the research findings, in particular the benefits and challenges of child rights-based programming in the projects under consideration as well as their possible impact on safety and security. Using these findings, the study concludes by offering recommendations to various stakeholders.

“The study specifically seeks to discern what child rights-based programming brings to a project's operational practice and outcome, besides the delivery of services that are the focus of the individual project such as education or health.”

# Theoretical Considerations & Methodology

## Human Rights, Child Rights & Security: Theoretical Considerations

Since the end of the 1990s, different human rights-based approaches to development have been used by United Nations agencies, national development actors and various international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The development of these numerous approaches led the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) to adopt a Statement of Common Understanding on Human Rights-Based Approaches to Development Cooperation and Programming (hereinafter the “Common Understanding”) in 2003. This Common Understanding sums up the main aspects of a human rights-based approach:

- All development programs, policies and technical assistance advance the realization of human rights as laid down in international human rights instruments;
- Human rights standards contained in, and principles derived from, the international human rights instruments guide all development cooperation and programming in all sectors and in all phases of the programming process; and
- Programs of development cooperation contribute to the development of the capacities of duty bearers to meet their obligations and those of “rights-holders” to claim their rights.

## Child Rights-Based Approaches to Development

A child rights-based approach to development is a version of a human rights-based approach that explicitly focuses on children’s human rights with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as its frame of reference. The status of an individual as a child affects his/her position as a rights-holder, especially in relation to civil and political rights, but there are also special rights identified for children within the Convention, such as protection rights, as well as the principle of the best interest of the child (Lansdown 2005).

A general human rights-based approach and a child rights-based approach differ in their respective concepts of the duty bearer. In international human rights law, the sovereign state bears the main responsibility to ensure its inhabitants their human rights, something that is commonly mirrored in human rights-based approaches. In child rights-based approaches, other stakeholders are also identified as duty bearers. As Jonsson (2003) puts it: “The CRC is an exception, because the parents (or other care-takers) are also recognized as duty bearers.” This is an interpretation of article 3(2) in the CRC, which says the State must:

*(...) undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures.*

This view on duty bearers is adopted by organizations such as Save the Children Sweden and UNICEF in relation to parents. This means that when parents are addressed in their roles as duty bearers, their own human rights must become an integral part of the child rights-based

programming, since they will not be able to ensure the rights of their children if their own rights are not respected, protected and fulfilled. The next step for the organizations then is to assess and develop strategies that strengthen the capacity of rights-holders to claim their rights and of duty bearers to fulfill their obligations.

As with human rights-based approaches in general, there is no template for child rights-based programming but rather a range of different interpretations and manners of operationalization. Even the name of the approach differs between the organizations and some of the terms are used interchangeably and are listed below:

- Child rights-based approach to programming (CRBA), used by UNICEF
- Child rights programming (CRP), used by Save the Children Sweden
- Child rights-based programming approach
- Child rights-based programming

### ***The Relationship between Child Rights-Based Programming in Conflict-Affected Areas and Safety/Security***

Development work in conflict-affected areas faces special challenges ranging from variable disruptions in everyday life to influxes of refugees and/or internally displaced persons (IDPs) and outbreaks of violence—all putting extra stress on already difficult interventions. Relationships between organizations and governments are especially complex in areas of conflict, where development actors can find themselves either too proximate or in opposition to the government. There is also the danger that organizations become substitutes for the state in implementing the rights of children. The government's independence may be seen

as compromised by its relationship with certain donors and/or development actors.

As such, some criticism of the use of human rights-based approaches in development has argued that these approaches risk “politicizing” development actors’ work and complicating their relationship with the host government (Birdsall 2007), something that is especially problematic in conflict-affected areas. On the other hand, it can be argued that all development work might be viewed as political due to its interventionist character and allocation of resources and power. All development programming that addresses non-discrimination, participation and accountability seriously will undoubtedly disturb the status quo, while not being “political” in terms of party politics per se.

### ***Defining Security***

Since this study is concerned with questions of impact on safety/security in conflict-affected areas there is a need to define security as it is used here. Traditionally, definitions of security have focused on the integrity or survival of a state and on the kind of threats that pose clear and immediate threats to the state, such as interstate war or civil unrest. The individual person has not been the subject of this type of security analysis and rarely enters into it except as a potential soldier or threatening militant opposition. After the end of the Cold War, a variety of more inclusive definitions of security emerged that allowed for an incorporation of the safety and security of the individual and the community into the analysis.

“Human security” is one of the more commonly-used concepts that encompass these changes in our understanding of security. It was introduced on the international agenda in the 1994 UN Human Development Report that stated that the subject of security should be the hu-

## Types of Security

Type of Security	Reference Object	Responsibility to Protect	Possible Threats
Traditional Security	The state	The integrity of the state	Interstate war Nuclear proliferation Civil unrest
Individual Security	The individual and the community	The integrity of the individual and the community	Disease Poverty Natural disaster Violence Landmines Human rights abuses
Human Security	Human beings	Life and well-being of human beings	All of the above

man being and should comprise economic, physical, environmental, community and political aspects of security as well as food and health security.<sup>3</sup> In this sense “human security” is closely related to human rights in that it spans over all aspects of daily life. However, it is also clear that “human security” (focusing on the life and well-being of human beings) and traditional security (focusing on the survival and development of the individual state) are inter-related and mutually dependent. A state experiencing civil war or unrest does not constitute a safe environment for its inhabitants more than a population suffering from political suppression or hunger provides a state with a predictable security situation.

Human security, with its relationship to state security on the one hand and human rights on the other, is a concept that can link human rights-based approaches to state security. It can be argued that respect for human rights is necessary for sustain-

able state security. Human rights define what acceptable state behavior is and in times of questionable human rights compliance the public may challenge state legitimacy, contributing to insecurity for both individuals and the state. Following this line of argument, it is essential to build durable systems for monitoring human rights violations and claiming rights through legislation and policymaking, since these kinds of systems have the potential to build (or restore) trust between a state and its inhabitants. This, in turn, adds to an environment that promotes and facilitates continuity and safety.

Child rights-based programming is aimed at contributing to state compliance of children’s human rights, and thus the development of structures that promote human security indirectly through human rights. This study aims to examine this relationship further by reviewing how child rights-based programming affects safety and security in areas of conflict, if at all.

“Security” as used in this report refers both to human security and more traditional security, although human security will be the starting point for the analysis as it is both more in line with the idea

<sup>3</sup> It can be defined as “a situation/condition free of injury/threats to an individual’s, group’s, or community’s well-being, including freedom from threats and/or direct attacks on physical and psychological integrity.” See Conteh-Morgan, 2005.

of human rights as such and more easily related to the individuals and communities involved in the selected projects.

### **Underlying Hypothesis of the Study**

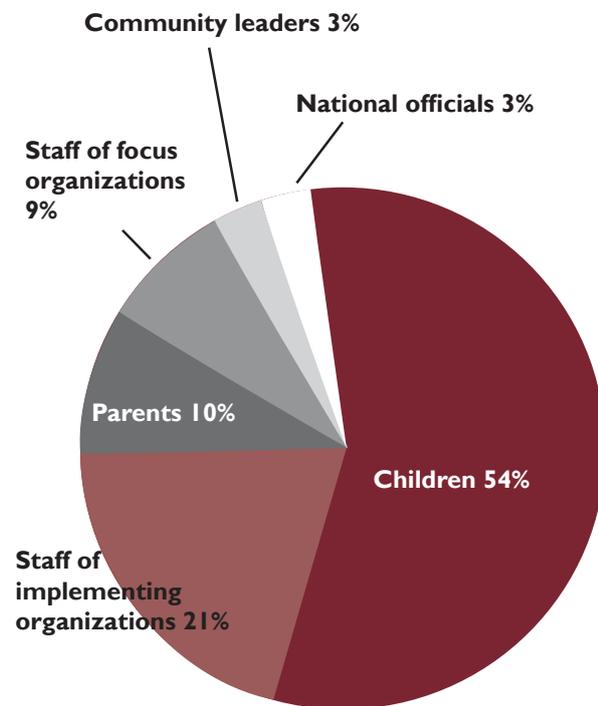
Using the ideal model of child rights-based programming that was created for this study and given the relationship between human rights and human security elaborated above, this study adopts the following hypothesis:

*If child rights-based programming indeed has a positive influence on safety/security, the projects that display more of the key components of the “ideal” child rights-based programming will also be more likely to have a positive impact on safety/security in their respective environments.*

### **Selection of Projects**

All projects that form the empirical base for this study were to be situated in conflict-affected areas in the MENA region. Since any area affected by conflict tends to experience some level of insecurity, contested authority and legitimacy, diminished national capacity, forced displacement/refugee situations and/or the need for shorter time-frames for duty bearer responses, these kind of areas are challenging for all types of development work regardless of programming. Consequently, this kind of environment provides a real test for child rights-based programming.

Moreover, these projects were to be considered good examples of the operationalization of child rights-based programming, both in regard to their day-to-day work and their outcomes. In order to meet this condition, the projects were selected in cooperation with four organizations working with different versions of child rights-based programming (hereinafter called “focus organizations”). Save the Children Sweden, UNICEF, Naba’a and Defence for Children International were all asked to select projects to be examined in this study. The projects were to have:



### **Study Interviews**

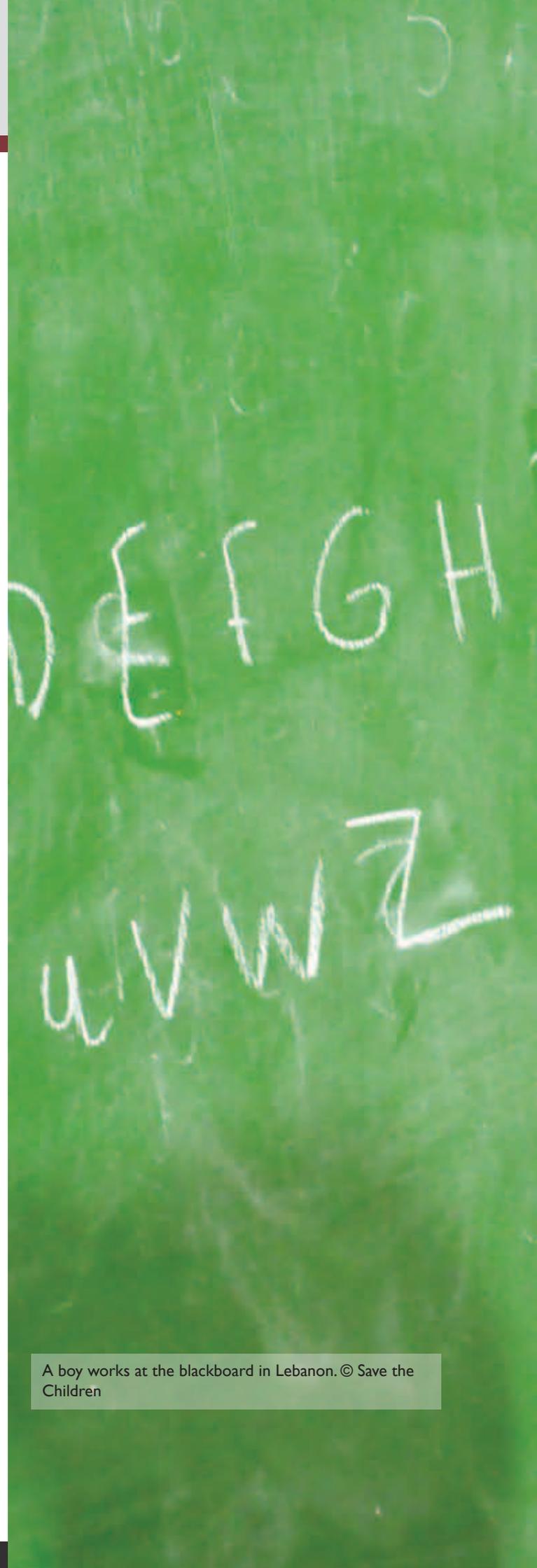
- explicitly used some kind of child rights-based programming in their documentation; and
- been implemented for at least one year, focusing on basic schooling or other child- or youth-oriented activities.

After this first round of selection, local partner organizations and community-based organizations engaged in the projects were also included in the discussion. Finally, seven projects in three countries were selected for the study. All of the projects selected were part of broader and longer-term programs for holistic child rights-based programming. This meant that the selected projects might not include all the key components of ideal child rights-based programming, even though the overall program might do so.

### **Research Method**

In order to grasp the qualitative aspects of child rights-based programming that might distinguish it from other kinds of programming both in its operational practice and in its outcomes, qualitative methods were used for both data collection and analysis. This was in order to be able to answer questions like why and how—not just what, where and when. The qualitative nature of the study means that it cannot be used to draw general conclusions but can be used to give a detailed and deeper picture of the benefits and challenges of applying processes like child rights-based programming in conflict-affected areas and specific outcomes that may be related to the usage of such processes in relation to safety and security.

To develop a thorough empirical understanding of the practices of the selected projects, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were carried out with children in focus of the individual projects and their parents, staff engaged in the projects on different levels, as well as public officials active in the project areas. Besides the interviews, the study reviewed documents that framed the practices of the projects, e.g., organizational strategies on various levels and program and project plans.





