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# Symposium Report: Keeping Children and Families together with Economic Strengthening

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**March 6, 2015**

*This report is produced by the Supporting Transformation by Reducing Insecurity and Vulnerability with Economic Strengthening (STRIVE) Program. Managed by FHI 360, under the FIELD-Support LWA, STRIVE represents a consortium of leading organizations committed to advancing the state-of-the-practice of economic strengthening to improve the well-being of vulnerable children.*

*For more information, please visit [www.seepnetwork.org/strive](http://www.seepnetwork.org/strive) or [www.microlinks.org/strive](http://www.microlinks.org/strive)*

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# STRIVE

STRIVE (Supporting Transformation by Reducing Insecurity and Vulnerability with Economic Strengthening) was initiated in 2007 by USAID's Displaced Children and Orphans Fund and the USAID Microenterprise Development Office. The project was managed by FHI 360 with partners including ACDI/VOCA, CARE, MEDA, Save the Children, and Action for Enterprise (AFE). STRIVE sought to fill the gap in information that links economic strengthening to the wellbeing of children and youth through the implementation and evaluation of economic advancement interventions designed with the specific intent of benefitting children. STRIVE's monitoring and evaluation system documented both economic and non-economic indicators for children. The project's learning strategy served to capture the results of the interventions and to share successful and unsuccessful strategies with the greater development field. In this way, STRIVE aimed to contribute to the advancement of a knowledge base on how to best generate positive outcomes for children through economic strengthening programs and to develop replicable models.

STRIVE conducted field activities with implementing partners in four countries: the Philippines, Afghanistan, Liberia, and Mozambique. In the Philippines, AFE implemented a value chain intervention intended to link low-income producers to key market actors. In Afghanistan, MEDA implemented a project to improve the quality of informal apprenticeships in the construction industry and improve linkages between actors in the industry. In Liberia, a value chain intervention led by ACDI/VOCA connected farmers with profitable value chains and promoted local production of staple foods. In Mozambique, Save the Children led an effort to improve nutritional outcomes for children through the introduction of savings groups and a rotating shared labor scheme.

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# ACRONYMS

AFE	Action for Enterprise
CCF	Child, Community, Family (Moldova)
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CSG	Child Support Grant (South Africa)
CSI	Child Status Index
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCOF	Displaced Children and Orphan's Fund
ES	Economic Strengthening
HES	Household Economic Strengthening
IGA	Income-generating Activity
IRC	International Rescue Committee
KEP	Karnali Employment Programme (Nepal)
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PW	Public Works
R&R	Recovery and Reintegration
SCORE	Sustainable, COmprehensive REsponses
SROI	Social Return on Investment
STRIVE	Supporting Transformation by Reducing Insecurity and Vulnerability with Economic Strengthening
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VUP	Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (Rwanda)
VSLA	Village savings and loan association

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## OVERVIEW

This report is an overview of the key issues addressed during the “Keeping Children and Families together with Economic Strengthening” symposium funded by USAID’s Displaced Children and Orphan’s fund (DCOF) and implemented by FHI 360 through the Supporting Transformation by Reducing Insecurity and Vulnerability with Economic Strengthening (STRIVE) project. The symposium took place on March 6, 2015, at the office of FHI360 in Washington, D.C. and was attended by over 44 practitioners, donors, and researchers and included presentations, case studies, and discussions on topics related to the design, assessment of gender and vulnerability, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and research of economic strengthening (ES) interventions intended to prevent families and children separation and support reintegration. STRIVE selected 10 case studies on the topic through an open call for abstracts; case studies were also presented and discussed (see Annex 2 for Case Study Summaries).

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## SYMPOSIUM OBJECTIVES

An estimated 24 million children around the globe live in situations absent of parental care (EveryChild, 2009). The preponderance of these cases are in low- and middle-income countries. Although in some cases parental care is not possible or in a child’s best interests, it is generally recognized that children outside of parental care are more likely to be neglected and exposed to abuse and exploitation, are more vulnerable to health and behavioral problems, and face challenges in developing relationships, a sense of identity, and self-esteem (Laumann, 2015).

This symposium was part of STRIVE’s work to track and document the impacts of diverse interventions on household and child wellbeing, including both economic (financial), and non-economic (health, education, nutrition) vulnerability factors. Through this symposium, STRIVE continued its work to identify and demonstrate interventions that can sustainably increase household incomes and/or assets and document how such increases improve (or fail to improve) resiliency in the face of conditions that can cause family separation.

The symposium sought to achieve the following specific objectives:

- To examine the relationship between economic strengthening interventions and family separation and reintegration, that is, why, when, and how economic strengthening interventions help prevent unnecessary separation of children and families?
- To bring together a group of experts to discuss the challenges to and opportunities for targeted ES interventions to address child separation from households
- To inform future programs and research

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# ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY AS A DRIVER OF FAMILY SEPARATION

The problems that drive family dissolution cannot be solved by short-term, sector-specific, one-off solutions. These complex social and economic issues are rooted in structural and contextual issues related to poverty, psycho-social problems, intergenerational violence, family dynamics, conflict, and child labor and trafficking, among others. It is clear, however, that poverty is a key driver of separation and a barrier to reunification. Poor families who lack livelihood options and/or experience economic shocks are less able to provide for a child's material and emotion wellbeing, which in turn makes the family vulnerable to factors that “push” a child out of the house or “pull” the child into an alternative living situation, such as a residential facility. In the absence of adequate social protection services<sup>1</sup> and/or formal employment options, ES activities may help families stay together by supporting caregivers to meet consumption needs, build up their savings and asset-based safety net and eventually grow family resources.

There is, however, a limited pool of evidence of the impact of ES interventions on reducing child–family separation or supporting household reunification. This is due in part to the difficulty of identifying and measuring the complicated structural and contextual dynamics that drive separation, a lack of understanding of what keeps families together and the difficulty isolating the “drivers” of child–family separation to disentangle the impact of ES activities from other interventions. Ultimately, the base of evidence is weak due to these measurement factors combined with the cost of and programmatic complications involved in conducting rigorous longitudinal studies, including tension between research fidelity and the need for programmatic changes and course correction.

In the absence of a large pool of direct evidence of ES impact on family separation/reunification, “child wellbeing” indicators are often used as proxy measurements for family stability. The research and project outcome data presented at the symposium suggest that ES can improve child wellbeing indicators related to nutrition, health, education, emotional/psycho-social, and reduced child labor, which in turn serve as proxy measures for estimating household vulnerability to separation. Several examples supporting examples are provided below and additional research and evidence can be found in Annex 1, a presentation of the literature conducted in preparation for the symposium.

- Data from 60 national studies to identify children at risk of HIV showed that household economic status and parental education level were the most consistent predictors of negative outcomes for children (Akwara, et al., 2010).
- An evaluation of the Rwanda's Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP) measured categories of increased expenditures that result from a cash for work program. The top categories of increased expenditures are: (1) consumption (food, utensils, clothing), (2) human capital (education, health), (3) income generation (farming, business), (4) asset

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<sup>1</sup> The World Bank defines social protection programs as “...both social assistance (such as cash transfers, school feeding, targeted food assistance and subsidies) and social insurance (such as old-age, survivorship, disability pensions, and unemployment insurance)” (World Bank, 2015).

accumulation (livestock), and (5) financial services (saving, credit, insurance) (Devereaux, 2012).

- Research by the Karnali Employment Programme (KEP) in Nepal shows that ES reduces child poverty, improves child wellbeing and care, increases human development, (that is, health, education and nutrition) (Adhikari, Hagen-Zanker, & Babajanian, 2014).
- Concern Worldwide Graduation Programme in Burundi resulted in increased investment in child education, along with general reduction in deprivation, increased savings and asset ownership, consumption of meat and vegetables, social cohesion, and use of preventative medicine (Devereux & Roelen, 2013).
- PACT Tanzania's *Pamoja Tuwalee* resulted in improved child wellbeing outcomes from families who participated in WORTH savings groups: 77 percent of WORTH households reported improved child health compared to 65 percent of non-WORTH households, and 36 percent of WORTH households reported improved child emotional wellbeing compared to 19 percent of non-WORTH households (Munene & Radeny, 2015).

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## NON-ECONOMIC DRIVERS OF FAMILY–CHILD SEPARATION

Although there is evidence that economic vulnerability or poverty is one of the most, if not the most, important factor driving household–child separation and preventing reunification, participants highlighted the importance of non-economic considerations. For the purpose of designing and implementing strong programs, practitioners must consider the contextual, social, and psychological factors that put a child or family at risk of separation or prevent reunification. This position is supported by existing research and program experience.

- The International Rescue Committee (IRC) Urwaruka Rushasha's (New Generation) program research on the impact of village savings and loan association (VSLA) interventions on child wellbeing in Burundi, showed that improving economic outcomes is not enough to ensure sustained behavior change in a family; "...results suggest that the VSLA intervention alone did not reduce harsh discipline practices, improve positive discipline, or impact child wellbeing or mental health" (Annan, Bundervoet, Seban, & Costigan, 2013; Bundervoet, Annan, & Armstrong, 2011).
- Cash transfers and nutrition: "Just Give Money to the Poor" presents evidence that provision of financial resources or cash is not adequate to improve child wellbeing indicators related to nutrition (Hanlon, Barrientos, & Hulme, 2010).
- The JUCONI method used by Railway Children in East Africa focuses on psycho-social support and emotional healing the first 18 months of child reintegration before introduction of economic strengthening activities.

Throughout the symposium participants shared examples of non-economic drivers of family separation:

- Intra-household-level stressors: decision making around limited resources (parent's time, finances), negative relationship dynamics (parent–child, husband–wife), death of parent(s),

death of a wage earner, and/or remarriage that affect resource allocation among family members

- Child-level stressors: Preferred treatment of certain children (males versus female), emotional abuse, sexual abuse, violence, discrimination based on sexual preference, mental illness (child or caregiver)
- External shock: War/conflict, natural disaster, forced migration
- Cultural elements: Certain cultural norms that can exacerbate tension in the home, including an acceptability of violence, polygamy, and tension between multiple spouses
- Weak social network and capital: Families, especially in the case of migration, that may lack network of relatives and neighbors who can serve as a safety net of support
- Trafficking: A family that may be “tricked” (with promises of better opportunities, education in a religious boarding school, work) into sending a child away or a child may be forcibly taken from a family, and forced to become a laborer, or sex worker
- Demand for child labor: Families and children who may voluntarily seek more resources in work for which the demand for child labor is high, such as the fishing industry on Lake Volta, Ghana (Schley, Danvers, & Annan, 2015)
- Perceived opportunities: A family whose motivation may be rational even if the outcome is destructive; poor families that chose to send children to religious boarding schools, to become soldiers, or to marry daughters early in hope of greater access to resources for the child or the family

## DRIVERS OF FAMILY STABILITY OR SUSTAINED REINTEGRATION

Symposium participants emphasized the need for better understanding of the positive factors that support families to remain unified, even in the face of external shocks. Although more research on the positive drivers of family resilience are needed, there is some evidence, mostly anecdotal, suggesting that the following may have a positive influence on family–child unity: (1) education-level of the parent (Akwara, et al., 2010); (2) positive emotional state, (such as the confidence resulting from having employment (Roelen, 2015), (3) existence of a social safety net (formal or informal), (4) with strong linkages to a child protection system (Roelen, 2015), and (5) access to childcare to support income activities (Rotaru, 2015).

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# ECONOMIC STRENGTHENING ACTIVITIES TO PREVENT CHILD- FAMILY SEPARATION AND SUPPORT REUNIFICATION

If we accept that poverty is an important driver of family separation, then Economic Strengthening (ES) activities can support families to become or remain economically and emotionally resilient, so that children are well cared for and more likely to remain inside the home.

ES interventions, also commonly referred to as household economic strengthening (HES), “comprises a portfolio of interventions to reduce the economic vulnerability of families and empower them to provide for the essential needs of the children they care for, rather than relying on external assistance” (PEPFAR, 2012). ES interventions that seek to prevent child separation and support reunification are most often implemented at the household level and aim to build caregiver economic capacity. In a smaller number of contexts, such as those reintegrating older youth, ES activities directly target youth with income-generating activities (IGA), entrepreneurship, vocational training, internships, mentorships, or job placements.

A literature review of the limited research on ES interventions in this context, did not point to any particular ES activities as being more or less successful (Chaffin & Kalyanpur, 2014). There is agreement, however, that ES programming must fit the context—both the market opportunities and constraints as identified through a market assessment, but also the household composition and context. Families at risk for separation or striving for reintegration vary in composition, needs, and capabilities. ES interventions that target this population should be designed to match the target populations’ attributes. One consideration is household profile in terms of size (number of people), composition (number, gender and ability/disability of infants, children, adults, elderly) and caregiver situation (single parent, kinship, community support, recent death of income provider), which will impact the amount of support, the incentives for participation, and the logistics of facilitating support. A case study example cited South Africa’s Child Support Grant (CSG) program, which had an impact on poverty but the size of the cash transfer was too small to impact drivers of family separation, including child labor and sexual exploitation (Jones, Roelen, & Delap, 2015). Other non-economic risk factors can affect outcomes such as gender dynamics, agency and decision-making, family configuration, child abuse, and psychosocial wellbeing.

The design or selection of ES interventions should mirror the target population’s household economic vulnerability profile in terms of income stability, ability to meet consumption needs and stability of the asset base, and how this relates to the household’s ability to take on risk. Consideration of a family’s current economic situation is essential: whether a poor parent can only focus on “survival-level issues such as food security that she cannot meaningfully tackle any longer-term livelihood strategies” (de Montesquiou & Sheldon, 2014). The “pathway out of poverty” (see Figure I below) approach reflects this understanding; each level of economic vulnerability and associated risk is matched with appropriate ES

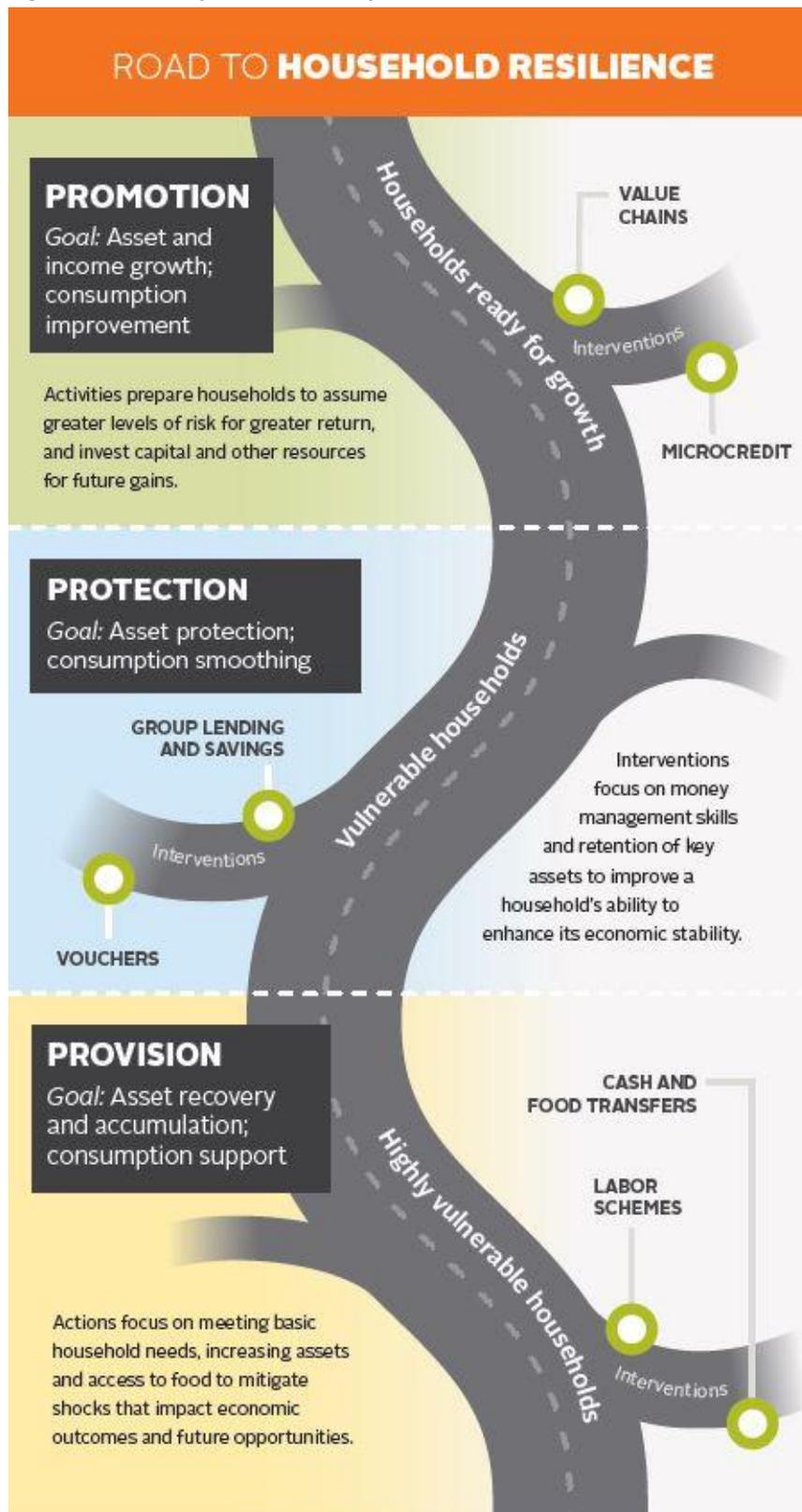
interventions that can potentially move the household toward reduced economic vulnerability. The pathway starts with provision activities that provide consumption support (such as cash transfers, food provision) and facilitate asset acquisition and recovery; the path progresses to protection activities that protect asset and smooth consumption (savings groups, vouchers, skills building), and reaches promotional activities that are increasingly risky yet more profitable so that consumption and investment can grow (access to financial services, microenterprise, income-generation activities).

Pact's program in Ethiopia uses a similar framework to match groups of households to appropriate ES activities. A vulnerability assessment and analysis is conducted using the Child Support Index (CSI) tool to categorize households into three cohorts that participate in a treatment that should match their needs and abilities (Munene & Radeny, 2015).

- Families in Destitution: Support for basic needs in order to stabilize;
- Families Struggling to Survive: Microenterprise Selection, Planning and Management (ME-SPM) training, support and follow up; Savings, Credit and Investment (SCI); and
- Families Ready to Grow: Support to consolidate income, build resilience through SCI methodology

Table I describes common ES interventions classified by level of economic vulnerability as defined in the LIFT II Conceptual Model (LIFT II Project, 2013).

Figure 1: Pathway out of Poverty



(Bass & Reid, 2014)

**Table 1: Common Economic Strengthening Approaches**

<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Approach</b>	<b>Level of Intervention</b>
Conditional cash transfer (CCT)	Provision of regular cash transfers contingent upon specific behavior (ongoing support for child's education, health care, food)	Provision
Unconditional cash transfers	Provision of cash without conditions. The target population is often a more vulnerable one (child-headed households, elderly)	Provision
Cash-for-work	Provision of cash in exchange for work	Provision
Food-for-work	Payment in food rather than money, in exchange for work	Provision
Provision of productive assets	Granting of animals, grinding mills, sewing machines, seeds and tools for agriculture, etc., often to complement another ES intervention (microcredit, skills training, IGA).	Provision/protection
Provision of access to land	Negotiating with communities and/or municipalities for donation or sale of arable land to NGO on behalf of beneficiaries.	Provision/protection/promotion (depending on purpose)
Vouchers	Paper, tokens, or electronic cards that can be exchanged for a set quantity or value of goods, with either a cash value or as a pre-determined set of commodities or services; vouchers redeemable at pre-selected vendors	Provision/protection
Financial literacy training/financial education	Activities to build knowledge and understanding of financial concepts and risks, and help individuals develop the skills, motivation, and confidence to apply that knowledge and understanding so they can make good decisions and participate in economic life	Provision/protection
Community-managed microfinance (group savings, village savings and loan associations)	Self-selected groups pool resources to accumulate savings and make loans to members. Groups may become a platform for provision of other types of services (health, non-formal education)	Protection
Individual savings	Savings account opened in the name of the child or caregiver. NGO can add matched savings, perhaps conditional on positive behaviors (schools attendance, clinic visits)	Protection
Job placement	Job opportunities facilitated through linkages with employers. If necessary, agencies can offer a salary subsidy to employers as an incentive.	Protection
Apprenticeships	Working-age child/youth learns a trade under the guidance of a skilled worker.	Protection
Technical and vocational education and training (TVET)	Skills are taught in a central location, sometimes in a residential facility. Length of training depends on the occupation. Often includes such additional skills as basic literacy, numeracy, business skills and life skills education, employability skills.	Protection
Mobile training	Trainers visit villages or neighborhoods for short periods. Training is tailored to the needs of the community to improve a given production technology or the quality of a specific product, especially in agriculture and agro-processing. Trainers can return for follow-up.	Protection

Intervention	Approach	Level of Intervention
Income-generation activities (IGAs)	Groups or individuals receive training and/or inputs for the production of goods (handicrafts, vegetable gardening, agro-processing) and generate income to be divided among group members.	Protection/promotion
Market linkages (value chain, local economic development)	Interventions to enhance profitability of enterprises or whole industries by studying the market system and creating linkages with actors along the value chain. Can include negotiating with suppliers, buyers, or processors; establishing cooperatives; strengthening law and policy; improving firms' competitiveness; increasing exports; attracting investment and tourism.	Promotion
Business loans	Caregivers take on debt to establish or expand micro-enterprises. Often paired with business development services, including entrepreneurship training and provision of productive assets.	Promotion
Small grants for business	Cash to establish or expand micro-enterprises. Often paired with business development services, including entrepreneurship training and provision of productive assets.	Promotion
Microfranchising	Creation of scaled-down versions of existing businesses using proven marketing and sales techniques. With supplies and training from established firms (and support from NGOs), caregivers and/or youth sell retail goods or provide services.	Promotion

\*The interventions in this table and descriptions of their approaches are from Chaffin & Kalyanpur (2014) pages 9–25.

Two types of ES interventions that were commonly highlighted during the symposium are described in more detail below:

**Cash Transfers:** Provision of cash with or without conditionality can support child wellbeing, especially among the very poorest or in a crisis situation. Non-conditional cash transfers can free up consumption spending for use on children's health, food, or education. Conditional cash transfers linked to positive child-related behaviors (that is, improved nutrition, school attendance, reduced child labor) can reduce the opportunity cost of not using child labor and instead sending children to school (Roelen, 2015). Research on unconditional cash transfers in Uganda reported that the majority of poor youth beneficiaries started micro-businesses in skilled trades, and "earnings rose nearly 50%, especially women's" (Blattman, 2008). Another evaluation of an unconditional cash transfer program in Ecuador found a significant drop in child labor (both paid and unpaid). However, poorly designed cash transfer programs with inappropriate or misaligned incentives can result in the "commodification" of children, that is, foster parents motivated by financial gain rather than concern for a child's wellbeing (Edmonds & Schady, 2012).

**Savings Groups:** Self-selected groups organize with objective of accumulating savings and eventually providing credit to members. Savings groups have also been successful as platforms for the delivery of other interventions, including skills training, behavior change interventions, and information dissemination (Parr & Bachay, 2015). An important secondary benefit of

savings groups is the empowerment and other psycho-social improvements among members. Evidence from a CARE International study shows that savings group participants increased household consumption of major food groups and a statistically significant increase in reported planning for future education of children (Stene, Chandani, Arur, Patsika, & Carmona, 2009).

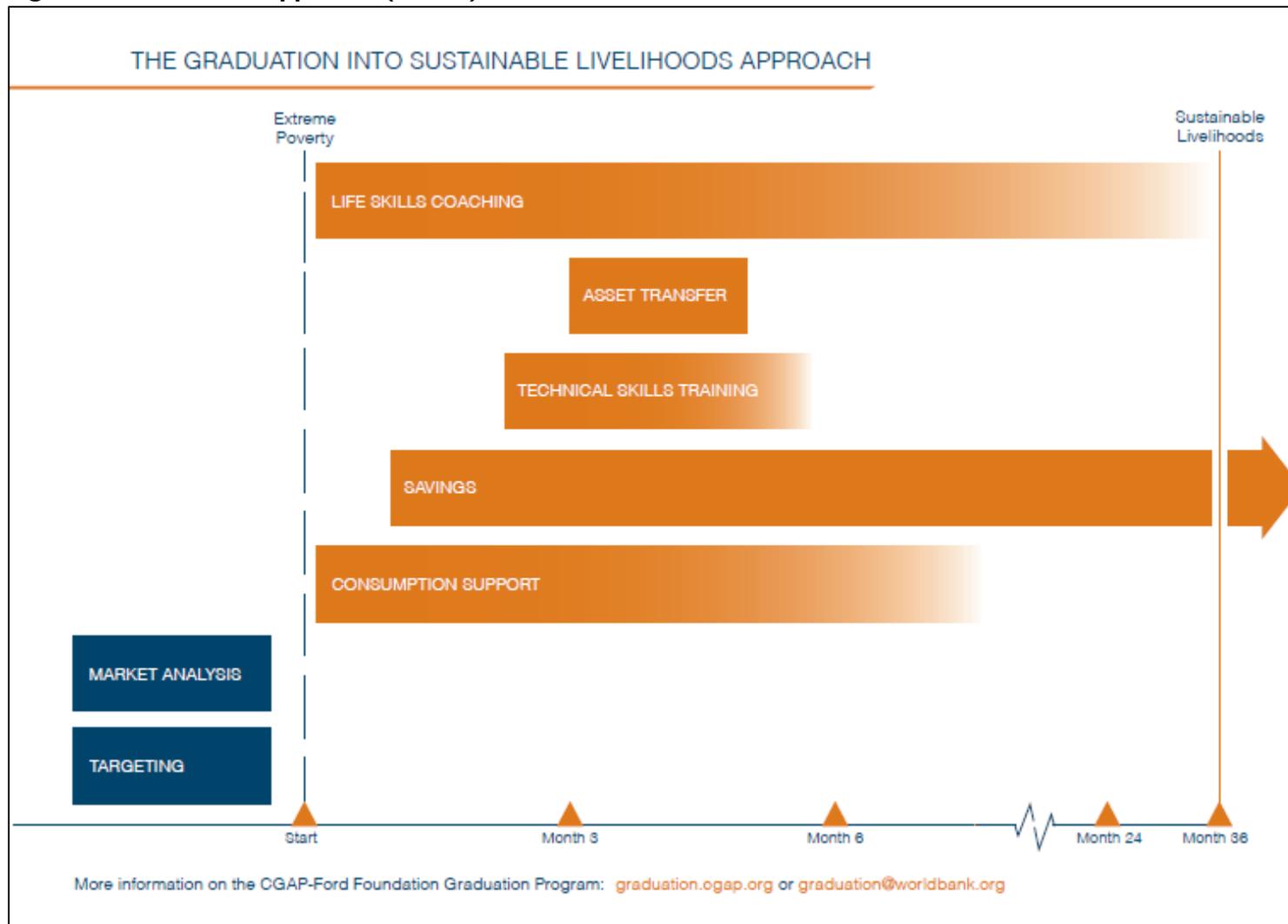
### **Graduation Approach<sup>2</sup>**

While some projects like PACT or LIFT use the pathway out of poverty framework to prescribe a set of appropriate standalone ES interventions for a target population, other programs aim to move a target population along the pathway until they are out of poverty during the project's lifetime through a set of sequenced ES interventions. The Trickle Up program in Burkina Faso integrates such a "graduation approach" into its family separation prevention programs (Figure 2). Ultra-poor women are targeted to participate in sequenced ES activities that include: Step 1: Savings group formation and training; Step 2: Livelihood and household management training; Step 3: Seed capital grants to jump-start or expand a livelihood activity (such as vending, animal husbandry) and Step 4: Bi-weekly to monthly one-on-one mentoring and coaching on livelihood development.

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<sup>2</sup> A fully integrated, five step suite of interventions, delivered in a specific sequence, for the purpose of helping extremely poor people achieve sustainable livelihoods. CGAP-Ford Foundation.

