**Community capacity development to strengthen child protection and education**

**for conflict-affected boys and girls Chad**

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*I would really like to go to school, but I have no one who can support me to continue my studies. I do not have any soap to wash my clothes before going to school. I am overwhelmed by hunger; I don’t eat enough. In the morning, I have to do many chores, like fetch water and the wood.*

This is the story shared by Aisha, a 14-year-old orphan girl living in a refugee camp for the past two years in the South of Chad. For the over 230 million children like Aisha worldwide living in countries and areas affected by conflict, access and attending school is a violated right (UNICEF, 2014). While eager to attend school, over 71 million are forced to temporarily or permanently interrupt their education given the severe adverse effects of conflict (Jones & Naylor, 2014). Being out-of school augments the risks of young girls like Aisha being a victim of violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect. Lack of education impedes on the success and sustainability of peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts.

After being neglected by global humanitarian aid actors for decades, education is increasingly prioritized and considered a key area of investment (UNICEF, 2013, 2014). In fact, education is the best predictor of social cohesion, integral to peace-building and reconciliation, and a means of protecting children from abuse, and exploitation (Education for all, 2012). Formal and non-formal education opportunities offer children basic education skills as well as provide crucial life-saving protection measures including psychosocial support. Research shows that including children and community actors living in conflict-affected areas in educational activities has positive and incremental effects on social cohesion, paving the way for good governance and active engaged citizenship (Save the Children 2007; UNESCO 2002). The question is what is the best approach to supporting supports child protection post-conflict?

Given the disruption, destruction and weakening of both formal and community support systems post-conflict, education at both levels is important. In this article, we examine a ‘bottom-up’ capacity development program carried out in Chad to strengthen community based child-protection mechanisms based on capability approach. The intervention was undertaken as part of a four-year inter-sectoral program carried out by UNICEF in 12 conflict-affected countries funded by the Government of the Netherlands.

A focus on individual capacity development, involving the increased capacity of children, parents, teachers and community members to prevent, reduce and cope with conflict and promote peace was one of the five established objectives of the *Peacebuilding, Education, and Advocacy in Conflict-Affected* programme (UNICEF, 2013). The programme seeks generally to study potential social norms change in conflict-affected and post-conflict states through inquiry and study grounded in learning and action.

In this article, we first discuss linkages between education, child protection and social cohesion as established in the literature, followed by a review of the context of Chad where the programme was carried out. We then present findings according to the phases of mapping, capacity development and action planning and monitoring. Our intervention points to how capacity development has resulted in increased inter-linkages and advocacy amongst community actors thereby providing for both increase child protection and human security.

**Community education, child protection and social cohesion**

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes in Article 38 (4) that children have the right to be protected during times of ethnic and community conflict and war and that governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by the consequences of this violence (UN, 1989).Though almost all governments have now ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in practice many governments are often “unable or unwilling to fulfill their obligations to protect children and children’s rights” (Wessells, 2009, p.10). Conflict impedes the provision and access of both formal education and protection systems given destruction of infrastructure and resources, displacement, fear, security and distrust in government institutions (Justino, 2014). Mapping research on child protection in Africa shows that families and communities feel that the formal system are often not responsive to their needs (Krueger, Thompstone & Crispin, 2013). In situations of conflict, the natural protective capacities of parents, families and community groups are equally undermined (Boothby & Ager, 2010).

With the breakdown of social protection structures and services and a collapse of formal and informal child protection systems, strengthening both the formal and non-formal systems is increasingly recognized as critical (UNICEF, 2015). Traditionally, emphasis has been placed on top-down approaches to child protection while ignoring informal support systems, yet evidence suggests that children, communities, families, parents/guardians, teachers, traditional and religious leaders play key roles in forming a protective environment.

Prompting a shift to a more holistic systems approach to protection, inclusive of the education sector, is consistent with the human security paradigm (UNICEF, 2004). In this people-centered view of security, the emancipation and full and healthy development of children as well as that of adults is viewed as foundational for national, regional and global stability and well being. This is also part of a growing recognition of the positive inter-linkages between child protection, social cohesion and education. Scott (2013) states: “child protection can make a significant contribution to peacebuilding, when specific peacebuilding activities are incorporated into child protection programming at the community level, involving the participation of community-based groups.” (p. 6) Interventions that build capacities for dialogue, reconciliation and collaboration, support a community’s social cohesion and collective action that will in turn strengthen child protection.