# An Ideal Model for Comparison: Child Rights-Based Programming & Its Key Components

“Child rights-based programming” refers generally to all development programming based on the CRC. Since the focus organizations in this study do not use the same concepts between themselves to describe the process of operationalizing child rights in their development work, it has been necessary to develop a theoretically-based ideal of “child rights-based programming” to be used in the study as a model for comparison.

This “ideal model” was developed through a review of existing guidelines, handbooks and theoretical literature on child rights-based approaches, with the aim of finding the common denominators between these approaches.<sup>4</sup> The conclusion was that in order for a development project to be child-rights based, it should ideally contain:

- A child rights situation analysis
- A clear and outspoken child focus
- Active inclusion of marginalized, disadvantaged, or excluded groups
- Identification of different kinds of duty bearers
- Explicit child rights objectives, measurable goals and targets
- Monitoring and evaluation carried out using child rights-based principles and indicators

- Taking into account all four guiding principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Local ownership, partnership and participation<sup>5</sup>

Child rights-based programming can be said to be an attempt to operationalize the CRC in practice; all key components of such approaches are derived from the CRC. The following describes these components in detail.

## 1. *Child rights situation analysis*

A child rights situation analysis forms a comprehensive basis for the planning and implementation of all programs, projects and activities. A child rights-based situation analysis must therefore not only focus on the actual rights situation per se, but also include an analysis of the underlying causes for the non-realization of rights and the existing power relations between duty bearers and rights-holders. A thorough understanding of the capacity of different duty bearers, their knowledge of child rights and their political ambitions is indispensable to determining future programs and project objectives. Data should preferably be disaggregated by gender, age, geographical spread etc. both in the situation analysis and in the monitoring and evaluation phase, if this can be done without harming the integrity of individual children or parents.

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4 See for instance Hamm (2001), Miller (2010), Jonsson (2003) and handbooks from The Danish Institute for Human Rights, Save the Children, Plan International and UNICEF.

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5 For an overview of the key components and their sub-components, see Appendix A.

## 2. **A clear and outspoken child focus**

Agency and the empowerment of children and youth is another essential component of child rights-based programming. This aspect requires organizations to incorporate the unique circumstances of children and youth in all phases of their projects and programs and to use empowering language that facilitates the strengthening of agency.

## 3. **Active inclusion of marginalized, disadvantaged, or excluded groups**

Marginalized, disadvantaged and excluded groups should be actively included in the analysis and formulation of program/project objectives, as well as in the development of various activities. Children and youth who are systematically denied their rights or whose rights are down-prioritized, who are not legally recognized as rights-holders or who are ignored by official government structures, and children who belong to minority groups at risk of discrimination or who are economically deprived are all examples of these kinds of rights-holders.

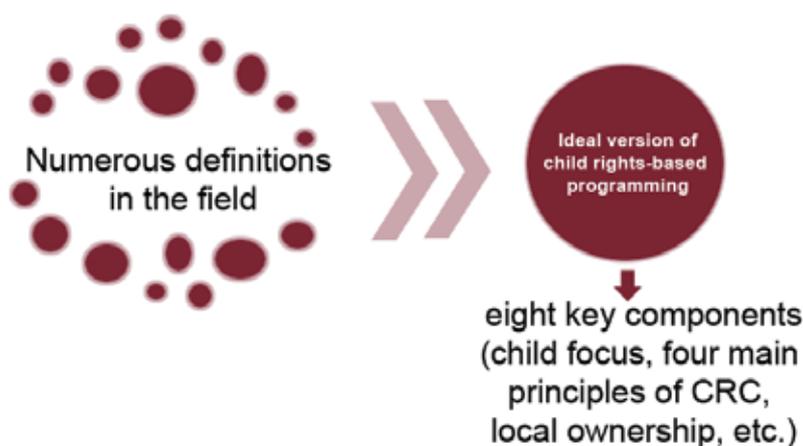
## 4. **Identification of different kinds of duty bearers**

Child rights-based programming should differentiate between different duty bearers such as state officials, parents, development organizations, community leaders and teachers. It is also important to assess the different duty bearers' capacities and/or political will to fulfill these rights, as well as their awareness of international and national legal systems concerned with the rights of children. It is also important to clarify the relationship between various duty bearers in order to support them in their roles and responsibilities.

## 5. **Explicit child rights objectives, measurable goals and targets**

Because human rights address fundamental issues, it is almost impossible to find a development project that does not touch on some area of human rights or deliver a service that fulfills a right, even though said rights might not be specifically addressed as such. Child rights-based programming, however, should explicitly relate

## Defining child rights-based programming



measurable goals and targets of both a project's process and outcome with human rights. The objectives of a specific project or program should be clearly framed in relation to the rights that are to be strengthened.

### **6. Monitoring and evaluation using child rights-based principles and indicators**

The objectives of a project in child rights-based programming should also be monitored and evaluated using child rights-based principles and indicators. If not, there is a risk that the objectives will not be truly operationalized within the program structure. The establishment of human rights indicators relating to the objectives and goals is therefore paramount. Rights-based monitoring and evaluation should also guide the planning and implementation of future projects and programs. Moreover, programming should be evaluated in a way that ensures that children and youth participate and feel that their views are taken seriously.

### **7. Taking into account all four guiding principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child**

Four rights named in the Convention are considered general principles guiding the interpretation of all other rights in the Convention. According to these principles:

- all the rights guaranteed in the Convention must be available to all children without discrimination of any kind (Article 2);
- the best interests of the individual child must be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children (Article 3);
- every child has the right to life, survival and development (Article 6); and
- the view of the individual child must be considered and taken into account in all matters affecting him or her (Article 12).

Therefore, these four general principles must also permeate child rights-based programming regardless of the specific focus of the intervention.

### **8. Local ownership, partnership and participation**

To enable long-lasting and sustainable outcomes, child rights-based programs and projects should create and sustain strategic partnerships with the communities, civil society, host states and the private sector. Especially important for child rights-based programming is participation by children in identifying the challenges/rights violations that the project will target as well as in planning of project activities. Generally, participation in the initial phases of a process creates more comprehensive ownership.

To summarize, an ideal project using child rights-based programming should display the above key components during preparation, implementation and final goal achievement.

## **Selected Projects & Their Contexts**

The projects selected for in depth study were seven projects run by the four focus organizations, Save the Children Sweden, Naba'a, UNICEF and Defence for Children International and their local partners in Yemen, Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territory. Yemen and Lebanon are parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as is Israel, which has occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1967. The Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) have also ratified the Convention but are not official parties to it.

The projects studied in Yemen and Lebanon incorporated components that address refugee and IDP stakeholders, thus meeting the study's definition of working in conflict-affected areas. The projects in the oPt, however, did not incorporate refugees and IDPs per se, but the region is in other aspects more classically identified as a conflict-affected area.

### **Lebanon: Geographical Context and Projects**

Projects A, D and E are all geographically located in one, or both, of the Palestinian refugee camps Nahr El Bared and Beddawi in Northern Lebanon. In 2007, conflict within Nahr El Bared led thousands of refugees to flee to Beddawi camp, doubling the population there and resulting in immense pressure on housing and services.

Project A is managed by a community-based protection network seeking to protect Palestinian children from violence, abuse of power and discrimination. Some 1,700 children have participated. Project D, run by Naba'a, seeks to reconstruct one of the residential areas that was destroyed during the Nahr El Bared crisis, affecting 11 families of 558 persons. Project E facilitates remedial classes

for children identified in UNRWA schools as being in need of extra support, reaching 180 children in Nahr El Bared and Beddawi camps.

Project C, affecting 1,600 persons over three years, is based in the southern suburbs of Beirut. Project C seeks to ensure the availability and accessibility of formal and non-formal education for Iraqi refugee children in Lebanon.

### **Yemen: Geographical Context and Project**

The governorate of Sa'ada is located in northwest Yemen. Since 2004, it has been the staging ground for a conflict between the Al Houthis, an anti-government insurgency movement, and the Yemeni army. In 2009, this conflict escalated and 250,000

<b>Focus Organization</b>	<b>Name of the Project</b>	<b>Country</b>
<b>Save the Children Sweden</b>	A. Protecting the rights of Palestinian children affected by armed conflicts through community-based mechanisms in the Gaza Strip and North Lebanon	Lebanon
<b>Save the Children Sweden</b>	B. Child protection/education project – Sa'ada Emergency	Yemen
<b>Save the Children Sweden</b>	C. Ta'leem Youth	Lebanon
<b>Naba'a</b>	D. Reconstruction of the Mohajareen area project	Lebanon
<b>UNICEF</b>	E. Remedial education project in the Scout Centre in Nahr El Bared and Beddawi	Lebanon
<b>UNICEF</b>	F. Creating Adolescent-Friendly Spaces	occupied Palestinian territory
<b>Defence for Children International</b>	G. The Protection and Community Mobilization Program	occupied Palestinian territory

\*The organizations and projects studied are detailed in Appendix B

individuals were forced to leave, becoming IDPs in Amran.

Project B serves a number of objectives: providing education and school supplies, the running of tent schools and support for children to enroll in nearby schools, and the establishment and operation of child-friendly spaces that offer psycho-social services as well as non-food items like children's clothing and life skills training. It has affected an estimated 10,000 children.

### ***Occupied Palestinian Territory: Geographical Context and Projects***

Projects F and G are being implemented in the oPt, which is comprised of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Each of these areas was occupied in 1967 and has large groups of children and youth, many of them refugees or IDPs that face numerous obstacles including achieving freedom of movement, access to education and health and lack of protection from violence.

Project F facilitates Adolescent Friendly Spaces with the goal of creating a policy and programmatic environment that allows adolescents to use their full potential and participate in national development. The spaces have impacted over 50,000 young people through the outreach of four Palestinian NGOs and 93 community organizations and youth centers. Project G works on protection and community mobilization in partnership with the Palestinian Network for Children's Rights, which consists of 60 community-based organizations.



Iraqi refugee boys in Lebanon © Save the Children



# Analysis: Benefits, Challenges & Security Implications of Child Rights-Based Programming in Conflict-Affected Areas

This section explores how the seven projects in focus relate to the ideal model of child rights-based programming in order to discern the degree to which their operational practices adhere to the ideal model. This was done through an analysis of the documents of the respective project and the interviews conducted with children, parents, staff and other duty bearers related to each project.

## Child Rights Situation Analysis

In general, the organizations participating in this study have extensive work experience in the countries under examination and are thus well-informed of the respective national legal systems and their commitments to international human rights law.

Still, the process of doing a proper child rights analysis takes time and thus can be an obstacle, especially in situations that demand a quick response (as often is required in conflict areas) or where rights-holders are not protected. To be conducted properly, a child rights situation analysis should incorporate the participation of children; in any situation, this takes additional planning and care.

**In emergencies** Most of the respondents working in emergencies expressed that the child rights-based approach does not play an active role in their planning. For example, one staff member said that “*pure emergency [planning] is not, if truth be told, rights-based, it is really about needs.*” However, other staff members interviewed disagreed, saying that even if a child rights situation analysis is not conducted in emergency situations, priorities can easily

be set by the organization’s overall programming. When an emergency situation occurs in a region where the implementing organization already has carried out a child rights situation analysis, the existing analysis may constitute an important (and child rights-friendly) tool.

Another staff member interviewed proposed ways of adapting to produce a child rights situation analysis in emergency situations:

*“It is not really complicated. It is not that you want to go and do a survey [...] There are tools ready that you can adapt. [...] You adapt the tools, you train the people that will go and work with the children for a couple of hours. Since you have an emergency, instead of having six-day trainings, you can have the basics in two-hour training [...]. If you just respond, you may be causing more harm to the community than benefits.”*

All types of child rights-based programming aim at creating sustainable structures, however, it appears that this aim is addressed quite differently in emergency situations.

*“It is almost easier in emergencies because you do some activities with the children and then everybody is happy, [...] in a development project you have to be much more formal and much more official and you have to do your official meetings and stuff like that before you can start a project. So that is the advantage with child protection in emergencies, you can immediately build in the listening to children.”*

**Lack of protection** Conducting a good child rights-based situation analysis may be particularly challenging in a context like Lebanon, a country which is not party to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The fear of in-

carceration experienced by recent refugees may make it difficult to conduct proper assessments (of the number of refugees, their whereabouts and their most urgent rights violations).

**Perceptions of donor requirements** Conducting a rights-based situation analysis may challenge the existing format for funding applications. According to respondents, many donors ask for more general quantitative-based analyses and needs assessments and do not expect applicants to use the attainment of human rights as goals or indicators. Funding applicants, while not asked directly about this, expressed hesitancy to use rights language in their funding applications, fearing it would jeopardize the application. This may constitute a challenge for organizations that seek to integrate and adopt a rights-based framework for their programming, since the applications and the donors' requests tend to set the project objectives.

In conclusion, the child participation component is particularly time- and resource-consuming and a greater challenge in specific contexts. Nevertheless, practitioners considered it valuable to create sustainable actions appropriate to the context. In the words of one, *"We could have started [with the activities] two weeks ago, but we really want to understand the situation, to hear the children, to work with the local municipality, the duty bearers, and the ministry. [This process] takes more time from our staff, also from the community, but it also lasts longer."*

## Clear & Outspoken Child Focus

The projects all took the specific circumstances of children into account in their practice. This was especially clear when it comes to the kinds of activities, and time and place they were conducted.