**Figure 2: Graduation Approach (CGAP)**

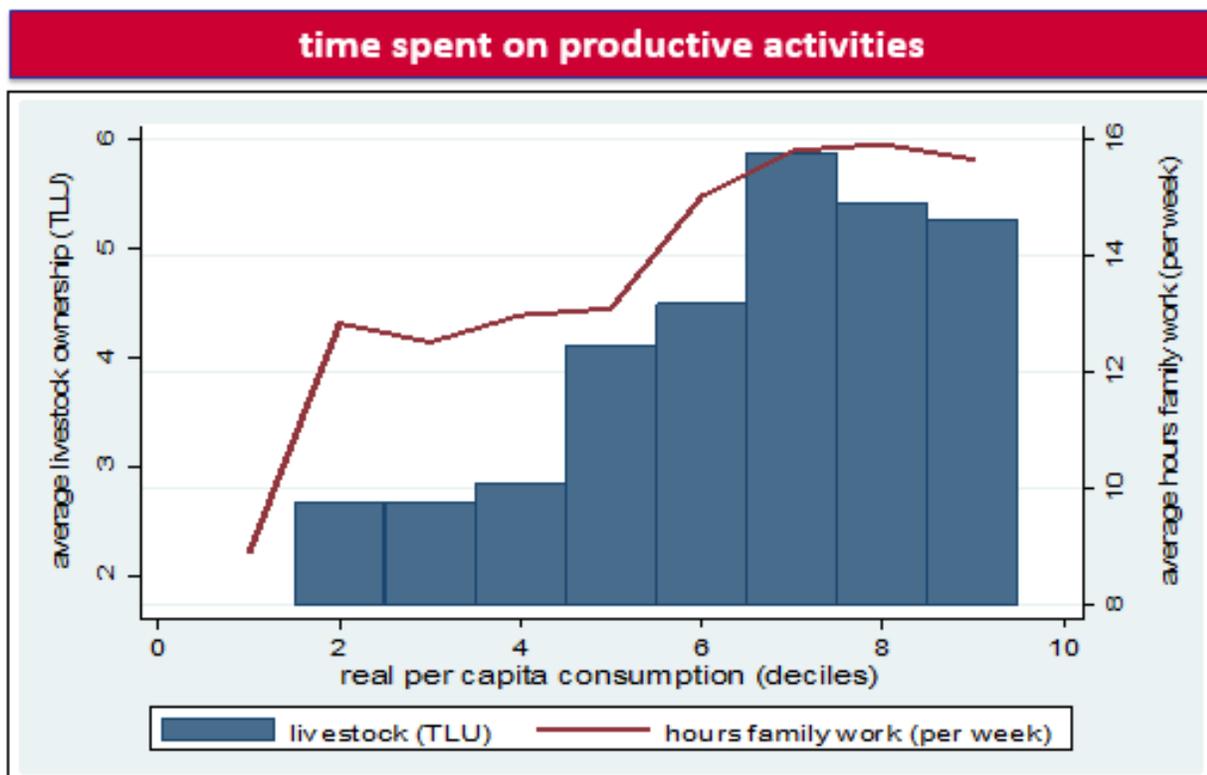


(CGAP, 2009)

## POTENTIAL NEGATIVE IMPACT OF ES INTERVENTIONS ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Although ES activities have the potential to support family unification through reducing household economic vulnerability, ES activities can also result in unintended negative consequences if improperly designed or executed. It is important to consider how involvement in an ES activity can affect the allocation of financial and time resources among household members. Such allocation may result in a trade-off between: (1) parent and/or child time spent on ES activities versus other activities to the benefit of child development (studying, playing), and (2) investment of financial resources in additional income generation versus investment in the child (better nutrition, education). For example, an increase in a parent's time spent working may result in a reduction in their time spent parenting or providing child care. Similarly, a child may be required to "substitute" and do household chores previously done by the parent instead of studying or playing, which contributes to child wellbeing. This shift may introduce stress within the home or reduce education advancement opportunities, thereby impacting the child's long-term wellbeing. Similarly, a parent's increased investment in income generation usually comes at the cost of less time parenting,

**Figure 3: Livestock Ownership and Family Work across Consumption Deciles for Children Aged 10–15 in Rural Ethiopia**



Source: Roelen (2015)

Unfortunately, it is difficult for development practitioners as external observers to know and understand a household’s decision-making process and how it may affect child wellbeing. Such resource allocation decisions are influenced by many contextual factors including cultural norms, gender-biases, and seasonal income flows. However, research on the impact of ES interventions on child wellbeing can illuminate some common trends and patterns around household resource distribution. For example, research conducted in Ethiopia reflects the trade-off between household income (real consumption per capita), assets (livestock ownership) and a child’s wellbeing (number of hours on family work): a child’s time contribution to productive activities increases steadily as the household consumption and asset acquisition increases (Roelen, 2015). This trade-off in an effort to achieve optimal allocation of resources between investments in livelihoods and in child wellbeing has been termed the “two-fold investment trap as households have to make choices regarding: (1) the distribution of household resources to children (versus livelihoods improvements); and (2) the contribution of resources by children to the household (versus their own development)” (Roelen, 2015).

## ASSESSING VULNERABILITY

Because a family’s level of vulnerability to separation or re-separation is driven by both economic and non-economic drivers, ES activities to support family unification should assess household economic health as well as child and caretaker wellbeing. Such an assessment can provide a more complete understanding for programming purposes of the different factors that put a family at risk. Assessments serve a number of purposes, including: (1) to identify or “target” program participants; (2) to identify the appropriate types of ES (provision, protection, promotion) for a given context or population, (3) to customize interventions to household specifications, and (4) to track and measure changes in vulnerability.

### Figure 2: Child Status Index

**Child Status Index (CSI)** is a composite tool to measure family health composed of six domains:

- food and nutrition
- shelter and care
- protection
- health
- psychosocial
- education and skills

(O’Donnell, Nyangara, Murphy, Cannon, & Nyberg, 2013).

A number of assessment tools were presented in the selected case studies. PACT (prevention of separation) and Retrak (reintegration) both use the CSI<sup>3</sup>, a “family” composite index that can be used to screen and/or target participants, design support package for households, and measure change. The CSI is composed of 7 indicators (See Figure 2) focused on the primary caregiver and 13 focused on the child (MEASURE Evaluation, 2013). The Child, Community, Family (CCF) Moldova program uses a tool to assess both risks and protective

factors to target households, develop customized intervention plans, and measure a family’s progress (Rotaru, 2015):

- Living conditions: safe, appropriate housing

<sup>3</sup> The *Child Status Index* (CSI) provides a framework for identifying the needs of children, creating individualized goal-directed service plans for use in monitoring the wellbeing of children and households, and program-level monitoring and planning at the local level. As of 2013, the CSI has been used in 17 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and Latin America. It has been translated for use in a variety of geographical, linguistic, and cultural contexts. (MEASURE Evaluation, 2013)

- Family and social relationships: social network, relationships with the community, support from relatives
- Employment and household economy
- Behavior: how the family’s conflicts are solved, problem-solving skills, relationship within the family, parenting skills
- Physical and mental health: access to medical services and medication, if needed
- Education: level of education and its impact on employment and decisions related to children’s schooling.

#### METRICS FOR MEASURING VULNERABILITY TO SEPARATION

Symposium participants discussed the need for indicators that accurately reflect the multitude of economic and non-economic drivers of separation at both the household and child levels. The most commonly used metrics—child labor at a population level and income at the household level—do not consider the economic, psycho-social, emotional, and structural causes and effects of a given intervention. Several examples of more comprehensive indicators sets were presented; Trickle Up recently completed a baseline evaluation of its program in Burkina Faso in which it measured household economic status, caregiver wellbeing and behaviors, and child-level outcomes (See Table 2). However, despite acknowledgement of several strong examples, there was general agreement that donors and practitioners should reach consensus around a set of useful metrics that effectively assess and measure the impact of ES interventions on the household/caregiver and child vulnerability to separation.

**Table 2: Trickle Up Vulnerability Assessment**

Household Economic Wellbeing Outcomes	Caregiver Wellbeing Outcome	Child-level Wellbeing Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to financial resources</li> <li>• Financial literacy</li> <li>• Household income and savings (increased food security, diversified income, reduced debt)</li> <li>• Child-centered expenditures (increased allocation of resources to children, including for child education)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced financial and parental stress</li> <li>• Increased women’s decision-making power</li> </ul> <p><b>Normative Beliefs about Child Abuse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase knowledge of harmful effects of child exploitation and abuse, right to education</li> <li>• Change norms about child abuse</li> <li>• Decrease approval and intentions of child abuse and exploitation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reduced Family Separation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer children leaving home for work</li> <li>• Fewer children studying in madrassa</li> <li>• Fewer child marriages</li> </ul> <p><b>Reduced Child Exploitation and Violence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less involvement in hazardous and exploitative work</li> <li>• Less transactional sex</li> <li>• Less exposure to physical and sexual violence</li> </ul> <p><b>Improved Child Wellbeing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased school enrollment, attendance and performance</li> <li>• Improved emotional wellbeing</li> <li>• Improved sense of safety and confidence</li> </ul>

(Ismayilova & Sanson, 2015)

## DESIGN IMPLICATIONS FOR ES ACTIVITIES TO PREVENT FAMILY–CHILD SEPARATION AND PROMOTE REINTEGRATION

There is tension between the need to adapt ES interventions to the needs of each family with the need to achieve scale through cost-effective models. Case studies varied in their balance between standardization and customization of ES activities. Trickle Up Burkina Faso adapts the standard graduation approach to fit groups of similar households. This standardization of activities is complemented by one-on-one mentoring. On the other hand, the **S**ustainable, **C**omprehensive **R**esponses (SCORE) for vulnerable children and their families project implemented by AVSI customizes the graduation approach to “fit the project to the people”; each family is assessed and develops a “household development plan” reflecting that household’s capabilities and risks. SCORE has shown that this customized approach can be cost-effective through the achievement of economies of scale (Lowicki-Zucca, 2015).

If taking a standardizing approach, keep in mind some key household- and context-level characteristics that can affect program design:

- **Type of family:** Activity design should reflect household composition in terms size and type of caregiving configuration (single head of household, disabilities, kinship care, community care), gender dynamics, and the size to ensure appropriate and adequate resources are provided to avoid tension over resource competition and support sustained impact. Research suggests that although the Government of Ghana’s Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP) program’s cash transfers are having a positive impact on poverty and school enrollment, the impact is limited because the cash transfer is too small (Jones, Roelen, & Delap, 2015).
- **Issues of seasonality:** If seasonal or migrant work is away from the home, consider the impact on children. In some cases children will be pulled from school to substitute for parental duties. Or family tension can result if short-term migration results in multiple marriage or parental disagreements.
- **Geography:** Serving ultra-poor populations that are geographically disbursed presents a challenge. Project innovations to address this issue can include the use of mobile phones for behavior change and skill building as well as case management. Retrak used innovative measures in their graduation model, including audio business training (Kay, Shibru, & Wakia, 2015).

*Timing of ES Activities:* Participants discussed when the appropriate time was to introduce ES activities into child–family separation/reunification programming. Some projects, especially reintegration programs such as Retrak (Kay, Shibru, & Wakia, 2015) and Railway Children Africa (Kent & Lane, 2015) focus first on emotional and psycho-social support and counseling only; ES activities start only after emotional issues are addressed. Arguably, only after a child and family have regained an emotional stability can they successfully engage in economic activity.

*Incentives:* Interventions should carefully consider the incentives created by support. The incentives match the size and needs of the target families. It is important to consider the role of children in asset accumulation strategies and income-generating activities, particularly in reintegration programs. Poorly

designed incentives (that is, grants, vouchers, cash transfers) can encourage families to foster or to take in a child solely for personal financial gain. Consider the monetary value appropriate to prevent adverse effects that result in the commodification of children.

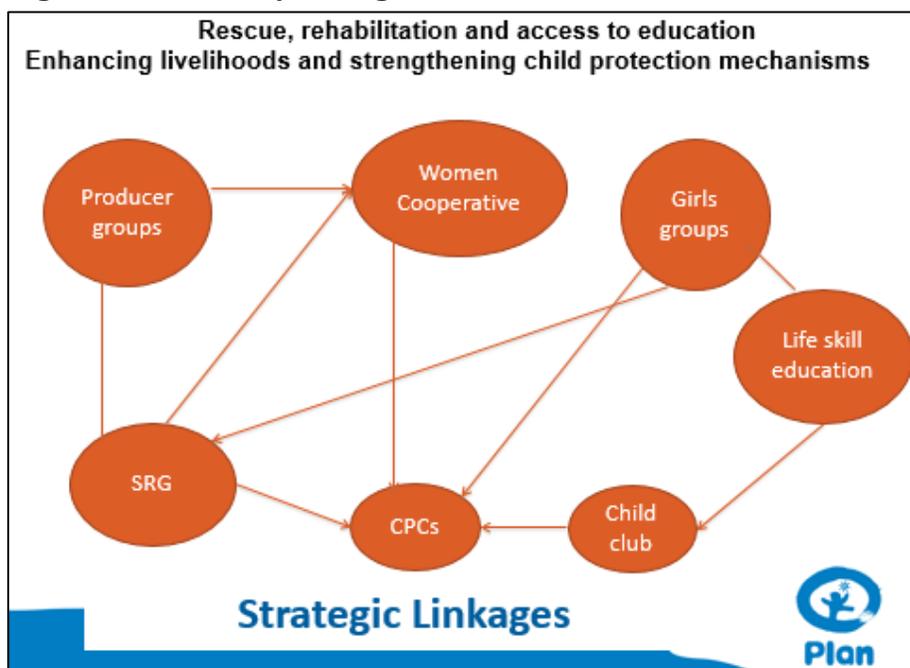
*Childcare Needs related to ES Activities:* Consider issues and solutions to child care needs while parents are engaged in the ES activity. This challenge can prevent the ultra-poor, primarily mothers, from participating in IGA, savings groups or other ES activities. The CCF Moldova program solved this program by running a daycare for participants. An evaluation of Rwanda's VUP concluded that although the public works (PW) program resulted in positive economic gain, because it took caregivers out of the home it had a negative impact on the quality of family care and in a few extreme cases induced family separation. Based on this result, the program is considering alternative child care solutions (Jones, Roelen, & Delap, 2015).

#### *Linkages between Child Protection and Social Protection Systems*

Functioning social protection support such as cash transfers, work for cash, food provision can support families in staying together. However, social protection schemes need to be linked to child protection activities to ensure that incentives are correctly aligned to have a positive rather than negative effect at the child level. Examples of perverse incentives can result in commodification of children or misuse of grants by caregivers. Proper monitoring of children by social protection agents can ensure a positive impact (Jones, Roelen, & Delap, 2015).

*Sustainability and Preventing Dependency:* In the early stages of a graduation approach, very poor participants often require the provision of cash or food (that is, cash transfer, voucher, food provision) free up household resources for productive activities. All activities, especially provision activities, should incorporate a phased exit plan and behavior change to avoid participant dependency on external resources. PACT's work in Ethiopia and Tanzania focused on the capacity and behavior change of caregivers to "break the dependency mentality" and promote sustainability and scalability. The PACT program also cited the use of local community facilitators who continued to support beyond program lifetime and efforts to strengthen local structures and systems (family, community, local civil society organizations/CSOs, government) as essential to sustained impact (Munene & Radeny, 2015). Plan Nepal emphasized capacity building for and linkages between local institutions and organizations, including child protection committees, women's cooperatives, and boys/girls clubs (Poudyal & Christopherson, 2015).

**Figure 4: Community Linkages**



(Poudyal & Christopherson, 2015)

*Gender:* A sub-session of the symposium focused on how gender impacts child separation-reunification programs. On the one hand, there is evidence that augmenting women’s income fosters investments that promote family and community wellbeing, and that women spend more of the income they control on food, health care, home improvement, and schooling for their families, which improves outcomes for children and builds resiliency in the event of market downturns.<sup>4</sup> Multiple studies have shown female caregivers allocate more resources to children than do their male counterparts (Chaffin, 2011). However, participants also discussed the need to more deeply engage males in project interventions to ensure sustainability and address negative household gender dynamics.

Programs that target adolescents should consider that boys and girls are likely to require different provisions to participate safely and equitably. As far as possible, agencies should make special provisions to include households with children who are particularly vulnerable or marginalized due to their gender, disability, ethnicity, HIV and AIDS status, or other factors (Chaffin & Kalyanpur, 2014). Similarly, certain ES activities put women at a disadvantage; Rwanda’s VUP supported a public works project that require demanding physical labor despite the fact that the majority of targeted participants were women. Most adults in PW are women, but PW is physical and demanding disadvantaging women, particularly pregnant and lactating women (Roelen, 2015). It is crucial to anticipate and explore with participants the possible unintended consequences of economic interventions, as well as the potential benefits, and to take these into account in selecting and designing interventions. Further, it is vital to compare outcomes for boys versus girls at different ages to disaggregate and assess the effects (Chaffin, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> A study in Brazil showed that the likelihood of a child’s survival increased by 20 percent when the mother controlled household income (Smith, Ramakrishnan, Ndiaye, Haddad, & Martorell, 2002). The greater the female share of household income in Cote d’Ivoire, the higher the spending on food (Joy, Carter, Wagner, & Narayanan, 2007).

## DESIGN IMPLICATIONS FOR MULTI-SECTORAL PROGRAMS TO PREVENT FAMILY-CHILD SEPARATION AND PROMOTE REINTEGRATION

“Economic wellbeing is not only dependent upon economic strengthening interventions; it results from the interplay of multiple interventions targeting vulnerable households: Including protection and psychosocial care, parenting skills, household gardening, and education support for children, among others” (Munene & Radeny, 2015).

Although poverty may be among the most important drivers of separation, programs that seek to reduce the risk of family separation or re-separation require a holistic set of interventions in which ES activities effectively link with psycho-social, behavior change, and skill-building support at the child, caregiver, and community levels. Table 3 presents some common non-economic activities, discussed during the symposium, that are valuable in programming to reduce child-family separation.

**Table 3: Non-economic Interventions**

Intervention	Description
Behavior Change	Information and messaging to change parenting norms and behaviors, children's rights, gender equality, trafficking, early marriage, institutionalization, violence/sexual abuse, education/school attendance, available support services, An example is Trickle Up child's rights sensitization component disseminated messages about child rights and the risks of child labor and trafficking. (Trickle Up, 2015)
Safe Spaces for Children	Boys and girls clubs are an effective way to provide emotional support and build social capital for at-risk children. These clubs can also be platforms for ES and other activities.
Parenting Skills/Early Childhood Development Skills	Improved understanding of child development phases and useful behavior techniques.
Child Protection Systems and Social Protection Systems	Social protection services, including cash transfers, public work programs, and food provision can support families at risk of separation to remain united as well as free up resources for increased investment in children. The social protection and child protection systems should be closely linked.
Psycho-social Support/Empowerment	Counseling, groups work, VSLAs, boys/girls clubs
Transitional Housing	Provision of a safe place for youth when they leave home and as they reintegrate into the family.
Advocacy	Advocate for improved and linked child protection and social protection systems, and policy change. CCF Moldova advocated with employers to provide the job to a mother with a young child and with vocational schools to include young mothers in their programs (Rotaru, 2015).
Access to Child Care	Facilitate access to nursery or child care service to free time for income-generating activities
Social Capital/Community Engagement	Build capacity of community in child and social protection, support advocacy and public policy change. Examples include child protection committees.

Some additional considerations that were discussed related to the design and implementation of holistic family separation programs that include both economic and non-economic activities are discussed below.

*Case Management versus Referral System:* The decision on how clients are managed in terms of selection, support, and follow-up monitoring. The case management approach was endorsed by some symposium participants as the most effective way to work with this population due to the complicated nature of the problem and the need to coordinate of multi-sector activities. However, referrals were cited as being more cost-effective and having more potential for reaching scale.

*Targeting:* Programs that support a certain population (orphans and vulnerable children/OVC, HIV-affected populations) can chose either a targeted approach in which only those households that meet a certain profile receive support or an inclusive approach in which all community members are eligible and special attention is focused on the selection of high incidence communities. On the one hand, targeting can be a

cost-effective way to allocate limited resources to the intended population and ensure that the neediest receive the intended aid. Alternatively, targeting can result in stigmatization of the targeted population, which may discourage participation for fear of discrimination.

*Role of Donors:* Donors can support the efforts to build the capacity of implementers to integrate ES activities into child–family separation programs in accord with best-practice standards. ES activities are often viewed as an “add-on” to a child protection project, and, therefore, are not always designed and implemented in a quality manner or tend to rely on the most familiar ES activities such as income generation activities and entrepreneurship, which may not be appropriate.

Another donor priority should be support for longitudinal and experimental research to build the evidence base. Finally, donors need to support increased coordination among implementers and donors to create program linkages between programs to avoid duplication and parallel efforts, to build on economies of scale, and to promote learning and expand the evidence base (Chaffin & Kalyanpur, 2014).

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## NEXT STEPS

The final session of the symposium, on the way forward, was truncated due to the weather-shortened workshop day and focused on reviewing some of the knowledge/evidence gaps and research questions suggested by participants throughout the day and sharing information on existing networks and initiatives.

The group briefly discussed what coordination structures and opportunities exist that address issues related to reintegration of children in family care and prevention of family–child separation and whether or not there was a need for further coordination on prevention of separation, reintegration, and economic strengthening that goes beyond existing groups/structures and initiatives. A number of groups and networks (see table below for an illustrative list) address some of these topics, or aspects of these topics; within these groups there is a fair amount of organizational overlap. The main technical capacity within these groups seems to be child protection and social work, although member organizations often have technical capacity in economic strengthening that they can draw on. Recent interagency work relating to reintegration of children in family care suggests that in practice technical coordination related to prevention of family–child separation and reintegration of children into family care needs to be strengthened and focused. Participants in the symposium did not advocate for new coordination mechanisms on this topic; they did note, though, that in the development context there may be a gap in open access to coordination of the nature that is offered by the Child Protection Working Group that focuses on emergency/humanitarian contexts.

Table 4: Illustrative List of Networks Working on Topics Related to Separation of Children from Family Care and Reintegration of Children in Family CareNetwork	Purpose
<p>Better Care Network</p> <p><a href="http://www.bettercarenetwork.org/">http://www.bettercarenetwork.org/</a></p>	<p>Founded in 2003 by the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF) and the Africa Bureau for Sustainable Development of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and Save the Children UK, BCN facilitates active information exchange and collaboration on the issue of children without adequate family care and advocates for technically sound policy and programmatic action on global, regional, and national levels to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduce instances of separation and abandonment of children;</li> <li>• reunite children outside family care with their families, wherever possible and appropriate;</li> <li>• increase, strengthen, and support family and community-based care options for children;</li> <li>• establish international and national standards for all forms of care for children without adequate family care and mechanisms for ensuring compliance; and</li> <li>• ensure that residential institutions are used in a very limited manner and only when appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>The BCN is guided by the UNCRC; the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (welcomed by the UN General Assembly in 2009) and the 2003 Stockholm Declaration on Children and Residential Care. The BCN is not a legal entity but an interagency network.</p>
<p>Child Protection Working Group</p> <p><a href="http://cpwg.net/">http://cpwg.net/</a></p>	<p>The Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) is the global forum for coordination and collaboration on child protection in humanitarian settings. The group brings together NGOs, UN agencies, academics, and other partners under the shared objective of ensuring more predictable, accountable, and effective child protection responses in emergencies.</p> <p>Established in 2007 by the IASC as part of the cluster approach, the CPWG is an area of responsibility under the global Protection Cluster, which is led by the Geneva-based CPWG coordinator and supports field-level child protection coordination groups in their coordination efforts and technical capacity in humanitarian situations through its Rapid Response Team (RRT) to strengthen child protection responses.</p>

Table 4: Illustrative List of Networks Working on Topics Related to Separation of Children from Family Care and Reintegration of Children in Family Care Network	Purpose
<p>CPC Task Force on Livelihoods and Economic Strengthening</p> <p><a href="http://www.cpcnetwork.org/task-force/livelihoods-and-economic-strengthening/">http://www.cpcnetwork.org/task-force/livelihoods-and-economic-strengthening/</a></p>	<p>The CPC Task Force on Livelihoods and Economic Strengthening seeks to enhance the protection and wellbeing of crisis-affected children through sustainable livelihoods approaches and economic strengthening of households. The Task Force strives to improve the design, quality, and effectiveness of economic programming, both with adults, and in economic interventions that target adolescents themselves.</p>
<p>Faith to Action Initiative</p> <p><a href="http://faithtoaction.org/">http://faithtoaction.org/</a></p>	<p>Resource for Christian groups, churches, and individuals seeking to respond to the needs of orphans and vulnerable children in Africa and around the world. Focus is to encourage action that is informed by evidence-based “best practice” and that recognizes and upholds the vital importance of family and community in the life of every child.</p> <p>Promotes/aims to strengthen family-based care for children in need. Offers practical tools and resources, inspiring stories and examples, and up-to-date information on key strategies and research to help guide action. Seeks to engage and equip churches and individuals through our website, publications, conference workshops, and webinars.</p>
<p>Family for Every Child</p> <p><a href="http://www.familyforeverychild.org">http://www.familyforeverychild.org</a></p>	<p>Unique global alliance of national civil society organizations working together to improve the care of children around the world. We use our wealth of local experience and knowledge generated over years of working directly with children to advocate for and achieve better care for children globally. Together we work toward a world where every child can grow up safe and protected in families and be provided with quality alternative care when needed. Advocacy, technical assistance, practice exchange, case studies.</p>
<p>Home: The Child Recovery and Reintegration Network</p> <p><a href="http://www.childrecovery.info">http://www.childrecovery.info</a></p>	<p>Supported by UHI Center for Rural Childhood and Oak Foundation, UNICEF, Oak Foundation, Development Links Consult/Uganda.</p> <p>Facilitate access to quality resources on recovery and reintegration of children affected by sexual exploitation and trafficking</p> <p>Filter, distill, package, and disseminate knowledge in a regular and effective way for the purposes of learning</p> <p>Capture and highlight innovative practice in the field</p>

Table 4: Illustrative List of Networks Working on Topics Related to Separation of Children from Family Care and Reintegration of Children in Family Care Network	Purpose
	<p>Stimulate debate</p> <p>Identify gaps in knowledge, resources, and training, working creatively to address these gaps</p> <p>Reach a diverse audience of practitioners, researchers, funders, policymakers, and students to foster learning, collaboration, and partnership</p> <p>The role of the Oak Fellow is to support the learning and exchange of knowledge surrounding the recovery and reintegration of children affected by sexual exploitation and related trafficking globally.</p>
<p>Interagency Working Group on Reintegration</p> <p>Information pulled from Wedge, Joanna. 2013. Reaching for Home: Global Learning on Family Reintegration in Low and Lower-Middle Income Countries. Interagency Group on Reintegration.</p>	<p>The Inter-Agency Group on Children’s Reintegration was formed in 2012 to pool learning from different actors engaged in this area of child protection work. The group includes NGOs and UN agencies that support the reintegration of children from a range of circumstances, including children in residential care, from the streets, who have been trafficked or migrated, and in emergency contexts. To date, the group has overseen the completion of extensive desk-based research on children’s reintegration, which provides recommendations for policymakers and practitioners and identifies gaps in knowledge and understanding. It is now working toward developing globally agreed guidance on key elements of good practice in children’s reintegration for organizations engaged in reintegration processes, including governments, NGOs, and UN agencies.</p>
<p>Recovery and Reintegration from CSE: A Learning Network to promote and facilitate learning on Recovery and Reintegration for children and adolescents affected by sexual exploitation</p>	<p>Family for Every Child, Retrak, and the International Centre: Researching Child Sexual Exploitation, Violence, and Trafficking, University of Bedfordshire, have come together to lead the implementation of this project, supported by a grant from Oak Foundation for 2015–2018. The project aims to increase knowledge and strengthen practice on children’s recovery and reintegration (R&amp;R) following child sexual exploitation (CSE). It will do so by developing an open, vibrant, locally accessible global learning network. This will enable children affected by CSE to have the opportunity to benefit from and engage in the improvement of sensitive, appropriate, and individualized services that support successful family and community-based R&amp;R. It is intended that services will improve as a result of practitioners’ increased</p>

Table 4: Illustrative List of Networks Working on Topics Related to Separation of Children from Family Care and Reintegration of Children in Family Care Network	Purpose
	capacity to provide quality interventions and responses to CSE. The project will also connect with practitioners and policymakers working on R&R from other forms of abuse, exploitation and violence against children, and other initiatives advancing learning, practice and policy on children’s reintegration.
RELAF (Red Latinoamericana de Acogimiento Familiar)  <a href="http://www.relaf.org">www.relaf.org</a>	RELAF (Latin American Foster Care Network, for the right to community and family-based care for children and adolescents) promotes and supports the strategies of governmental and non-governmental organizations for the restoration of such a right, since it considers the lack of policies with relation to this issue to represent a kind of social, political, and institutional violence that affects thousands of children and adolescents in Latin America.  The current objective of the RELAF project is to create and strengthen the active network of regional stakeholders to contribute to the de-institutionalization processes of children and adolescents and to the prevention of the separation of origin families and their communities. Furthermore, it promotes family-based care in Latin America to achieve the implementation of the Right to Community and Family-Based Care.

(Laumann, 2015)

The group also briefly reviewed comments on research gaps and suggested research questions that might help to move the evidence base forward. Table 5) below shows a summary of those questions.