Moving this agenda forward involves better understanding the nature and implementation of capacity development that enhances child protection. We note that externally-driven child protection interventions tend to suffer from lack of “fit” and local ownership by the community as well as weak linkages with the national child protection system, often resulting in wasted resources and poor performance (Wessells, 2015). These shortcomings are particularly serious for children and their communities in conflict and post-conflict settings where adequately considering local circumstances is a central requirement, as a deterioration of already critical conditions may compromise peace-building efforts and even trigger a return to violence. The active involvement of the community in monitoring of child protection issues can be positive if well supported and facilitated (Natasha, Colombia Article; and Cook, 2015).

These are critical consideration for international children’s agencies investing in supporting informal systems of support, enhancing their ability to cope and manage distress (Krueger, Thompstone, Crispin, 2013; Krueger, Vise-Lewis, Thompstone, Crispin, 2015; Wessells, 2015). While there is recognition of the role of capacity development in “building back better” (Bissell, 2015, p. 6) in post-disaster efforts, insufficient attention has been paid to “the capabilities required of international or outside actors to support capacity development effectively” (Griejn, Hauck, & Ubels, 2015, p. 85).

As Wessells queries (2015) “how can one strengthen efforts to protect children at community level through community driven action?” (p. 10) He argues that a critical ingredient to supporting community based child protection mechanisms is enabling community ownership. This is strongest when community members are analysts, planners, implementers and the external agency a facilitator of community planning and action. His analysis of current practices globally shows that this approach ranks amongst the lowest, despite it’s proven effectiveness.

The Chad child protection social cohesion initiative examined the opportunities of a non-formal education training programme to strengthen the capacities of communities actors to identify, develop and monitor action plans as a means of enhancing child protection. The intervention was carried out in Southern Chad, in Koumra region, with UNICEF, a local community organization involved in child protection advocacy, ARED, and facilitated by an international organization, the International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD), and affiliate of Royal Roads University. Below is some background on the social, political and economic situation of Chad given that child protection encompasses an ensemble of laws, policies, regulations, services and institutions which help support the prevention and response to current and future child protection risks. These responsibilities are ideally distributed among a numbers of public institutions, especially social welfare, education, health, security and justice, with services being provided by local authorities, non-state actors and local associations, but as presented below as a country entrenched in poverty and conflict this system in not operative.

**Child protection and education context in Chad**

Shaping Chadian children’s protection system are endogenous and exogenous factors (Ager et al. 2005; Cook and duToit, 2005; Lynch and Cicchetti 1998; Strang and Wessells, 2006). Significant amongst the *exogenous*, or externally reinforced, factors is that since gaining its independence in 1960, Chad has been confronted with endless armed conflict generated internally by deep ethnic, religious and political divisions (World Bank, 2013) along with an almost three decade rule by president Déby, and ongoing conflicts in neighbhouring countries, namely in Sudan and Central West Africa. With two thirds of the population living below the poverty line, the country ranks 184th out of 187 countries in the Human Development Index (UNDP 2013).

While education and the child protection system are regulated by a fairly comprehensive legal and institutional framework, the transition from standards-setting to implementation has been problematic. With respect to education, Article 35 of the Constitution guarantees that every citizen has the right to education that is free of charge and that basic education is compulsory, yet more than three quarters of those over 15 years of age are illiterate. Contributing to the low literacy level is inadequate infrastructure; classes that average 70 pupils per class and per teacher and a school curriculum that does not correspond to the needs of the country or to the modern age (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2009). It is estimated that 40% of displaced children are not enrolled in primary school (Kälin, 2009). There is also a general failure to consider conflict-sensitivity education to “minimize tensions’ that may lead to conflict” and to “help build peace” (Education above all, 2012, p. 8).