**Practice reflects rights** In numerous instances, projects incorporated practices specifically attuned to child rights and children's circumstances:

- **Protection** – Projects in Yemen and the oPt, in particular, changed the location of their activities when participating children expressed feelings of insecurity at the first location.
- **Gender balance** - To various degrees all focus organizations and their partners developed strategies to reach both boys and girls through the activities by building relationships with parents, hiring female facilitators to strengthen the gender balance, and ensure that activities for female rights-holders met cultural expectations. At the same time most organizations sought to conduct coeducational activities, or activities that incorporate both boys and girls at the same time.
- **Child expression and participation** - Additionally, organizations recognized rights-holders' unique views by asking children and their parents about their perceptions and experiences of conducted activities. Through interviews with children and parents, the study found that activities addressing the right to education were well-

appreciated by children. In Lebanon, interviewees noted the lack of sufficient educational possibilities but acknowledged that the organization in question was contributing to fulfilling the right to education.

➤ **Right to play** - Several of the projects also focused on the right to play, alone or in combination with education. According to the staff of the focus organizations, meaningful extracurricular activities had a beneficial effect on the mental and emotional development of children and youth and allowed them to release some of the psychosocial pressure created by living in stressful situations. One Yemeni mother emphasized the influence of these extracurricular activities on the overall development of her children: *“At first when we arrived in this area my sons were very afraid and shy and they couldn’t go out or speak to other children. They didn’t meet any of their neighbors. But now that has changed, they go out and they have even become physically stronger.”*

**Creation of sustainable structures** Appreciation for activities may not in itself distinguish child rights-based activities from activities arranged by other organizations not working specifically with child rights-based programming. What distinguished the projects in focus was that many of the children interviewed (particularly those in the oPt) did link the project activities with child rights. This indicates that educational activities carried out using child rights-based programming may generate agency within children and youth. One boy interviewed expressed this in his own as: *“We have the right to come here and study, and we have the right to do activities and play.”*

This facilitation of agency, which in turns builds and sustains operational practice, embodies the move from a needs-based discourse to a rights-based one, where rights-holders play an active role in shaping projects. A particularly telling example of this was the participation of youth and children in designing a reconstructed neighborhood on the border of a Palestinian refugee camp in northern Lebanon, where extensive work was done to incorporate children and youth. This serious engagement with rights-holders and their parents, etc. was a

stepping stone in the creating of sustainable structures, agency and trust, which in themselves are necessary building blocks for all sustainable development endeavors.

**Incomplete integration of a child focus** The written documentation of the organizations in focus indicated, however, that the projects had not yet fully embraced a discourse based on child rights. “Beneficiaries” was still the most common term used when referring to rights-holders targeted by the projects. Phrases such as “unmet needs” were used to describe violations of the right to education, physical security, etc. These remnants of a needs-based discourse were also apparent in interviews with staff from the focus organizations and their partner organizations. This indicates that the necessary discourse of child rights-based programming is still developing and requires constant capacity building to permeate all levels of practice.

In summary, a clear and outspoken child focus ensures that the situation of children and their rights are kept at the center of a project’s operational practice. By acting in line with child rights throughout, programming appears to create agency in rights holders that sustains beyond the project’s life. Relatively minor adjustments to include both children and parents in activities are important since they become proof of the project’s engagement, thus creating local support for the project and its aims.

## Inclusion of Marginalized, Disadvantaged & Excluded Groups

Most staff members interviewed indicated that the inclusion of all children in the projects regardless of their legal or societal status was of key importance. This concern was emphasized particularly in relation to the status of refugees and IDPs within their host communities, as indicated by this staff member:

*“We want to ensure inclusion. For example, when we work with refugees and the donors ask for a*

*specific focus on refugees (like the case with the Iraqis) our partner tells us only you [the organization] accept to have some [children from the host community]. Others [organizations] they don't accept to fund part of projects that include non-refugees"*

**Refugee rights under a child rights framework** The inclusion of the refugee children, mentioned in the quote, was generally carried out by creating and upholding safe physical spaces where children could study or play, in combination with awareness-raising activities aimed at children and parents on the rights of *all* children, and openly articulated advocacy towards duty bearers on different levels.

An interesting example of this kind of work was found in the project concerned with Iraqi refugee children's schooling. Here, the focus organization negotiated with the Lebanon's Ministry of Education to find ways to fulfill these children's right to education, taking their status as children rather than refugees as a point of departure (since Lebanon is not party to the Refugee Convention). These negotiations led to a government memorandum granting all Iraqi refugee children the right to education by enrolling in Lebanese public schools. At the same time, Iraqi school children were receiving, through the work of local partners, education and training on children's rights, thus creating a top-down, bottom-up structure for the implementation of a new policy and sustainable change.

**Facilitating human security** In the situation described above, the focus organization was an interpreter and facilitator that constructively communicated local knowledge of the precarious situation of the Iraqi children to the official state duty bearers. This role of interpreter/facilitator can be important in order to start building trust and dialogue between rights-holders and duty bearers. When it comes to the inclusion and protection of marginalized groups, cooperative approaches are especially important, since all levels of society must demonstrate political will in order for the efforts to be sustainable. Once these channels are working other rights issues probably can be raised and dealt with in a similar manner, a manner that influences human security positively.

“A clear and outspoken child focus ensures that the situation of children and their rights are kept at the centre of a project's operational practice. By acting in line with child rights throughout, programming appears to create agency in rights holders that sustains beyond the project's life.”

In insecure contexts where political agendas may be constantly changing and emergencies follow one after another, the sustainability of such dialogue is more challenging. The inclusion of marginalized groups (e.g. refugee children) generally requires not only clear political will but also extra funding in order to be sustainable.

**Perspectives on sustainability** However, the very idea of creating sustainable and durable solutions for refugees or IDPs sometimes met with resistance during interviews with staff members, community leaders and parents. Some respondents feared that creating a long-term project would seem to accept the current situation and abandon aspirations of returning “home” or returning others home. These viewpoints pose a methodological challenge for projects aiming to create sustainable structures, since support for this aim may not be shared by all staff members or the host community. This challenge may add an extra dimension of tension in an already-strained setting.

In conclusion, the need to include children regardless of background and legal status in projects appeared to be vital to the child rights programming approach. The influx of refugees or IDPs or the coexistence of groups that do not generally mix leads to societal conflict. If projects succeeded in including marginalized groups into regular activities rather than creating special projects exclusively for these groups, their integration was shown to normalize relations between the different children. This achievement has great potential for diminishing the probability of conflict among different groups. The main challenge to including refugees and IDPs in mainstream activities appeared to be fear among refugees and their host communities of making the situation permanent.

## Identifying Duty Bearers

The first task for any project, in order to provide support for and advocate towards duty bearers, is to identify the relevant duty bearers in relation to the children in their area. The identification of duty bearers is also paramount for rights-holders, in order for them to be able to claim their rights. The

focus organizations in this study all, to various degrees, sought to build capacity among governmental duty bearers as well as the staff of implementing partner organizations. Some projects conducted awareness-raising among children, parents and the community.

**The state as a duty bearer** In many of the projects in focus, the organizations themselves faced challenges in identifying the state as the legal duty bearer for the rights of children (for example, when the state has not ratified fundamental human rights treaties, when reservations have been made against specific articles, or in contexts where the political situation is very sensitive). One staff member working with Palestinian children in Lebanon stated that:

*“There is no clear accountability for the Palestinians. They are under UNRWA, as a duty bearer, but to what extent and how is it in practice? [...] I find it very complex to analyze who is a duty bearer, who has responsibility. Usually it is very clear that the government is a counterpart. [...] In the Palestinian context, you don’t have any government but you have UNRWA, who is a duty bearer for a certain number of things, but they don’t have the same accountability as the government. It is a little bit more complex.”*

It may also be that a state was identified as the relevant duty bearer but the probability of it adopting its responsibilities were viewed as unlikely. Facilitators at one of the organizations working with Palestinian children in Lebanon expressed a lack of faith in international mechanisms:

*“[They] talk about international conventions and international principles and standards to be respected, but each individual has the right to have a state, to have an ID and so on. So how can we believe in and live by these principles and at the same time the international community, the international organizations who are supposed to provide us with these rights are not providing them?”*

These kinds of attitudes generally lead to a situation where legal duty bearers (like the state in question) are not held to account, something that constitutes a challenge for child rights-based programming. Even when knowledge of children’s



A boy and girl participate in an art activity in the occupied Palestinian territory © Save the Children

rights is present among the staff and parents, cynical understandings regarding their potential for instigating change create a vacuum and negatively influence the motivation to protect and advocate for rights.

**Parents as duty bearers** Parents are recognized as duty bearers by the CRC, as stated above. Parents are generally understood to have a duty to promote and respect the rights of their children but cannot be held accountable for implementing all aspects of their children's right to education, for example the provision of school facilities and teachers' salaries. However, they can be held accountable for allowing their children to attend school and making sure that children have time to do their homework, etc.

➤ **Among children** - When asked who is responsible for fulfilling their rights, the vast majority of the interviewed children answered in the following order: their parents, their extended family, their teachers/facilitators at the project centre and the community. Some of them, especially the older children and youth, also recognized the state and the NGOs working in their area as duty bearers. (A few of the children also mentioned themselves or God as responsible for the fulfillment of their human rights.) One organizational staff member said: *"Duty bearers are often seen as government, etc. We see [them] as much lower down than that, especially in terms of children's rights, with parents as duty bearers."* A father commented: *"In fact, the family is a small government, but we also have the umbrella of a big government that should first provide all the rights of the parents, then we can provide our children with their rights."*

➤ **Among parents** - The majority of the parents interviewed in this study recognized themselves as primary duty bearers. All of the parents interviewed were familiar with the rights of the child, if not before project activities, from their children after taking part in the project. The level of knowledge varied widely among parents, however. The majority could not identify duty bearers up to the government level and their understanding of mechanisms for respecting, protecting and fulfilling the human rights

of their children did not extend beyond themselves, the community and/or the organizations working on the projects. This knowledge gap may indicate that parents in some cases need more support from organizations to understand their role as duty bearers.

➤ **Parents as rights-holders** - It is important to recognize that parents are rights-holders as well as duty bearers. One organization employee mentioned the vulnerable state of parents when asked if realizing child rights is the responsibility of the government or the community. *"No, at the lower level [the responsible party] is the parent. But from the NGO perspective, it is not the parent; parents are also victims. [...] If the father is unemployed due to politics, he is a victim like his child. And being jobless also affects the child because their rights are tied together."*

➤ **Rights tied to duties** - In all the projects, children were taught about their duties towards their families in conjunction with their rights. For example, the child's right to education was presented as linked to his/her duty to study well and respect the teacher, while the child's right to the best attainable health care was paired with his/her duty to take good care of him/herself. All the children interviewed were familiar with both their rights and what was perceived to be the duties associated with these rights. However, this way of teaching rights may have the unintended consequences of creating a conditional understanding of human rights among the children. Some children thought of their rights as something that could be taken away if they did not fulfill their responsibilities. For example, one child said: *"When you do your duties, you can have your rights."*

**Organizations as duty bearers** All organizations implementing the projects in focus adopted the role of duty bearer in relationship to their work. This role includes the obligation to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of the children participating in their projects.

➤ **A possible challenge to state authority** - The relationship between the legal duty bearer and the organization is, within the organizations, generally seen as unproblematic.

According to a staff member: *“I think [the relationship] is complementary actually. And I think that we have not undermined the government. We are not paying the teachers. They still have to provide all of those sorts of things.”*

However, a majority of the children and youth interviewed stated that they come to the project centers because its facilities fulfill some of their rights, e.g. the right to play, the right to education, the right to development and the right to participate in decision-making. Some children said that they like to attend the activities because the facilitators treat them with respect and without violence. In this aspect, the projects create a “mini state” where the organizations are recognizing the rights of the children and where the rights function as a contract between the organization and the individual child. A practitioner at one of the organizations described the situation as such: *“Since our government cannot fulfill all the needs of the schools, organizations like X and Y are taking care of the responsibilities. In this way, the children get their rights.”*

This may indicate a problem since the parents and children in general appear to be less aware of the ultimate duty bearer (the state), which may re-direct a pressure that should be placed on the state rather than on the organization.

On the other hand, organizations that complement or replace the work of legal duty bearers, through their projects may constitute a stabilizing factor in the sense that they are fulfilling the rights of children that otherwise should have remained unfulfilled. An organization can in such circumstances have a clear positive impact on human security in the communities where it is active.

➤ **Importance of sustainability** - However, this issue makes it vital that responsibilities are gradually transmitted to the local community, which in turn requires projects and programs to be of adequate duration. One staff member said: *“Improving communities needs long-term intervention, not just an imaginary ‘swoosh’ and everything will be fine.”*

Interviewees expressed an awareness of the problems posed by short-time projects in areas where long-time engagement is of essence: *“I think you can do some damage control by always keeping in mind that you, as an organization, are a foreign body. I mean, your organization is completely dependent on its funding and without the funding it cannot do anything.”*

➤ **Capacity-building among legal duty bearers** - Ideal child rights-based programming requires that organizations work with the legal duty bearers in awareness-raising, training and advocacy, a condition that may be hard to realize in practice. However, all the focus organizations, i.e., Save the Children Sweden, UNICEF, Naba’a, and DCI facilitated, sponsored or conducted capacity-building for all identified duty bearers. The impact of this kind of capacity-building was noticeable in an interview with one duty bearer in the oPt who used extensive rights language and made clear references to the CRC when talking about his work in the government. It later turned out that this specific respondent had received child rights training sponsored and facilitated by one of the focus organizations.