**Table 5: Summary of Research Questions**

Theme	Gaps and Questions
Family/kinship	What are the characteristics of and dynamics related to different kinds of household/family units/groups and their contexts? What kinds of interventions seem most effective with those kinds of families in those contexts? Given the importance of kinship care in many situations, when we think about preventing separation do we need to think about strengthening more than one household or family? How can ES interventions support child-headed households most responsibly and effectively? How can they build the capacity of children who care for other children?
Drivers of family–child separation	How can ES interventions be effectively deployed to help prevent the unnecessary placement of children in residential care for reasons due to

Theme	Gaps and Questions
	<p>poverty and lack of access to services? In what contexts?</p> <p>Can ES interventions be used to help affect/reduce the violence and trauma that can be associated with family–child separation?</p>
Targeting and tailoring	<p>To what extent do ES interventions need to be tailored to households to be effective and cost-effective versus use a “one-size-fits-all” approach?</p> <p>What are effective strategies for matching economic strengthening interventions to households?</p> <p>What does, or should, targeting mean in terms of prevention of separation?</p>
Interventions	<p>What do we know about selecting complementary interventions?</p> <p>What role can early child development (ECD) centers (center-based or home-based) play in women’s economic empowerment?</p> <p>What do we know about ECD centers as income-generating activities for individual and groups? What do we know about good practice?</p> <p>What contexts and characteristics typify good child protection committees?</p> <p>How do/can child protection committee’s support or leverage economic strengthening interventions to protect children?</p> <p>How can projects learn about the role of children in household asset accumulation strategies? How can projects be designed to protect children’s rights and development needs? How should they take seasonal demand on children’s labor into account?</p>
Scale	<p>What do we know about scale and effectiveness of reintegration programs?</p> <p>What do we know about scale and effectiveness of prevention of separation programs?</p> <p>Are current reintegration and prevention of separation programs planned with scale in mind?</p> <p>What are the tensions between effectiveness and program scale?</p>
Transitional care	<p>What is known about transitional homes and best practices related to transitional care that can support durable reintegration of children in family care?</p>
Commodification of children	<p>What kinds of incentives can be offered to families or individuals to encourage them to take in children, and how can these incentives be managed in ways that do not allow children to become commodities?</p>
Measurement of success	<p>To what extent is it realistic and useful to think about developing and promoting the use of common indicators related to families, households, and children that can be used across different programs (such as, ES, social protection, child protection) to generate comparable data related to children’s vulnerabilities and wellbeing, family–child wellbeing, family–child separation?</p> <p>What indicators would be most useful to measure across multiple program types?</p> <p>How do “beneficiaries” of prevention and reintegration programs understand program success? Do their views differ from those of implementers?</p>
Research methods	<p>What research methods are most useful to understand the effects, outcomes,</p>

Theme	Gaps and Questions
	<p>and impact of reintegration and prevention of separation programming? What are the strengths, potential, and likely limitations of large-scale quantitative research? Qualitative research? Mixed methods research? What methods or designs are ruled out (for example, is it possible and practical to study separation prospectively)?</p> <p>How can we isolate and determine attributor variables in family separation (such as parenting skills, ES, psycho-social) according to context?</p>

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# ANNEX I: STRIVE SYMPOSIUM LITERATURE REVIEW

Document name	Author (Publisher)	Type of document (study, program evaluation, report, discussion paper, etc.)	Year of publication
What do we know about economic strengthening for family reintegration of separated children?	(Women's Refugee Commission, CPC Learning Network)	Lessons Learned, Literature Review; Identification of Tools	2014
Economic strengthening activities in child protection interventions: an adapted systematic review	Rachel Marcus, Ella Page (ODI)	Systematic Review	2014
Researching the linkages between social protection and children's care in Rwanda: The VUP and its effects on child wellbeing, care and family reunification	Keetie Roelen, Helen Shelmerdine (Centre for Policy Protection, Institute of Development Studies; Family for Every Child)	Qualitative Study (research)	2014
Researching the linkages between social protection and children's care in Ghana: LEAP and its effects on child wellbeing, care and family cohesion	Keetie Roelen, Helen Karki Chettri (Centre for Policy Protection, Institute of Development Studies; Family for Every Child)	Quantitative and Qualitative Study (research)	2014
A Randomized Impact Evaluation of Village Savings and Loans Association and Family Associations and Family-Based Interventions in Burundi	J. Annan, T. Bundervoet, J. Seban, J. Costigan (International Rescue Committee)	Randomized Controlled Study and Evaluation	2013
Reaching for Home: Global learning on family reintegration in low and lower middle income countries	Joanna Wedge (Interagency Group of Child Reintegration)	Literature Review	2013
A Double-edged Sword: Livelihoods in Emergencies	Ann Young Lee (Women's Refugee Commission)	Report based upon Literature Scan, Key Informant Interviews, Field Assessments	2014
Children and Economic Strengthening Programs: Maximizing Benefits and Minimizing Harm	J. Chaffin, N. Rhoads, J. Carmichael (CPC Livelihoods and Economic Strengthening Task Force)	Guide (evidence-based)	2013
Stepping forward: Sharing learning about children's reintegration between humanitarian and	Joanna Wedge (Family for Every Child)	Literature Review, Research and Discussion Paper	2013

<b>Document name</b>	<b>Author (Publisher)</b>	<b>Type of document (study, program evaluation, report, discussion paper, etc.)</b>	<b>Year of publication</b>
development actors			
World Family Map 2014: Mapping Family Change and Child Wellbeing Outcomes	Laura Lippman, W. Bradford Wilcox (Child Trends)	Statistics Report	2013
Child Rights Situation Analysis: Rights-Based Situational Analysis of Children without Parental Care and at risk of losing their Parental Care: Global Literature Scan, November 2006	Claire O’Kane, Claudia Moedlagl, Raluca Verweijen-Slannescu, Evelyn Winkler (SOS-Kinderdorf International)	Literature Scan/Situational Analysis	2006
The Impacts of Economic Strengthening Programs on Children: A Review of the Evidence	Josh Chaffin (CPC Livelihoods and Economic Strengthening Task Force)	Evidence Review (43 studies)	2011
Research on factors surrounding the family reintegration of street girls in Kinshasa, DRC: the search for long-term and durable solutions in the light of ‘multiple stigmatizations’, March-June 2013	Mathilde Guntzberfer (Family for Every Child)	Research Study	2013
Technical Brief: Family reintegration for children living in the streets	Kristin Smith, Joanna Wakia	Technical Brief	2012
Standard Operating Procedures: Family Reintegration May 2013	Retrak	Standard Operating Procedures	2013
Retrak Report: End of Project Evaluation: Sustainable Reintegration of Orphans and Vulnerable Children into Family and Community Life in Uganda and Ethiopia	Azeb Adefrsew, Joshua Wandera, Zahara Legesse Kauffman	End of Project Evaluation	2011
Livelihoods and Protection for Conflict-affected Children and Youth	Carinne Meyer Brody	Theme Discussion Paper	
Re-Member: Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Reconciliation	Ilse Derluyn (ed), Cindy Mels (ed.), Stephan Parmentier (ed.), Wouter Vanderhole (ed.)	Edited Book	2012
Cash and Child Protection: How Case Transfer Programming Can Protect Children from Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Violence	Hannah Thompson (Save the Children)	Discussion Paper	2012

<b>Document name</b>	<b>Author (Publisher)</b>	<b>Type of document (study, program evaluation, report, discussion paper, etc.)</b>	<b>Year of publication</b>
Child Safeguarding in Cash Transfer Programming: A Practical Tool	Hannah Thompson (Save the Children)	Programming Guide/Tool	2012
Social Protection and Cash Transfers to Strengthen Families Affected by HIV and AIDS	Michelle Adato, Lucy Bassett (IFPRI)	Research Monograph	2012
Reducing Child Poverty with Cash Transfers: A Sure Thing?	Armando Barrientos, Jocelyn Dejong (ODI)	Academic Journal Article	2006
Empowering Rwandan youth through savings-led microfinance	Anathalie Mukankusi, Malia Mayson, Tom Caso, Wendy Ann Rowe (Catholic Relief Services)	Case Study	2009
Going Home: The reintegration of child domestic workers in Nepal	Dr. Helen Banos Smith (Family for Every Child)	Study	2014
Going Home: The reintegration of child domestic workers in Mexico, Moldova and Nepal	Dr. Gillian Mann (Family for Every Child)	Study	2014
Strategies to ensure the sustainable reintegration of children without parental care: JUCONI, Mexico	Dr. Anita Schrader McMillan, Dr. Elsa Herrera (Family for Every Child)	Study	2014
Longitudinal study of children's reintegration in Moldova	Dr. Helen Banos Smith (Family for Every Child)	Longitudinal Study	2014
Economic strengthening to reduce risk of gender-based violence for adolescent girls in humanitarian settings			2014
Home Truths: Facing the Facts on Children, AIDS, and Poverty (Final Report of the Joint Learning Initiative on Children and HIV/AIDS)	Final Report of the Joint Learning Initiative on Children and HIV/AIDS	Final Report of Multiple Research Studies	2009
Livelihoods, economic strengthening, child protection and wellbeing in Western Uganda	Benjamin Katz, Josh Chaffin, Inbal Alon, Alastair Ager (Children and Youth Services Review)	Cross-sectional Multivariate Analysis; Academic Journal	2014
Economic Dimensions of Child Protection and Wellbeing (Editorial)	Dr. Fred Ssewamalaa , Dr. Lindsay Stark, Josh Chaffin, Mark Canaverab, Debbie Landis (Children and Youth Services Review)	Editorial for a series of articles	2014

<b>Document name</b>	<b>Author (Publisher)</b>	<b>Type of document (study, program evaluation, report, discussion paper, etc.)</b>	<b>Year of publication</b>
Social transfers and child protection in the South (UNICEF Office of Research)	Armando Barrientos, Jasmine Byrne, Paola Peña, Juan Miguel Villa (Children and Youth Services Review)	Discussion Paper—based on database, including information on 79 impact evaluations in 28 countries, covering 45 medium and large-scale social transfer programs	2013
Can village savings and loan groups be a potential tool in the malnutrition fight? Mixed method findings from Mozambique	Aurélié Brunie, Laura Fumagalli, Thomas Martin, Samuel Field, Diana Rutherford (Children and Youth Services Review)	Mixed Methods Study	2014
Reforming child institutional care in the Post-Soviet bloc: The potential role of family-based empowerment strategies	Leyla Ismayolova, Fred Ssewamala, Aytakin Huseynli (Children and Youth Services Review)	Discussion Paper	2014
Retrak Report: Evaluating outcomes: Retrak's use of the Child Status Index to measure wellbeing of street-children	Su Corcoran, Joanna Wwakia (Retrak)	Evaluation Report	2013
Stolen Futures: The Reintegration of Children Affected by Armed Conflict	Johanna MacVeigh, Sarah Maguire, Joanna Wedge (Save the Children)	Report (Save the Children)	2007
Going Home: Demobilizing and reintegrating child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo	Beth Verhey (Save the Children)	Discussion Paper	2003
Reaching the Poor and Vulnerable: Targeting Strategies for Social Funds and other Community-Driven Programs	Julie Van Domelen (World Bank Social Funds Group)	Toolkit	2007
Measuring Vulnerability to Poverty	Gisele Kamanou, Jonathan Mordoch (United Nations University)	Discussion Paper	2002
Strengthening families to support children by HIV and AIDS	Linda M. Richter, Lorraine Sherr, Michelle Adato, Mark Belsey, Upjeet Chandan, Chris Desmond, Scott Drimie, Mary Haour-Knipe, Victoria Hosegood, Jose Kimou, Sangeetha, Vuyiswa Mathambo, Angela Wakhweya (AIDS Care vol. 21)	Discussion Paper	2009

Document name	Author (Publisher)	Type of document (study, program evaluation, report, discussion paper, etc.)	Year of publication
Girls Formerly Associated with Fighting Forces and Their Children: Returned and Neglected (2006)	Susan McKay, Malia Robinson, Maria Gonsalves, Miranda Worthen (Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers)	Discussion Paper	2006
Social Transfers and Child Protection	Armando Barrientos, Jasmine Byrne, Paola Peña , Juan Miguel Villa (UNICEF Office of Research)	Research Working Paper	2013

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# ANNEX 2: CASE STUDY SUMMARIES

## ANNEX 3: SCORE- SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRENGTHENING EFFORTS STABILIZE VULNERABLE FAMILIES IN UGANDA

Organization: AVSI

Presenter: Massimo Lowicki-Zucca

This case study explores the impact of socio-economic strengthening interventions from the SCORE (Sustainable Comprehensive Responses for vulnerable children and their families) project on mitigating the risk of child–family separation. The analysis is based on 12,639 vulnerable households in Uganda from data collected over a three-year period. The SCORE project seeks to empower families with livelihood and life skills, and raise their awareness of their role in their own development that will enable them to sustainably take charge of their future and deliver durable outcomes for their children. Socio-economic empowerment and food security are two of the main objectives of household economic strengthening activities. SCORE promotes and supports Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) and Farmer Field School (FFS), as well as the development of employable technical skills for youth through apprenticeships. Research shows that SCORE beneficiaries experienced a marked reduction in the prevalence and severity of well-established drivers of child–family separation: poverty, violence, and child labor.

## ANNEX 4: COMPETING PERSPECTIVES ON REINTEGRATION AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR ECONOMIC STRENGTHENING INTERVENTIONS

Organizations: Deakin University School of Humanities and Social Science, World Vision

Presenter: Luke Bearup

This case study describes sociological research into the competing perspectives of “successful” reintegration held by recipients and facilitators of trafficking protection assistance in Cambodia. The findings reveal general agreement among the participants upon the primary features of reintegration success: employment, acceptance, education and training, family life, and the fulfilment of basic needs, safety and security. Yet, beneath these ideals of success lay competing traditional and modern discourses that reveal contrasting pathways to social integration. These findings are considered a major challenge of defining “procedural” objectives for reintegration assistance. Although the data provide clear support for interventions related to economic strengthening, it is argued that social integration, much like poverty, is principally a matter of social and cultural relations.

## ANNEX 5: ACTIVE FAMILY SUPPORT: AN EMPOWERED WOMAN EQUALS A STRONG FAMILY

Organization: CCF Moldova

Presenter: Liliana Rotaru, PhD

The CCF Moldova project aims at reforming the system for institutionalizing babies and young children in Chisinau, by replacing residential care with a wide range of day and community services. The project has three different packages of interventions to support of the following objectives: 1) preventing the separation of children from their families; 2) reintegrating children into their biological or extended families, and 3) placing children without direct parental care into alternative care or in adoptive families. The project also provides cross-cutting technical assistance to state professionals in developing services and in improving their knowledge, attitudes, and practices. CCF identified early childhood development (ECD) services as a key intervention to empower mothers to be economically active and productive by freeing them to earn income while their young children are properly cared for with ECD interventions. In addition to providing safe care for children, the ECD services focus on four areas essential to child development: socio-emotional, cognitive, motor, and language.

## ANNEX 6: MAKING ECONOMIC STRENGTHENING WORK: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO PREVENTION OF CHILD TRAFFICKING IN GHANA

Organization: Challenging Heights

Presenter: David Schley

Challenging Heights works with underserved fishing communities on Lake Volta in Ghana where children are vulnerable to child trafficking and child labor. The program rescues children from slavery in the fishing industry by providing educational, medical, and psychosocial rehabilitation and reintegrating them back into their families and communities. Challenging Heights monitors reintegrated children and those vulnerable to trafficking, as well as supports communities to build resistance to child exploitation. The organization also provides livelihood support and economic empowerment to the families of survivors of slavery and caregivers of vulnerable children, combining vocational and business training with microfinance initiatives and the establishment of cooperatives. Specific interventions include: (1) economic support, both in-kind and small cash grants for school attendance for reintegrated children; (2) micro-grants and business development advice for families; (3) youth economic empowerment activities, and (4) livelihoods projects aimed primarily at female caregivers for reintegrated and children at risk of being trafficked.

## ANNEX 7: CASH FOR CARE? RESEARCHING THE LINKS BETWEEN SOCIAL PROTECTION AND CARE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Organizations: Family for Every Child, Uyisenga Ni Imanzi (Rwanda), Challenging Heights (Ghana), CINDI (South Africa), and the Center for Social Protection at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS)

Presenter: Camilla Jones

As the first sub-Saharan large-scale government implemented cash transfer and public work scheme project, this case study examines the impact of family separation and reunification interventions on the wellbeing and care of children. The social protection schemes considered include Rwanda's Vision Umurenge Programme (VUP), Ghana's Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty Programme (LEAP) and South Africa's Foster Child Grant (FCG) and Child Support Grant (CSG). This research shows that social protection schemes have the potential to prevent loss of parental care and support family reunification by improving material wellbeing and reducing stress in the household. It also points to the need for, and explores linkages between, social protection and child protection systems, both formal and informal, to prevent separation and support children's care and reintegration efforts. The research was qualitative, with over 240 adults and 180 children participating, and the findings of the research in South Africa are currently being analyzed.

## ANNEX 8: IMPROVING CHILD PROTECTION AND REDUCING THE RISK OF FAMILY SEPARATION THROUGH TARGETED HOUSE ECONOMIC STRENGTHENING AMONG HIGHLY VULNERABLE, HIV AND AIDS AFFECTED FAMILIES

Organizations: Pact Ethiopia and Pact Tanzania

Presenter: Victoria Munene

Pact implements the PEPFAR-funded *Yekokeb Berhan* program in Ethiopia and *Pamoja Tuwalee* program in Tanzania, two large-scale, comprehensive family and community-based programs that aim to improve the wellbeing and protection of highly vulnerable, HIV- and AIDS-affected children. Cumulatively, these programs have served a total of 687,050 children and 385,316 households (577,856 children and 313,939 households in Ethiopia and 109,194 children and 71,377 households in Tanzania), working in partnership with 4,722 community committees, 81 local partners, as well as the Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth Affairs (MoWCYA) in Ethiopia and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) in Tanzania. *Yekokeb Berhan* and *Pamoja Tuwalee* utilize a family-centered and systems-development approach that emphasizes self-help and strengthens local structures and systems to improve the delivery of high-quality, essential, and customized services that result in positive child health, nutrition, protection, psychosocial, and developmental outcomes. Both programs aim to reduce social and economic vulnerability among highly vulnerable, HIV and AIDS affected families by implementing targeted household economic strengthening interventions with a focus on community-led savings groups coupled with activities to strengthen parenting and child protection knowledge and skills among target caregivers and communities.

## ANNEX 9: ENHANCING ECONOMIC CAPACITY FOR RESILIENCE AGAINST BONDED SERVITUDE AND VULNERABILITY: THE KAMLAHARI PRACTICE ABOLITION PROJECT IN NEPAL

Organization: Plan International- Nepal

Presenter: Hem Poudyal

The Kamlahari, a type of bonded child labor practice, exists in the five Mid-western and Far-western Terai districts of Nepal. Poor Tharu families often send girls, ranging from age 6 to 18, to work as domestic servants for a meager income or to pay off loans borrowed from local moneylenders. Once the girls are rescued and brought back home for rehabilitation, the project actively helps their families with alternate livelihoods to reduce the risk of that the girls are sold off again. Project participants are organized into “affinity groups” that have chosen similar economic activities, and the groups create their own action plans. Groups receive technical training via field visits by the technical staff. To reduce the risks connected with starting a new business, participants also receive strictly in-kind start-up grants of inputs, such as seeds, fertilizer, tools, and micro-irrigation support.

## ANNEX 10: EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC GAIN: REINTEGRATION OF CHILDREN ON THE STREETS IN EAST AFRICA

Organization: Railway Children

Presenter: Peter Kent

This program aims to provide meaningful support structures for children separated from their families and living on the streets of cities across East Africa. Interventions are driven by the premise that the most appropriate place for a child to develop and to thrive is in a family home. However, the project also understands the reality—a significant number of children end up on the streets due to multiple deprivations in their families, typified by high levels of neglect, violence, and abuse that aggravate and perpetuate levels of poverty in the home. Informed by knowledge of neuroscience, trauma theory, and attachment theory, the program interventions seek to break the intergenerational cycle of violence between mothers and fathers and their children by fighting the debilitating impact of repeated exposure to violence and/or neglect on brain development and functioning and on the ability of children to engage positively in social settings and to form healthy relationships of their own. This program is driven by psychosocial support to create an environment where families have the potential to engage in various economic opportunities that are available through the program, including bio-intensive agriculture activities, enterprise training and start-up grants, and vocational training.

## ANNEX 11: KEEPING CHILDREN OFF THE STREETS IN ETHIOPIA: INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES (IGA) AND SELF HELP GROUPS IN REINTEGRATION AND PREVENTION

Organization: Retrak

Presenters: Joanna Wakia & Lynn Kay

Retrak Ethiopia is piloting a project that combines economic strengthening and child protection strategies to reintegrate children from the streets and prevent further family separation. As part of the reintegration process income generating activity (IGA) grants and business training are provided, alongside psychosocial support and parenting skills advice. The prevention program uses savings and loan

self-help groups to economically and socially empower women and deliver key child protection messages, which are further reinforced through wider community education. The mid-term review showed an improvement in children's wellbeing; increased savings and plans to engage in economic activities that increase income; greater understanding of children's needs, good parenting skills, the risks of street life, child labor and trafficking; and an increased desire to return and keep children at home. In addition to the 160 children reintegrated by Retrak from the street, several mothers actually went out themselves to find and reunite with their children who were on the streets in some form of child labor.

## ANNEX 12: CHILD PROTECTIVE EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC STRENGTHENING AND CHILD RIGHTS INTERVENTIONS AMONG ULTRA-POOR FAMILIES IN BURKINA FASO

Organizations: Trickle Up, University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration, Women's Refugee Commission

Presenter: Leyla Ismayilova

The Nord Region of Burkina Faso is characterized by ultra-poverty that has a significant impact on nutritional and education status, child protection outcomes, exposure to hazardous work, and child separation. Specifically, children who are separated from their family members, either for work or to attend religious schools such as *madrassas*, have an increased risk of exposure to hazardous work and physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. The Trickle Up program is a women's economic empowerment program that, among other economic outcomes, aims to reduce family separation. Trickle Up Plus is the classic economic program with an additional child rights sensitization component that includes education on the negative impacts of child separation. In partnership with local agencies, Trickle Up utilizes a carefully sequenced set of time-bound economic interventions designed to move families sustainably out of extreme poverty, based on the Graduation Approach, a methodology developed by BRAC and globally piloted by CGAP and the Ford Foundation. Aimed at female primary caregivers, these livelihood and economic strengthening activities include: savings group formation and training; livelihood and household management training; seed capital grants to for livelihood activity (vending, animal husbandry), and regular livelihood development mentoring and coaching.

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# ANNEX 3: SCORE—SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRENGTHENING EFFORTS STABILIZE VULNERABLE FAMILIES IN UGANDA

**Authors:** Massimo Lowicki-Zucca<sup>1</sup>, Rita Larok<sup>1</sup>, John Paul Nyeko<sup>1</sup>, Innocent Bidong Ogaba<sup>2</sup>, Patrick Walugembe<sup>3</sup>

**Name of Organization:** <sup>1</sup>AVSI, Plot 1119, Ggaba Road, Kampala, Uganda (PO Box 6785), <sup>2</sup>CARE International in Uganda, <sup>3</sup>FHI360.

**Name of Program/Project:** SCORE (Sustainable Comprehensive Responses for vulnerable children and their families)

**Geographic Location of Program/Project:** 35 districts in Uganda

**Implementing Partners:** AVSI Foundation, CARE, TPO, FHI 360

**Program/Project Period:** 2011–2016

**Funding Sources:** USAID

**Funding Amount:** US\$32.6 million

**Theme(s):** Economic empowerment, child protection, family strengthening

## SUMMARY

This paper explores the impact of socio-economic strengthening interventions from the SCORE (Sustainable Comprehensive Responses for vulnerable children and their families) project on mitigating the risk of child–family separation. The analysis is based on 12,639 vulnerable households in Uganda, for whom data are analyzed across a period of three years of programming. The SCORE project is based on the premise that empowering families with knowledge and skills, and raising their awareness of their role in their own development, will enable them to sustainably take charge of their future and deliver durable outcomes for their children. Two of the main objectives through which the strengthening of the household is promoted are socio-economic empowerment and food security. In terms of preventing child–family separation, the analysis of project data shows that SCORE beneficiaries experienced a marked reduction in the prevalence and severity of well-established drivers of child–family separation: poverty, violence, and child labor. The measurement of these known drivers of child–family separation is used to infer prevention achievements.

## DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

**Context:** Vulnerability in Uganda is related to a wide range of factors, including poverty, orphanhood, weakness of family structures, child labor, life in the streets, disability, and disease, including and in particular HIV and AIDS. Measures to protect vulnerable children, particularly *girls*, are spotty and unreliable, leaving children at great risk of abuse, neglect, and exploitation in a range of settings such as homes and schools. The Government of Uganda estimates that up to 8.6 million children (96 percent of

Ugandan children) are moderately or critically vulnerable. Poverty and protection failures (violence, abuse, and neglect) are well-established drivers of child–family separation. Review of data concerning studies of the situation of street children in Uganda shows that poverty and abuse are the top factors that influenced children to leave home and come to the streets. The SCORE project aims to strengthen the socio-economic situation of target households, and tracks a range of parameters about the situation of beneficiary households, including poverty and protection failures (including abuse and child labor).

SCORE targets moderately and critically vulnerable children and families in 35 districts of Uganda. Through community-level mobilization, local inventories of vulnerable families, other existing projects, and local implementing partners, SCORE identifies potential beneficiaries, who are subsequently screened through a vulnerability assessment tool, determining enrollment. By December 2014, SCORE had enrolled about 23,000 households, including about 130,000 members.

**Economic Strengthening Intervention(s):** To build household economic capacity, SCORE promotes and supports Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs), Farmer Field School (FFS), and the development of employable technical skills for youth via apprenticeship.

A VSLA is a self-selecting, community-based, and member savings-led financing mechanism comprising between 15 and 30 people who come together and save every week. The minimum saving amount, set by the group, is usually 100 to 1,000 shillings (US\$.04–US\$.40). After a few months of building up the level of savings, the group is able to make loans to its members, who utilize them to initiate economic activities, pay essential services (such as health and education) or buy household assets. Loans are repaid with interest. At the end of each VSLA cycle (generally about 10–12 months) all the savings and paid interest are shared among members, proportionately to their relative saving.

Using the Farmer Field Schools approach, the project forms groups of 20–30 members (including vulnerable households) that undergo season-long theoretical and practical learning sessions centered around good agronomic practices that will lead to increased productivity, better management of pests and diseases, improved soil nutrient levels, maintained balance in the ecosystem, and ability to make well-informed decisions to increase food production. The methodology is based on “learning by doing,” through experiential discovery and comparisons carried out almost entirely in the field and a non-hierarchical relationship among the learners and facilitators. The four major principles within the FFS process are for farmer to: a) grow a healthy crop, b) observe fields regularly, c) conserve natural enemies of crop pests, and d) understand ecology and become experts in their own field.

SCORE also implements apprenticeship placements for youth in profitable trades (hair dressing, mechanics for bicycle and motorcycle repair, catering) to improve their socio-economic skills and enhance their capacity to start their own business or to get gainful employment. The apprenticeship delivers an occupational on-job skills training, consisting of structured, short-term, supervised placements of youths in particular trades that are profitable in the given market as determined by local rapid market assessments and dialogues with key informants in the communities. Youth apprenticeships should contribute to increased total household income and consequently improve socio-economic status of vulnerable households.

**Other Intervention Activities:** Overall, SCORE implements a range of 18 “families” of activities, spanning across its four objectives: (1) socio-economic empowerment, (2) food security and nutrition, (3) child protection and legal services, and (4) household strengthening to access, provide, and procure essential services. In addition to economic strengthening interventions, SCORE builds the resilience of vulnerable families through a range of activities that include life skills for youth, parenting skills trainings for parents, financial literacy, business skills, nutrition education, cooking demonstrations, community dialogues on child protection, hygiene, and a range of health issues.

The program of activities selected for each family is in response to their circumstances, resources, and potential. Each family is supported to develop and implement a *Household Development Plan*, an innovative approach introduced by SCORE. This plan is developed by project staff in dialogue with the household, and identifies from the “menu” of SCORE activities the mix of interventions that the project will carry out for each specific household, the contribution (in terms of time, commitment to specific behaviors, and other resources) that the household will offer, and the expected end-of-year outcomes.

The activities are selected on the basis of the needs and potential of each household and, in principle, can differ from one household to another. For instance, a household with access to land may be selected for VSLA and FFS, and in case the diet of the household is revealed to be poor, either a kitchen garden or nutrition education/cooking demonstrations could be selected. In case of a household with no access to land (for instance, living in a urban slum) and with a situation of domestic violence, and where an adolescent child is out of school, the project may select parenting skills dialogues, horticulture, and VSLA, and link the child to technical training opportunities as an apprentice.

Some activities will take place in parallel (for instance, parenting skills or protection dialogues), while others will likely be sequential, and, therefore, require that certain “background” activities be completed beforehand. For example, financial literacy training is ideally targeted to families who have participated in a VSLA, or youth who have been linked to an apprenticeship, or farmers who have completed an FFS and are in the process of getting registered as a production and marketing group. Other activities are triggered only upon identification of a certain critical situation, including referrals for acute malnutrition, health emergencies, or cases of grave protection failure.

**Follow-up and Monitoring Activities:** The wide range of activities supported by SCORE allow for multiple contacts with beneficiaries throughout the implementation period, including community dialogues, VSLA sessions, FFS learning days, child protection outreaches, and financial literacy trainings. Besides these, however, social workers also perform dedicated home visits at a minimum of a quarterly basis but generally depending on whether the situation of the family suggests the need for closer follow-up.

The SCORE project developed a household Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT) that captures on an annual basis, thereby allowing for longitudinal analysis, the basic demographic and socio-economic information about the household, social protection, food security, education and guardianship information about an index child, and gives a score ranging from 0 (least vulnerable) to 131 (most vulnerable). Participation of children and their households in the SCORE project is contingent on the household receiving a minimum of score of 40.

A Village Savings and Loan Association Management Information System (VSLA MIS) manages and analyzes data on VSLA composition, savings, loans, and funds utilization. Furthermore, the study carried out the analysis of SCORE VAT data covering 13,327 beneficiary households enrolled by SCORE in its first phase (last quarter 2011–first quarter 2012) and corresponding second assessment (second quarter 2013).

The longitudinal study concluded that the VSLA approach can be used, besides community development, for direct vulnerability reduction strategies, and that the VSLA approach can be made more inclusive of the most disenfranchised members of the community without sacrificing efficiency or effectiveness. SCORE project data are highly suggestive of a positive linkage between socio-economic interventions and protection outcomes, thereby reinforcing the current literature. The manuscript was published in the *Children and Youth Services Review*.<sup>5</sup>

SCORE is implementing additional monitoring and data collection activities to ensure data quality assessments at the level of the household, at the implementing partner, and at the overall database level. SCORE also conducts dedicated follow-up for households enrolled in various arms of SCORE operational research activities such as an evaluation of the effectiveness of the VSLA model, the youth life skills trainings, and the parenting skills trainings.

## OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

**Evaluation and Evidence of Success:** The SCORE project relies on a range of tools to gather all the data needed to construct all indicators and to support all decision-making functions. The primary sources for data are activity-related project documents (vulnerability assessments, household plans, activity reports) and dedicated studies, collections, and surveys.