As for the child protection system, a mapping review of Chad’s formal child protection system undertaken in 2014 shows that there is a lack of coordination and capacity across the entire child protection system (Bureau International des Droits de L’enfant, 2014). The report states: “*il est indéniable qu’il reste beaucoup de travail à accomplir pour offrir aux enfants un niveau de protection satisfaisant*” (p. 92). Children in Chad enjoy the protection offered by the ministries and other institutional bodies that encompass the Chadian government, along with additional ministries that have mandates that more directly relate to the promotion of child rights and child protection, but these systems are not well functioning. As observed by UNICEF child protection officer “strengthening community capacities is key particularly when civil society structures across the country are fairly weak.” Respecting these rights requires strengthening the capacity of actors across the formal child protection system --judiciary, police and social sectors—to better provide for child protection (ICRBR, 2014). This involves both a better understanding of rights and context as well as implementation practices.

In contrast, Chadian civil society organizations, which reinforce helpful local *endogenous*, community and cultural practices, have been active, often more so than most political parties and governmental institutions. Their research, advocacy, training and other support activities have, for instance, contributed to raising awareness of issues such as child abuse and maltreatment, as well as the economic and sexual exploitation to which large numbers of children in the country are being subjected (République du Tchad 2004; Fittouin, 2012). In our community training program we partnered with non-governmental actors to strengthen community actors role. Below, we explain the approach and the setting for the intervention.

**Approach and setting**

**Approach**

The community education and capacity building undertaken in Chad is grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and draws from the child rights and development expertise of the International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD) and the use of social cohesion, psychosocial support and community planning tools that integrates outcome mapping. IICRD community planning capacity training reflective action to design, implement, monitor and evaluate programs and interventions to better support and protect the rights of children and promote social change (Earl, Carden, Smutylo, 2001). The aim is to enable change in behaviors, actions and relationships of people, groups and organizations. Thetraining has been applied and adapted in a diversity of settings and contexts, including HIV/AIDS, natural disasters, violence and conflict as well as in Information Communication Technology (Cook, Heykoop, Anuntavoraskul, Vibulphol, 2014). The training has shown to assist in strengthening the child protection system by creating spaces within community to critically reflect, and develop relevant action plans that they can then monitor to improve the child protection, education and municipal governance systems.

The community education process consists of (1) mapping to identify actors and assess child protection system at the community level, (2) training of key community actors in child rights and well being, social cohesion and psychosocial support, and (3) Engaging key community actors in the development of local social cohesion indicators and actions, and equipping them with the tools to monitor their progress. Underpinning this approach is an understanding that training can enhance a person’s capabilities, in other words what people are effectively able to do and to be (Sen, 1993). And that people learn best when the material is relevant to them, whereby “[l]learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 38).

**Setting**

The intervention unfolded in Mandoul, Koumra region, one of Chad’s 23 regions located in the south of the country. The region for implementing the training programme was selected through a consultative process with UNICEF, partners, NGOs, government and others. The region was deemed to be somewhat typical of the country, having been affected by displacement, reflective of its diversity, and having community-based child protection mechanisms in place to some extent, although reputed to be one of the Chadian regions with the highest incidents of violations of children rights, as well as one of the poorest.

Southern Chad has received large populations of people evacuated from Central African Republic (CAR) as a result of fighting and displacement. Some of these displaced populations are from CAR and others are returning Chadian nationals who have never lived in Chad but instead have parents or grandparents with Chadian origins therefore, placing them in the vulnerable situation of not knowing where to go as their place of family origin is largely unknown to them. The new arrivals from CAR have been transported to refugee camps, their homes, or transit sites. One of the government-run transit sites is located near the main town of Sarh, in the Moyen-Chari region where an estimated 15,000 persons lived in early 2014.

In the mapping phase, the communities involved were Koumra (Mandoul) and Maro, Maingama Returnee Camp, and Belom Refugee Camp (Moyen Chari Region). The training program and community implementation in the next phase was coordinated by Enfant ARED (*Association pour la Récupération et l’Encadrement des Enfants en Détresse*).Based in Koumra and operating in all 33 cantons of Mandoul Region since 2001, ARED was selected as the community organization to coordinate the training process given their leadership in advocacy in the area of abandoned children since 2001, around child survivors of human trafficking – the latter being a phenomenon reportedly on the rise in recent years.

**Community capacity development process**

**Understanding issues and actors through mapping**

To effectively plan a training program that appropriately strengthens child protection in ways that reflect local community realities, we started with mapping. This initial phase is essential to identify who are key actors, how the child protection is experienced by children and young people and viewed by community actors.