➤ **International advocacy** - From the perspective of local partner organizations, child rights advocacy carried out by an international NGO is often a positive experience. One staff member of a local partner organization said: *“For the local NGO, it is hard to do advocacy work—to shout towards the [Israeli] government. [...] Please, come on, we want you [the focus organization] to shout. You are European, no one will say anything to you, but they will put us in prison.”* Local partners appreciated that the larger international organizations are able to give voice to their concerns.

In sum, the organizations’ self-proclaimed responsibility complemented or sometimes even replaced (or at least challenged) the legal duty bearer’s responsibilities within the framework of the individual projects. In this way the state, the legally-responsible party for the implementation and protection of children’s human rights, may have been perceived as having been released from aspects of its responsibility towards rights-holders, knowledge about where to claim rights may have been obscured or

state authority contested. Staff of the organizations themselves stated that they believed they had mediated these risks.

To conclude this section on the importance of identifying duty bearers, all organizations in focus did so on several levels. The benefits of focusing on duty bearers other than the state, such as parents, community leaders, development organizations, appear to be that the rights of the child become the responsibility of all persons surrounding him or her.

However, since it is the state that is the ultimate legal duty bearer in relation to the rights of the child and generally also the only duty bearer with enough power to take many of the actions necessary to instigate sustainable change, it is important that all other duty bearers are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to each other. Even if the state has been lobbied by the focus organizations through channels other than the studied projects, it is of essence that the children, parents, local organizations and the community at large for each project knows about this work and the state's responsibilities.

## Child Rights Objectives, Measurable Goals & Targets

Clear, visible and measurable goals clearly relating to the rights of the child are essential in order to measure progress and to further develop the practice of child rights-based work. One interviewee explained that: *"The intervention itself is always linked to a violated right; this is what the intervention is based on. If you like, for us, it show[s] the track, where you are going to reach and to go."*

**Tensions over language** However, the interviewees did not all agree that the use of rights-based language was critical. One stated: *"[Y]ou don't need to say specifically—what is the right to education? For me, [not using the language] is not compromising. Because if you just want to prove that you are a child rights-based programming organization and you lose the possibility to intervene for the best interest of the child, then this is not smart."* Expressing project

objectives in human rights terms may in itself be controversial in conflict-affected areas and there are different views among staff, children and parents over whether a language of rights in day-to-day activities is of essence or even wise. One respondent in favor of using child rights language saw it as an important asset for the refugee children in a certain project:

*"[K]nowledge [of rights] make a big difference because it's universal wherever they go; it is the one language that they [the children] can use, so this is why we have a strong focus on this component." A teacher agreed: "It is important to train people about these rights. Everybody should know them. Teachers used to beat children as a punishment in school, but now there are many alternative methods [of disciplining children]."*

In contrast, other staff members expressed fear that knowledge about their rights might put children and youth at risk, since they could become frustrated and start demanding their rights, which in turn would generate conflict. This was most clearly articulated in the oPt. For example, one administrator said:

*"That is international law [children's rights]. It is a work in progress. We are on a road but we cannot say exactly how long the road is and where we are going to get to and how we are going to get there and so on. I mean you cannot really give those answers to a child because there you have to be careful so what we say is realistic and realizable—especially for young people. Because the idealism of a young person can be easily—I don't want to say manipulated—but can easily be overestimated. That is really not helpful. That is when it becomes hurtful."*

To address this dilemma some projects developed a method of teaching about rights using the protection principle. Rights were taught in a more indirect manner and paired with suggestions of how to claim rights in non-confrontational ways.

**Demands to know more about rights** On the other hand, several of the children expressed clearly that they sought to learn more about child rights, with one interviewee stating: *"Of course we need to know about our rights. How can we other-*

wise demand them?” The idea that rights knowledge could generate frustration and then conflict among children and youth was not substantiated by the interviews with children. A group of young males said: “When you know more, you do not feel frustrated—you try to change [...]. [T]he children all around the world are so many. If they all know about their rights, we could make a big change.”

Parents largely shared these views. One father interviewed in the West Bank told his own story to highlight the difference that rights knowledge has made in his family’s life. He himself was not aware of his rights when he was young. “My needs were not addressed in rights. The only right I knew about was the right to defend my country.” He tried to do this by throwing stones during the first *intifada* (the 1987-1993 uprising). He was arrested and spent a lot of time in jail and as a result missed out on his education. He still believed he had acted correctly because for him there was no other alternative. However, he felt that “there has been a development in society. The knowledge about child rights has improved.” As a father, he could see that his children have more role models than he had and as a consequence will be able to choose other options.

Another parent, a mother and IDP, expressed the difference that knowing her rights and expressing them in rights language has made for her: “When my daughter is bringing home water and people from the community say to her that ‘You are an IDP, you don’t have this right’, she says ‘No, I have the right! I have the right to be free. I have the right to participate. This is my right.’ Now my children have more confidence.”

In summation, reservations expressed by some organization staff about the use of human rights language and references did not appear to be mirrored among children and parents. Moreover, to be able to measure progress and further develop the practice of child rights-based work, the project objectives and operations practice should ideally be expressed in child rights language. There are clear security issues to be dealt with in order to ensure that the children and youth are not harmed, but these are challenges to be met rather than avoided in order for the project to maintain a child rights-based nature.

“Several of the children expressed clearly that they sought to learn more about child rights, with one interviewee stating: ‘Of course we need to know about our rights. How can we otherwise demand them?’”



Three Yemeni boys in Aden © Save the Children



“Project staff members working with refugee children and children from host communities felt strongly that integration and non-discrimination were critical. If the children from the two groups got to know each other and played together, they felt, it was easier to reduce xenophobia in the community.”

## Monitoring & Evaluating Processes & Outcomes Using Child Rights Principles & Indicators

Children and youth also participated in the projects' monitoring and evaluation procedures. The majority of youth and children interviewed said that they felt their opinions were taken seriously by the project staff. Methods used to incorporate the views of children and youth varied between organizations and were dependant on the ages of the children involved. Some projects asked children orally for feedback, while other organizations used questionnaires to gather relevant information. In some instances, children and youth themselves were in charge of the supervision of monitoring activities from a child rights perspective. Youths participating in these systems said their monitoring included, for example, inspecting the environment where activities were conducted to ensure their appropriateness from a child/youth and accessibility perspective.

**Challenges for transparency** However, it should be noted that this type of participatory evaluation can be problematic when the participants are dependent on the project they are evaluating. Structures that allow open dialogue and candor must therefore be extremely well considered in these cases.

**Lack of evaluator knowledge** Some of the staff interviewed said it was difficult to find evaluators and auditors familiar with child rights-based programming: “Usually it is very difficult to find a consultant who can do child rights-based programming [...]. You have to explain how we see our role and the partner's role.” This quote indicates a perception that child rights-based programming requires special competencies and knowledge of children's rights. Evaluator lack of knowledge of child rights is more problematic if an open rights language does not permeate the project objectives and operations.

In conclusion, the benefits of using child rights-based principles in monitoring and evaluating projects are most visible in the practice of child

and youth inclusion. Children are taken seriously and may also have a lot of information and ideas for improvement that other stakeholders do not have. The challenge in this case is to create a monitoring and evaluation process that is both accurate and achievable.

## Fully Incorporate the Principles of Non-Discrimination, Best Interest of the Child, Development & Survival & Participation

The **right not to be discriminated against** is a principle that was reflected in all projects, for example through the inclusion of boys and girls in joint activities, or by ensuring the participation of both refugee and host community children. To reach better gender balance, projects employed both male and female facilitators and made efforts to create trust within the communities so parents felt safe leaving both their sons and daughters in the care of the project centers. One mother in Yemen described how staff from the organization where her daughter participated in activities made a home visit to talk to her husband.

*“At first my husband refused [to allow] our daughter to take part in the activities. Then one of the volunteers went to him and said that ‘we are going to protect her and we are going to bring her back to the house’, and then he agreed to let her go.”*

**Balancing lack of discrimination with cultural sensitivity** However, challenges remain in reaching gender equality. All organizations balanced gender equality with their wish to maintain the trust of the community, which may be guided by other cultural practices. If girls were not “allowed” to take part in physical activities, like football or volleyball, in coed groups, organizations chose to separate the girls from the boys in these activities, rather than accept the lack of female participation.

Many of the children and youth interviewed brought up gender issues when talking about child

rights. For example, they discussed how long a child has the right to play and the general understanding that this varies for boys and girls. Girls felt that they had to “*grow up more quickly*” and had more responsibilities in the household. In some areas, girls also expressed that they felt less support if they wished to continue their education. The knowledge of their rights in this regard, however, appeared to strengthen the girls’ confidence. One girl said: “*We want to study, too, and do things in the future.*”

**Creating trust and security** As mentioned above, project staff members working with refugee children and children from host communities felt strongly that integration and non-discrimination were critical. If the children from the two groups got to know each other and played together, they felt, it was easier to reduce xenophobia in the community. Moreover, there were indications that the joint activities of the children spilled over to adults, who also got to know each other through their children. This was especially apparent in the Yemen project where the integration of IDP and host communities was initially a challenge. A group of boys interviewed in Yemen said that they now “love” the IDP children that had recently arrived in the area “like their own brothers.” Even if this sentiment does not reflect their true feelings, it still shows that discriminatory statements have become impermissible. This kind of integration of the different groups was generally made by invoking the principle of non-discrimination in a situation where discrimination appeared. The integration may in turn create trust between the groups necessary to avoid possible conflicts.

**Structural challenges** It is problematic, therefore, that organizations sometimes faced structural challenges in implementing the principal of non-discrimination—especially in projects funded with emergency monies. Some donors may have directives to only target refugee children, for example, since they are seen as living in a state of emergency. In projects working with these groups of children, it was clear that children from the host communities were not much better off and the organizations and their staff felt strongly that if their projects had complied with this bias and only targeted the new arrivals, they would have created or increased existing tensions between the refugee and host

communities—the exact opposite of what the situation required. Instead, the implementing organizations developed special strategies to include all area children, for example, “mixing” funding to carry out the projects in a non-discriminatory fashion.

Some staff respondents also mentioned discrimination against children with disabilities and expressed the need for accessibility to activities for children with physical or mental disabilities. The study found that those projects that were more decidedly based on child rights principles were more inclusive of children with disabilities.

Discrimination on other grounds such as class, religion, sexual orientation, etc. were not mentioned by the respondents when asked about their work and non-discrimination. Issues of religion were likely either irrelevant (in areas where all rights-bearers belonged to the same religion) or too politically sensitive to engage. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation remains a deeply controversial subject and would likely not be addressed by projects.

Few respondents interviewed referred directly to the concept of the **best interest of the child**. It was expressed implicitly, but rarely clearly articulated in either interviews or written documents. This may indicate either that there is a general understanding of the concept as unproblematic, that there is a lack of knowledge about the concept, or that it is viewed as difficult to implement. One staff respondent highlighted the need for a more explicit use of the concept:

*“This [best interest of the child] is something that all the time needs discussion, because in our reality on the ground we have to take this interest into our consideration while we are planning. In the process of legislating any law, children’s rights and the best interest of the child should be taken into consideration.”*

The **principle of the right to life, survival and development** was also not referred to or elaborated on by project or partner staff, very much like the principle of the best interest of the child. Even though the principle was not mentioned explicitly, parents stated that their children receive emotional

and physical benefits from participation in the projects. The children themselves stated that they have the possibility to learn new things and take part in activities like drama, art, music and life skills—all examples of strengthening a child’s right to development.

In contrast, the **principle of child participation** was elaborated on extensively by staff in interviews. For many of the interviewees, child participation appears to be the essence of child rights programming. Child committees, children’s boards and networks were established or in the process of being established in many projects. The children and youth interviewed were greatly appreciative of the possibility to initiate their own activities. One group of youth interviewed on the West Bank said: “[I]t is important to be able to address our own needs. Participation is why we come here [to the centre].” The participatory structures created within projects and located at the centers created opportunities for personal development for children and youth.

The study found that there appears to be a tendency to limit the participation of children and youth to initial child rights situation analyses and specific participatory project activities during the implementation phase. It has proven more challenging to include children and youth in project design, which is typically carried out by the focus organizations based on the situation analysis. Lack of organizational capacity in community-based organizations may be one explanation for this, as may be the structures of large international non-governmental organizations.

To conclude, the organizations active in the projects have developed quite substantial knowledge and practice regarding non-discrimination and participation, while the other principles (the right to life, survival and development and the best interest of the child) are not elaborated or problematized to any substantial degree. Although the interviewees appear to be most engaged in the principle of child participation, the study found the projects’ work with the principle of non-discrimination the most interesting in its possible implications for safety and security.