**SCORE beneficiary flow and graduation model.** The information gathered through the analysis of the data and indicators will serve two main purposes: programmatic action (assessing project progress, adjusting activities, changing implementation styles) and reporting purposes.

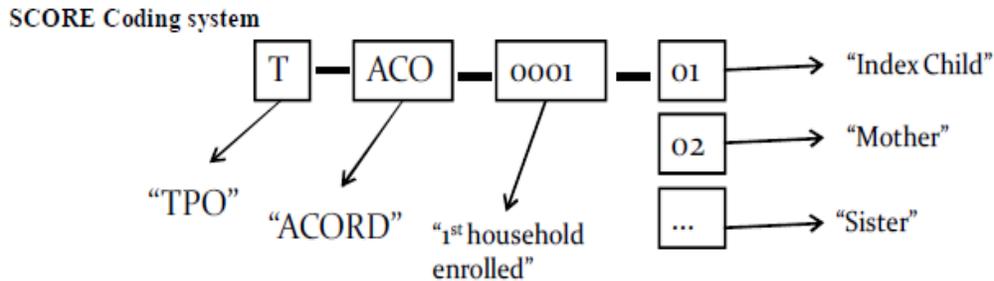
SCORE has a well-developed coding system that allows information on any project beneficiary to be linked, regardless of when it is collected and through which tool it is collected. The code is an alphanumeric string that allows every member of every household enrolled in the project to have their own unique and individual code, which then can be linked across the entire set of tools. The SCORE Coding System assigns to each project beneficiary (that is, index child and every household member), an alphanumeric string containing 10 characters, as follows:

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<sup>5</sup> “Savings groups as a socioeconomic strategy to improve protection of moderately and critically vulnerable children in Uganda,” *Children and Youth Services Review*, Volume 47, Part 2, December 2014, Pages 176–181. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740914003090>.

- X – A letter that indicate the SCORE member agency (A-AVSI, C-CARE, T-TPO)
- XXX – Three letters that indicate the Implementing Partner (MPK-Meeting Point Kitgum, ACO-Acord)
- XXXX – Four digits that indicate the progressive number of households reached by the same Implementing Partner (0012)
- XX – Two digits that indicate the progressive number for each household member

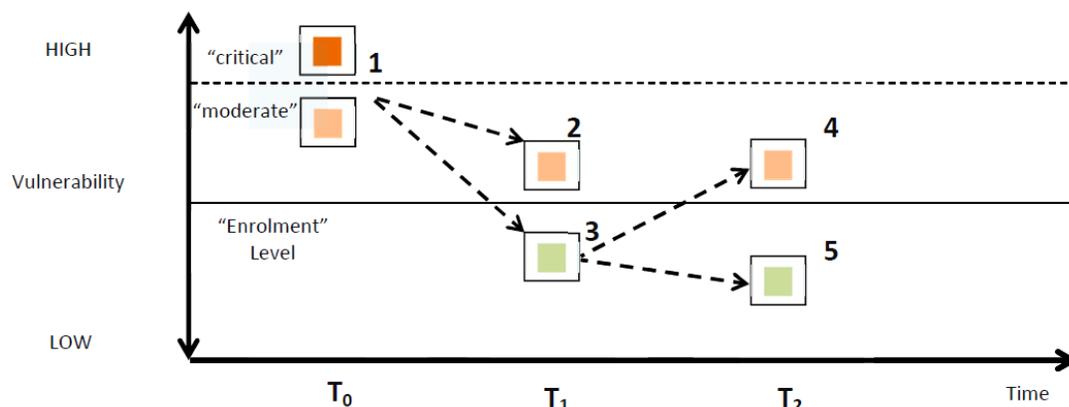
**Figure 1: SCORE Coding System.**



**Measurement of Vulnerability:** The SCORE project conceptualizes vulnerability as multi-sectoral, spanning all the facets of an individual’s life: social, economic, and health. SCORE utilizes a multi-sectoral assessment instrument, the Vulnerability Assessment Tool, to gather information on a range of vulnerability “red flags” across different thematic dimensions. Each one of these flags, when measured, is given vulnerability points. With regard to the socio-economic status, the VAT inquires about the household’s income, the source of income, and the main income contributor within the household. With regard to food security and nutrition, VAT addresses the household’s diet, the number of meals, and whether there are times when food happens to be unavailable. Concerning protection, the VAT asks about occurrence of a range of protection failures, including child labor, child abuse, substance use, the existence of a disability or chronic health condition (including HIV), and the household’s degree of knowledge of where to receive protection services. With regard to access to essential services and family strengthening, VAT questions span the parenthood status of the child, the status of the guardian, and the household’s access to safe water, sanitation, schooling, and health services.

The VAT is administered at regular cycles (by and large annually) and enables longitudinal and cross-sectional analysis of the evolution of household vulnerability and of its components and drivers. The major interactions with the VAT are as illustrated below.

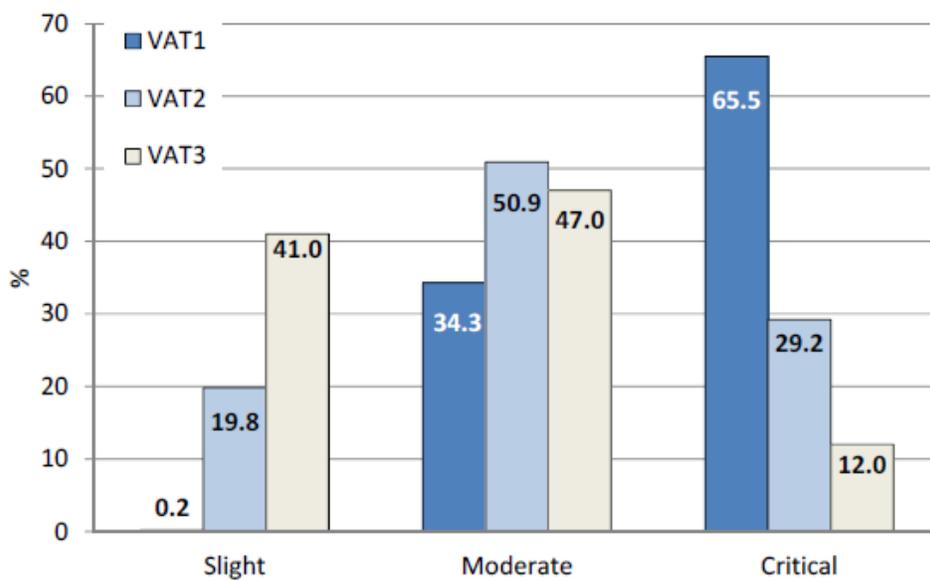
**Figure 2: Enrollment, follow-up, and “graduation” of families involved in SCORE**



1= Enrollment 2= Follow up 3=Pre-graduation 4=Rebound 5= Graduation

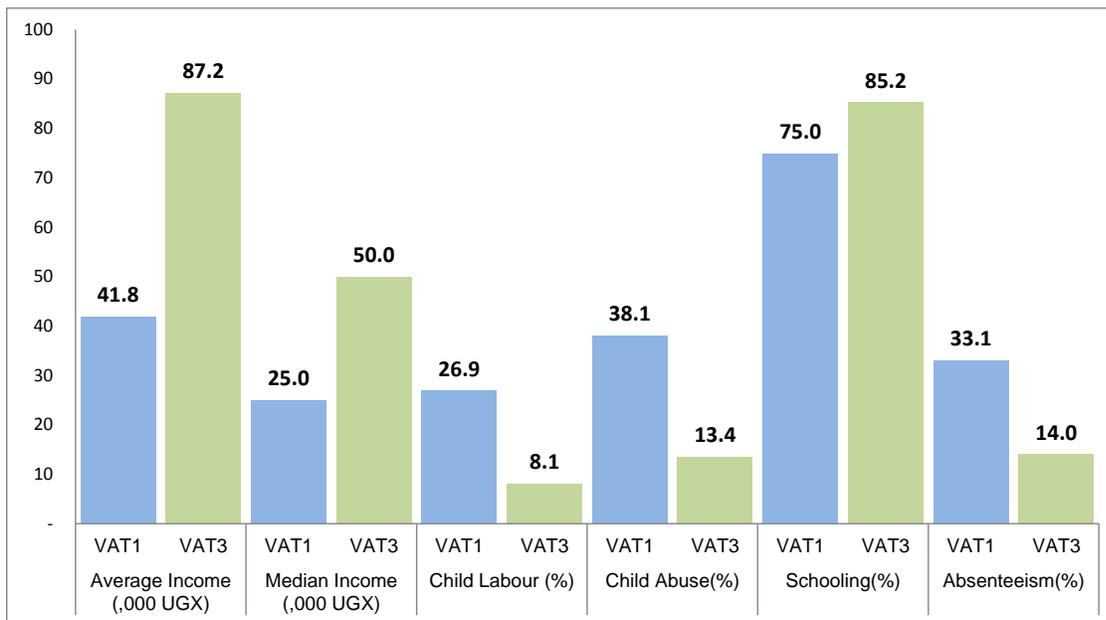
From the analysis of subsequent VAT assessments for SCORE beneficiaries, remarkable improvements in the vulnerability status of families have been achieved. Overall, 42 percent (7,604) of SCORE households assessed at the end of Year 3 are now below enrollment threshold. Overall, 71 percent of SCORE households have moved from a vulnerability bracket to a lower one (that is, from critically vulnerable to moderately or slightly vulnerable, and from moderately to slightly vulnerable). Some 2,211 households have been below enrollment threshold for at least one year, and therefore are being now “graduated” out of the project.

**Figure 3: Changes in vulnerability for SCORE beneficiaries (three consecutive assessments)**



This presentation is based on the analysis of 12,639 SCORE households that received at least one of the three economic strengthening activities and shows a dramatic improvement with regard to a range of drivers of child–family separation. In the absence of indicators to measure the prevention of child separation from families, measuring the impact on the known drivers of child separation can serve as proxy indicators. Average and median income doubled (the former from 41,840 to 87,200 Uganda Shillings, the latter from 25,000 to 50,000 Uganda Shillings). The prevalence of child labor has fallen from 26.87 percent in 2011 to 8.07 percent in 2014. The occurrence of child abuse has reduced from 38.09 percent to 13.43 percent. Child schooling also improved, with enrollment increasing from 74.96 percent to 85.25 percent, and absenteeism falling from 33.07 percent to 14 percent.

**Figure 4: Changes in selected indicators: households receiving economic strengthening.**



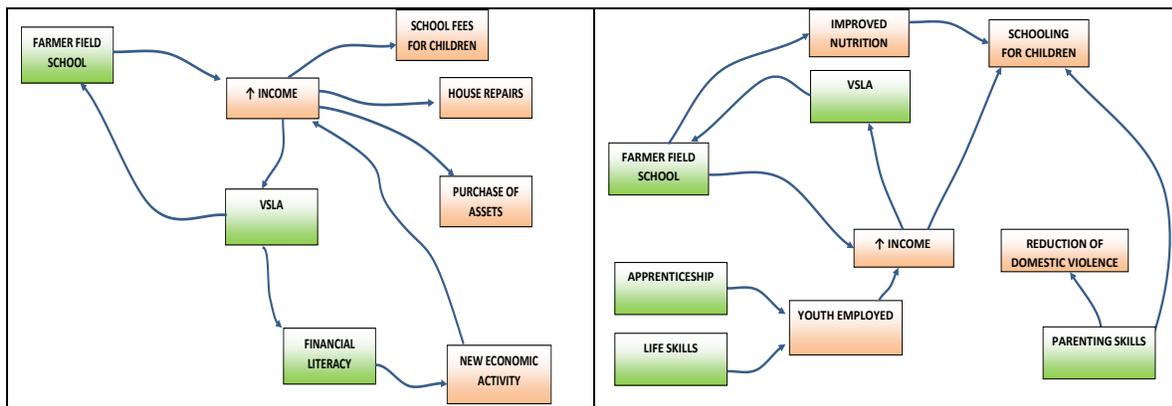
An important issue involves whether, and to what extent, results may be attributed to specific activities. Additional investigation was carried out on whether there was an activity within each of the objectives that was particularly “important” with respect to improved circumstances as reflected by a reduced VAT score. Attribution was identified through the creation of a “change SCORE” variable (by subtracting the score of Year 1 from Year 3) and regressing it on the activities. A stepwise method was adopted, and to be included, an activity must be significantly affecting the change in the VAT score (p-value 0.15). Twelve activities were added, one by one, to the model without dropping any.

Three activities were associated with a slight (greater than 1 point) decrease in the VAT score: apprenticeship, FFS, and community dialogues. Although increased participation generally resulted in larger reductions in the VAT over time, the magnitude of the association was very small. In other words, no “magic bullet” was identified among the set of activities implemented by SCORE, and evidence did not support a “the more the merrier” approach to project intensity. Both results, although preliminary, are supportive of a family-tailored response, contingent of each household’s mix of resources, needs, and potential. This result can be expected due to both the nature of the programmatic response (interventions

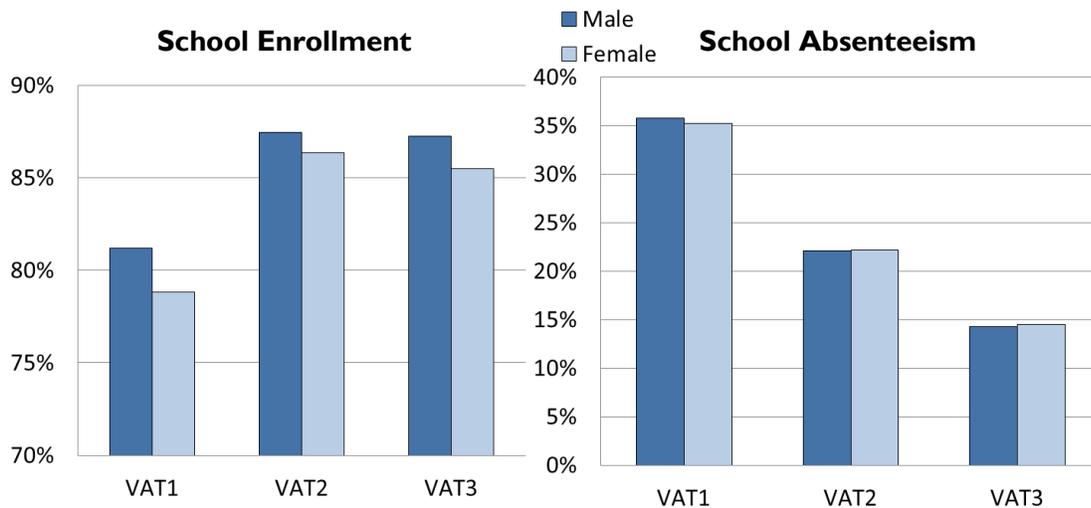
are not standardized but customized to a specific household producing an identification problem in the regression, since those households that have not received an activity may have been specifically not meant to receive such activity); it is further illustrated by the many observed linkages across activities and results.

The images below present graphic examples of pathways that connect activities to results for households graduating from SCORE support and provide a degree of insight into how more than one activity may influence a certain result, how certain activities may be sequentially reinforcing each other, and how positive feedback loops (an activity leading to a result that makes the initial activity more effective) may occur.

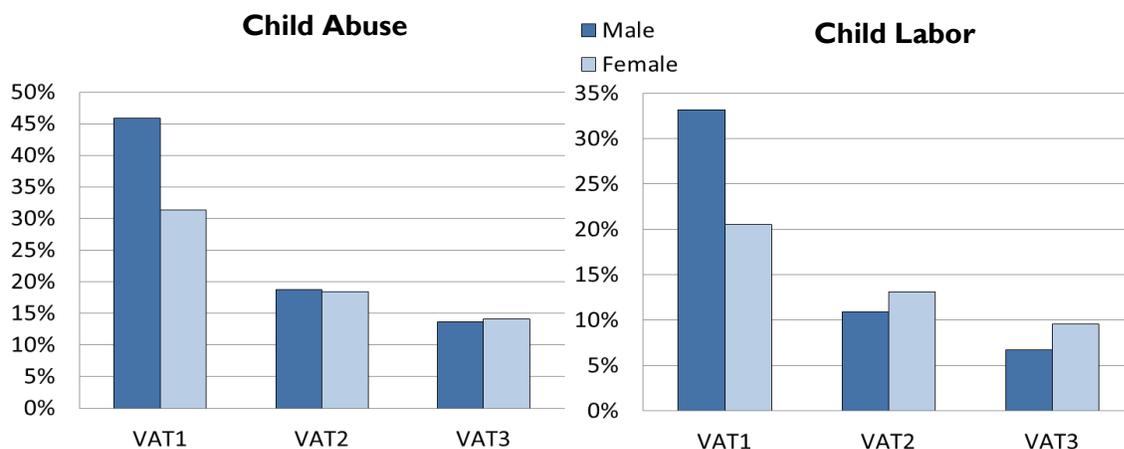
**Figure 5: Activity – result pathways for beneficiaries involved in the project**



Analysis also investigated outcome variations depending on the gender of the participants. Data show different starting points for female and male children along some of the indicators, but show narrowing differentials and similar paths of improvement. This suggests that SCORE can deliver impact and appropriately respond to different circumstances and challenges determined by the gender of the beneficiary. For instance, schooling ratios of index children were observed to be slightly different by gender at first vulnerability assessment, and so were some protection parameters. School enrollment has been observed to increase for both boys and girls, and the enrollment gap narrowed.



Similarly, child labor was reported to be more prevalent for boys than girls and the programmatic response points to a decreasing trend for both.



## LEARNING

**Innovations:** SCORE introduced to OVC programming in Uganda three main innovative features.

1. Family-centered, tailored interventions, which “fit the project to the people,” rather than standardized one-size-fits-all packages.
2. Emphasis on household resilience, containing handouts and always promoting beneficiary contribution (in accordance with their capacities).
3. Focus on sustainably graduating the households out of the project.

**Lessons Learned:** The SCORE project has shown that programming based on promoting household resilience is largely successful at all levels of vulnerability. Also, the program suggests that multi-sectoral, tailored, family-centered approaches can deliver sustainable results. The key emerging learning points from the SCORE program by the end of the third year of implementation is that economic strengthening has a direct positive influence on child protection and family stability if complemented with relevant psychosocial interventions.

**Adaptation and Replication:** Two out of three of the economic strengthening activities (VSLA and FFS) are fairly modest in terms of resource needs and therefore allow for great replicability. The VSLA model proposed by SCORE actually opens the door for a more poverty-reduction, vulnerability-inclusive utilization of this well-tested approach. SCORE OR is documenting how VSLAs can improve inclusion and still deliver excellent results for vulnerable families.

**The Way Forward and Scaling:** Vulnerability needs in Uganda outweigh available resources. In the SCORE-targeted districts alone, there are estimated to be more than 3 million vulnerable children. Parameters of the programmatic response of SCORE (largely comprising low-cost interventions, limiting asset transfers, focusing on sustainability and household resilience) could be replicated as efficient and effective measures for household empowerment, and therefore mitigate the risk of child-family separation. Families have been empowered to take charge of their needs and aspirations, and will be models and examples in their communities.

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# ANNEX 4: COMPETING PERSPECTIVES ON REINTEGRATION AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR ECONOMIC STRENGTHENING INTERVENTIONS

**Author:** Luke S Bearup

**Acknowledgments:** Karen Lane, Margaret Slocomb, Heather Pfahl, and Bill Philbrick

**Name of Organization(s):** Deakin University School of Humanities and Social Science, World Vision International

**Name of Program/Project:** The Improving Management of Programs and Aftercare for Children Sexually exploited (IMPACTS)

**Geographic Location:** Cambodia (multiple sites)

**Implementing Partners:** Four (non-disclosed) NGOs

**Program/Project Period:** Data collection Aug 2010–May 2012

**Funding Sources:** World Vision USA, World Vision Australia

**Funding Amount:** US\$10,850 (data collection and translation/transcription services)

**Theme(s):** Tradition and modernity, empowerment, imposition of western development frameworks, gender, trafficking, protection, reintegration, evaluation, indicators

## SUMMARY

This case study describes the preliminary findings of sociological research undertaken into the competing perspectives of “successful” reintegration held by recipients and facilitators of trafficking protection assistance in the Kingdom of Cambodia. The study participants were generally agreed upon the primary features of reintegrative success: employment, acceptance, education and training, family life, and the fulfilment of basic needs, safety, and security. Yet, beneath these ideals lay competing discourses that reveal contrasting traditional and modern pathways to social integration. In addition, a bureaucratic perspective on reintegrative success was identified as derived from those employed by NGOs to broker reintegration. These findings are considered in relation to the challenge of defining “procedural” indicators for reintegrative success. Although the data provide clear support for interventions related to “economic strengthening,” this paper asks what it is, precisely, that we are aiming to “strengthen” through “reintegration assistance.” In response it is argued that social integration, much like poverty, is principally a matter of social and cultural relations.

## STUDY DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

**Background:** The provision of remedial assistance to victims of sexual violence and trafficking for sexual exploitation in Cambodia are ultimately aimed at promoting the successful reintegration of project

beneficiaries. The desired outcome of assistance therefore is captured within the notion of reintegrative success. The importance of this concept in Cambodia has been identified through empirical research (for example, Bolton, Nadelman & Wallace 2008; Derks 1998; Miles et al. 2013; Reimer et al. 2007; Surtees 2013; TAF 2005b), and affirmed within the Cambodian government's trafficking protection policy (Ministry of Social Affairs Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation 2009). Similarly, the emphasis upon reintegration within the sector of trafficking and protection has been gaining precedence within policy internationally (UN 2011). For example, in her review of international trafficking law, Gallagher identified "supported reintegration ... [as] ... a right owed to trafficked persons" (Gallagher 2012, p. 352). Yet, despite its emerging importance, the lack of clarity associated with the concept has hampered the task of designing and evaluating the provision of assistance (Frederick 2012; Gallagher & Surtees 2012; Lisborg 2009; OHCHR 2013; UNIAP 2012). Accordingly, the present study was undertaken with the goal of gaining greater understanding of the contrasting perspectives on reintegration, and thereby developing a more robust theory of how reintegration might be achieved and its attainment supported.

**Methodology:** An inductive qualitative approach known as Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM) (Charmaz 2006, 2014; Clarke 2005) was identified as being particularly suited to the task of exploring the notion of reintegration. Although a range of reasons for this choice might be described, the foremost amongst these is related to the suitability of GTM for exploring areas in which "existing theory seems inadequate" (Miles & Huberman 2002, p. 32). The exploratory research question was posed as follows:

How do Khmer young women who have received shelter-based remedial assistance on the basis of past sexual exploitation and abuse (a) construct ideas related to successful reintegration; (b) who/what are the people, processes, and mechanisms important to achieving this success; and, (c) amongst these people, and related groups and institutions identified as important, how are concepts of 'successful reintegration' constructed, reconstructed and practiced?

**Sampling Procedures:** The methodology received ethics review clearance by committees in Australia and Cambodia. Access to the study participants was facilitated by four (non-disclosed) NGOs independently identified as undertaking best practice work in reintegration by the Child Affairs and Protection Working Group (a sub-group within the National Committee Secretariat for Suppression of Human Trafficking, Smuggling, Labour and Sexual Exploitation). The four NGOs were represented within the three Cambodian shelter protection coalitions.<sup>6</sup> Each NGO developed a sampling frame of young women aged between 18 and 25 years of age who had been "successfully reintegrated." No guidance was offered stipulating what constituted successful reintegration as this task was left to each of the participating NGOs. The sampling frame comprised 200 successfully reintegrated clients and included information on their client code; age; ethnicity<sup>7</sup>; geographical location of origin; present provincial location; vocation/employment status; approximate time in care; and official date of transition to community or reintegration.

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<sup>6</sup> These included The NGO Coalition to Address (Sexual) Exploitation of Children in Cambodia (COSECAM), Ending Child Prostitution Abuse and Trafficking (ECPAT), and the Chab Dai coalition.

<sup>7</sup> This was included as a reminder to confirm the inclusion of recipients of Khmer ethnicity only.

**Recipients.** In brief, the sampling and interview process was designed to ensure that the names of former clients remained unknown to the researcher, that the former clients were suitably informed and felt free to decide whether or not to participate in the study, and that the potential for harm was minimized. The recipient interviews were held in quiet and private locations conducted in and around Phnom Penh (14), and in Kompong Thom (3); Kampong Chhnang (2); Kampong Cham (1); Poipet (2); Kampot (1); Pailin (1); and Kandal (1).

Other participants: The NGOs further assisted in generating a convenience sample for additional participants who were reflective of types of persons considered by the recipients to be important to reintegration. These included officials from the village, commune, and government ministry, social enterprise managers, NGO staff members (for example, counsellors, teachers, and social workers), and seven family members of former clients who had previously received reintegration assistance. The participant interviews were primarily conducted in Phnom Penh, but also in Kampong Cham, Kampong Thom, and Ratanakiri.

**Sample characteristics:** The total sample comprised 53 participants. These included young women of Khmer ethnicity aged 18–25 years, who had been sexually abused or exploited as children or youth through rape or trafficking, who had spent time in residential care services, and who had since been identified as successfully reintegrated (n=25). The remaining participants (n=28) included the “types” of people considered by the young women to be important to their experience of attempted reintegration. These included 16 NGO employees (that is, social workers, counsellors, teachers, and program management staff); two social enterprise/business managers; three governmental representatives (that is, from the village and district level, and from the Ministry of Social Affairs). These employees are referred to as brokers of assistance insofar as their roles were wholly or partially concerned with brokering the achievement of successful reintegration. In addition seven family members of former clients receiving “reintegration assistance”<sup>8</sup> were interviewed.

Table 1 describes the aggregated sample characteristics for the 25 former recipients of assistance who were classified as successfully reintegrated. The left-hand column presents the aggregated totals while the column on the right reveals the corresponding number of recipients from whom the data were derived, as differentiated between victims of rape (r) and of sex-trafficking (t).

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<sup>8</sup> The recipients in addition identified friends as important to reintegrative success. Yet in order to minimize intrusion into the lives of former recipients of assistance, questions about friendship were incorporated within the recipient interviews.

Table I

<b>Sample Characteristics: Recipients of Assistance</b>		
Average length of interviews	85 mins	(n = 25)
Age	21 years	(n = 25)
Age at rape / sexual abuse	14.8 years	(n = 11)
Age at trafficking / sexual exploitation	15.3 years	(n = 11)
Married	7	(r=4, t=3)
Separated	3	(r=2, t=1)
Children	10	(r=8, t=2)
Estimated months in shelter care (n=22)	21.78	(r=20.7, t=23)
Average no. months reintegrated (n=22)	31	(r=45, t=25)
Reintegrated to former home or community	11	(r=7, t=4)
Integrated to a new home or community	14	(r=6, t=8)
Urban reintegration	16	(r=7, t=9)
Rural reintegration <sup>9</sup>	9	(r=6, t=3)
Stable employment (x3@school, x1 housewife by choice, x2 unemployed)	18	(r=9, t=9)
Stable accommodation (at date of interview)	23	(r=13, t=10)

**Interviews:** The qualitative interviews were undertaken between August 2010 and May 2012 with translation assistance.<sup>10</sup> A handful of interviews were undertaken in English with foreign residents who worked as NGO staff members and social enterprise managers. The method of “intensive interviewing” was employed, which has been described by Charmaz as a “gently guided, one-sided conversation that explores research participants’ perspectives on their personal experience with the research topic” (Charmaz 2014, p. 56). The focus of the interviews was upon learning about the participants’ perspectives, ideals, and experiences of reintegration, and the obstacles encountered to achieving their concepts of success.

**Analysis:** The analysis commenced right from the first interviews, as is consistent with Grounded Theory Methodology (Glaser & Strauss 1967). In this case study, emphasis is given to describing the range of competing ideals that comprised the notion of successful reintegration. Particular attention is given here to describing the ways in which the ideals of the participants were interpreted in light of available discourses and moral frameworks of interpretation. A dialectical-relational approach guided the application of Critical Discourse Analysis. Accordingly, discourses may be understood as ways of making meaning of the world “which can generally be identified with different positions or perspectives of different groups of social actors” (Fairclough 2010, p. 232).

<sup>9</sup> Seven additional interviews were undertaken with family members of direct recipients of assistance from rural locations. This measure provided a means of ensuring more balanced representation of persons from both rural and urban areas.

<sup>10</sup> Ms. Seng Sophea’s contributions to the process of translation and transcription were critically important to the study.

**Limitations:** Of the hundreds of orphanages and the scores of shelters operating in what is a largely unregulated environment in Cambodia, this study was conducted with a handful of relatively well-funded organizations. Although the study findings represent a substantive contribution to the dialogue about reintegrative success, the experiences reported within this study are not representative of victims, recipients, or practitioners more generally. Most victims of trafficking within the Greater Mekong Sub Region, receive little or no access to formal support (Surtees 2013).

## FINDINGS

Figure 1 (see below) depicts the participants' wide-ranging hopes, aims and conceptions of reintegrative success. When asked to describe success, the participants often began with emphasis upon the attainment of employment. Next they often described other related conceptions of success, such as educational attainment. As the interviews progressed and greater rapport was established, the recipients generally gave increasing emphasis to the attainment of acceptance by family, relatives, neighbors, colleagues, and friends. In total the participants' descriptions of success amounted to in excess of 950 discrete references that were coded to 17 discrete categories of success. The prominence of each of these categories of success (as represented by each sphere) is indicated by the various tiers and the descending size order. Each tier reflects the corresponding number of recipients who spoke of each conception of success (that is, in excess of 50, 40, 30, 20, 10, and five participants).<sup>11</sup> For example, largest central sphere "employment" identified in the first tier, was equated with successful reintegration by nearly all of the participants (in excess of 50). The second tier alternatively includes "acceptance," "skills and education," and "wife and family," which represent conceptions of success shared by in excess of 40 of the participants.