To map and assess protection and education gaps and opportunities, we used focus group discussions, individual interviews, and participatory child-centered exercises (i.e. “unity circle”; “community social mapping”). These were carried out by the core research team assisted by 5 interpreters/rapporteurs who provided aid with note-taking and translation to the local languages spoken by research participants (i.e. Arabic, Sara, Sango). A total of 17 focus group discussions were convened (9 with adult participants; 4 with female young people, and 4 with male young people). Each involved between 7 and +30 participants.

Research activities were guided by a list of semi-structured questions --such as explain what are the child protection issues you observe? How do you respond? What is your capacity to address these? The resulting group-elaborated conceptions of social cohesion and child protection were explored in greater depth during individual interviews. Additionally, IICRD “unity circle” (focusing on key social relations) and “community social mapping” (exploring human and environmental social and physical protection issues) participatory action research exercises were conducted with school children in Koumra where a number of them were survivors of human trafficking, and refugee children at Belom Camp. These participatory exercises, designed to provide children with an opportunity to experience, identify, reflect on, and discuss the main child protection mechanisms and risks in their communities, proved highly successful and were well-received by the children as well as their school teachers and other adults involved.

Our analysis involved assessing the community based child protection mechanisms given a need to “work in a coordinated manner towards protection of children from all forms of violence, in all settings” (Plan international, 2015, p. 18). The local Mapping activities pointed to three key findings:

**1. The identification of community stakeholders implicated in child protection in the Chadian context**. Reflecting the importance of considering local context, mapping served to identify a range of actors. These included child protection groups at various community levels, youth groups, women’s groups, peace building associations, local and international NGOs, traditional leaders and elders, as well as religious leaders.

**2. Lack of interlinkages amongst community actors**. A critical indication of the weakness of the informal child protection sector was the lack of communication amongst different groups involved in child protection at the local level. This was indicated by the lack of knowledge by the different groups, in regards to what each other was doing, as well as the absence of communication mechanisms within and between these groups.

**3. Significant risks as well as protective factors affecting child protection**. A key result of the mapping was identifying key child protection issues. Five issues stood out: poverty, child trafficking, the worst forms of child labor, violence, early marriage, and female genital mutilation. Below, we briefly elaborate on how these child protection issues were experienced by young people and explained by community actors as complex and interdependent. Poverty, for instance, was listed by most study participants as a key threat to child protection, at the root of many child protection problems including domestic violence. “*La pauvreté pousse les mamans a etre très faché. Le papa est mort et ils ont de la difficulté à survivre*” (Poverty drives moms to be very angry. Dad died and they are struggling to survive) explained a community leader in Balom, and child labour. A representative of the women’s association remarked “*On est obligé de faire travailler les enfants pour chercher du fargo.*”(We are obliged to work the children to look for Fargo).

Child trafficking was another complex child protection issue. Families of these children usually expect to receive some kind of monetary compensation from intermediaries who offer them economic support in exchange for child labour and, in some cases, are deceived into believing that their children receive a better education when traveling for work. Some poor children are coerced, or willingly leave their villages to supposedly attend school, only to find themselves being forced to beg on the street to bring money to their schools by their traffickers. Chadian girls from poor families also seek work in the larger cities where they often end up being forced to engage in prostitution and/or domestic slavery. Additionally, significant numbers of children had been identified in some military training centers of both government and rebel forces.

A phenomenon related to child trafficking is the participation of children in the so-called worst forms of child labor. Due to economic hardship, families must often send their children to work. These children are typically unschooled and face extremely challenging circumstances including poor living conditions, violence, long working hours, below minimum wage, and other hardships.  In focus groups with children, they described elaborately their obligation to work : “*je ne fais que le balayage de la cour chaque matin, d’aller au marché, faire la cuisine tous les jours, chaque soir je dois les donner de l’eau pour se laver, le refus de ces travaux, et on me tape*.” (I'm just sweeping the yard every morning, going to the market, cooking every day, every night I have to give them water to wash, if I refuse to do this work, they whip me).

The case of the “*enfants bouviers*” – child cattle herders, commonly found throughout southern and eastern Chad – was raised in every single focus group and interview conducted in this study. *Enfants bouviers* are children, typically from an agriculturalist background, engaged to guard and drive herds of cattle, often working over 12 hours a day with little food or water. They are often physically and mentally abused. Usually there is a contract between the parents and the employer establishing the remuneration to be paid in exchange for the child’s labor (Arditi, 2005, 713).