## Local Ownership & Partnership

Local ownership of development projects is always a challenge for actors not themselves originating from the local community. This may hold especially true for international non-governmental organizations operating in areas where project funding almost entirely originates from international donors and where locally-based organizations are too small and lack resources to apply for funding on their own. The focus organizations in this study have in effect become intermediaries between local actors and governmental agencies and donors.

**Child ownership** Children and youth expressed great satisfaction with the projects. The children that participated in the various activities talked about their participation in positive and proud words. Older children and youth said that they felt they were taking greater part in society than if they had not participated in the projects. Organization staff emphasized the importance of creating locally-owned knowledge: “[A] rights-based approach does not just go in and come out, it builds the capacity of the child and the community to take on their own response and build that capacity within and strengthening the capacity.”

**Parental ownership** Parents interviewed described how the organizations were making an effort to involve them in the activities of their children by inviting them to meetings and training sessions or initiating parents’ councils. Some parents not so familiar with the projects did say that there was still a need for more inclusion: “It is better if the organization talks about the activities to the parents first, so that they can talk to the children instead of the other way around. It is really important to include the parents, to tell them what is going on in simple words and [get them to] participate.” According to the interviews with staff and parents, parents can be difficult to reach if they do not have a permanent address or work long hours, while others are traumatized or otherwise inaccessible to implementing organizations.

**Creating local bodies** Many of the focus organizations or their local partner organizations were working to create local ownership through the creation of networks or local child rights committees. Staff members said it was important that such committee members be a part of the local community. When solid structures for cooperation were established, interviewees from the community and implementing organizations said that shared “rights language” made communication and cooperation much easier.

**Tensions between community actors** A single-minded focus on child participation can be perceived as downplaying the needs of other parts of the community, which in turn can be an obstacle to the development of local ownership. One community leader said, for example, that although he agreed that it was good that children were involved in the planning process of the specific project, the organizations had not listened enough to the opinions of others within the community. This perception put a strain on the effort to create local ownership. It might be said that the implementing organization, through a top-down decision, demanded bottom-up processes that challenged local ownership through its emphasis on children’s opinions.

The government representatives (the duty bearers on a state level) interviewed were reluctant to discuss their relationships with the implementing organizations, probably to avoid criticizing important sources of funding or differentiate between different organizations. This in turn rendered it difficult for the study to clarify the level of ownership felt by the legal duty bearers for the individual projects or programs. However, one minister said that the government “felt doubt” about organizations that do not contact and coordinate their work with the relevant ministry before doing an intervention, clearly indicating a wish for more direct involvement and ownership.

**Need for project longevity** Generally, a challenge to local ownership is the short time-span of many projects or project activities owing to gaps in funding. Similarly, there are often gaps between funding periods in emergency responses and it is difficult to create sustainable local ownership under

these circumstances. One father noted the short duration of the project his son had participated in. He did not know why the period had been so short, since no one had communicated the reason for the cessation of the activities. He said: *“You will not see any changes in such a short time.”*

In conclusion, all the projects aimed to establish local ownership despite that initial project ideas were

seldom developed with broad involvement of community actors. According to the staff interviewed, the key to local ownership is to ensure that the projects are of real relevance to the children and their communities. Adherence to rights principles such as child participation can challenge the quest for community ownership.

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# Conclusions: Benefits, Challenges & Security Implications of Child Rights-Based Programming in Conflict-Affected Areas

When comparing the different projects reviewed in relation to the model of child rights-based programming, it was clear that no single project displayed all of the model's components. This was not unexpected since the ideal model is rigorous, while the practice of child rights-based programming is still relatively new and in flux.

To make this comparison more concrete, the qualitative data gathered in the analysis of the seven projects in focus were categorized by the indicators and sub-indicators in the ideal model and given a rating (see Appendix D). The ratings were -1, 0, 1, 2, where the score -1 marked that the indicator was not present in the project and 0 indicated a lack of data to evaluate the category. The score 1 marked that the indicator existed to some extent and the score 2 represented that the indicator existed at a satisfying level. All the ratings of the projects were then added together and the sum used as a quantitative tool to compare the projects.

The comparison showed marked differences between the projects. Three projects clearly stood out as closer to the ideal model and the outcomes of these three projects will be detailed later in order to discern if the hypothesis presented in the introduction can be said to hold true. Do the projects that display the greatest number of the key components of the ideal model of child rights-based programming in their operational practice also have the most positive influence on safety/security? If the hypothesis is correct, then the outcomes of these three projects should include improvements in the project area's security/safety. The outcomes in focus are not service-related but rather those that distinguish child rights-based programming from other types of programming, as limited by the study's scope. The focus is therefore on the

traits that differentiate child rights-based programming from other forms of programming.

Following are the benefits and challenges common among all the projects studied, based on the above narrative discussion.

## Benefits & Challenges

### ***Benefit 1: The focus on children puts attention on one of the most vulnerable groups in society***

Not only are children especially vulnerable in situations affected by conflict, children and youth also make up the majority of the population in many conflict-affected areas. The emphasis on children as integral to child rights-based programming appears to provide a platform for resource-allocation and advocacy that might otherwise be sensitive. A clear child focus may enable interventions that would otherwise have been problematic to carry out, since issues around children appear to be on somewhat neutral ground. This became apparent through interviews with respondents from various sectors who, to great extent, converged around the concept of child rights and agreed on its importance. For instance, the Lebanese government allowed Iraqi children to enroll in school even though their families are illegal in the country. Likewise, in Yemen and the occupied West Bank, organizations are able to carry out activities for children despite a complex operational environment.

**Benefit 2: Human rights concerns are prioritized and seen as a key element to achieving social justice and economic development**

Organizations working in emergency situations using child rights-based programming are more likely to prioritize human rights concerns (e.g., the right to education, health and protection) at an early stage. A focus on these fundamental concerns of the individual and the community is necessary in order to create—or re-create—trust and hope in the community, which in turn is essential for rebuilding society. Moreover, human rights understandings are built on international standards and principles that the majority of countries have ratified. These standards and principles can therefore be used as process tools in vindicating programs and specific areas of programming and objectives. Necessary for this prioritization is the child rights situation analysis, which provides specific knowledge of rights violations, the duty bearer community and early-on communication with relevant stakeholders.

**Benefit 3: The increased use of participation and non-discrimination principles in project planning, implementation and evaluation tends to reduce tensions in the local community and contribute to a project's sustainability**

For all organizations involved in the selected projects, participation was important and clearly valued. Children and youth in these projects felt like active participants and that their views were taken seriously. The study showed that the principle of non-discrimination appears to be particularly important when working in conflict-affected areas where IDPs or refugees

“The emphasis on children as integral to child rights-based programming appears to provide a platform for resource-allocation and advocacy that might otherwise be sensitive. A clear child focus may enable interventions that would otherwise have been problematic to carry out, since issues around children appear to be on somewhat neutral ground.”

are present. Those projects using child rights-based programming targeted, to the extent it is possible, children from both the host community and IDP/refugee groups and this contributed to easing tensions between IDPs and the host community, with implications for project sustainability and long-term stability, safety and security.

***Benefit 4: The work of organizations (whether they are INGOs, NGOs or the UN) complement the role of the legal duty bearer, i.e., the government, contributing to the fulfillment of children's rights and creating trust and security in the community***

Adopting child rights-based programming as an organization might also mean taking on the role of a duty bearer. The fact that the organizations perceived themselves as duty bearers within the framework of their projects was mainly beneficial (although it also has challenges). The study found that this role as duty bearer provided children and youth with temporary areas of safety and security where their rights were fulfilled. This was recognized in most of the projects and children expressed that, within the framework of the project, they had the right to play and express themselves. This is an example of how, in the projects reviewed, child rights dictated both the process of implementation, including active participation in shaping the project, and the outcome in the form of service delivery, i.e. access to education or health.

***Benefit 5: Sustainable and positive relations with community leaders and state officials are developed, enabling advocacy towards relevant duty bearers and in turn perhaps leading to more active involvement and responsibility for necessary development endeavors***

During the interviews, community leaders and government representatives did not take issue with human rights or the need to respect, protect and fulfill the human rights of children. All community and governmental interviewees were interested in and supportive of the projects reviewed, as well as of child rights-based work in general. Even if this

in itself is not evidence of a genuine support for human rights and human rights-based programming, it indicates an opening for discussions with community outsiders. However, some rights issues may remain “too politically sensitive” to be discussed on the local level, as some project staff members indicated. This being the case, the focus organizations’ good relationships with and access to decision-makers are important for future cooperation. Further, the study found that child rights advocacy has an awareness-raising influence on the duty bearer community, both at the state and community levels. In some projects, parents (as duty bearers) gained more extensive knowledge of rights, as well.

***Benefit 6: Knowledge about the rights of the child are integrated throughout project activities, which enables awareness-raising among rights-holders and in turn strengthens agency and the ability of children to claim rights***

All projects included some form of teaching about the rights of the child, the results of which were reflected in the interviews with youth and children. Knowledge about human rights and where to claim them is an important first step in the creation of rights awareness, despite the fears expressed by other interviewees about the pitfalls of rights knowledge among children.

***Benefit 7: Meaningful activities for children contribute to their well-being and a sense of security/safety***

Project activities designed on the basis of a child rights situation analysis play an important role in children’s development, according to the study’s interviews with staff and parents. Interviewees said that children and youth in these projects found psychological relief from their stressful surroundings as well as time and a safe space where they can receive educational support or engage in matters that interest them. Parents generally viewed the activities as meaningful and as contributing to their children’s development. The activities were perceived to be important for both parents and youth,

therefore, by facilitating a space that could keep their children safe and positively engaged.

The study also identified several important challenges in the implementation of child rights-based programming:

**Challenge 1: Mainstreaming human rights knowledge and rights language in all aspects of the development process is challenging**

This study found that *rights language* did not permeate all processes of the projects reviewed and was especially hard to implement in emergencies and/or conflict-affected areas. This had several explanations: sometimes it was the result of difficulties in recruiting personnel with the right skill-set or to keeping others trained, especially in emergencies. In other instances, the problem seemed to be connected to difficulties in integrating learning of rights into staff training in a manner that linked the training to the day-to-day practice of their work. However, there also appeared to be hesitancy among staff to use human rights discourse even when children, parents, communities, state duty bearers and international donors were open to it. They either did not see the need for this, since it is “embedded in the work”, or were wary of perceptions that such rights are only contingent on the fulfillment of corresponding duties (as one boy said: “*Respectful children have their rights and disrespectful children don’t have their rights*”).

Still others expressed cynicism about the rights children are entitled to according to international law and the conditions they actually live in. They fear that *knowledge about rights* will lead to “frustration and disappointment” which in turn can put the children in dangerous situations.

Nevertheless, interviewees, both children and staff, generally believed that usage of human rights terms and information about child rights were important regardless of their situation and the context in which they live. To not explicitly connect the project/program objectives to child rights or the facilitation of knowledge about rights appeared to hinder the implementation process of child rights-

based programming, a process that is important to children’s empowerment. This empowerment builds on the entwinement of practical operationalization of the general principles of the CRC, the delivery of services that fulfill child rights, and the spread of knowledge about child rights. It is, as indicated in the ideal model above and as suggested by interviewees, perceived to be at the essence of child rights-based programming that children should not only participate in the design of project activities, they should also know that it is their right to do so, for example. The same goes for the right to play, express themselves and to receive education, etc. Children should, according to the ideal model logic, be agents of change in fulfilling their own rights.

**Challenge 2: Child rights-based programming is a comprehensive work method that demands long-term commitment and sustainable practices**

In order for child rights-based programming to function well, its key components should permeate the work of the focus organization and its implementing partners. Due to its participatory ambitions, it is especially time and resource intense, particularly in conducting the rights situation analysis. This is a challenge in any context, since it requires skills, dedication, time and resources, but this study found it especially problematic in areas affected by conflict and in emergency situations, where short-time interventions are predominant and pose challenges to a comprehensive implementation of child rights-based programming. Emergency projects often run on one-year contracts and have very limited resources in terms of both funding and time.

**Challenge 3: Effective advocacy can be hindered by lack of clarity among rights holders over who are the legal duty bearer**

Child rights-based programming requires that all relevant duty bearers be identified and targeted for advocacy within the scope of the program (although not within each of the projects within each program). This requirement is especially difficult for organizations operating in areas with unclear duty bearers. The research data suggests that, without

a clear reference to duty bearers, the concept of the duty bearer may become confusing for children and youth participating in project activities. If there is no obvious duty bearer that the local partner organizations can refer to, the rights of children and youth are left in a vacuum. The only duty bearers remaining are often parents (whose rights might also be violated) and the implementing organization. In bringing about change, these actors (parents and NGOs) play important roles, but to change structures, legal duty bearers such as government officials are key. Therefore a lack of clarity over and/or political sensitivity about addressing duty bearers poses a challenge to the full implementation of child rights-based programming.

To conclude, there are a number of benefits to using child rights-based programming in conflict-affected areas, both general and specifically related to security. These benefits are common to all the projects in focus, to varying degrees. While the challenges described above exist in all projects, they appear to be less important than the benefits.

## Model Child Rights-Based Programming: Three Projects & Their Influence on Security

As mentioned previously, three of the projects in focus were markedly closer to the theoretical ideal model than others.