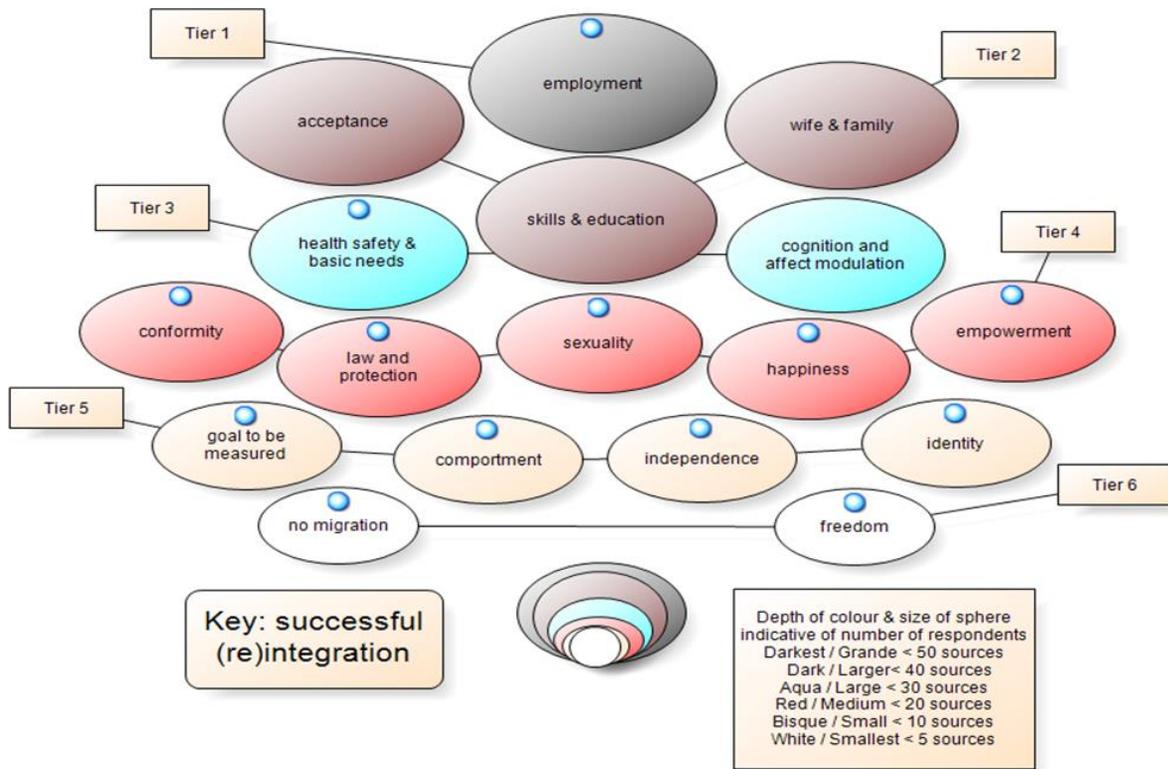
In Figure 2 (see below) each of the 17 sub-conceptions of successful reintegration is again presented, only this time they are clustered by word similarity.<sup>12</sup> Figure 2 demonstrates high levels of association between the five most predominant conceptions of success—the categories of skills and education, employment, wife and family, and acceptance—and further the categories of basic needs (that is, shelter, health care, safety, clothing and food). Yet the graphic further reflects high levels of word association between conceptions of success as "conformity," "comportment" (for example, proper ways of walking and talking), and "sexuality." This cluster may be contrasted with an alternative group of nodal relationships between the conceptions of success coded to the categories of "cognition and affect modulation," "empowerment," "identity," and "independence." Finally, the data revealed a high level of association between the conception of reintegration as an intervention or activity performed by the brokers requiring measurement (that is, goal to be measured) and the cessation of migration ("no migration"). These notions of success were exclusive to the brokers of assistance alone; none of the other participants described success in this way.

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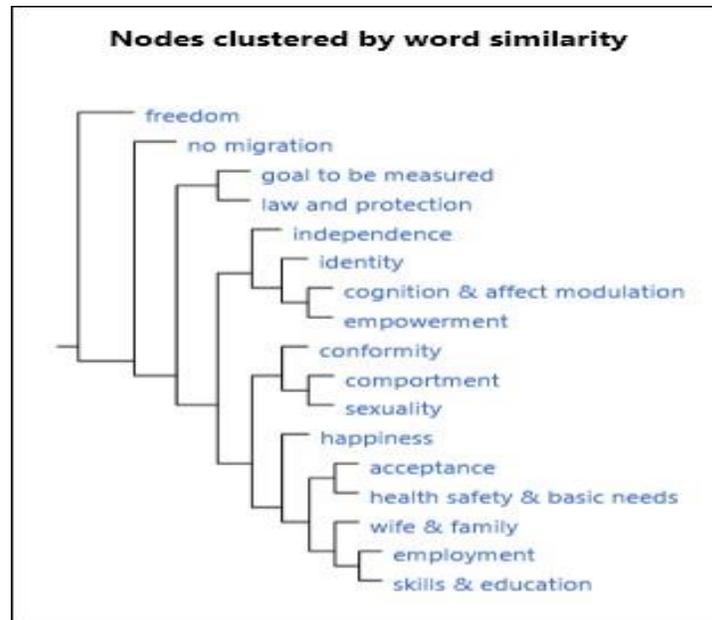
<sup>11</sup> Conceptions of success mentioned by less than five recipients are excluded from the graphic.

<sup>12</sup> This graphic was generated within Nvivo software using the Pearson correlation co-efficient to compare all of the data coded at each of the 17 nodes in order to reveal levels of association.

**Figure 1: Sub-conceptions of Reintegrative Success**



**Figure 2: Sub-Conceptions of Reintegrative Success by Cluster**



## DISCUSSION

The data reveals a high degree of consensus upon this cluster of primary conceptions of reintegrative success: employment, acceptance, wife and family, skills and education and also basic needs and safety. The participants were therefore in agreement upon the importance of these ideals. Yet, as revealed in Figure 2, there also were clusters of ideals which appear alternatively related to more traditional and modern understandings of success. Successful reintegration was therefore envisioned by some of the participants as being related to the display of proper sexuality and comportment (for example, ways of walking and talking), and conformity with traditional norms. In traditional-rural contexts, therefore, a successfully integrated woman “naturally” reflects certain norms and ideals associated with the traditional female role.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, successful reintegration was alternatively described by other participants as being related to the notions of empowerment, cognition and affect modulation, identity, and independence. In modern-urban environments, therefore, social integration was understood as being related to the attainment of a strong individual identity, an appreciation of one’s equality and rights, positive thinking and affect modulation, and a sense of independence. In other words, successful reintegration was constructed and experienced differently within traditional-rural, and modern-urban socio-cultural contexts. Moreover, these data suggest that even the broadly shared primary notions of success (that is, employment, acceptance, wife and family, skills and education, and also basic needs and safety) were understood and experienced differently within rural-traditional and urban-modern socio-cultural contexts.<sup>14</sup> Within the rapidly changing context of Cambodia, the participants’ perspectives were indicative of both traditional and modern pathways to the achievement of their primary ideals and the attainment of reintegrative success.

The data further reveal a third, “bureaucratic” conception of reintegrative success that was uniquely derived from the participants who were employed by NGOs, or otherwise engaged as brokers of assistance. As a result of their unique position as facilitators of assistance, the brokers’ uniquely described reintegrative success as an activity to be measured and as entailing the cessation of (unsafe) migration (that is, goal to be measured and no migration). These ideas of success were not shared by the recipients of assistance or the other participants. As argued below, the brokers’ responses reveal that they saw themselves not merely as facilitators of assistance that is aimed at promoting reintegration within community, but as facilitators of reintegration itself. The brokers, therefore, appeared prone to equating reintegration with the delivery of assistance, and success, with the achievement of pre-established, procedural indicators.

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<sup>13</sup> A similar model of a successful traditional Khmer woman was identified by anthropologist Judy Ledgerwood around 25 years ago (Ledgerwood 1990).

<sup>14</sup> By way of example, as a married Australian male, it is likely that I share agreement upon the importance of marriage in relation to social integration, with for example, a married traditional Maasai warrior from Southern Kenya. Yet simultaneously, given our contrasting experiences of family and community life, we likely hold contrasting perceptions of the ideal of “family.”

## IMPLICATIONS FOR 'REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE' AND ECONOMIC STRENGTHENING INTERVENTIONS

Given Cambodia's rapid industrialization and the associated social and cultural changes underway, there exist large swathes of countryside that reflect traditional-collectivistic rural ways of life, as well as growing city centers whose urban populations are increasingly adopting modern-individualistic socio-cultural norms. Accordingly, it is not surprising that this study, which was composed of recipients from both rural and urban locations, found evidence for contrasting understandings of successful reintegration reflective of traditional and modern cultural norms. Although the participants were therefore broadly agreed upon employment as an ideal of success, the existence of alternative traditional and modern pathways suggests that the ideal of employment is interpreted differently in these contrasting contexts. The findings therefore lend support to calls for adapting the provision of assistance to reflect the individual circumstances and contextual realities facing recipients of assistance and their families (Derks 1998; Reimer et al. 2007; Veitch 2013; Wedge, Krumholz & Jones 2013), while giving emphasis to the integrative function of traditional and modern social norms.

In addition, the data revealed that the brokers of remedial assistance (for example, NGOs) had a tendency to equate their own work, or the provision of assistance, with reintegration itself. For example, one reintegration worker explained: "...when they leave the shelter, they already get a certain skill and get a job before we reintegrate them..." In this brief sentence, it is clear that reintegration is conceived as something that is done by the NGOs, as indicated by the phrase "we reintegrate them." In addition, this statement indicates that the precondition for leaving the shelter (and being "reintegrated") is the certified attainment of a marketable skill and a job. In this example, the attainment of reintegration is equated with leaving the shelter, and the eligibility for leaving made dependent upon attainment of skills and employment.

The brokers' conceptions of reintegrative success as "an activity or goal to be measured" and "the cessation of migration" begin to reveal two interrelated deficiencies within prevailing approaches to evaluating reintegrative success. Firstly, when NGOs conflate reintegration with an activity or goal to be measured, they have evidently failed to maintain a distinction between the assistance they provide, and what (potentially) happens in the realities of social cultural life. This leads to an emphasis upon process-level indicators (related to the delivery of interventions) rather than the development of measures or indices designed to correspond with a theory of how social and cultural integration is achieved within specific groups and communities. Secondly, even when there is an effort to move beyond process-level indicators to measure outcomes, the latter are again not necessarily related to local social cultural processes but instead focused upon outcomes of reintegration assistance more generally. For example, has the beneficiary got a job? Tick. Does the job pay more than \$2.5 per day? Tick. Such indicators appear associated with conceptions of integrative success, but they do not measure whether social integration has been achieved. This is not to suggest that level of income is unimportant to overall wellbeing, but it is to question its relationship to the achievement of social integration.

While the brokers' descriptions of success more generally reflected those expressed by the recipients, they also had a tendency to see themselves as doing the work of reintegration. Their notions of reintegration thus partially reflected the procedural agenda, goals and *modus operandi* of their NGOs.

Conversely, it is argued that the “substantive” experience of social integration, as potentially experienced within a social unity or group, reflects a social and cultural achievement made within a specific group and context. The former (that is, the procedural) is within the control of NGOs to change, the latter (that is, the substantive) is not so easily manipulated. Clearly, the procedural delivery of reintegration assistance may assist the integration of recipients and serve to strengthen social relationships and the cultural affinity of a group, and yet outside interventions may alternatively undermine the strength of these relations.

It is, therefore, proposed that future research into reintegration, or associated efforts to design, implement, monitor and evaluate associated programs, incorporate a reflexive distinction between procedural conceptions of reintegration (or of what “we do” in providing assistance) and substantive conceptions of reintegration (as related to the extant social and cultural processes involved in facilitating integration within a group or community).

It is relatively easy to see how economic strengthening interventions aimed at promoting reintegration might adopt procedural notions of success that exhibit a bias toward measuring levels of employment or income. Such indicators are simply easier to measure and avoid the complexity of assessing social integration. The problem is that externally applied standards or ideals can influence the design of interventions, and their evaluation can proceed without sufficient regard for both the recipients’ desires (and those of their families), and the social and cultural means by which integration may be achieved. Humanity’s highest ideals, as encapsulated within conceptions of human rights, reflect abstract understandings of what is good and right. The provision of assistance involves aiming to achieve these within particular social and cultural locations. The prominence of employment as a primary conception of reintegrative success is, therefore, best interpreted in the light of the social and cultural norms related to traditional-collectivistic and modern-individualistic ways of life. A job is not a job is not a job! The supported attainment of various forms of employment or the development of small businesses or microenterprises is, therefore, best perceived not as promoting independence, but inter-dependence within social groups based within specific cultural contexts.

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# ANNEX 5: ACTIVE FAMILY SUPPORT- AN EMPOWERED WOMAN – A STRONG FAMILY

**Author:** Liliana Rotaru

**Name of Organization:** CCF Moldova—children, communities, families [www.ccfmoldova.org](http://www.ccfmoldova.org)

**Name of Program/Project:** Support to Child Protection Department for the Closure of Institution for Babies in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

**Geographic Location of Program/Project:** Chisinau Municipality, Moldova

**Implementing Partners:** Municipal Child Protection Department

**Program/Project Period:** 2010–2015

**Funding Sources:** Hope and Homes for Children UK, UNICEF, Embassy of Finland

**Funding Amount:** €1,100,000

**Theme(s):** Development, extreme poverty

## SUMMARY

Moldova has inherited from its Soviet past a child protection system that heavily relies on institutional care. The government and civil society sought to change the reliance on institutional care with the implementation of the 2007–2012 Strategy and Action Plan to Reform the Residential Care System (the “Strategy”). Although external evaluation of the strategy’s implementation has been generally positive with a 54 percent reduction in number of children in residential care, challenges remain in addressing children under the age of 3 and children with disabilities. These groups of children have been less affected by the reform, and structural poverty remains a significant challenge for their families.

The CCF Moldova project aims to reform the system for institutionalizing babies and young children in Chisinau, by replacing residential care with a wide range of day and community services. The project implements three types of key interventions: 1) preventing the child and family separation, 2) reintegrating children with their biological or extended families, and 3) placing children without direct parental care into alternative care or with adoption families. The project also provides cross-cutting technical assistance to state professionals in developing services and in improving their knowledge, attitudes, and practices.

## DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Moldovan government approved the 2014–2020 Child and Family Protection Strategy,<sup>15</sup> which stipulates the need to continue the reform of residential care, gradually ban the institutionalization of children under 3, and promote policies and practices to reconcile the family and work life.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://lex.justice.md/md/353459/>

CCF Moldova has cooperation agreements or Memoranda of Understanding with all the central and local public authorities that have jurisdiction over the institutions that house children.

Despite the public assertions of government commitment and the enactment of a legal framework, a significant gap exists between policy and practice as discriminatory attitudes lead to children from vulnerable groups to continue to be placed in institutional care. Children from the most vulnerable families in society constitute a disproportionate number of the children in institutional care in Moldova. These vulnerable groups include children with disabilities, children of Roma origin, children infected with HIV and tuberculosis, children from single parent families, children of teenage mothers, and children of parents who themselves grew up in institutional care. A high proportion of children under the age of 3 enter the system across the country, despite the overwhelming evidence of the negative effects institutional care has on the development of babies and young children.

Based on the 30-month<sup>16</sup> analysis of causes of institutionalization,<sup>17</sup> the first three most common reasons for children's separation and risk of separation from families (out of a list of 13) are shown in the following table.

**Table I**

#	The causes of separation or risk factors	The number of children and percent of children from Institution for Babies (IB); the data are related to 120 children from IB	The number of children and percent of children from the prevention program; the data are related to 369 children from the prevention
1	Material/financial difficulties	97 children (81%)	357 children (97%)
2	The unemployment of the parents	91 children (76%)	267 children (72%)
3	The lack of relatives' network or support	17 children (14%)	244 children (66%)

Supporting vulnerable and marginalized parents to access services and support that enables them to provide care and protection for their children at home has successfully prevented family separation for many children. When this is not possible, placement with the extended family, a foster family, a family-type home or, where appropriate, through national adoption have all successfully created family environments for children at risk of separation and institutionalization.

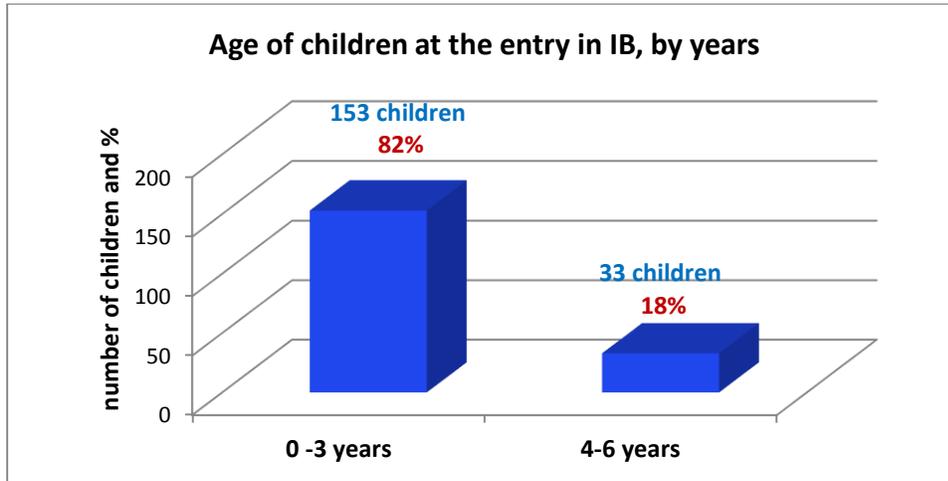
This unique and holistic program is tailored to the individual needs of each child and family and is built on the following core values: partnership, respect, inclusion, sustainability, and the best interest of the child. The cases with the highest risk of separation are referred by the Child Protection Department. Prevention specialists lead the identification, assessment, referral, and intervention.

<sup>16</sup> July 2012–December 2014

<sup>17</sup> The data collected on a group of 469 children aged 0–7 in prevention and reintegration programs,

**Economic Strengthening Intervention(s):** We constantly collect data that are used to design our interventions. We noted, for instance that despite the overall decrease of children entering institutions because of our prevention program, the greatest proportion of children who are separated from their families are still under the age of 3.<sup>18</sup>

**Graph 1: Age of children at the entry in IB by years**



We used those data that demonstrate the disproportionate number of younger children who enter institutions to help us decide to target the parents of the youngest children and understand the underlying causes that lead to the institutionalization of the youngest children. Many of these households included single mothers who care for the young children. After our analysis, we concluded that early childhood Development (ECD) services could contribute to preventing family separation, and support the process of reintegrating young children back into their homes. Access to ECD services empowers mothers to be economically active and productive by freeing them to work and earn income while their young children are properly cared for with ECD interventions. In addition to the immediate economic impact of allowing mothers to earn income without having to put their young children into institutions, ECD interventions contribute to the cognitive, socio-emotional, and motor development that studies have proven lead to greater chances for children staying in school and earning greater lifelong incomes.

Seventy-seven children attended two *social crèches*—an ECD day service for children age 4 months 2 ½ years old.<sup>19</sup> By having *social crèches* care for their children during the day, families (usually single mothers and sometimes grandmothers) were able to ensure the proper care of their young children and maintain employment or continue studies, without having to place their children into institutions or otherwise being forced to separate from their children.

The program has allowed young children in institutions to be reunified with their grandmother who previously could not take care of them because she was employed and could not take care of her twin grandchildren for 24 hours.

<sup>18</sup> This data are confirmed by the prevention program.

<sup>19</sup> The standard age of enrollment in kindergarten in Moldova

If a mother expresses her intention of leaving a baby in an institution, she was and is still given the option to stay with her baby in a Mother & Baby Unit – a residential service offering shelter, food, medical services and advice while the mother is caring for the baby and building her attachment with the baby, in order to prevent separation. This service is offered for 6-8 months and when mothers leave the M&B Units they have no day care, so they can't get employment and pay for her and baby's needs. This increases the risk of separation and the mother's and baby's vulnerability. To ensure continuum of services, for this age group (babies and toddlers) we have opened a social crèche – a day care for children 4 months – 2, 3-5 years old.

In many cases, for mothers who used before the Mother and Baby Unit and had no options after they were leaving the services, usually 6-8 months later. When a mother expressed her wish to leave the child after giving birth, she is placed in M&B unit to support her attachment with the baby, a vital part of healthy development for the child. However, the mother and family had no access to any sort of continuum of services that could address the risks contributing to their vulnerability. After six to eight months, the mothers are forced to leave the M&B Unit without having any of the initial reasons addressed that forced her to separate from the child (see Table 1). Prior to 2011, a mother had no support that would allow her to work while keeping her child. She was forced decide to either give up her only source of livelihood or part with her baby.

**Leveraging informal activities.** There are cases when families are unable use the crèche. In those cases, to assist mothers in caring for their children, the program worked with mothers and other family members to identify strengths and resources that could be leveraged for family support. Sometimes, small grants were provided to mothers and families to establish informal economic activities that they could conduct at home while at the same time caring for their young children. The program supported diversifying traditional activities like sewing, to find a market niche. For instance, one mother made textile bags and purses, decorating them with used soft toys and using small pieces of fabric that she obtained for free from in tailors' workshops. These products proved marketable. Informal economic activities are intended to be transitional insofar as mothers are able to go back to formal employment once children reach kindergarten age. Informal activities, like making handmade decorative bags and purses, may be so successful in earning income, however, that the families may continue the activity to provide supplemental household income even after mothers go back to formal employment.

The CCF Moldova experience has demonstrated that economic empowerment activities by themselves are insufficient to preventing separation or encourage the reunification and reintegration of separated children back with their families. Economic pressures, while a major contributing factor, are not the only factors that lead to family separation. Accordingly, all interventions are preceded by thorough assessments and investigations of all risk factors. In addition to employment and household economy, the assessment examines:

- Living conditions
- Family and social relationships
- Behavior
- Physical and mental health
- Education

After the assessment, the specialist together with the family develops an intervention plan in which the parents have the main role. After identifying primary reasons for separation and risk factors in each family situation, an intervention plan with economic empowerment interventions may include:

1. Legal support in obtaining all documents allowing employment and access to social benefits
2. Temporary housing arrangements or rent
3. Temporary food/hygiene supplies
4. Advocating with employers
5. Advocating with vocational schools
6. Providing grants for small equipment
7. Offering social crèche services
8. Social and psychological counseling to support job retention

The table below illustrates the types of economic and other interventions used with a cohort of families of 688 children:

**Table 2**

Nr.	Type of intervention	Absolute number of children <sup>20</sup>	Percent from total number
1	Social and legal counseling	540	78%
2	Psychological counseling	468	68%
3	Emergency counseling	431	62%
4	Support for enrollment in the kindergarten	363	53%
5	Emergency food supplies	327	48%
6	Clothes and shoes	312	45%
7	Medical counseling	308	45%
8	Independent living skills training	296	43%
9	Family planning counseling	246	36%
10	Economic skills' developing training	237	34%
11	Medication	222	32%
12	Hygiene products	222	32%
13	Transportation services to access services or work	212	31%
14	Child equipment and toys	195	28%
15	Housing	154	22%
16	Support for the parents' employment	143	21%
17	Kindergarten supplies	137	20%
18	Specialized therapies	126	18%
19	Food supplements for babies	102	15%
20	Special educational support	94	14%
21	House equipment	90	13%
22	Psychotherapy	83	12%
23	Furniture	71	10%
24	Rent	57	8%

**Other Intervention Activities:** CCF Moldova values the dignity and independence of beneficiaries and avoids interventions that may increase a sense of dependency on external support. Therefore, we provide intense initial interventions to ensure positive outcomes for children and families and involve the formal services. When these services are limited or are of low quality, we develop or improve the needed services.

CCF Moldova is not a service provider, but rather a service developer. To decrease the dependence on external support, we transfer the services to the state Child Protection Department and the funding that

<sup>20</sup> Total number 688, both in prevention and reintegration; data collected 2011–2014

is normally allocated for residential care is redirected to day and community specialist formal services. Most newly created services do not need additional funds, since residential care is more expensive than day and community services. Table 2 shows the different kinds of non-economic interventions that are crucial to the effectiveness of the economic empowerment interventions.

- The intervention most often used is social, legal, and psychological counseling that targets and strengthens the beneficiaries' parenting social and communication skills, instills a sense of responsibility, and improves relationships within the family, including the relationships between a mother and her parents, in those situations of shared living.
- Advocacy and sensitization play a key role by targeting the Child Protection Department specialists who frequently blame the families for their own issues. The specialists expect that immediate positive change can occur without any outside support. (Unfortunately, this unsympathetic attitude toward the most vulnerable members of society is prevalent among state workers). Other forms of advocacy include:
  - Advocacy and sensitization of those working in educational, medical, and social services to encourage and promote the inclusion of both children and adults.
  - Advocacy and sensitization of those within the state structure responsible for documentation, including those working at embassies of foreign states, to support the undocumented population (who are often of Roma origin) born in another country, who have no identification or birth registration documents, and may have illegally crossed the border.
  - Advocacy with the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection, and Family to encourage the gradual ban of the institutionalization of children under 3, with the simultaneous development of services.
- Vital supplemental support includes access to essential medicines and support to quality and user-friendly medical services particularly targeting women who need family planning and reproductive health counseling.
- Targeting the provision of day care services is essential for not only children under 3 but also for disabled children, the two most vulnerable categories of children at risk of separation.

**Follow-up and Monitoring Activities:** The CCF Moldova intervention, ACTIVE FAMILY SUPPORT, consists of three phases:

1. Intense intervention (duration depends on case complexity)
2. Six months of monitoring
3. Case closure and revisiting the family after six months after the closure to measure the change

The intervention duration and intensity are determined by the complexities of the family situation, family participation in the process, and whether the family has the support of a social network. The monitoring is closely connected with the length and intensity of intervention. As a rule, short-term interventions (up to three months) are actively monitored for the same duration of time. If the intervention is long-term, complex, or “relapsing,” the follow-up activities and monitoring may take up to 12 months or longer.

**Gaps and Challenges:** The table below shows the challenges presented during ACTIVE FAMILY SUPPORT and measures taken to mitigate these challenges.

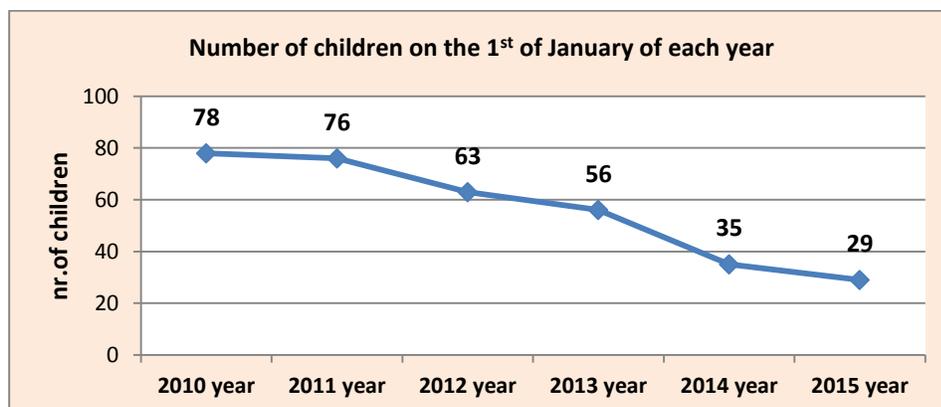
**Table 3**

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Means of Mitigation</b>
Limited commitment from parents to find and keep a job	Trust building measures with counseling and support
Difficult employment market and high unemployment rate	Facilitating access to the state office for employment; support in employment process;
Limited financial resources to start a small entrepreneurial activity	Small grants Referral to other structures/NGOs
More jobs available in informal job market, with no social benefits for the employee	Advocacy on behalf of the beneficiary, including legal support, if needed
Lack of professional education; limited professional skills	Vocational training
Low salaries	Access to other services and social benefits
Limited accessibility of formal services (location, number of service support sites available, etc.)	For the future we will advocate for geographical outreach of services—crèches, counseling, training, etc.

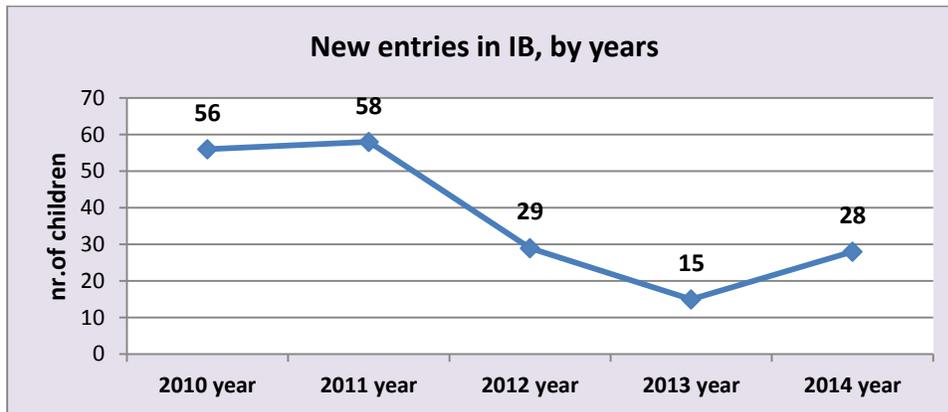
## OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

Despite the lack of a moratorium on new entries, due to an efficient reintegration and prevention programs, the numbers of children both in the institution and entering the institution has dropped gradually over the last years.