Violence – either threatened or explicit – constitutes a ubiquitous feature of Chadian children lives. Domestic violence, sometimes involving severe hitting or beating of children and women, also remains a longstanding practice in Chad. Some of it is perceived as unproblematic and even done “for children’s own good”. For instance, teachers routinely beat their students in response to some form of “misbehavior” on the part of the student, such as failing to learn a lesson or complete the homework, refusing to carry out a chore, or disobeying orders. Conversely, the sexual exploitation of female students is allegedly not uncommon but regarded as shameful and unacceptable behavior, as is violence associated with excessive drinking.

Early marriage for girls is also a common practice in Chad.  Some early marriages are practiced even before puberty, as early as eight years of age. These are often arranged marriages without the consent of the children in questions. Early marriage of children has a negative impact on their health, their development, and the full exercise of their rights. Young married girls are expected to drop out of school which results in severely limiting their social interactions. They are also at-risk of early pregnancy, which can be dangerous to their health and that of their subsequent children (Humanium n.d.).

The mapping also served to identify the actors implicated and the relevance of a capability approach to training which considers the potential and strengths of community actors.As stated by a representative from the Ministère de l’Action social at issue was *: “on veut rendre les acteurs locaux de promiximité, de les outiller, les amener à comprendre, de connaitre les instruments juridiques et des competences pratiques pour traiter des situations.*” (we want to make local actors of proximity, equip, get them to understand, to know the legal instruments and practical skills to deal with situations). As the children explained in participatory activities on exploitative child labour, with their involvement with family members they would be able to distinguish between exploitative child labour that prevented them from attending school and child labour that allowed them to contribute to the household chores while attending school, and thereby not jeopardizing their education. In the following discussion, we describe the training program to engage community actors in child protection issues. This was especially important in mitigating child protection risks such as harmful, exploitative work, in order to reinforce local resilience and endogenous non-formal protective factors, to support local peacebuilding and access to education.

**Capacity Development**

Following the mapping, a training workshop was held with representatives from 5 community actors: young people, women’s group, community faith and traditional leaders and local CBO’s. The workshop was facilitated by IICRD and hosted by ARED and UNICEF, with ARED holding the responsibility for supporting follow-up actions. The training focused on the key issues identified in the mapping, and used hands on experiential activities to build the knowledge, skills and self-awareness of the community stakeholders. The first part of this 4-day training focused on sharing the results of the mapping, increasing awareness on child rights and protection, psychosocial support, social cohesion.

**Action planning and monitoring**

The second aspect of the training focused on action planning and monitoring tools where these actors participated in a series of activities to better understand, identify actions and community mechanisms to strengthen social cohesion and peacebuilding and create concrete action plans to:

* Enhance cooperation between “formal” government CP duty bearers and local “non-formal” stakeholders including women, youth, local leaders and traditional dispute resolution experts;
* Strengthen capacity to improve networking mechanisms;
* Inform community stakeholders of their rights and children’s rights and local mechanisms that uphold these rights; and
* Build on local community peace building assets like children’s well-being, dignity, belonging and justice.

Activities carried out included: Experiential, reflective sessionsexploring social cohesion and child protection (e.g. using IICRD’s “unity circle” socially reflective game), assessing risk and protective factorsof social cohesion and assets that can enhance cohesion (root mapping), and applying Outcome Mappingto create local “vision” and “mission” statement for programs to develop local “progress markers” (graded indicators) that identify change according to a graduated set of statements: expect to see, like to see, and love to see. The table on risk and protective factors reconfirm the numerous challenges implicated in child protection, including lack of , both as it relates to formal education and to non-formal education, and as it relates to the knowledge and practice of human rights including rights.

Table 1.