The projects that stood out as being most in line with the study's theoretical model of child rights-based programming were projects C, G and F:

- **Project C:** *Ta'leem Youth*, run in Lebanon by a coalition of partners including Save the Children Sweden, Middle East Council of Churches, Caritas Migrants, Amel Association, the European Institute for Cooperation and Development, the Sawa Group and the Cultural Association of Hermel;
- **Project G:** *The Protection and Community Mobilization Program* carried out on the West

Bank by Defence for Children International in partnership with the Palestinian Network for Children's Rights and;

- **Project F:** *Creating Adolescent Friendly Spaces* run in a collaboration between UNICEF, Tamer Institute, MA'AN Development Centre, National Committee of Summer Camps, Al Nayzak and 93 community-based organizations and youth and community centers throughout the West Bank

These projects included outcomes such as the creation of safe spaces, child rights knowledge, awareness-raising and increased attention to the individual child. Thus the benefits and challenges of using child rights-based programming in conflict-affected areas presented above are also present in these three projects.

However, the comparison of the outcomes of all projects also showed some marked differences between the three distinguished projects and the others. The three projects most in line with the theoretical model of child rights-based programming produced a number of outcomes that the other projects in focus either did not, or did but only to a substantially lesser degree.

These differences and their links to stability/security will be presented below in order to discern if the hypothesis presented in the introduction holds true. If the hypothesis is correct, then the outcomes of these three projects should have a positive impact for security/safety in the project's area of operation.

### **Outcome 1: The creation of sustainable systems focusing on duty bearers' accountability can be seen as part of institution-building, and as a means to strengthen the relationship between community and state**

Through these projects, the three organizations used a clear child rights focus to create local structures for community development. These structures created space for dialogue, built relationships, and supported a common framework (of child rights). They also support a national development agenda through the provision of increased equal access to



Palestinian girls do origami © Save the Children

education and services. Moreover, if these systems outlast the project as is expected, they will play an active role in increased social justice, development of policies and laws, and in the monitoring of public officials' performance and institutional child rights compliance.

**Attaining structural change in Project C** For example, Project C's advocacy that resulted in the drafting of a government memorandum, mentioned earlier, allowed Iraqi refugee children to enroll in Lebanese public schools despite their lack of legal status. Thus, this particular project outcome protected these children's right to education and managed to generate structural changes well beyond the scope of the individual project. Through the drafting of the government memorandum, tensions between the refugees and the host government lessened since the discussion on whether or not refugee children should be able to attend school ceased to be an issue. For the same reasons, it also alleviated tensions on the local level between the host community and the refugees. Furthermore, it made the situation easier for the refugees them-

selves, since they were able to focus on issues other than the schooling of the children. For all involved, the successful structural changes had a clear positive impact on the security environment in the project area. The advocacy work on a national level was matched by the work of local partners in training Iraqi school children and their host communities in their rights and how to obtain them, which also can have a long-term effect when there are clear national rules acknowledging the internationally accepted rights. The mediating role of an INGO in this case was shown to be important in conflict-affected situations where local organizations might find it difficult or even risky to target their own authorities through direct advocacy.

**Child-leadership relationships in Project G** The child committees initiated by one of the organizations in Project G in support of the principle of child participation is another good example of the creation of systems that emphasize duty bearers' accountability while strengthening the rights-holders' opportunities to claim their rights. These child committees were constituted of children that received

“ To conclude, effective child rights-based programming can be said to strengthen the social contract between the society and its leaders. In a region with weak governance and common rights violations, young people’s knowledge of human rights is central for them to claim their rights and work for more rights-respecting societies.”

thorough training in child rights. They were given the task of gathering opinions and suggestions from other children in the community and then bringing them to the attention of community leaders and public officials. Violations of the rights of any child or other problems arising were also addressed by the committee, which performed as a sort of ombudsmen for community children.

The creation of structures for dialogue and complaints between rights-holders and duty bearers can have a very positive influence on safety/security by providing organized and peaceful channels for community development and rights claims.

In sum, all three projects show that effective child rights-based programming may help create sustainable structures for community development and duty bearer accountability through its focus on children’s rights. In a region with weak governance experiencing regime transitions, the creation of locally owned sustainable structures is important.

**Outcome 2: Thorough training of children and youth in structured and peaceful participation in local development creates new and engaged agents for change**

The child committees of Project G exemplify how the three distinguished projects involved children and youth as active participants in their operational practices. As a result, children became agents for changing their own environments. A child interviewed said that the committee experience gave them all “*self-confidence and the full knowledge needed to defend our rights.*”

Such development of engaged actors for change has the potential to reverberate through society and impact development far beyond the scope of the immediate project. The practical training of children and youth to enable them to become well-informed, rights-respecting and empowered leaders has positive implications for development both on a local and national level.

Efficient child rights-based programming appear to improve children’s and youth’s capacity to engage in the development of their own society through

peaceful means, which is a key condition for development in a region with large numbers of unemployed youth and weak governance structures.

**Outcome 3: Children, youth and local community actors develop skills to work actively against discrimination, which in turn is necessary to ease tension between different groups and strengthen social cohesion and equality**

The three projects discussed here placed special emphasis on promoting non-discrimination among children, youth and local community actors themselves so that non-discrimination was not only a requisite within the projects but a skill transferred to local society actors.

For example, cooperation between different local NGOs in project G also enabled them to develop activities about human rights for children and youth, with greater attention to rights principles such as gender balance, access for children with disabilities, and general non-discrimination.

Child rights-based programming can be said to potentially strengthen social cohesion and equality, thereby easing communal tensions and moderating sources of conflict. In a region that hosts two of the top three refugee-producing states, as well as four of the top five refugee-hosting locations, sustainable work against discrimination and for equal rights are paramount to avoid conflicts.

**Outcome 4: The investment in knowledge among children, youth and local community actors about their human rights and where to claim them has the potential to strengthen the social contract between a rights-respecting state and its inhabitants**

The three projects most in line with this study's model of child rights-based programming stand out as the projects where children and youth were most knowledgeable about their rights and systems for fulfilling them. Staff in these three projects generally viewed child rights both as an valuable and useful tool for specific situations (such as in

children's encounters with military and/or police), but also as an important universal language.

The children and youth in these projects all viewed human rights as a necessary foundation for changing their societies for the better. Children's and youth's endorsement and use of a rights language also contributed to a visible focus on the accountability of duty bearers, since the articulation of rights implies a corresponding responsibility from a duty bearer. This focus on the relationship between the rights-holders on the one hand and the legal duty bearer on the other strengthens a working social contract between society and its leaders. The mutual engagement of rights-holders and duty bearers in social development and state-building is necessary in order to create conditions for peaceful development.

To conclude, effective child rights-based programming can be said to strengthen the social contract between the society and its leaders. In a region with weak governance and common rights violations, young people's knowledge of human rights is central for them to claim their rights and work for more rights-respecting societies.

**Outcome 5: Putting human rights on the agenda of local and national authorities can contribute to the rule of law which in turn strengthens safety and security**

This study found that the three distinguished projects were especially consistent in their use of child rights-based references and language both within their projects and in relation to duty bearers on the local and national levels. This in turn lead duty bearers on different levels to ask for child rights training from the organizations. For example, the close partnership between the implementing organization and Palestinian authorities in Project F led to a prioritization of capacity-building of duty bearers, and increased knowledge about child rights among the legal duty bearers. In interviews with government representatives, they described their duties in human rights terms, indicating that they were attempting to integrate their training into everyday activities.

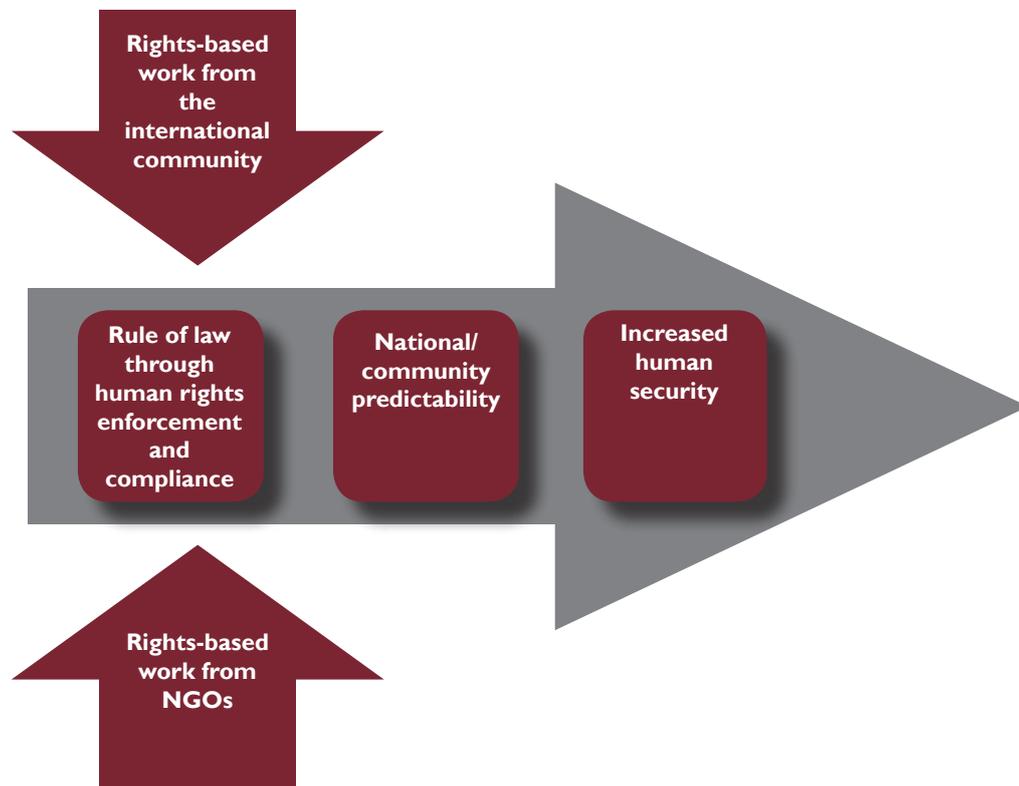
In the network of organizations created as a part of Project G, network members said that their common use of child rights-based frameworks increased their discussions on how their respective projects made use of these frameworks when dealing with different duty bearers.

While a gap often exists between the use of human rights language and actual rights-based policies, the creation of a rights discourse has the potential to serve as an entryway for systematic change in the role and accountability of duty bearers. If both government and local representatives officially agree on the importance of developing and sustaining a human rights-respecting society, this agreement (although perhaps more in principle than in practice) opens up a space for discussing and demanding rights-based policies. Moreover, when the capacity-building of duty bearers is conducted in tandem with broad capacity-building of rights-holders, the creation of common objectives and priorities becomes possible.

Respect for human rights in a society is closely related to the rule of law. Thorough child rights-based programming shows that community attention to human rights can also contribute to the rule of law as duty bearers on different levels are trained and become aware of their legal duties under international law. The officials interviewed seemed to embrace the chance to point out that their policies related to human rights principles rather than other forms of reasoning. This may in turn contribute to strengthening security since “the absence of justice is frequently the reason for the absence of peace” (Parlevliet 2010).

In summation, the operational practices of projects C, F and G included more of the key components of the theoretical model and employed them to a higher degree than the other projects did. This analysis showed that the outcomes that distinguished these three projects from the others all may have a potential long-term and positive effect on security. Whether they have influenced security

### Increased security through child rights-based programming



during the span of the projects is harder to discern since the study does not allow for a comparison with the situation before the start of the projects. Consequently, it appears clear that when many key components of child rights-based programming are

present and deployed in the operational practices of a specific project, that project is more likely to deliver outcomes that are conducive to improving security.

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# Concluding Remarks

This study's aim has been to answer two main questions by reviewing the operational practices and outcomes of existing development projects that used child rights-based programming in conflict-affected areas in Yemen, Lebanon and the oPt. The two questions were:

*What are the benefits and challenges of using child rights-based programming as the overall approach for development interventions in the selected projects?*

*How can these benefits and challenges be related to the safety and security in the selected areas?*

The findings show that there are a number of benefits to working with child rights-based programming in conflict-affected areas. The general benefits include that:

- The focus on children puts attention on a vulnerable group
- Human rights concerns are prioritized and seen as a key element to achieving social justice and economic development
- Participation and non-discrimination principles have the potential to ease tensions in the local community and contribute to a project's sustainability when integrated into project planning, implementation and evaluation
- Organizations complement the role of legal duty bearers contributing to fulfillment of children's rights which in turn creates trust and security in the community
- Good relations with community leaders and state officials are developed, which enables advocacy towards relevant duty bearers and in turn may lead to more active involvement and responsibility for necessary development endeavors

- Knowledge about the rights of the child are integrated throughout project activities, which enables awareness-raising among rights-holders and in turn strengthens agency and the ability of children to claim rights

- Meaningful activities for children contribute to psychological relief and provide them with a safe space

The study also identified some important challenges for the implementation of child rights-based programming in conflict-affected areas. These challenges were that :

- Mainstreaming a human rights knowledge and rights language in all aspects of the process is difficult even if agreed to be beneficial
- Child rights-based programming is a comprehensive work method that demands long-term commitment and sustainable practices
- Effective advocacy can be hindered by lack of clarity over legal duty bearers

To conclude, there are a number of benefits to using child rights-based programming in conflict-affected areas, both of a more general nature and with specific relevance for security. These benefits are common to all the projects in focus, although to varying degrees. At the same time, some challenges also manifest themselves in all projects; these are outweighed by the benefits.