**Graph 2: Number of children in IB on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January by years**



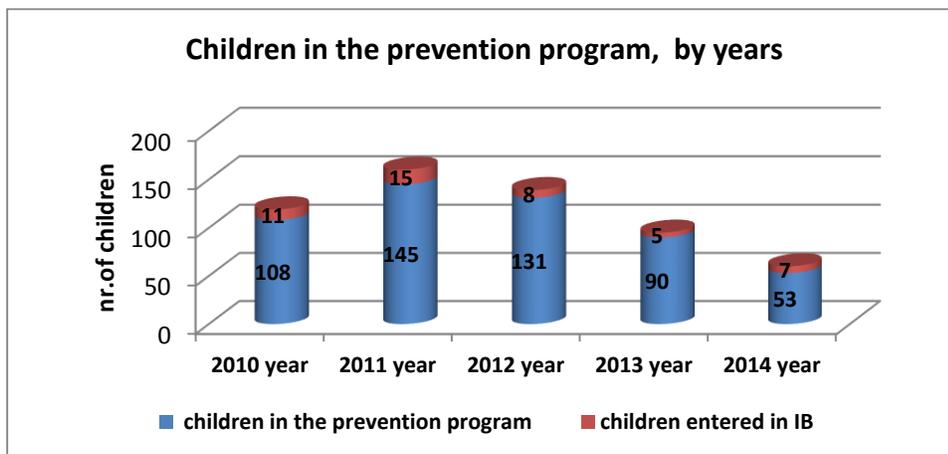
**Graph 3: Number of new entries in IB by years**



Attachment support, job finding services, and access to social crèches for child care support, supplemented with psychological counseling and support for accessing universal social services (such as registering children for kindergarten) effectively prevented the separation of children from their families. Since June 2011, only 2 out of 77 children who attended social crèches were temporarily separated from families. The average age of children who attend the crèche is 6–9 months. The average amount of time children attend the crèche is 12 months.

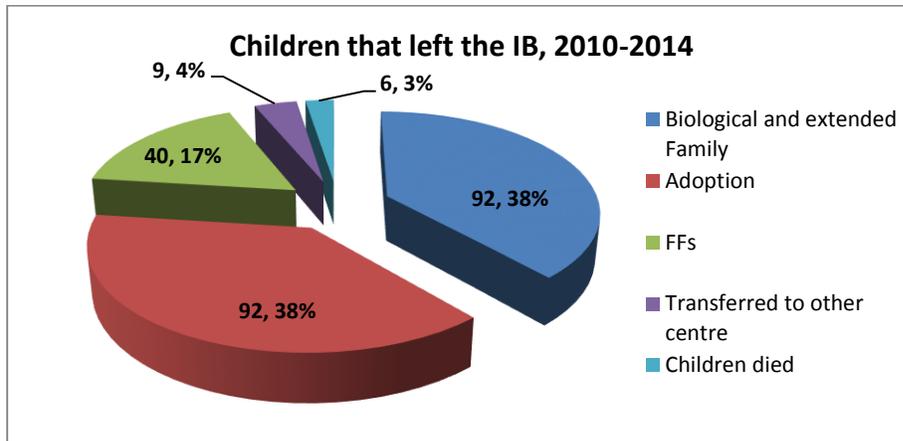
Our direct prevention program worked in Chisinau Municipality with **527 children** and their families. Of this number, 46 children, representing approximately 9 percent of cases, entered institutions. Reasons for entering institutions included: late case identification; additional time needed due to the complexity of the problems; and continuing risk to the child even after the intervention because the parents didn't change their behaviors. Of the 46 children from the prevention program who entered into institutions, 16 were eventually reintegrated into their biological family. The remaining 30 children were adopted. We concluded that alternative care placement was necessary for only about 6 percent of children.

**Graph 4: Children in the prevention program, by years**



Of 268 children who were initially placed or went through the institution during the 2010–2014, 239 left the institution as shown in the graphic.

**Graph 5: Children that left the IB, 2010-2014**



**Theory of Change:** The assessment of risk factors and causes of separation allowed a series of assumptions to be made. We recorded that most mothers with children in institutions and at risk of separation have complex, associated issues, such as poverty, lack of coping mechanisms, poor parenting skills, and poor or inexistent social network. We started our program with three basic assumptions:

1. The women need strong coping mechanisms and good parenting skills to provide a safe and nurturing environment to their children.
2. The women need support to secure and maintain a job in the formal sector to solve economic issues; this will provide resources for education, health, and housing and to address other risk factors.
3. Many women will need child care services and counseling accessible and client-friendly.

Based on these assumptions, we identified short-term outcomes for the reintegration and prevention program.

1. The state professionals responsible for the prevention and reintegration program in Chisinau have and use a referral mechanism to refer complex cases to CCF Moldova.
2. All families with children aged 0–7 at risk of separation are assessed and intervention plans are proposed, obtaining beneficiaries' consent.
3. All families with children aged 0–7 in institutions are assessed and plans are proposed.
4. A service plan is produced for the institution's closure/transformation based on the needs of children and families served, as well as those of the community.
5. State professionals are aware of the harm of institutionalization does to young children and need trainings, advisory services, study visits, and joint case management.

Intermediate outcomes include:

1. State professionals have increased capacity in child protection to prevent institutionalization.
2. A foster care development strategy is developed; the number of foster families is increased.
3. The number of children entering institution is decreased.
4. The number of children in institution is decreased.
5. The number of children leaving institutions is increased.
6. The number of families reunited with children is increased.
7. The number of families who keep the children is increased.

Long-term outcomes include:

1. The residential care component is closed; the former Institution for Babies is converted into a complex for social services.
2. An emergency placement center<sup>21</sup> is regulated and functional.
3. The quality of the Mother and Baby Unit<sup>22</sup> is improved.
4. Day care<sup>23</sup> for disabled children provides highly functional preventive services.
5. A family assistance service<sup>24</sup> is in place in the Complex for Social Services.
6. Two to three social crèches<sup>25</sup> are available for mothers who work.
7. No children are in residential care.
8. Institutionalization of children under 3 is banned.
9. Use of foster care is diversified, including for newborn and disabled children, and groups of siblings.
10. A replicable model is developed for the closure of Institutions for Babies.
11. A replicable prevention model is developed for children 0–7 and their mothers.

**Target Beneficiaries:** Usually the direct intervention targets the biological families, but there are some interventions that also target extended families. Interventions may also, in part, target communities, which are important for providing employment. Further, private employers are targeted with advocacy and educational messages about respecting the rights of women.

**Evaluation and Evidence of Success:** The active family support model incorporates simple research methods, guidance for project and program design, policy development and advocacy activities, and techniques for monitoring implementation and impact. The program measures the presence of risk and protective factors in each child's situation. The assessment covers the following six wellbeing domains: **living conditions, family and social relationships, behavior, physical and mental health, education, and household economy.**

The assessment is carried out at the beginning of work with the family, at the time of finishing the work with the family, and six months after completing the work with the family.

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<sup>21</sup> On the premises of the Institution for Babies and Young Children

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

The first section for each wellbeing domain contains a range of statements relating to risk and protective factors. **Statements that apply to the child’s situation are checked with an X.** The total number of checks is entered in the last row (total risk factors/total protective factors).

At the time of the initial assessment (at the beginning of the work with the family), the following question should be answered: “Are all of the child’s needs in this domain being satisfied?” A negative answer indicates that work should be done with the family to satisfy the child’s needs in that specific area. The section entitled “Measuring Change” implies the evaluation of the extent to which the child’s needs are satisfied in each wellbeing domain at different times.

## LEARNING

The social crèche service is predominantly a prevention service offered to families with children who are at risk of separation, but it also can be used as a service to support reintegration (when the family has to work and the child is under 3).

With daily quality care for their children, parents (especially the mothers) are able to find and maintain employment, rent an apartment, and cover the needs of the family while keeping their children as part of the household.

After almost four years, social crèche services have clearly impacted a very specific group of mothers—those with babies, no family support and experiencing economic problems (unemployment and low or no income). Evidence of success is demonstrated by the decrease in the number of babies and young children placed in institutions. Success is so great that there are no vacant places in either of the crèches and there is a waiting list for families who want their children to attend the crèches.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- The prevention program is a key component in Deinstitutionalization process.
- Services to support the DI process may vary. However, all case interventions are determined by assessments, and for all cases interventions, including family counseling, economic empowerment, foster care, and legal advice were essential.
- The success in many prevention cases derives from the complex intervention for the family; the economic strengthening component provided sustainability.

**Adaptation and Replication:** The active family support model is used in the countries where Hope and Homes for Children UK is involved, with similar evidence of success.

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# ANNEX 6: MAKING ECONOMIC STRENGTHENING WORK: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO CHILD TRAFFICKING IN GHANA

**Authors:** David Schley, Kate Danvers, and James Kofi Annan

**Name of Organization:** Challenging Heights

**Name of Program/Project:** Holistic Protection (Rescue, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration) with Education, Livelihoods and Advocacy.

**Geographic Location of Program/Project:** Central Region, Ghana, West Africa.

**Implementing Partners:** Challenging Heights

**Program/Project Period:** Ongoing

**Funding Sources:** Ongoing, past and prospective funding partners include Sunwest Bank Foundation, Hovde Foundation, Free the Slaves, Walk Free, Learn 4 Work, Empower, United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, Freedom For All, Made in a Free World, Breaking the Chains through Education, 27 Million Voices, Friends of Challenging Heights.

**Funding Amount:** Annual turnover of approximately US\$470,000

**Theme(s):** Child labor and trafficking, reintegration monitoring, microfinance, skills building and workforce development, extreme poverty (development), women's economic empowerment

## SUMMARY

Challenging Heights works with underserved communities where children are vulnerable to child trafficking and child labor in the fishing industry on Lake Volta. The program rescues children from slavery and then provides educational, medical, and psychosocial rehabilitation and reintegration back into their families and communities.

Challenging Heights monitors reintegrated children and those vulnerable to trafficking and helps communities build resistance to child exploitation. This is done by recruitment of volunteers to form Child Rights Clubs and Community Child Protection Committees, which lead on the development and implementation of Community Action Plans that address children's welfare. The organization also campaigns at an international, national, and local levels to bring about systemic, legal, and attitudinal change to promote child rights, especially with regard to education and freedom from forced labor.

The program also provides livelihood support and economic empowerment to the families of survivors of slavery and carers of vulnerable children, combining vocational and business training with microfinance initiatives and the establishment of cooperatives. Challenging Heights run schools to support children and youth from communities with high rates of illiteracy to access education, including youth training linked to the employment market, creating meaningful opportunities that allow parents and carers to see genuine value in academic achievement and thus invest in their children's schooling.

## DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

**Context:** There are over 2.4 million “economically active” children (aged 5–17) in Ghana.<sup>26</sup> Over a million are denied education because of the need to work instead of attending school, and an estimated 240,000 are victims of hazardous child labor.<sup>27</sup> Because child labor is a widely accepted activity, Ghana is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking,<sup>28</sup> and an estimated 193,100 Ghanaians live in conditions of modern slavery.<sup>29</sup> Challenging Heights works in coastal fishing communities centered around Winneba (Central Region), which are source communities for trafficking of children into the fishing industry on Lake Volta. Children from these communities are vulnerable to trafficking because most families live in conditions of poverty, the children have already acquired the necessary fishing skills from their parents, and the communities have historic social links to the communities working on the lake. There are an estimated 49,000 children working on Lake Volta, with 21,000 forced to undertake hazardous child labor that includes risks to life.<sup>30</sup> Conditions in the fishing communities on the lake are extremely impoverished; there are no health care facilities, no schools, no running water, sanitation, or electricity and the lake itself poses risks to life through storms, accidents and infections (including bilharzias). The program’s objective is to bring trafficked children home and return them to their family environments, while addressing factors that led to trafficking in the first place. Such factors not only include poverty, but the widespread acceptance of allowing children to work, and traditional practices of children living away from their parents. Children are sent away for a variety of reasons, even in wealthy families, and often the outcomes are seen as positive for the family or child or both. For example, a child might move to be closer to a good school, or to live with a relative who can better provide for him or her, or to whom he or she feels especially emotionally close. At other times, the decision to move a child is more forced, or more closely driven by poverty; for example, a child is essentially in bonded labor to pay off a loan from an extended family member, or a parent may have too many children to care for themselves, and so send a child to live away.

**Economic Strengthening Intervention(s):** Challenging Heights currently implements four types of activities to support economic strengthening:

1. Economic support for school attendance for reintegrated children

Most of the program’s rescued trafficked children attend public school after reintegration. Although there are no official fees for public school attendance in Ghana, in practice there are numerous prohibitive costs attached to schooling (cost of a new desk; additional materials, including uniform, shoes, school bags, stationary, books) that can lead to children dropping out of school.

2. Micro-grants and business development advice for families of reintegrated children

This economic strengthening activity is integrated into a holistic assessment of families prior to

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<sup>26</sup> Ghana Statistical Services. (2010) Ghana Population and Housing Census.

<sup>27</sup> The International Labour Organisation/Ghana Statistical Services. (2003) Child Labour Survey ILO/GSS.

<sup>28</sup> U.S. State Department. (2014) 2014 Trafficking In Persons Report <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/>

<sup>29</sup> Hope for Children. (2014) Global Slavery Index <http://www.globalslaveryindex.org/>

<sup>30</sup> Paul Asamoah Kukwaw. (2013) Analytical Study on Child Labour in Lake Volta Fishing in Ghana. The International Labour Organisation/International Programme on Elimination of Child Labour.

reintegration and ongoing monitoring after the child returns home. Field officers visit families regularly, and provide ongoing mentoring, and psychosocial and practical support as needed. Most parents of trafficked children are either unemployed or self-employed in fishing, fish selling, or other petty trading. Furthermore, many are single mothers due to the practice of men taking multiple wives, which results in abandonment of one or more wives or the concentration of income in the hands of the favored wives and their children. Large family sizes are valued in these communities, so single mothers often have to balance care of young children and working, sometimes drawing on older generations of the extended family or requiring daughters to stay home from school to help with child-care.

Before reintegration, our field officers visit the key carer for each child (usually the mother) to carry out a holistic assessment, which includes an assessment of the family's current economic activities, identify their needs and provide business development advice. Each family is offered a GHS200 (US\$58) grant. The field officer and carer work together to decide how this will be invested. The current money does not need to be repaid provided the grant is spent on the agreed upon income-generating activities and that children are adequately cared for at home and attend school successfully. Before the child returns home, carers attend a training event on how banks work, and are supported to set up a bank account at a recommended local rural bank. The money is paid into the bank account soon after the child returns home. Field officers provide announced and unannounced follow-up visits to monitor children as part of the holistic package of care, and can offer further business advice as part of these visits. In the event that the conditions of the bond are broken, Challenging Heights requests police assistance in recovering the grant money—however in practice, this has not happened to date.

#### 1. Youth empowerment program

The University of Education in Winneba attracts affluent students from across the country who are able to find secure and well-paid employment at banks and business that provide secure and well paid employment. Traditionally, however, employers have found it hard to find suitably skilled local candidates to fill such roles, especially since most candidates lack the basic information and computing technology skills needed in the modern workplace. This program enables young people aged 16–24, who have missed out on secondary education, to access skilled work or have the capacity to set up their own businesses and become self-employed. Although we reserve places for young people who support vulnerable or reintegrated children (usually siblings), the program is open to all in the local community. Every year 220 people go through a free 20-week course that involves ICT hardware and software training, business and entrepreneur training, and leadership training. The content of the course has evolved over time, and was developed from discussion groups with young people and feedback from Winneba employers. Our program provides the critical skills necessary for local young people to access semi-professional jobs such as teaching, librarianship, secretarial or mobile banking, computer repair work, and self-employment.

#### 2. Livelihoods project

This project is in development at present, with recruitment underway for the first phase, the women's fish preservation project. The fishing industry remains profitable in Ghana but primarily to those able to access it at more than a subsistence level. In practice many of the poorest people are forced to work for others because they do not have the reserves to establish their own enterprises and thus only receive a fraction of the profits of their work. Over the next two years, 200 women will be given training in fish smoking and preservation and seed capital of a GHS400 (US\$117) loan to buy equipment and fish to start

their business. The loan has the same educational and care conditions attached as the micro grants given to families of reintegrated children, but must be paid back, (over a period of one year at 0 percent interest). Also, compared to the micro-grants, which can be used flexibly for any business idea, this loan can only be used for fish preservation equipment and fish, as part of a scheme to set up a women's co-operative of fish preservers, who in future will work from the same smoke-house and cold store facilities. Monitoring several times a month will ensure the conditions are adhered to, and if broken, the loan will be recoverable at a rate of 30 percent interest. Each beneficiary signs a bond with Challenging Heights which has legal standing, meaning that the Magistrate's Court and police can become involved to recover the loan if conditions are not met. Further phases of the project will provide horticulture training, and soap-making training, together with introductions to businesses in Winneba willing to purchase locally produced goods, so that women may diversify their income. Women who access the livelihoods project may be mothers or family members of reintegrated children, or children at risk of trafficking or dropping out of education. Nearly all women signed up for the project so far have children (reflecting the demographic of Winneba, where there are strong cultural expectations for women to have children, coupled with a high teenage pregnancy rate and high rate of children born outside of marriage), but the project is open to women without children, too.

**Other Intervention Activities:** Our advocacy activities are aimed at changing the system that allows trafficking to flourish and denies children their rights to education and a safe family environment. Today we advocate at a national and international levels to end modern slavery and improve children's rights and lives in Ghana. We are the Ghana partner for Walk Free, an international anti-slavery movement of over 6 million members, with whom we have launched campaigns that aim to change police practices and community attitudes. Challenging Heights staff members regularly contribute to national newspapers, radio, and TV programs. Dr. James Kofi Annan has represented Challenging Heights at several high-level international initiatives, including the Global Freedom Network, the Participate Initiative (UN discussions on post-2015 development goals), and speaking at United States Senate hearings on trafficking.

Some of our advocacy efforts link directly to economic strengthening. For example, we campaign for improved funding of education, including timely release of grants given to public schools and the introduction of free secondary education. Free secondary education has now been added to the manifestos of most of the major political parties in Ghana, although the current government has not acted on this. We are partnering with Family for Every Child to advocate for the geographical expansion of the Livelihoods Empowerment Against Poverty program (social protection payments),<sup>31</sup> a benefit for which many of our families would be eligible, if the scheme covered all areas.

As well as high-level systemic change, local level changes in attitudes must occur before slavery in Ghana is eradicated. We carry out community sensitization events (awareness-raising) and train people in child rights through our Community Child Protection Committees (largely composed of volunteers) and Children's Rights Clubs. These community resources are key in preventing children from being trafficked, and in helping to monitor them and protect them from re-trafficking once they have been reintegrated.

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<sup>31</sup> Keetie Roelen & Helen Karki Chettri. (2014) Researching the Linkages between Social Protection and Children's Care in Ghana: LEAP and its effects on child wellbeing, care and family cohesion. Centre for Social Protection & Institute of Development Studies.

The rescue, rehabilitation, and monitoring after reintegration of trafficked children is a holistic package of care that helps us tackle those drivers of trafficking and family breakdown unrelated to poverty. These include rejection of children by parents or step-parents because of perceived or actual behavioral, spiritual, or medical problems in the child, parental separation, and the traditional practice of men taking multiple wives, which sometimes leads to men abandoning some of their wives and failing to provide for the children of those women. Psychosocial interventions are carried out at the rehabilitation and monitoring stages to help heal family relationships and retrain children in normal family life. Our team includes a community mediator authorized by the Magistrate's Court to call fathers to account and encourage them to provide adequately for their children (as required by Ghanaian law). We register all children with the National Health Insurance Scheme, and bring their families to the attention of state social workers.

**Follow-up and Monitoring Activities:** Children are monitored for two years, initially intensively, and then dropping to once every one or two months depending on need. A successful reintegration would be one where the child feels settled and safe in his or her family environment, school attendance is being maintained, the child is not at risk or subject to abuse or re-trafficking, the family has enough income to meet basic needs of all members, and the family is gradually becoming independent from Challenging Heights. Our field officers carry out both announced and unannounced visits in children's homes, and speak to neighbors and family members about the child's wellbeing. We visit children's schools, as drop-out from school is a risk factor for re-trafficking, and teachers are often the first to notice signs of abuse or neglect. All families of reintegrated children are linked with the local Community Child Protection Committees for informal support, and children are encouraged to attend our Child Rights Clubs.

**Gaps and Challenges:** Unpredictable funding and economic uncertainty (inflation and currency devaluation) present significant challenges to the stability and sustainability of our economic strengthening programs. We also face local challenges such as unscrupulous bank staff taking advantage of high illiterate and innumerate clients, and difficulties in obtaining land to widen our livelihoods project. Occasionally we have children who are difficult to reintegrate. This does not happen often, because the majority of children we rescue have been "called for" by a concerned relative who, having been educated through our community work about the poor conditions on the lake, has reconsidered the family's decision to send the child and asks for Challenging Heights' help to rescue them. The families, therefore, make a commitment toward the future care of the child before they are rescued. The therapeutic interventions in our rehabilitation package give us the opportunity to resolve family relationship issues and children's adjustment difficulties before reintegration, thus preventing placement breakdown later. Examples of such issues are rejection of the child by the parents (because of his or her behavior, or the spiritual stigma of having been on the lake), or children who struggle to accept as a carer a parent who previously trafficked them. Occasionally we rescue children without knowing their family origins, because while on the lake we see they are at immediate risk of serious harm. These children can be more difficult to reintegrate, since we first have to trace their families and then find a member willing to take responsibility for the future of the child; in these cases the economic strengthening interventions are key so that the child is not just perceived as a burden. We also have cases where a parent is willing to accept a child, but we see that the standard of care they can provide is inadequate. In these situations, we enlist the support of the state social worker to find a relative in the extended family who can take responsibility. We are able to overcome a lot of the challenges relating to family disputes and refusals to take parental responsibility because we have as part of our team a community mediator whose decisions are endorsed by the

Magistrate's Court. We have some concerns about reintegrating some of our teenage girls, whom we feel may be at risk of becoming pregnant and hence dropping out of school. Locally there are strict taboos against providing unmarried youth with contraceptives, however, so we are only able to provide sex and contraceptive *education* (knowing that *access* to contraceptive supplies is likely to be difficult).

## OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

**Theory of Change:** Our theory of change calls for interventions at the individual, community and systemic levels across four interlinked areas of programming: education, protection, livelihoods, and advocacy. It is too simplistic to say that economic strengthening and alleviating poverty will prevent trafficking; we know that many poor families in our communities and around the world do not traffic their children, and we also know of families in our communities who continue to traffic multiple children, despite having been lifted out of poverty. We believe there is a complex interplay between economic causal factors on the one hand (exacerbated by large family size, traditional practices of multiple marriage, lack of state social protection, and national economic uncertainty) and attitudes, values, and traditional beliefs that relate to children and their rights (cultural norms include acceptance of child labor, separation of children from parents, and a high rate of violent discipline). The latter means that the physical abuse suffered by children on the Lake is normalized, and reports not taken seriously.

In some families where trafficking occurs, individual children and their rights are not valued: instead they are seen as assets, whose labor or trafficking can create immediate economic rewards for the family. In other families, rights may be more respected, but no value is seen in educating a child in an environment where basic education alone does not lead to the promise of future employment or improvements in quality of life. In both cases, the combination of promised short-term economic gain and widespread acceptance of children working away from home leads to ideal conditions for traffickers to approach families, and lowers the threshold for families to consider trafficking. Vulnerability to traffickers is increased because many families do not know the true conditions of work on Lake Volta, and many may even be tricked into thinking they are sending their child to a better way of life, for example an apprenticeship with a fisherman and promise of future business.

Community sensitization activities about the rights of children and damaging conditions on Lake Volta lead to changes in attitudes and requests from families to bring children home. Longer term changes in community attitudes are achieved by creating and supporting Community Child Protection Committees, which lead in the protection of children and challenge attitudes directly within the community. Rescue of children and the reintegration package we provide affords short-term economic changes for families. A risk is that economic support only alleviates immediate poverty, however, but not the poverty of opportunity that these communities struggle with. Therefore, economic interventions must go hand in hand with ongoing monitoring of children to ensure they are in school, and activities are aimed at changing attitudes toward child rights and future employment opportunities for the next generation. Furthermore, the economic support we offer must be wider than just improving incomes—we must also address poverty of opportunity by providing training, empowerment, and meaningful livelihoods interventions. Our livelihoods and youth empowerment projects offer the promise of intermediate and longer-term changes, and provide real life examples in the community that training and education can lead to meaningful improvements in quality of life.

Through advocacy we seek stronger enforcement of existing laws to help drive social change, and for changes in national policy that improve educational opportunities and social protection for all vulnerable families. We have been involved in some formal research (with Family for Every Child) relating to the links between social protection and children's care, the results of which are being presented as part of an advocacy campaign to policymakers. On other issues, we generally campaign from a rights-based rather than an evidence-based, approach and focus on bringing the stories of our marginalized beneficiaries to public attention. Recent campaign focuses have included: calling for international pressure on the government of Ghana to secure the release of funds for the National Plan of Action Against the Worst Forms of Child Labour, a "Stop the Buses" campaign to urge government to change police practice in checking vehicles for unaccompanied children, and ongoing campaigning to make education in Ghana genuinely free.

**Target Beneficiaries:** Our primary beneficiaries are children who have been trafficked (or at risk of being so) into the fishing industry on Lake Volta, including many who have suffered years of exploitative labor, enduring neglect, physical, emotional, and sometimes sexual abuse, and working conditions that endanger their health and their lives. They are identified through our Community Child Protection Committees, set up to build local resistance. In addition we work with local schools and run community sensitization events, which often prompt teachers, family, or community members to report trafficked children. We target the most vulnerable families with vocational and economic support, focusing particularly on women carers of former child slaves and children at risk of being trafficked. We consider families to be vulnerable if children from that extended family or close community have already been trafficked, if children are out of school, if children are working, and if children's basic needs are not being met.

### **Evaluation and Evidence of Success:**

**Vulnerability:** Our protection program seeks to give survivors of slavery a normal childhood. Thus we aim for rescued children to be accepted by members of their community following their rehabilitation and reintegration. Our monitoring systems follow the children's progress at home and at school for at least two years, with the goal of the child and family achieving independence from Challenging Heights in that time. The key metrics for this are children achieving their potential at school and families being economically secure to provide for all members. We expect families to be able to provide for the basic needs of all their children, and because we have an ongoing presence in the communities, families approach us if their circumstances change and they cannot feed or clothe their children. It is very rare for families in our communities to have savings against future unplanned expenses, so although we encourage families to save and help them open bank accounts, we do not use having savings as a measure of financial security. We define children as vulnerable if they have been trafficked, are in a family where a child has been trafficked, or live in a community where trafficking is prevalent.

## LEARNING

**Innovations:** Our holistic approach not only reintegrates former victims of slavery back into their home community and offers livelihood support to their families, but through education and youth empowerment programs, offers them and their parents a realistic and achievable vision of a brighter future that is worth

striving for. We believe the success of our approach is borne of the fact that Challenging Heights is a grassroots organization, founded and run by a survivor of slavery with programs developed by local staff with an understanding of the issues that affect their communities.

**Lessons Learned:** The current program has evolved over 10 years of anti-trafficking work, as our organization’s understanding of the issue has developed. The extensive rehabilitation program was found to be necessary to ensure survivors of slavery—denied access to education and an understanding of social norms for many years—could reintegrate successfully into their community. The conditional nature of our microfinance initiatives, whereby families can only get a loan or grant if they promise to care for and keep all their children in education, was a result of us appreciating the perceived lack of value of education by some families. The expansion of our livelihoods program is a result of understanding the underlying systemic support required for underserved communities to be lifted out of poverty and above a hand-to-mouth existence. Such systemic support includes building fish-smoking and cold-store facilities, identifying business partners who intend to purchase locally produced goods, and forming producers’ co-operatives that can achieve economies of scale. The establishment of our education programs was in response to seeing the true nature of existing provisions, where participation in “free” state education in practice incurs significant costs for families. Our growing advocacy program is the product of insights from research and our own experience of the extent of the problem of slavery in Ghana.

**Adaptation and Replication:** When tackling child exploitation, context is vital. Internal trafficking in Ghana is facilitated by a tradition of moving children within extended families, social acceptance of violence against children, and hazardous forced labor that is considered reasonable by perpetrators in a society where children are expected to work. We believe that in our communities the catalyst for child exploitation and abuse is poverty, but that the poverty of opportunities means more than economic strengthening is required to reverse it. Our approaches may be applicable where there are similar drivers, but may be inappropriate or unnecessary in societies where there are different societal attitudes and norms.

**The Way Forward and Scaling:** Scaling up our livelihoods program would be best achieved through infrastructure investment. We have a plan to develop facilities for our women’s co-operative of producers of preserved fish. We have already purchased the land and are seeking investment to build smoking kilns, an industrial-sized cold store, a crèche, washrooms and toilets, and a women and children’s health clinic. At present our support is largely limited to micro-finance and training which, although powerful, have clear limitations. For many, the lack of basic infrastructure presents a glass ceiling, with a significant proportion of any business profits taken up by intermediaries, for example, landlords, and smoke-kiln and cold-store owners. Families living in the most underserved communities pay disproportionately more for health care, both because of a lack of local centers and because the absence of sanitation facilities (water supply, toilets) makes them more vulnerable to common diseases.

Scaling up our protection program will be best achieved by focusing on prevention, since children will always be more easily (and cheaply) trafficked into slavery than we can find and rescue. This requires us to raise public awareness of the issue and change cultural attitudes to children, at both a local and national level. There is also a need for stronger state action, including the proper resourcing of police to enforce existing laws.