During the workshop, participants shared testimonals that spoke poignantly of how child protection issues are interconnected with education. An example of this is provided below:

There was a 7-year-old girl who lives with her grandmother and was raped by a man of about forty. The girl was alone at home that day sweeping the compound of their living place and a man appeared. At that time of day, her grandmother went to the local church. The man pulled away the broom from the girl’s hands and led the girl in to the house, forcing himself upon her. In her effort to resist to this man, she knocked her shoulder against the door. Since the man was stronger than her, he took her in, placed her face down and penetrated her anus until he ejaculated. Before that, the man knocked the girl’s face against the wall, so she was helpless and wounded,. Unfortunately for this man, the owner of the compound came back home and found him violating the girl. He was discovered and ran away. After this, the local police station was informed and the girl was taken to the hospital. The girl was submitted twice for an HIV test, with negative results. Now, she is waiting six months later for another test. The grandmother prevents the girl from going to school, because others laugh at her. The rapist is caught, and he is now in jail awaiting judgment and sentencing. Every day the girl and her grandmother face, threats from the rapist’s family.

By sharing this story, the community organizations were able to more deeply understand the impact on children of poverty and lack of social cohesion. Enabled to critically examine the situation, community actors gained not only new insights into the situations but felt empowered to denounce abuses and advocate for child protection. One participant stated: “ in light of a better understanding of the causes and consequences of conflicts oppressing and depriving children of their rights, we are now better equipped to implement dispositions which will ensure a climate of good social cohesion and peace for the thriving of children all over.”

Table 2.



In the action plan and monitoring, community actors focused on sharing knowledge about rights with a specific focus on promoting girls right to education (see Table 2). The action plan has helped communities plan action and monitor progress in ways that are realistic.

Upon writing this article, several activities had been carried out by community actors:

* Campaigns took place where girls were able to stand up to say no to child marriage and publicly condemn parents who continue to marry their daughters early. These outreach activities had been attended by over 1,300 people in the three communities.
* The youth group organized two competitions in two high school using theatrical presentations on migration and child marriage and the importance of peaceful coexistence
* Social mobilization has been reinforced by radio messages, radio spots, messages of peace in churches and mosques and newspaper articles.
* Sessions targeted parent-teacher associations and school principals to understand the importance of schooling for girls as conditions for reducing child marriage, female genital mutilation, migration, child trafficking, poverty, but the root causes of schooling of girls.

These actions speak to the commitment and potential of actively engaging communities in child protection plans. A participant states: “ This will no doubt contribute to the improvement of living conditions for our children who demand nothing but peace and peaceful coexistence ... relevant recommendations have emerged from our work... We will make a point of faithfully transmitting these to all concerned and to work for the application of what lies within our jurisdiction. »

**Moving forward**

This article points to the critical importance of engaging a range of community actors for child protection, education and social cohesion post-conflict. This bottom-up approach was central in a context where the formal protection and education systems are unable to meet the needs of vulnerable children. While these priorities have traditionally been responded to by the state in isolation, our study shows how capacity development is critical to support formal and non-formal education as well as ensure appropriate, context receptive child protection. The participatory research also shows that when communities are provided with the appropriate tools for action and monitoring, this helps not only address the complexities entailed in child protection but also strengthens social cohesion. Providing a transformative space is critical for potentially divergent interest, norms and constructions of reality to meet and be co-constructed (Wals, 2009).

In moving forward, we recommend that this training be expanded to other sites across the country. In doing so, it is critical to find locally accepted and engaged organizations to ensure ongoing implementation and support. Also important in the context of Chad is to accredit the training program. One of the key educational markers that the youth identified was the lack of access to accreditation that they could use to enhance their job prospects and post secondary opportunities. To address this issue, ARED is working with IICRD’s YouLEAD initiative to pilot an online skill recognition program and develop a new “Social Cohesion” stamp to recognize the key skill sets required to support local peace through support for vulnerable boys and girls. The Online Skill Recognition Program of YouLEAD is a way for young people to record their learning and skill development over time in an online portfolio/profile. It helps fill the need for capacity leading to job-readiness and support young people on their life path. The YouLEAD stamps are intended to support young people to recognize and develop their life skills by: tracking their progress, witnessing their own potential and expanding their skills, knowledge, and self- awareness.

As stated by child advocate Graça Machel: “war violates every right of the child…the impact of conflict on children is everyone’s responsibility, and it must be everyone’s concern” (UNICEF, 2009: v, 3). Making this a reality requires actively reinforcing the relationship amongst community actors in order to tighten the linkages and nodes in the web of support for children. The community educational model presented here is one way of practically engaging communities in understanding the risk factors as well as to come together to reflect on local issues, use indicators to plan strategic interventions, and denounce and advocate for the protection of children’s rights.

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