Those projects where operational practice was closest to the theoretical model of child rights-based programming also stood out in their outcomes related to security.

This analysis showed that:

- The creation of sustainable systems focusing on duty bearers' accountability can be seen as part of institution-building, and as a means to strengthen the relationship between community and state
- Thorough training of children and youth in structured and peaceful participation in local development creates new and engaged agents for change. Children, youth and local community actors develop skills to work actively against discrimination, which in turn is necessary to ease tension between different groups and strengthen social cohesion and equality
- The investment in knowledge among children, youth and local community actors about their human rights and where to claim them has the potential to strengthen the social contract between a rights-respecting state and its inhabitants.
- Putting human rights on the agenda of local and national authorities can contribute to the rule of law which in turn strengthens safety and security

The process of “doing rights” in child rights-based programming requires integrating child rights principles in planning, implementation and evaluation. This integration brings about unique outcomes beyond the service delivery of the individual project. This study suggests that outputs such as individual and community participation, increased acceptability and integration of refugee and IDP communities, child and youth empowerment through knowledge of rights and social sustainable development are beneficial qualities of every process of doing child rights-based programming.

The challenges identified with child rights-based programming through this study are to some extent challenges that may occur regard-

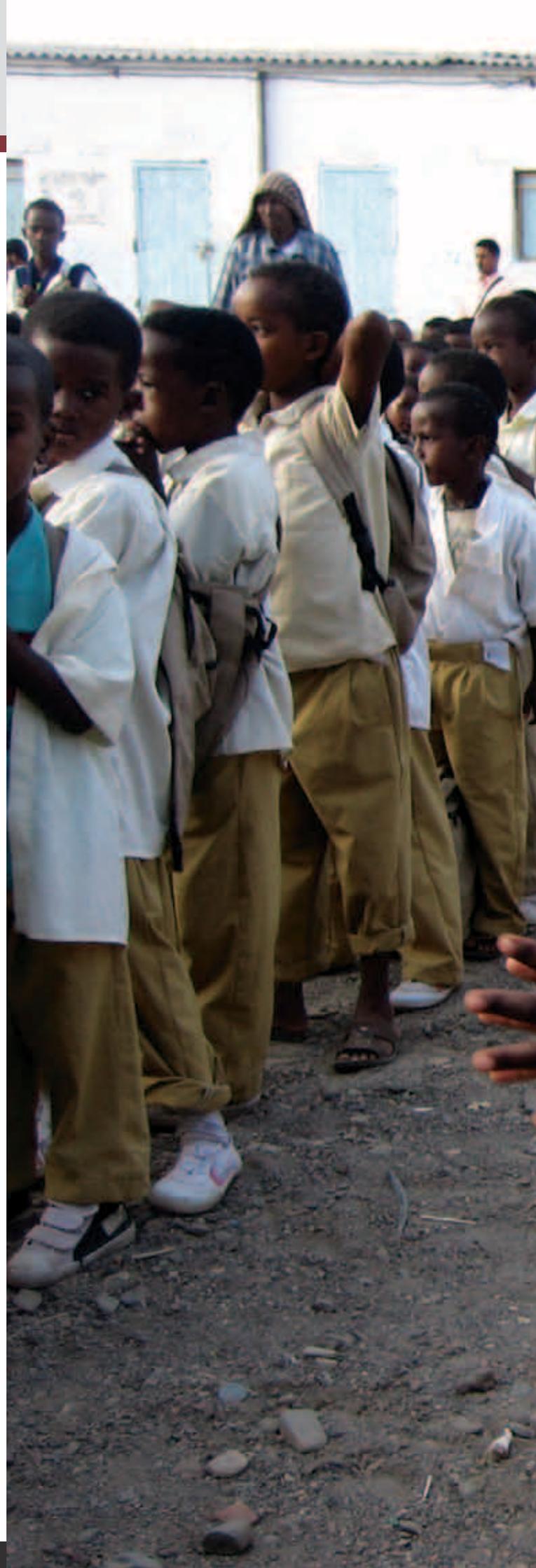
“This study suggests that outputs such as individual and community participation, increased acceptability and integration of refugee and IDP communities, child and youth empowerment through knowledge of rights and social sustainable development are beneficial qualities of every process of doing child rights-based programming.”

less of whether the methodology is implemented in conflict-affected areas or not. Developing and strengthening the approach as a whole may very well contribute to meeting these challenges. For example, knowledge of child rights-based programming would create better understanding of the methodology/approach among staff, local partners and donors and thus ease tensions over its aspects and objectives.

This study finds that the more child rights-based a project is, the more its outcomes have the potential to positively influence safety/security in the area. These findings put somewhat new demands on donors to conflict-affected areas. Sometimes, the funding most readily available for development work in conflict-affected areas comes from short-term so-called “emergency” funds. As discussed, child rights-based programming is a comprehensive approach that needs time to develop to reach its full potential, and for these kind of approaches short-term funding is not ideal. It takes time to build partnerships, train staff in the discourse and make participation in all phases of the projects a real and significant feature. Furthermore, as discussed, there is real danger of cynicism about rights-based approaches and remedies. To instill trust and hope about rights-fulfillment in children living in difficult circumstances could be counter-productive were activities stopped or projects withdrawn prematurely.

Donors interested in the benefits of child rights-based programming may appreciate that here, the rights-based process itself is actually part of the outcome. As one mother put it:

*[I]f a child knows his rights and knows them really well, when he grows up he will ask for his rights from the authorities or from those responsible and this will bring development of society and security.*





# Recommendations

## To donors

- Increase the possibility of long-term funding to avoid unstable sources.
- Extend opportunities for long-term partnerships with organizations.
- Consider the amount of funding allocated to emergency funding vs. long-term sustainable development projects.
- Consider limiting funding allocated for specific groups only, i.e. refugees, and instead provide for wider inclusion of rights-holders within one project in order to secure the principle of non-discrimination.
- Increase demand for rights-based analyses and evaluations from applicants.
- Increase demands for a clear formulation of process indicators and process evaluations from applicants.
- Use an explicit human rights-based language to strengthen the individual person's position as a rights-holder rather than as a "beneficiary", "recipient" etc. If this is not advisable for political reasons in direct negotiations with government officials, keep the language active among donor staff for reasons of clarity.

## To governments

- Increase use of rights-based goals, targets, methods, etc. in the development of national systems related to children, for example, health and education.
- Support the use of clear child rights-based language in oral and written communications.

- Enhance capacity-building on child rights-based programming for government officials, as well as civil servants.

## To organizations working in child rights-based programming

- Increase efforts to establish long-term partnerships with implementing partner organizations in order to establish trust with rights-holders and enable sustainable structures for human rights protection, fulfillment and promotion.
- Use child rights advocacy to enhance the long-term effects of projects/programs on safety/security.
- Consider methods for teaching children about responsibilities that do not present their rights as dependent on their behavior.
- Ensure that parents who become aware of their role as a child rights duty bearer are informed of the entire child rights regime, the responsibilities of the legal duty bearer, and that parents have rights as well.
- Develop systems for communicating rights-based goals, targets, methods etc. to all stakeholders to secure a common understanding of child rights-based programming and the practice of human rights.
- Support the use of clear child rights-based language in oral and written communication (within organizations and between organizations and donors).
- Enhance capacity-building on child rights-based programming for all staff members and for all partners implementing projects, especially for emergency response programs/projects with a high rate of staff turnover.

➤ Emphasize what child rights-based programming means for each staff member's specific job description and tasks.

➤ Develop systems to promote learning in the day-to-day development of child rights

based-programming and to improve both practical and theoretical understanding.

➤ Develop indicators that are informed by child rights principles for child rights programming's unique outcomes and conduct evaluations on their basis.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A

### *Key Components of Child Rights-Based Programming and Its Sub-Indicators*

#### **Child rights situation analysis**

- challenges are identified from a rights perspective;
- the underlying causes of the non-realization of rights and development challenges are identified, including the analysis of power relationships;
- the foundation for country strategies and thematic project plans are laid out;
- the legal and policy environments are assessed;
- duty bearers, their capacity and political will are identified; and
- if, and to what extent, duty bearers are aware of their human rights obligations is assessed, with a focus on accountability.

#### **Clear and outspoken child focus**

- children are viewed as social actors;
- the unique circumstances and contexts (families, social environment etc.) in which children live and act are acknowledged; and
- the above is taken into account during planning, implementing and evaluating projects and programmes.
- marginalized, disadvantaged, or excluded groups are included;
- urgent rights violations of such groups are addressed; and
- the long-term sustainability of societal development is in focus.

#### **Different kinds of duty bearers are identified**

- duty bearers in need of support are identified; and
- duty bearers to be held accountable are identified.

## Explicit child rights objectives, measurable goals and targets

- goals are clearly related to child rights and/or the CRC (to fulfil children's right to education, best attainable health, social security, etc.);
- knowledge about human rights for all, and especially the rights of the child, is disseminated;
- information on how to access one's rights is distributed;
- advocacy on child rights is carried out;
- goals and targets, both for processes and outcomes, are clearly formulated in a way that can be measured;
- a child rights language is used in programme plans, programme budgets and memoranda of understanding, etc.; and
- references to the CRC, its optional protocols and general comments are made in the work.

## Monitoring and evaluating are carried out with child rights-based principles and indicators

- monitoring, etc. focuses both on processes and outcomes;
- child rights principles and indicators form a basis for the evaluations;
- the children in focus participate in the evaluation process; and
- the children in focus feel their views are taken into account in the planning, implementation and evaluation processes.

## CRC's four guiding principles are taken into full account

- all stages of programming are permeated by the child's right to:
  - development and survival;
  - non-discrimination;
  - participation, and;
  - the best interest of the child;
- local ownership, partnership and participation are paramount;
- children in focus are included in the process of identifying "problems"/rights violations;
- the children in focus should feel that the programs and projects are important or of relevance to them; and
- partnerships with host states, civil society, communities, etc. include references to child rights-based programming and/or the CRC.

## Appendix B

### Focus Organizations

*Save the Children Sweden (SCS)* in the Middle East and North Africa works on education, child participation, discrimination, civil society organizational development and to prevent violence and abuse against children in its programming. SCS carries out direct project implementation as well as indirect implementation through local partners. SCS cooperates with local NGOs and government institutions and UN agencies such as UNICEF, UNESCO and UNDP. Three of the selected projects are supported and/or directly implemented by SCS in Lebanon and in Yemen, projects A, B and C in the study.

*Naba'a, Development Action without Borders*, is a Lebanese NGO aiming at empowering local communities in order to enable their members to claim their rights and to play an active and healthy role within their society. Naba'a was created in 2001 and the organization has been working actively with children since then. Naba'a is the implementing organization of one of the selected projects, project D.

The *United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)* was established in 1946 and is now working in 156 countries. UNICEF's work is divided among a number of focus areas such as child survival and development, basic education and gender equality, HIV/AIDS and children, child protection as well as policy and advocacy. UNICEF is involved in two of the selected projects, projects E and F.

*Defence for Children International (DCI)* is an NGO established in 1979. Today DCI is represented in 40 countries worldwide. Its aim is to promote and protect children's rights on a local, national, regional and global level. Globally, DCI works with children's rights in juvenile justice, whereas work on the local level also includes programs on child labor, violence against children, children in armed conflicts, sexual abuse and exploitation, child trafficking etc. DCI is engaged in one of the selected projects, project G.

### Project A: Protecting the rights of Palestinian children affected by armed conflicts through community-based mechanisms in the Gaza Strip and North Lebanon

This project is run by the Child Protection Network (CPN), the local partner of Save the Children Sweden. The Child Rights Protection Network has the following members: Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation, Community Based Rehabilitation Association (CBRA), Developmental Action without Borders (Naba'a), Palestinian Children and Youth Institute (PCYI), Children and Youth Centre (CYC) and Al Khalsa. The project uses Child Rights Programming as defined by SCS.

#### *Project A's objectives*

Members of the Child Protection Network have identified three violations as particularly important to focus on in the Nahr El Bared context—violence (physical, sexual, verbal, and bullying), abuse of power and discrimination towards disabled children. The implementing partners and network members detect cases of abuse through field visits and interviews with children exposed to different human rights violations. The overall objective is to establish a community based reporting mechanism of child rights violations in compliance with Resolution 1612.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> In July 2005, the United Nations Security Council established a comprehensive monitoring and reporting mechanism on children affected by conflict in Resolution 1612. The monitoring and reporting mechanism is coordinated by UNICEF in cooperation with the Office of the Special Representative to the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict. Violations to be monitored include killing or maiming of children; recruiting or using child soldiers; attacks against schools or hospitals; rape or other sexual violence against children; abduction of children and denial of humanitarian access for children. The work is conducted first at the country level in coordination with NGOs and other organizations on the ground. The findings are then reported back to UN headquarters and the Security Council Working Group. The Resolution also includes the continued naming and listing of all offending parties and directs UN country teams to enter into dialogue with the offending parties in order to implement concrete, time-bound Action Plans for ending the violations. SCR 1612 then authorizes the Security Council to consider targeted measures against offending parties where insufficient progress has been made.