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# ANNEX 7: CASH FOR CARE? RESEARCHING THE LINKS BETWEEN SOCIAL PROTECTION AND CARE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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**Name of Organizations:** Family for Every Child (Uyisenga Ni Imanzi–Rwanda; Challenging Heights–Ghana; CINDI–South Africa) and the Centre for Social Protection at the Institute of Development Studies

**Name of Program/Project:** Researching the links between social protection and children’s care

**Geographic Location of Program/Project:** Rwanda, Ghana, and South Africa

**Program/Project Period:** August 2013–May 2015

**Funding Sources:** Family for Every Child

**Funding Amount:** £150,000

**Theme(s):** Cash transfers, public works programs, preventing family separation, kinship care, foster care, reintegration national systems, cultural traditions, child labor

## SUMMARY

Despite rising investments and increasing acknowledgement that social protection can be used as a key mechanism for reducing poverty and deprivation, there has been limited debate on the potential positive and negative impact of social protection on children’s care. This is the first substantial research project focusing on large-scale government-implemented national cash transfer and public works schemes in sub-Saharan Africa, and examining their impact on the wellbeing and care of children, including family separation and reunification. The social protection schemes in focus are Rwanda’s Vision Umurenge Programme (VUP), Ghana’s Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty Programme (LEAP) program, and South Africa’s Foster Child Grant (FCG) and Child Support Grant (CSG). This research shows that social protection schemes have the potential to prevent loss of parental care and have supported family reunification through improving material well-being and reducing stress in the household. It also points toward the need for, and explores linkages between social protection, and child protection systems, both formal and informal, to prevent separation and support children’s care and reintegration efforts. The research was qualitative, with over 240 adults and 180 children participating; the findings of the research in South Africa were being analyzed at the time of writing.

## DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

**Context:** There is evidence to suggest that increasing numbers of children in all three countries are living outside the care of their usual primary caregiver, with poverty and deprivation as key drivers of this family

separation.<sup>32</sup> HIV/AIDS is a factor affecting children's care in all the countries in focus and a key driver of family separation in South Africa in particular. Ghana has made considerable progress toward poverty reduction, becoming the first sub-Saharan country to reach the first Millennium Development Goal.<sup>33</sup> Despite this success, poverty remains endemic in parts of the country. In Rwanda, national rates of extreme poverty fell from 40 percent in 2000/01 to 24 percent in 2010/11.<sup>34</sup> Concerns about trends with respect to extreme poverty, however, led to the VUP being established in 2008.<sup>35</sup> In South Africa, nearly two-thirds of children lived below the poverty line in 2011, and 29.5 percent of pregnant women were estimated to be HIV positive.<sup>36</sup> Largely as a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, many people are caring for the children of their relatives, particularly grandparents caring for grandchildren, placing significant strain on household economies.

**Economic Strengthening Intervention(s):** The social protection schemes in focus are designed to reduce poverty and improve livelihoods, rather than deliberately target prevention of family separation or reintegration. Any impacts on family separation and reunification would work through addressing poverty as a major factor influencing the quality of children's care.

LEAP<sup>37</sup> aims to reduce extreme poverty through providing monthly cash transfers. The transfer is awarded to the household and the amount depends on the number of "eligible beneficiaries" per household. LEAP beneficiaries also receive free enrollment in the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) and consequent exemption from fees. This has helped LEAP beneficiaries to afford health care, particularly for their children. Ninety percent of all LEAP participant households were enrolled in 2012—a significant increase compared to those not participating in LEAP.

Beneficiaries of LEAP have to comply with "co-responsibilities" to receive their transfers. This includes enrollment and retention of school-age children in school; birth registration of newborns and their attendance at postnatal clinics; full vaccination of children under 5; and non-involvement in the "worst forms of child labor." Ghana operates several other national social protection programs aimed at children, which link into LEAP. These include the education capitation grant, school feeding program and free school uniforms program.

Rwanda's VUP<sup>38</sup> aims to accelerate the reduction of extreme poverty, and "graduate" households out of poverty, through four "pillars" of intervention: 1) Unconditional monthly cash transfers termed Direct

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<sup>32</sup> Delap, E (2013) *Towards a Family for Every Child: A conceptual framework*, Family for Every Child, London.

<sup>33</sup> Roelen, K. and Shelmerdine, H. (2014) *Researching the linkages between social protection and children's care in Ghana*, Family for Every Child/IDS/Challenging Heights, London.

<sup>34</sup> Roelen, K. and Shelmerdine, H. (2014) *Researching the linkages between social protection and children's care in Rwanda*, Family for Every Child/IDS/Uyisenga Ni Imanzi, London.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Mathews, S., Jamieson, L. Lake, L. and Smith, C (2014) *South African Child Gauge 2014*, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

<sup>37</sup> The text in this paragraph and the next on LEAP is all referencing: Roelen, K. and Shelmerdine, H. (2014) *Researching the linkages between social protection and children's care in Ghana*, Family for Every Child/IDS/Challenging Heights, London.

<sup>38</sup> The text in this paragraph on VUP is all referencing: Roelen, K. and Shelmerdine, H. (2014) *Researching the linkages between social protection and children's care in Rwanda*, Family for Every Child/IDS/Uyisenga Ni Imanzi, London.

Support (DS); 2) Public Works (PW), which offers paid employment on community asset building projects (such as terracing or building roads) and is targeted at extremely poor households with at least one adult who is able to work; 3) Financial Services, which provides access to savings, credit and financial institutions; and 4) Training and Sensitization. The training and sensitization pillar of VUP was being rolled out at the time this research took place. It aims to sensitize the community about the VUP and what it tries to achieve, and to engage communities in supporting broader development objectives, including the promotion of children's and women's rights, family planning, education, health, and hygiene.

South Africa's FCG was first implemented in 1992<sup>39</sup> as a child protection tool to support care for children being placed in foster care by court order. It is a relatively generous monthly transfer and is subject to a rigorous application procedure, including social work assessments and a court order.<sup>40</sup> The CSG was introduced in 1998. Its main aim is to alleviate poverty through a "means-tested" monthly transfer for up to six children per household.<sup>41</sup> The transfer is less generous than the CSG but is subject to a simpler application procedure.<sup>42</sup>

The FCG is administered in part by South Africa's Department of Social Welfare,<sup>43</sup> which enables psychosocial support to be provided through the social work system. However, as noted below, the extent to which children and families benefit from such support is under question, as it is widely recognized that the system is overburdened.<sup>44</sup>

**Target Beneficiaries:** LEAP eligibility is based on two criteria, namely (1) the household being considered poor, and (2) the household having a member who is either elderly, disabled or unable to work, or an orphaned or vulnerable child.<sup>45</sup> The selection of households is done at the community level by Community LEAP Implementation Committees (CLICs) and verified centrally by a proxy means test.<sup>46</sup>

The VUP<sup>47</sup> targets the abject and very poor through community-based targeting. The DS component of the VUP targets extremely poor households without an adult who is able to work, while PW targets extremely poor households with at least one adult who is able to work. The VUP is implemented in all 30

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<sup>39</sup> Meintjes et al. (2004), *Child Protection and Social Security in the face of poverty and the AIDS pandemic: Issues pertaining to the Children's Bill [B70-2003]*, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Hall, K., & Proudlock, P. (2011) *Orphaning and the foster child grant: A return to the 'care or cash' debate*, Children Count brief July, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

<sup>44</sup> Hall, K., & Proudlock, P. (2011) *Orphaning and the foster child grant: A return to the 'care or cash' debate*, Children Count brief July, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, Cape Town; Meintjes et al. (2004), *Child Protection and Social Security in the face of poverty and the AIDS pandemic: Issues pertaining to the Children's Bill [B70-2003]*, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

<sup>45</sup> Roelen, K. and Shelmerdine, H. (2014) *Researching the linkages between social protection and children's care in Ghana*, Family for Every Child/IDS/Challenging Heights, London.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> The text in this paragraph on VUP is all referencing: Roelen, K. and Shelmerdine, H. (2014) *Researching the linkages between social protection and children's care in Rwanda*, Family for Every Child/IDS/Uyisenga Ni Imanzi, London.

districts in the country. Within districts, sectors are ranked based on poverty levels and included in VUP according to this ranking. In 2012, 150 out of 416 sectors were included.

To access the CSG the primary caregivers of the child are means tested through an application to the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA).<sup>48</sup> They are eligible if they earn less than a certain amount, which is different if the caregiver is single or married.<sup>49</sup> Beneficiaries are the primary caregiver of the household and they can be caring for their own children, the children of relatives, or unrelated children.<sup>50</sup> The FCG is not means tested and eligibility is based on providing care to either a relative or non-related child, following assessment by a social worker and court order, after which the family can apply to SASSA for the grant.<sup>51</sup> Against the backdrop of many relatives, such as grandparents, caring for related children access to the FCG was extended from foster carers to kinship carers in 2003.<sup>52</sup> This has overstretched the system, in financial and human capacity terms.<sup>53</sup>

**Follow-up and Monitoring Activities:** The LEAP, VUP, and CSG programs do not monitor impacts on family separation or reunification since they are not designed to target these objectives. LEAP involves more general follow-up, however, such as on beneficiary compliance with the co-responsibilities described above. Adherence to these conditions is monitored by CLICs.<sup>54</sup> In practice, however, they are not enforced.<sup>55</sup> For the VUP, general follow-up is to be done by district-level paid staff.

In South Africa, the CSG may be subject to discretionary review dependent on earnings declared at application, with three months' notice given. The FCG is subject to review every two years, as part of the review of the child's wider wellbeing in the care arrangement and care circumstances. However, since the system has become over-burdened by the increased number of applicants to the FCG, there is limited time for social worker interactions with individual families.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Meintjes et al. (2004), *Child Protection and Social Security in the face of poverty and the AIDS pandemic: Issues pertaining to the Children's Bill [B70-2003]*, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

<sup>49</sup> Department of Social Development, South African Social Security Agency and UNICEF (2011) *Child Support Grant Evaluation 2010: Qualitative Research Report*, UNICEF South Africa, Pretoria.

<sup>50</sup> Hall, K., & Proudlock, P. (2011) *Orphaning and the foster child grant: A return to the 'care or cash' debate*, Children Count brief July, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

<sup>51</sup> Hall, K., & Proudlock, P. (2011) *Orphaning and the foster child grant: A return to the 'care or cash' debate*, Children Count brief July, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Roelen, K. and Shelmerdine, H. (2014) *Researching the linkages between social protection and children's care in Ghana*, Family for Every Child/IDS/Challenging Heights, London.

<sup>55</sup> Roelen, K. and Shelmerdine, H. (2014) *Researching the linkages between social protection and children's care in Ghana*, Family for Every Child/IDS/Challenging Heights, London.

<sup>56</sup> Hall, K., & Proudlock, P. (2011) *Orphaning and the foster child grant: A return to the 'care or cash' debate*, Children Count brief July, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

## OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

**Theory of Change:** The VUP, LEAP, and the CSG target poverty and wider living conditions. Poverty has been identified as a driver of family separation,<sup>57</sup> both directly and indirectly through its impact on household relations, domestic violence, and child labor, for example.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, reductions in household poverty may be considered an important indicator for prevention of separation and readiness for reunification. This qualitative research explores this hypothesis, exploring how social protection interplays with other factors to support or challenge children’s care and family unity.

The original purpose of the FCG was to provide some reparation for carers of children “in need of care” particularly those who face abuse and neglect, to ensure that family needs are not compromised.<sup>59</sup> Therefore its primary aim was to ensure stability of foster care placements, through mitigating poverty risk, which is important for preventing a complete loss of adult care, and for supporting future family reunification and reintegration. The FCG is now being used as a poverty alleviation grant for children in formalized kinship care, however, with the oversight of the child protection system maintained.

This research aims to provide evidence on the positive and negative impacts of social protection schemes on children’s care to support advocacy to governments and donors to adapt social protection schemes accordingly. A key recommendation from the research is that greater linkages should be established between social protection and child protection systems, to enable risk factors for separation to be addressed, and to enable opportunities for reintegration to be identified and capitalized on. Since the social protection and child protection systems in South Africa are well established, it is hoped that learning on how the two systems are linked with regard to children’s care can be gathered through the research there. This may provide useful learning for implementing this key recommendation forward in the Ghana and Rwanda contexts where both social and child protection systems are less well established.

**Evaluation and Evidence of Success:** The social protection schemes in focus have all been the subjects of evaluation and critique. Evidence of their success in relation to their stated aims is provided in this section, while evidence of their success in relation to prevention of separation and reintegration are provided in the lessons learned section below.

The 2012 Annual Review of the VUP<sup>60</sup> showed that it is exceeding interim milestones each year and is on track to meet targets by 2013. It is, therefore, likely to achieve its desired impacts on reducing extreme poverty. Given the importance of poverty as an underlying driver, it follows that positive impacts will also be achieved for prevention of separation and supporting reunification.

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<sup>57</sup> Delap, E (2013) *Towards a Family for Every Child: A conceptual framework*, Family for Every Child, London.

<sup>58</sup> Roelen, K. and Delap, E. (2011), *Researching the links between social protection and children’s care – a concept note*, IDS and Every Child, London.

<sup>59</sup> Meintjes et al. (2004), *Child Protection and Social Security in the face of poverty and the AIDS pandemic: Issues pertaining to the Children’s Bill [B70-2003]*, Children’s Institute, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

<sup>60</sup> FATE Consulting (2013) *Vision Umurenge Programme (VUP) gender equity assessment*, Kigali, Rwanda Local Development Support Fund.

PW as part of the VUP in Rwanda may compromise carers' abilities to provide high-quality care, since children may go unsupervised while parents work and may be required to perform caring responsibilities at the expense of their schooling and leisure time. This may reinforce inequalities in care between children and, in extreme cases, may induce family separation. This is a particular concern considering that most primary carers engaged in PW are female household members.

A recent gender audit of VUP<sup>61</sup> identified challenges for women posed by the physical, demanding work in PW. Women indicated that they are often disadvantaged and sometimes excluded from PW given their physical constraints and reproductive responsibilities. The majority of work available is physically demanding. These issues are compounded for pregnant and lactating women. Although the PW implementation manual refers to the need for special provisions for pregnant or lactating women, these had not been implemented in practice. Furthermore, the more productive and lucrative income-generating opportunities elsewhere are usually taken up by men, since women's child care responsibilities often preclude them from engaging.

LEAP has had positive but limited impact on poverty and school enrollment, largely due to low transfer amounts. However, the implementation of LEAP has also been inconsistent, with payment delays and arrears, lack of knowledge about the programme amongst communities and limited use of opportunities for community sensitisation, which is part of the programme design. Low transfer amounts and implementation challenges need to be addressed if it is to have a positive impact on prevention of separation and reintegration.

The 2010 evaluation of the CSG<sup>62</sup> showed that access to and uptake of the grant had improved since the last evaluation but people were still late to apply after children were born. This was attributed to problems accessing necessary documents, lack of information about procedures and misinformation about eligibility, bureaucracy, prohibitive costs such as transport, and familial disputes over whether to and who should apply. Recent improvements to procedures had made the process easier.<sup>63</sup> There is evidence that the CSG reduces poverty.<sup>64</sup> There is no evidence of the CSG helping to address child labor, however, including sexual exploitation, as a potential driver of family separation. This is attributed to the insufficient size of the transfer.<sup>65</sup>

With the extension of the FCG to also target formalized kinship carers, its focus has changed from one of child protection to one focused on poverty alleviation. The majority of children in kinship care and their caregivers do not require the additional supports of the child protection system that is associated with the FCG. This results in gaps<sup>66</sup> for the children in foster care, since social workers are overburdened with additional caseloads. However, it also limits their capacity to screen caseloads to identify those children

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Department of Social Development, South African Social Security Agency and UNICEF (2011) *Child Support Grant Evaluation 2010: Qualitative Research Report*, UNICEF South Africa, Pretoria.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Meintjes et al. (2004), *Child Protection and Social Security in the face of poverty and the AIDS pandemic: Issues pertaining to the Children's Bill [B70-2003]*, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

in kinship care who are most at risk, and to provide the psychosocial support children and families may need to prevent separation and support family reunification. Furthermore, this research raises concerns around the potential of the extension of the FCG to kinship carers to increase family separation due to the “commodification” of children.

## LEARNING

### Lessons Learned:

- This research shows that there is a potential positive impact of social protection on prevention of separation and reintegration.

The research so far has shown that, in many instances, social protection schemes have prevented the loss of parental care and supported family reunification through improving material well-being and reducing stress in the household. The positive effects of LEAP on material and non-material aspects of care and wellbeing can set in motion a positive virtuous cycle. By supporting families to stay together, LEAP could reduce the number of children who enter into child labor and make families more resistant to trafficking that usually leads to family separation.<sup>67</sup> In Rwanda, findings suggest that children have returned home following improved living conditions as a result of their families’ participation in the VUP.<sup>68</sup> The cash transfers improve carers’ abilities to provide for children’s basic needs, instilling confidence and making them feel better able to fulfil their care responsibilities.<sup>69</sup> This could be particularly important if children were reintegrating into the care of their previous primary caregiver after a period of separation. Although the research did not find clear evidence on whether or not the reunification led to lasting reintegration of children with families, it is clear that full reintegration would be more likely achieved and sustained if the families feel better able to provide for their children and fulfil their care responsibilities, as described above.

- Implementation challenges reduce the impact of social protection on poverty reduction, thereby reducing the positive side effects for children’s care.

In Ghana, the implementation of LEAP suffers from payment delays and arrears, and lack of knowledge about the program.<sup>70</sup> There is also limited use of opportunities for program sensitization, and a lack of enforcement of the co-responsibilities.<sup>71</sup> This reduces LEAP’s potential positive impact on prevention of separation and support for reintegration.<sup>72</sup> In South Africa, the rapid expansion of the FCG to target children in kinship care has overburdened the system. Payment delays and arrears, and delays in processing application procedures in the first place, cause children and carers to go without support for extended periods, thereby failing to address household poverty as a root cause of family separation. Such delays may also impact on quality of care and lead to family separation, or failing to create a positive environment

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<sup>67</sup>Roelen, K. and Shelmerdine, H. (2014) Researching the linkages between social protection and children’s care in Ghana, Family for Every Child/IDS/Challenging Heights, London.

<sup>68</sup> Roelen, K. and Shelmerdine, H. (2014) Researching the linkages between social protection and children’s care in Rwanda, Family for Every Child/IDS/Uyisenga Ni Imanzi, London.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Roelen, K. and Shelmerdine, H. (2014) *Researching the linkages between social protection and children’s care in Ghana*, Family for Every Child/IDS/Challenging Heights, London.

for reintegration. Furthermore, they reduce social workers' capacity to carry out other child protection duties, which if functioning optimally could support prevention of separation and reintegration.

- Effective links between social protection schemes and social work or child protection services are needed to support prevention of family separation and support family reunification and reintegration.

Full reintegration would be more likely and prevention of separation would be more successful if children and families, particularly those at high risk, were monitored and supported through child protection services linked with the social protection scheme through which the grant is received. For example, the awareness raising programs that often accompany social protection schemes could be used to provide parenting education. Or there could be greater efforts to monitor the wellbeing of vulnerable children in households that receive grants, including their readiness to reintegrate if relevant, or an assessment of a child's vulnerability to separation at first point of contact. Furthermore, the research provides some evidence of parental misuse of the grants on alcohol that lead to household conflict and family separation. Monitoring by child protection personnel would help such issues to be prevented and addressed.

Formal or informal structures and services, or models that combine the two, could be successful in this regard. In Rwanda, options for linking the social protection scheme and child protection services include the local deployment of social workers or home-based carers, serving as focal points that can refer vulnerable children and household members to appropriate services, including the social protection scheme.<sup>73</sup> In Ghana there is a need for stronger linkages to social services and specialized social workers, as well as to existing less formal structures for protecting children, such as community-based child protection committees.<sup>74</sup> Lessons regarding the use of the formal system for such monitoring are being gathered through the research in South Africa, considering the backdrop of the social work system being overwhelmed by the administrative burden and huge caseloads of children in need of the FCG since the grant was extended to children in kinship care. This research will take into account differences between rural and more urban contexts.

- Effective links between social protection schemes and social work or child protection services may prevent unnecessary separation due to the commodification of children.

The research raised some concerns regarding the commodification of children, if financial incentive is the sole reason for households taking on the care of other children. This could lead to the children receiving low quality care, being exploited for labor, and being separated. Although the pervasiveness of perverse incentives cannot be established on the basis of this research, the potential of perverse incentives created by cash transfers is important to keep in mind in the context of any child care reform in the countries in focus. In moving from residential care to family-based care, foster care grants or scholarships may be options under consideration for incentivizing families to care for children who are not their own. Similarly, existing literature from South Africa highlights the social as well as intra-household tensions that have arisen through the

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<sup>73</sup> Roelen, K and Shelmerdine, H (2014) Researching the linkages between social protection and children's care in Rwanda, Family for Every Child, London, UK, p. 4.

<sup>74</sup> Roelen, K and Karki Chettri, H (2014) Researching the linkages between social protection and children's care in Ghana, Family for Every Child, London, UK, p. 29.

provision of the FCG to caregivers of orphans.<sup>75</sup> These findings indicate that such policy initiatives should be undertaken with great care and should go hand-in-hand with strong coaching and monitoring.

- Effective links between social protection schemes and social work or child protection services are needed to ensure that opportunities for reintegration can be pursued.

It has been noted that the CSG is granted to the child's primary caregiver rather than the child's biological parent to reflect the "varied and fluid patterns of care giving observed in South Africa."<sup>76</sup> However, the provision of the higher value FCG only to caregivers other than the biological parents or previous primary caregivers may be a disincentive for family reunification. Existing literature has raised the concern that the FCG is encouraging the use of foster care as more of a permanent measure<sup>77</sup> instead of adoption, since adoption is not accompanied by grants.<sup>78</sup> The same concern would apply to reintegration efforts since reintegration is not accompanied by either a one-off or long-term grant, other than CSG if eligible.

**Innovations:** As the social protection schemes in focus do not target prevention of family separation or reintegration, qualitative research was carried out in each context to gather data on the potential positive and negative impacts of the schemes on children's care. Over 240 adults and 180 children participated. By approaching children's care through a social protection lens, and by accompanying the research with advocacy, we aim to encourage fresh interest and investment in care and protection from new actors. It is hoped that by working across three countries, and advocating at national, regional, and global levels, we will create a multiplier effect that encourages governments, donors, and UN agencies to use social protection schemes to more effectively improve care.

The results and recommendations of this research are already informing the work of governments, local authorities, and other key stakeholders in improving policy and practice on social protection, and support for prevention of separation and reintegration. It has enabled Family for Every Child's members to establish strong collaborative relationships with government, local authorities, and other relevant agencies. It is hoped that this will contribute to existing knowledge, adding depth of understanding around the links between social protection and children's care. In South Africa, we are currently mapping the political and policy environment with regard to the FCG and the CSG, to ensure recommendations made are relevant and implementable. A synthesis report will consider the implications of the findings of the research in South Africa on the linkages that exist between the social protection and child protection systems for other countries, including Rwanda and Ghana.

**Adaptation, Replication, and Scaling:** This research indicates that child protection and social protection

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<sup>75</sup> Hearle, C. & Ruwanpura, K. N. (2009) Contentious care: foster care grants and the caregiver orphan relationship in KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa, *Oxford Development Studies*, 37, (4), 423-437.

<sup>76</sup> Case, A. et al. (2005) The reach and impact of Child Support Grants: evidence from KwaZulu-Natal, *Development Southern Africa* Vol. 22, No. 4, October 2005.

<sup>77</sup> While long term foster care can be a positive option for children who cannot be reunited with families, it can also be problematic as children may suffer from the lack of permanency associated with such arrangements and from their ambiguous status in the household (Ghazal Keshavarzian (2015) **The place of foster care in the continuum of care choices: A review of the evidence for policymakers**, Family for Every Child, London).

<sup>78</sup> Budlender, D., Proudlock, P. & Jamieson, L. (2008) Formulating and implementing socio-economic policies for children in the context of HIV/AIDS: A South African case study. *IDS Bulletin*. Vol 39 No. 5.

schemes need strong and effective linkages to: monitor the wellbeing of separated children in households that receive grants; capitalize on potential opportunities for family reunification and reintegration offered by the grants; and prevent separation caused by any perverse incentives of the grant. Emerging findings from the research in South Africa suggest that there is no one model that can be used in all contexts to link child protection and social protection systems to achieve the above outcomes. Models for linking these and other relevant systems need to be designed with an understanding and appreciation of the context for child protection and care, the factors driving poverty, the way the social protection scheme functions, and available resources and capacities on the part of formal social service providers and within the communities themselves.

What is clear is that the building of linkages between child protection and social protection systems should not place an excessive administrative burden on either system so that they cannot perform the functions where they were designed for. This might involve establishing more nuanced criteria to support social workers to differentiate between and respond differently to different groups of vulnerable children within large caseloads as well as ensuring that they do not become de facto administrators of social protection programs. This would enable those with the most significant needs, or with a greater potential for family reunification and reintegration, to be responded to earlier and with a tailored portfolio of services. It might also involve identifying points within the system that assessments of children and families against such criteria can be made.

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# ANNEX 8: IMPROVING CHILD PROTECTION THROUGH TARGETED HOUSEHOLD ECONOMIC STRENGTHENING AMONG HIGHLY VULNERABLE, HIV AND AIDS-AFFECTED FAMILIES

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**Name of Organization:** Pact, Inc.

**Name of Program:** Yekokeb Berhan Program for Highly Vulnerable Children and Pamoja Tuwalee Coordinated OVC Care Program

**Geographic Location:** Nationwide in Ethiopia and in 3 Zones/10 Regions of Tanzania

**Implementing Partners:** In Ethiopia, Pact works with Child Fund and FHI 360 as well as with 34 local implementing partners; in Tanzania, Pact partners with 47 local organizations.

**Program/Project Period:** Both Yekokeb Berhan and Pamoja Tuwalee program have a period of performance of 5 years—2011–2016 and 2010–2015, respectively.

**Funding Amount:** \$92,000,000 (Yekokeb Berhan/Ethiopia) and \$25,000,000 (Pamoja Tuwalee/Tanzania)

**Themes:** HIV- and AIDS-affected children and families, savings groups plus positive parenting and child protection, microenterprise development

## SUMMARY

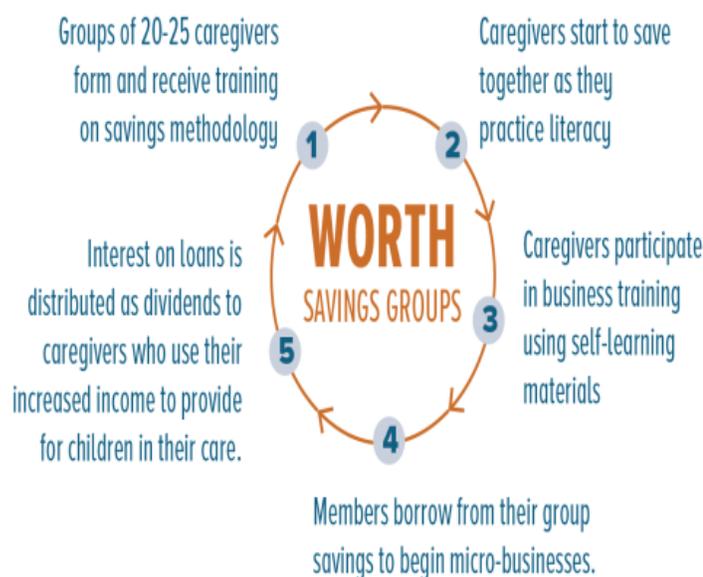
Pact implements the PEPFAR-funded *Yekokeb Berhan* program in Ethiopia and *Pamoja Tuwalee* program in Tanzania, two large-scale, comprehensive family and community-based programs that aim to improve the wellbeing and protection of highly vulnerable, HIV- and AIDS-affected children. Cumulatively, these programs have served a total of 687,050 children and 385,316 households (577,856 children and 313,939 households in Ethiopia and 109,194 children and 71,377 households in Tanzania), working in partnership with 4,722 community committees and 81 local partners, as well as the Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth Affairs (MoWCYA) in Ethiopia and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) in Tanzania. *Yekokeb Berhan* and *Pamoja Tuwalee* utilize a family-centered and systems-development approach that emphasizes self-help and strengthens local structures and systems to improve the delivery of high-quality, essential, and customized services that result in positive child health, nutrition, protection, psychosocial, and developmental outcomes. Both programs aim to reduce social and economic vulnerability among highly vulnerable, HIV- and AIDS-affected families by implementing targeted household economic strengthening interventions with a focus on community-led savings groups coupled with strengthening parenting and child protection knowledge and skills among target caregivers and communities. This potent mix has led to improved prevention of family separation as well as reunification and reintegration of children into their families and communities.

## DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

**Context:** Poverty and HIV and AIDS are major underlying causes of vulnerability in Ethiopia and Tanzania. At least 29 percent of the population in Ethiopia lives below the poverty line while 44 percent of the population in Tanzania lives on less than US\$1.25/day. Ethiopia's current estimated HIV prevalence rate is 1.2 percent<sup>79</sup> and Tanzania's is 5.1 percent<sup>80</sup> but the programs target communities with highest HIV prevalence (for example, 9 percent in Tanzania). There were an estimated 4.2 million orphans in Ethiopia in 2013<sup>81</sup>; at least 792,840 of these children were orphaned due to HIV and AIDS. In Tanzania, 3.1 million children have been orphaned (approximately 1.2 million due to HIV/AIDS) and at least 2 million children have been identified as most vulnerable children (MVC) (Tanzania Ministry of Health and Social Welfare [MHSW], 2008). The significant impacts of HIV and acute poverty lead to family disintegration and child separation, forcing children to flee from their families and communities on the quest to meet their basic needs elsewhere and placing children at high risk for various forms of exploitation.