The project focuses on children, their families and their communities, that have been affected by armed conflict with the aim of improving protection for these children and to provide them with psychosocial support. The aim is also to improve the capacity of the Child Protection Network and its individual members to address child rights issues and to strengthen rights-based advocacy and regional learning of child rights-based work. Consequently, the project provides psychosocial support for children affected by armed conflict, engages in the human rights capacity building of the CPN network, conducts child rights violations monitoring and educates children in child rights. A referral system has been established within the network.

### **Project B: Child protection/education project—Sa'ada Emergency**

The project is directly run by SCS in Amran in Yemen. The project uses Child Rights Programming as defined by SCS.

#### *Project B's objectives*

The project serves a number of objectives, among them education with a focus on provision of school supplies, the running of tent schools and support for children to enroll in nearby schools, the establishment and operation of child-friendly spaces, including psycho-social services, as well the provision of non-food items like children's clothing and life skills training. This study focused in particular on its work with child-friendly spaces and education. Child-friendly spaces have been set up in strategic places to be accessible to all children but are specifically aimed at children within the IDP community in Amran. The child-friendly spaces serve to accommodate activities such as sports, arts and crafts as well as life skill training.

### **Project C: Ta'leem Youth**

The project is run by a coalition of partners: SCS, Middle East Council of Churches, Caritas Migrants, Amel Association, the European Institute for Cooperation and Development, the Sawa Group and the Cultural Association of Hermel. The project uses

Child Rights Programming as defined by SCS. Here, the focus of the research lies on SCS as one of the implementing partners.

#### *Project C's objectives*

The project's aim is to assure availability and accessibility of formal and non-formal education for Iraqi refugee children and their host country counterparts in Lebanon. Further objectives of this project are to persuade Lebanese education authorities to make the right to education a reality for all, and to endorse flexible policies so education and protection activities can be informed by the changing needs of Iraqi refugee women and children. This will promote inclusion and improve education quality and make relevant school attendance for children and their parents or guardians. Interviews were conducted at one of the implementing partners and with staff, children and parents at a specific centre in a Beirut suburb. The project activities include educational support in English and mathematics as well as psychosocial activities.

### **Project D: Reconstruction of the Mohajareen area project**

The project is run by the Norwegian Refugee Council and Naba'a. Since Naba'a is a local partner to SCS in other projects, like Project A, the organization uses Child Rights Programming as defined by SCS.

The project focuses on the reconstruction of the Mohajareen area situated within the Nahr El Bared Camp. In 2007, the neighborhood was left in ruins together with other areas in the camp. Mohajareen had, before the crisis, been home to 105 families but in the summer of 2011 increased to 111 families consisting of 558 persons. The Mohajareen area is located just outside the original area of the Nahr El Bared Camp. The right to the land has been an issue of much debate. Due to the location of the neighborhood outside the original camp borders, it is not the legal responsibility of UNRWA to rebuild the area. At the same time, the unclear status of the Palestinians living in the camps has meant that reconstruction is not seen as the responsibility of the Lebanese state. Thus, the reconstruction of the

area has fallen between the cracks of different duty bearers. The resulting impact on children from the Mohajareen area pushed Naba'a to engage in the reconstruction project, since they could see the benefits of child participation in the reconstruction project.

#### *Project D's objectives*

The responsibilities of the project are divided between Naba'a and the Norwegian Refugee Council. Naba'a is in charge of the social aspects of the project while the Norwegian Refugee Council carries out the physical construction. The aim is both to rebuild the area and to use child rights-based programming while planning, implementing and evaluating the project. Naba'a has carried out social assessments and validations of the losses of houses and property in 2007. Home visits and meetings with the community have been used, as well as the creation of a Mohajareen Community Committee. Naba'a has also arranged design workshops with children and women to make sure that these groups are participating in the development of the reconstruction plan of the area and the houses. During the process of designing the area, there have also been trainings for the community on issues such as gender, elections, communication, conflict resolution and special training for youth.

### **Project E: Remedial education project in the Scout Centre in Nahr El Bared and Beddawi**

The project is run by UNICEF together with UNRWA and the local Scout centers. The project uses a Child Rights-Based Approach to Programming as defined by UNICEF.

#### *Project E's objectives*

The project focuses on basic education for children that have been identified in UNRWA schools as having learning challenges. The project also facilitates recreational activities for the same group of children. The main local implementing partner is the Scouts, but in order to facilitate a referral system from the schools, the project also includes cooperation with UNRWA. In total, six staff members

were directly connected to the project, both teachers and volunteers. UNICEF, as the focus organization, has also had trainings in child rights for the youth volunteers at the Scout centre.

### **Project F: Creating Adolescent-Friendly Spaces**

The implementing partners of the project are four Palestinian NGOs and 93 CBOs and youth- and community centers throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and "Area C" (areas under full Israeli control), and the Gaza Strip. The implementing partners are Tamer Institute, MA'AN Development Centre, National Committee of Summer Camps and Al Nayzak. The project is conducted within the program Right to Participation: Adolescents – Agents of Positive Change. The project is also carried out in close partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

#### *Project F's objectives*

The goal of the project is to "create an enabling policy and programmatic environment allowing adolescents to grow to their full potential and participate on national development."<sup>7</sup> The layout of the Adolescent-Friendly Spaces are that already existing youth and community centers, with the support from the local NGOs and UNICEF, are facilitating daily after-school learning spaces for adolescent boys and girls (aged 10-18), so-called "corners." The corners provide participatory learning classes in Arabic and math for low achievers and school drop-outs along with sessions in life-skills based education and sports. At some centers, recreational art, music and drama are also provided. To increase and strengthen the role of adolescents and to ensure the sustainability of the adolescent-friendly space, UNICEF and its partners are building the capacity of the Board of Directors in these centers. All four partners are coordinating the implementation of the program with UNICEF and with the Ministry of Youth and Sports both nationally and locally.

7 UNICEF MENA Regional office (2009) *Donor Report, Adolescents: Agents of Positive Change, The Rights to participation*, p. 8

## **Project G: The Protection and Community Mobilization Program**

The project is carried out by Defence for Children International (DCI) in partnership with the Palestinian Network for Children's Rights (PNCR). PNCR consists of 60 organizations out of which a couple were in focus for this research. The project is said to be "inspired by Child Rights Programming".

### *Project G's objectives*

The Palestinian Network for Children's Rights was established through The Community Mobilization Unit at DCI and is today serving as a "platform for mobilization of a social movement toward posi-

tive change in the lives of children"<sup>8</sup> as well as a forum for exchange of experiences and resources. Consequently, the network is both a local partner and a method to increase community mobilization. It aims to strengthen the capacities both of the children in focus and of the network members on an organizational level. Other aims of the network are to promote awareness of the rights of the child in all involved communities, and further children's participation in the Palestinian community at large. In the West Bank, a DCI junior board consisting of child representatives from the network member organizations has been established, as well as child protection teams working to assure children's rights within the network organization and its activities.

## Appendix C

### *Research Statistics*

Four semi-structured individual interviews<sup>9</sup> and 30 focus group interviews with 174 children and 24 individual interviews (with some exceptions) with parents were conducted as part of the study. The decision to conduct focus groups with the children was intended to help them feel at ease. Many questions were asked in the form of games and then followed-up on through further queries. Fifty-two percent of the children interviewed were girls and the rest were boys, all of them between the ages of 7 and 17.

Interviews, most of them individual, were also conducted with 96 staff members engaged in the projects at various levels. Among these, practitioners were interviewed together in eight groups of three to eight persons each, also in order to ease the atmosphere and to allow the researchers to speak to more people. Finally, 20 officials and community leaders were also interviewed individually. All 323 interviews were carried out during the spring and late summer of 2011.

All data was then analyzed using both prescriptive and open content analysis, meaning that interviews and texts were examined using the defined key components of child rights-based programming, but also searching for specific discourses and common themes in the data related to project benefits and/or challenges and/or a relationship to safety and security.

	Pilot: Save the Children Sweden, Lebanon	Save the Chil- dren Sweden, Yemen	Save the Children Sweden, Lebanon	UNICEF, Lebanon	Naba'a, Lebanon	DCI, Occupied Palestinian Territories	UNICEF, Occupied Palestinian Territories	Total no. of interview- ees/catego- ries
Staff, core organization	2	5	3	2	10	3	3	28
Staff, local implementing organization/s	15	13	7	8	Core org.	14	11	68
Parents	7	4	5	4	6	4	3	33
Mother, host community	4	1	1	3	4	2	2	17
Father, host community	-	1	1	1	2	2	1	8
*Mother, IDP/ refugee	3	1	2	-	-	-	-	6
*Father, IDP/ refugee	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	3
Children	25	35	26	23	23	10	32	174
	Age: 7-12	Age: 12- 15	Age: 10-15	Age: 8-13	Age: 6-15	Age: 11-17	Age: 14- 17	
Girls, host community	7	6	8,	12	15	4	17	69
Boys, host community	2	7	6	11	8	6	15	55
*Girls, IDP/ refugee	6	11	4	-	-	-	-	21
*Boys, IDP/ refugee	10	11	8	-	-	-	-	29
Community leaders	-	1	1	-	6	1	1	10
Local officials	-	1	1	-	1	-	1	4
National of- ficials	-	1	2	-	1	1	1	6
<b>Total no/org</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>Total no of respon- dents: 323</b>

\*This category exists in the pilot-project as well as for Save the Children's projects in Yemen and Lebanon

## Appendix D

### Analyzing The Projects in Relation to the Key Components of Child Rights-Based Programming

Scale:

**2:** Exist to a satisfying level

**1:** Exist to some extent

**0:** Lack of data

**-1:** Do not exist

Ranking:

**1:** Project G = 59

**2:** Project F = 55

**3:** Project C = 46

**4:** Project A & D = 32

**5:** Project B = 25

**6:** Project E = (2)

Indicators	Project A	Project B	Project C	Project D	Project E	Project F	Project G
<b>Child rights situation analysis</b>							
- challenges identified from a rights perspective;	1	2	2	-1	0	2	2
- underlying causes of non-realization of rights and development challenges are identified, including an analysis of power relationships;	2	1	2	-1	0	2	2
- foundation for the country strategies and thematic project plans are laid out;	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
- legal and policy environment are assessed;	1	2	2	2	0	2	2
- duty bearers, their capacity and political will are identified;	0	-1	2	0	0	2	2
- duty bearers' awareness of their human rights obligations are assessed	0	-1	2	0	0	2	2

<b>Clear and outspoken child focus</b>	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
- children are viewed as social actors;	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
- the unique circumstances (families, social environment etc.) in which children live and act are acknowledged;	2	2	2	2	1	2	2
- the above is taken into account in planning, implementation and evaluation	2	2	2	2	0	2	2
<b>Inclusion of marginalized, disadvantaged, or excluded groups</b>	2	2	2	2	0	2	1
- urgent rights violations of such groups are addressed;	2	2	2	2	0	2	2
- long-term sustainability of societal development is in focus	0	-1	2	1	0	2	2
<b>Different kinds of duty bearers are identified</b>							
- duty bearers in need of support are identified;	0	1	2	1	0	2	2
- duty bearers to be held accountable are identified	0	1	2	1	0	2	2
<b>Explicit human rights objective(s) and measurable goals and targets</b>							

- goals are clearly related to human rights and/or CRC;	1	1	1	1	0	1	2
- knowledge about human rights of all, and especially the rights of the child, is disseminated;	1	1	1	1	0	2	2
- information on how to access one's rights is spread;	-1	-1	-1	1	0	1	2
- advocacy on child rights is carried out;	0	1	2	1	0	2	2
- goals and targets, both for processes and outcomes, are clearly formulated in a way that can be measured.	2	1	2	2	0	2	2
- a child rights language is used in plans, budgets and memorandums of understanding etc;	1	1	1	-1	0	2	2
- references to the CRC, its optional protocols and general comments are made in the work	1	-1	1	-1	0	2	1
<b>Monitoring and evaluating are carried out with child rights-based principles and indicators</b>							

- monitoring, etc. focus both on processes and outcomes	0	1	2	2	0	2	2
- child rights principles and indicators form a basis for evaluations	1	-1	-1	0	0	1	2
- the children in focus participate in the evaluation process	1	1	1	1	0	2	2
- children in focus feel their views are taken into account in planning, implementation and evaluation	1	1	2	2	0	2	2
<b>The CRC's four core principles are taken into full account</b>							
- children's right to life, development and survival permeate all stages of the project cycle	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
- non-discrimination permeate all stages of the project cycle	2	2	2	2	0	2	2
<b>Participation permeate all stages of the project cycle</b>	2	1	2	2	0	2	2

- considerations of best interest of the child permeate all stages of the project cycle	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
<b>Local ownership, partnership and participation are paramount</b>							
- children in focus are included in processes of identifying rights violations or other concerns;	0	-1	-1	1	0	-1	1
- children in focus feel that the project is important or relevant to them;	2	2	2	2	0	2	2
- partnership with host states, civil society, communities etc. include references to child rights-based programming and/or the CRC	2	0	1	1	0	2	2
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>59</b>