### Economic Strengthening

**Intervention(s):** In both programs, Pact applies a Savings-Plus model that balances savings-led asset management with market-driven, growth-oriented strategies that enable families to transition from vulnerability to self-sufficiency. The programs ensure the application of risk reduction strategies to minimize families' exposure to risk, manage potential loss, and protect existing assets. To improve and sustain positive child and family wellbeing, the two programs utilize an economic strengthening plus approach, complementing robust household economic strengthening interventions with, among others, HIV prevention, care, and treatment; nutrition; early childhood care and development; educational access and retention; parenting skills; and abuse prevention and response.



Both programs align with national strategies and implementation plans: the Pamoja Tuwalee and Yekokeb Berhan programs align with Tanzania's national Costed Action Plan for MVC and Ethiopia's national Standards Service Guidelines, which promote integrated and comprehensive programming.

<sup>79</sup> Ethiopian Health and Nutrition Research Institute, Federal Ministry of Health: HIV Related Estimates and Projections for Ethiopia, August, 2012.

<sup>80</sup> Tanzania HIV/AIDS and Malaria Indicator Survey 2011–2012.

<sup>81</sup> Ethiopian Health and Nutrition Research Institute, Federal Ministry of Health: HIV Related Estimates and Projections for Ethiopia, August, 2012.

Pamoja Tuwalee and Yekokeb Berhan target highly/most vulnerable children and their caregivers living with, affected by, or vulnerable to HIV and AIDS. Children who are made vulnerable because of other factors, such as disability, living with elderly caregivers, or living in households headed by children are also considered for enrollment. Secondary beneficiaries of the program include members of households with enrolled children, community volunteers who are trained to support vulnerable households, community committees in charge of coordination and mobilization of resources to support vulnerable families, and services providers who are mobilized and trained by the program to deliver quality services to vulnerable children and households. Local communities also benefit from the program through outreach activities that are organized to promote community awareness and motivate them to take appropriate actions to support vulnerable children.

### ***Pamoja Tuwalee/Tanzania***

The Pamoja Tuwalee/Tanzania program employs the WORTH Economic Empowerment methodology to improve the livelihoods of primary caregivers, mostly women, of MVC to meet children’s essential needs and improve the wellbeing of caregivers’ young HIV-affected children. Caregivers of MVC are mobilized in savings groups of 20–25 members and meet on weekly basis. WORTH members acquire basic literacy business and financial skills using *Pact’s Women in Business Series books*. Select community volunteers called Empowerment Workers (EWs) are trained in the WORTH methodology and curriculum using the WORTH Operations Manual and then facilitate weekly group meetings to teach the savings methodology, financial management business skills and marketing. The cadre of more than 505 EWs provide ongoing support to strengthen group functionality and performance. While learning, caregivers start to save into a group fund and generate revenue by making microloans to group members. Group members use the microloan to create or expand small businesses that generate income to meet their children’s needs. After each monthly loan cycle, group members distribute the loan dividends to their savings funds. Caregivers learn how to invest their savings and access microloans for activities that grow and diversify their income.

Pact conducted a baseline survey on a sample of WORTH groups that are monitored on four levels of results: inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impact levels. Performance indicators have been developed for each result level, including household income, savings, access to loans, asset acquisitions, and services provided to children through income generated. The program teams conduct routine monitoring site visits to implementing partners (IPs) and WORTH groups to audit data sources. Pact provides quarterly feedback to partners to resolve identified challenges and share lessons for wider quality improvement. To assess the efficacy of WORTH, teams conduct focus group discussions with members of the groups to determine levels of impact as result of WORTH intervention. Pact conducts end of program evaluations to determine outcomes and impacts on child wellbeing. Areas measured include education, health, nutrition and food security, shelter, protection, and psychosocial wellbeing.

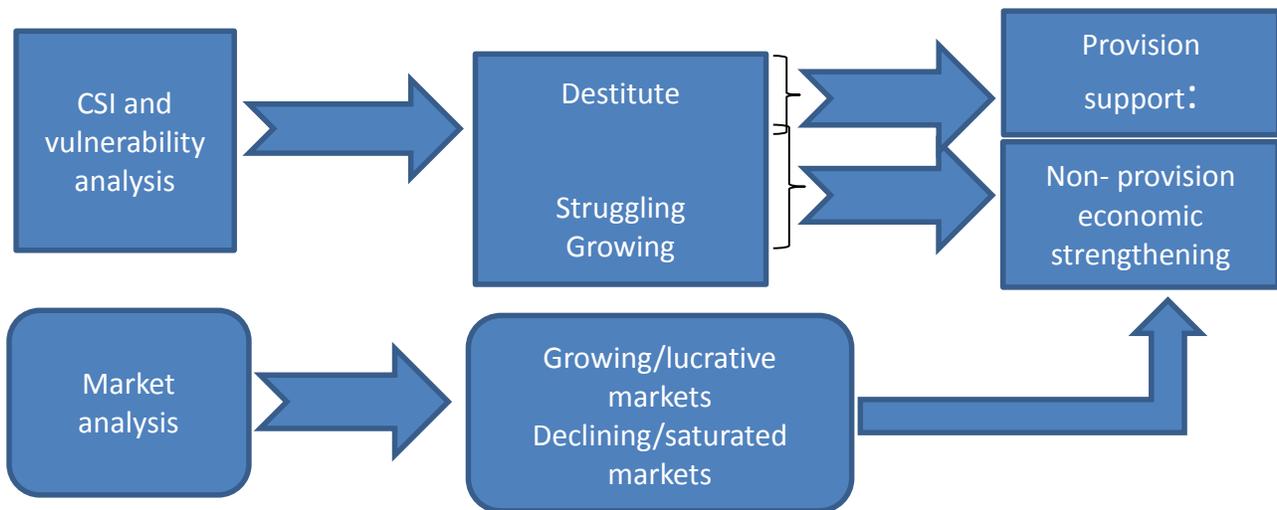
### ***Yekokeb Berhan/Ethiopia***

The Yekokeb Berhan/Ethiopia program’s economic strengthening interventions are informed by a robust analysis of local markets and household vulnerability contexts; activities are designed to address different levels of vulnerability through a livelihood “pathway approach.” Vulnerability assessments are conducted using the Child Support Index (CSI) tool, which includes a vulnerability analysis to categorize households

and identify appropriate interventions. The program cultivates strong linkages with relevant government agencies, especially the Micro and Small Enterprise Agency, to effectively make use of government resources in training, coordination, and access to loans for microenterprise activities. In all these efforts, Yekokeb Berhan seeks to strengthen capacity of families to take care of their children, hence reducing vulnerability and preventing risk of separation.

Yekokeb Berhan’s economic strengthening interventions are customized to one of three household categories—*Households in Destitution*, *Struggling to Survive*, or *Ready to Grow*. Depending on the category, the household is targeted with a package of evidence-based interventions to address its unique level of vulnerability. Primarily, interventions for the three household vulnerability categories include highly subsidized provision activities such as direct assistance in the form of material and medical support; protective activities such as savings mobilization and financial literacy; and productive activities focused at the household level in gardening and small business/income generation; and more market-oriented promotion activities that aim to grow enterprises and incomes through enhanced entrepreneurial specialization, business skills, and market engagement.

***Yekokeb Berhan’s economic strengthening approach***



The program’s economic strengthening interventions fall in three broad categories: community-based microfinance using Self-Help Savings Groups; vocational training, job-readiness, and linkages to employment opportunities; and household gardening with dual objectives—domestic consumption and income generation. In most cases, an integrated approach is applied to obtain the best outcomes and impact in households. Yekokeb Berhan uses community self-help savings groups (CSSG) and savings and credit cooperatives (SAC) to motivate households to develop the culture of saving, investment, and spending. A typical CSSG is made up of 10–25 self-selected members, usually from the same neighborhood. Membership is open to both women and men whose households are classified as Strugglers, according to Yekokeb Berhan’s vulnerability analysis. Once a CSSG is formed, its members receive a package of training, including selection, planning, and management of microenterprises (SPM), basic business skills, saving/credit/investment, micro-finance, and vocational training. Saving groups meet at regular intervals (some weekly, others bi-weekly). Each group elects a management committee at inception to provide

leadership and develop a written constitution that provides a framework for governance, dispute resolution and disciplinary action, and conditions for saving, borrowing, and access to group benefits. Each group member saves a specified amount—ranging from US\$.50 to US\$2 per week—as agreed to by the group, and they can take out loans to start or expand microenterprises.

Specific interventions implemented by the program include the following:

- Conduct market analysis for business viability and to inform design of training activities for MVC households.
- Provide a package of essential training (selection, planning, and management of microenterprises, basic business skills, saving/credit/investment, micro-finance, vocational training) for caregivers and older MVC.
- Train caregivers and older MVC on how to effectively participate in and utilize savings, credit, and investments to increase their income and asset base.
- Link caregivers older MVC involved in the economic strengthening activities to the existing capacity building, market and job opportunities.
- Train older MVC, youth, and some caregivers in vocational skills to increase their income and asset base.
- Build capacity of IPs to support households with microenterprise activities to grow, while ensuring gender equitable participation in economic strengthening activities, especially for women, youth headed households, elderly caregivers, people living with HIV, and people with disabilities.

**Other Intervention Activities:** *Savings-Plus* models coordinate delivery of additional services through the savings groups. The Pamoja Tuwalee program implements the following via the WORTH platform: 1) literacy classes to improve the reading, writing, and simple arithmetic skills, which enables caregivers to access information and keep good business records; 2) good parenting skills to strengthen caregivers' knowledge and skills in children's care and development, child protection, positive discipline, and communication and psychosocial support for children; 3) early childhood development (ECD) to build the knowledge and skills of caregivers so that they are able to identify the developmental needs of their children and provide consistent, responsive care (including improved access to ECD services via referral strengthening); 4) nutrition assessment counseling and support (NACS) via trained Empowerment Workers who conduct nutritional assessment using MUAC (Mid-upper arm circumference) measurement, refer children with severe malnutrition for therapeutic treatment, provide household nutrition counseling, and conduct ongoing monitoring.

Yekokeb Berhan improves access to locally available services (for example, health clinics, schools and other NGOs), conducts training and skills transfer in better parenting, ensures academic tutoring and psychosocial support, and advocates with stakeholders to ensure discounting of school fees and other expenses, such as for birth registration, health care, and education. Training the program's 17,000 volunteers is part of Yekokeb Berhan's commitment to strengthening the country's social welfare workforce. Local IP staff train all volunteers on key skill sets that they then strengthen among target caregivers via weekly home visits. These include life skills, sanitation and household management, gender equity, better parenting, perma-gardening, child protection, accessing local care, ECD, caring for children with disabilities, and HIV care and prevention.

**Follow-up and Monitoring Activities:** Both the Pamoja Tuwalee and Yekokeb Berhan programs conduct comprehensive case management to routinely assess child and family wellbeing, plan age-appropriate need-based services and support via individualized care plans, monitor evolving needs, and effectively transition children and families whose health, wellbeing, and economic status have improved and stabilized. For Pamoja Tuwalee, Most Vulnerable Children Committee (MVCC) members conduct weekly household visits to follow up identified cases and monitor progress. Civil society partners receive progress reports every month from the MVCC on the households visited. Partner staff and Pact regional teams make routine field visits to WORTH groups, households, children clubs, schools, and health facilities to monitor the progress of children with special cases.

Yekokeb Berhan employs routine monitoring and reporting procedures to track progress toward improved household economic status and child wellbeing. Routine monthly assessments are conducted by community animators and staff among sampled caregivers/households during monitoring visits. The assessments are aimed at measuring the levels of change that have occurred as a result of the economic strengthening activities. Community volunteers use Child and Family Care Plans to conduct weekly home visits during which they track progress, identify any further needs, adjust care plans, and link children and caregivers to services as needed. The program also conducts the CSI annually to track progress in wellbeing of children and caregivers. Based on the findings of the CSI, care plans are adjusted and services are provided either directly by the program or through referrals to service providers in the program's referral network. These efforts help to ensure that any potential risks are either prevented or mitigated promptly. The program's baseline and mid-term evaluations included indicators on economic strengthening and provided data and information for assessing impact and informing future improvements.

In addition to surveys, Yekokeb Berhan uses the Child Support Index Tool to measure changes in household economic vulnerability. Yekokeb Berhan analyzes 8 of the 20 indicators tracked by the Tool to develop a Vulnerability Index. The analysis is conducted annually to classify households as Destitute, Struggler, or Growing, based on their level of vulnerability. For the past three years, the program has conducted these analyses annually for all targeted households.

**Gaps and Challenges:** Dependency syndrome among some beneficiary communities is a significant challenge that the Pamoja Tuwalee program staff continue to fight through education of caregivers on the importance of self-help via WORTH savings groups. The program has also experienced challenges in addressing the economic needs of the special caregiver groups with limited participation in savings and income generating activities (that is, elderly, sick and disabled, and child-headed households). The program team is collaborating with Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF), ensuring that members of these groups are included in the cash transfer program. Select WORTH members also have limited access to reliable, profitable markets and lack skills on how to add value to their products to make them more marketable.

Regional teams are reaching out to Community Development Officers from the district to facilitate linkages with available market opportunities. Lastly, there is limited organization of groups into cooperatives to enable them to access larger markets and continue to support their children in a

sustainable manner. Program teams are working in collaboration with district teams to support transition into cooperatives.

Yekokeb Berhan experienced three key challenges, particularly between the first and second years of implementation. First, saving amounts were too small to support meaningful investments. Since savings were small, most group members took longer than anticipated to start investing in microenterprises. The program was able to encourage groups to increase savings, however, and new groups having learned from the experiences of the earlier groups, have been highly successful in saving significantly higher amounts. Secondly, most groups were reluctant to take loans during the first and second years of the program, which means they had savings but were not investing these in microenterprises. Similar to the first challenge, the program was able to work with groups to increase loan uptake and investments. The sharing of experiences of other groups supported by the program whose members took loans and started successful businesses has been a motivating factor for individual CSSG members. Lastly, data on the performance of groups and members was extremely weak at the beginning, making it difficult to analyze the impact of interventions on household social and economic wellbeing. The program's decision to engage Community Animators and establish a data management system has significantly improved data collection, quality and analysis.

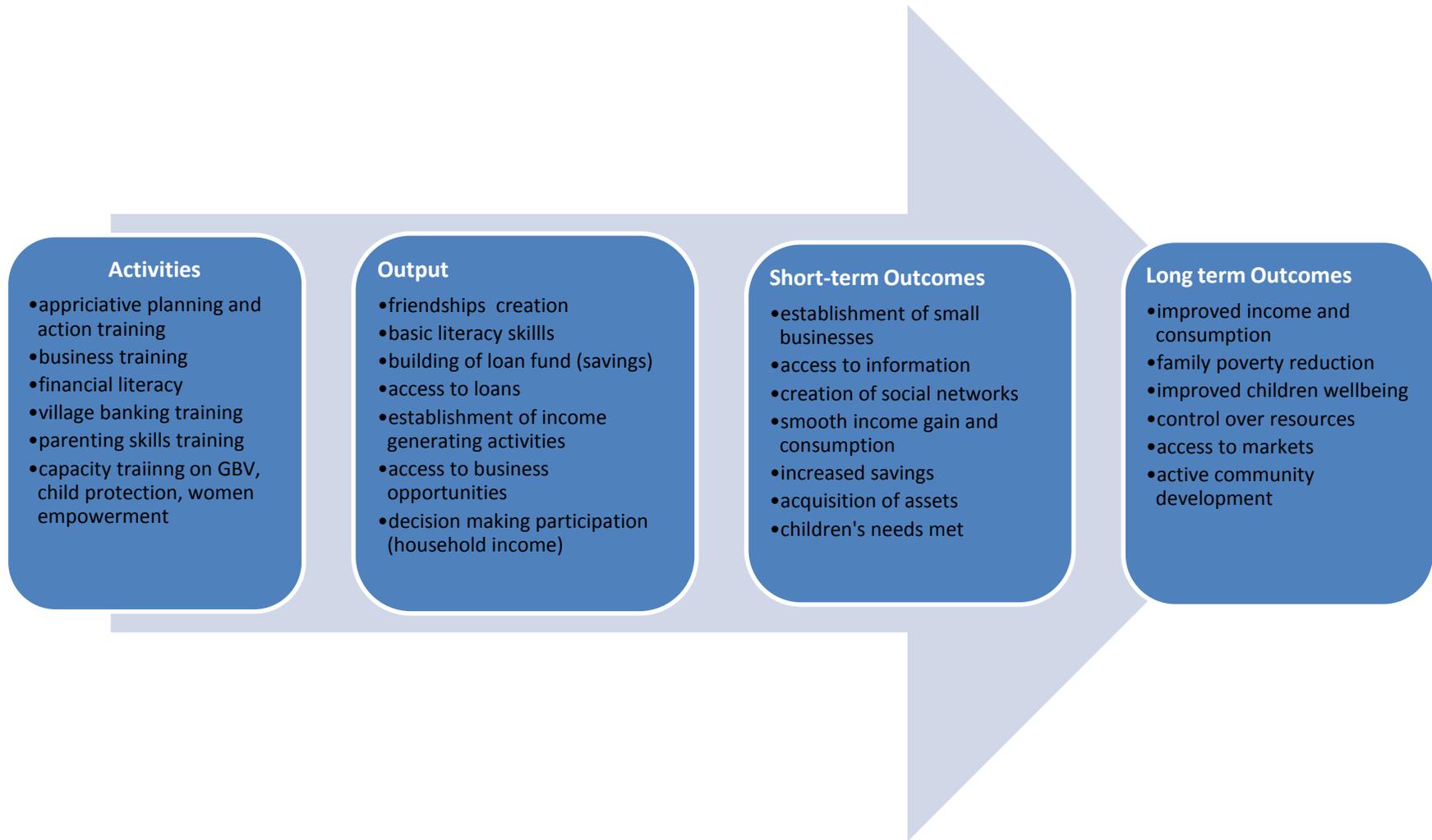
## OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

**Theory of Change:** Pact’s programs in Ethiopia and Tanzania apply Ecological Systems Theory<sup>82</sup> which purports that large-scale social change requires coordination and action across sectors, levels, and actors and emphasizes practical, high-impact, evidence-based interventions to achieve child and family-level outcomes. The livelihood pathway approach underlies key interventions implemented by the programs. This approach employs a systematic vulnerability analysis and classification, implementation of targeted, appropriate HES interventions according to household vulnerability levels, and sequencing of activities to ensure that families are not exposed to risk they cannot absorb, can weather shocks effectively, and build resilience and transition.

For Pamoja Tuwalee, the WORTH Theory of Change posits that through savings coupled with literacy, business, and banking training, members have access to loans to establish or expand self-owned business, thus increasing income. Through increased income, as well as savings and access to loans, members are able to increase household expenditures on basic needs such as housing, food, health care, and education, thereby increasing child investments. WORTH membership also leads to member empowerment and increased household decision making among women. These outcomes in economic security, self-owned businesses, and empowerment contribute to improved wellbeing among caregivers and their children, including prevention of family separation as children’s needs are met at household level (see below).

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<sup>82</sup> Bronfenbrenner, U: *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (ISBN 0-674-22457-4).



### Activities

- appreciative planning and action training
- business training
- financial literacy
- village banking training
- parenting skills training
- capacity training on GBV, child protection, women empowerment

### Output

- friendships creation
- basic literacy skills
- building of loan fund (savings)
- access to loans
- establishment of income generating activities
- access to business opportunities
- decision making participation (household income)

### Short-term Outcomes

- establishment of small businesses
- access to information
- creation of social networks
- smooth income gain and consumption
- increased savings
- acquisition of assets
- children's needs met

### Long term Outcomes

- improved income and consumption
- family poverty reduction
- improved children wellbeing
- control over resources
- access to markets
- active community development

Yekokeb Berhan's interventions increase the ability of families to earn a liveable income and include efforts to increase access to financial opportunities and resources, including microenterprise development, savings and investment groups, and youth vocational training. Generally, ES activities involve provision, protection, and promotion of asset accumulation in vulnerable households. Economic strengthening is pivotal for the sustainability of investments in care and support for MVC and their families. Yekokeb Berhan's economic strengthening activities promote two critical desired outcomes based on the national Standard Service Delivery Guidelines for OVC Programs<sup>83</sup>: Households caring for MVC have increased and diversified sources of income to care for the family; and improved household livelihood and asset base to meet basic needs of children and support self-reliance. Although focused on financial security, these interventions are closely link to physical, social, and human capital growth, build resilience to shocks, and reduce risks of family separation and child abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

**Evaluation and Evidence of Success:** Yekokeb Berhan uses a robust MERL system and PMP that includes a set of indicators for tracking performance and outcomes in each area of intervention, including economic strengthening. Outcome indicators for economic strengthening include: percent change in household vulnerability status; percent increase in number of households with microenterprise; percent increase in household income; percent increase in household expenses; percent increase in households accumulating assets; and percent increase in households using income from microenterprises to support basic family/children's needs (education, health). Vulnerability changes are measured using the CSI; 8 of the 20 indicators are aggregated to establish an index—the vulnerability index. The other outcome indicators are measured through surveys, including evaluations and periodic impact assessments.

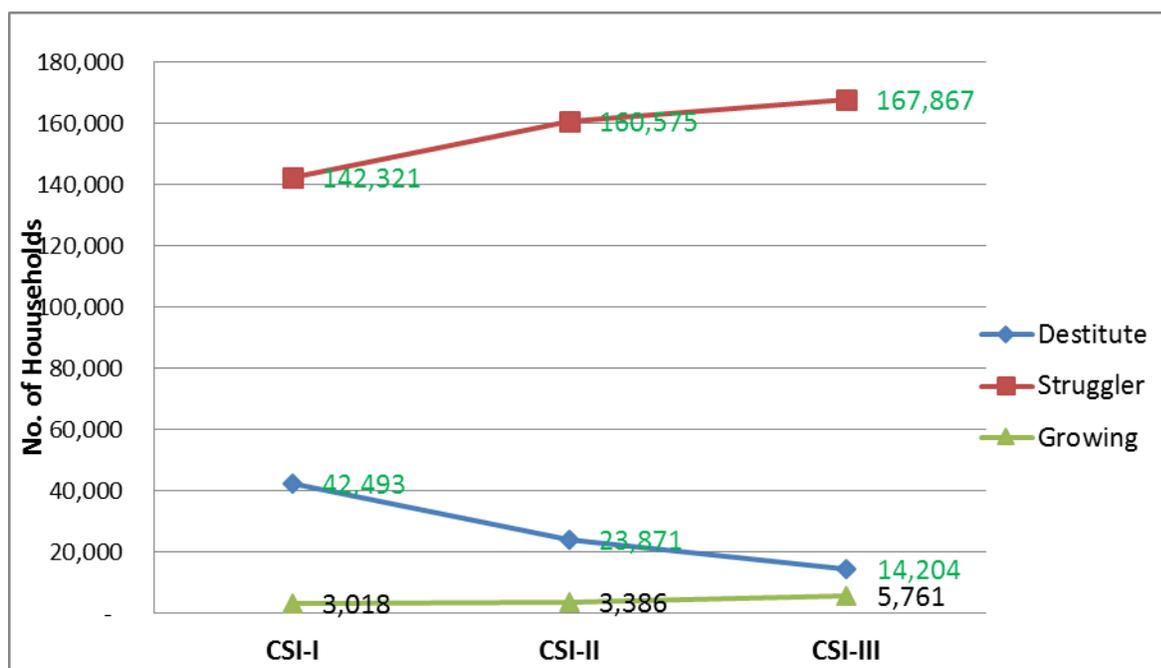
Although the program's target to support at least 30 percent of eligible households annually through economic strengthening interventions has not been achieved (due to budget reductions), significant progress has been made in reaching and supporting households in need of economic support. By end of 2014, Yekokeb Berhan supported the formation of 2,625 CSSGs with a membership of 54,214. Together these groups and individuals have saved over US\$1.5 million and provided more than \$1.9 million in loans to group members. To motivate savings and accelerate investments in microenterprises, the program rewards groups and members who reach a saving threshold of US\$20 within three months by matching individual members' savings on a 1:1 ratio. Participation in groups remains extremely high with less than 1 percent dropout in the past year. At least 32,574 households have been supported to start and/or expand microenterprises in the past two years.

The program has conducted CSI assessments each year for the past three years. The last assessment conducted in 2014 revealed significant improvements in household vulnerability. Based on the relative Vulnerability Index, the proportion of Destitute households decreased by 40 percent while the proportion of Struggler and Growing households increased by 5 percent and 70 percent, respectively. In 2013, the program reported a 55 percent reduction in the proportion of Destitute and nearly 137 percent increase in Growing households. These findings represent strong positive trends in child and household wellbeing as illustrated in the figure below.

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<sup>83</sup> Government of Ethiopia/Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs: Standard Service Delivery Guidelines for OVC Programs, 2010, Addis Ababa.

## Reduced household vulnerability



In 2014, Yekokeb Berhan program conducted an external mid-term external evaluation<sup>84</sup>. Among sampled households, 819 (38.3 percent) were engaged in ES activities supported by the program. At least 60 percent of households that participate in economic strengthening activities had received training in CSSG and microenterprise selection, planning, and management from the program. The evaluation reported improvements in the financial conditions of households that benefited from ES support.

- Seventy-six percent of members indicated that the training and technical support from the program enabled them to develop positive saving habits, thus enabling them to save and use their savings to invest in microenterprise activities and to meet basic household needs.
- Twenty-three percent of members cited increased savings; initially savings were low, but following training and support from the program, average weekly saving per group has nearly doubled, reaching US\$11 compared to only US\$6 two years ago.
- Twenty-two percent of members cited increased social bonds among group members—all CSSGs have social funds, which are used to support emergency household needs.
- Twelve percent of CSSG members cited improved vision for the future, ability to set goals and act on them, reflecting improved decision-making ability.
- Fifty percent of CSSG members engaged in microenterprise activities indicated increased understanding of local market opportunities, enabling smart business investments and growth.

In addition, at least 49 percent of households engaged in CSSGs and microenterprise activities reported that they had either expanded or diversified their businesses over the past year; 58 percent of those involved in microenterprises indicated that they were making a profit, saving more, and investing in assets such as housing and livestock. Anecdotal data gathered from CSSGs indicate that most members are using their income to meet family needs, particularly food, school materials, and health (an ES impact assessment

<sup>84</sup> Alliance for Better Health: Mid-term Evaluation of Yekokeb Berhan Program; July 2014, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

will be conducted in the next month to help determine related child investments and subsequent improvements in children’s health, nutrition, education, and protection outcomes).

Pamoja Tuwalee conducted a Rapid Impact Assessment of WORTH Intervention Results (2010–2011) to determine if and how the WORTH savings component contributed to reduced vulnerability of OVC/MVC, households through increased monthly average household income, increased attainment of basic needs (shelter, nutrition, education, emotional wellbeing, and health access), and other reported benefits or shortcomings of WORTH by the care providers. Caregivers were randomly sampled and the program used questionnaires, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and observation. The findings revealed significant household economic benefits and increased access to education through improved ability to afford school fees and pay for school uniforms (40 percent), meet household basic needs, and improve nutrition (15 percent). Results showed substantial education and skills-building on ECD and child protection. Empirical evidence reveals increased knowledge of child rights, increased rates of girls’ school enrollment and attendance; and reduced rates of child abuse and neglect. Moreover, there is a reduced rate of forced marriage and corporal punishment. As child immunization completion rates have increased, childhood illnesses have reduced (see table below).

### WORTH Rapid Assessment 2010–2011 Results <sup>85</sup>

Key Results from an Evaluation of WORTH/Tanzania as Reported by OVC Caregivers (n:744)		
	WORTH Households	Non- WORTH Households
WORTH Savings	US\$18–30	US\$3–6
Shelter and Care	42% reported improved shelter and care	18% reported improved shelter and care
	23% increase in permanent housing	6% increase in permanent housing
Food and Nutrition	78% have three meals a day	57% have three meals a day
Health	77% reported improved child health	65% reported improved child health
Emotional Health	36% reported improved child emotional wellbeing	19% reported improved child emotional wellbeing

## LEARNING

**Innovations:** Yekokeb Berhan economic strengthening approach and interventions are unique in many ways, including:

- The use of CSI to measure household vulnerability: CSI has traditionally been used only to track the wellbeing of orphans and vulnerable children. Yekokeb Berhan adapted the original CSI to incorporate additional functions to support care planning and measurement of household vulnerability.
- Incentivizing savings: At the start of Yekokeb Berhan’s saving groups, members saved an

<sup>85</sup> A WORTH impact evaluation was conducted in late 2014 and the report will be presented to Pact by the end of February 2015. The evaluation sought to: 1) Determine WORTH outcomes on women’s empowerment (literacy, decision making, bargaining power, knowledge in terms of HIV/AIDS, family planning, child care, entrepreneurship skills, leadership, self-confidence); 2) determine WORTH economic outcomes (increased household income, increased savings, access to loans, increased household assets); and 3) determine the extent to which WORTH outcomes are improving child wellbeing in terms of access to basic services (education, health, nutrition and food security, shelter), protection, and psychosocial wellbeing.

average of US\$5 per week or less than US\$.50 per member. To speed up savings and advance income generation, the program developed a strategy to incentivize group savings through matching contributions. The program matched members' savings on a dollar-for-dollar rate if they were able to save at least US\$20 within three months. The strategy worked: members increased their weekly saving in order to reach the US\$20 threshold and receive matching funds to enable them start their businesses.

- Linkages to government microenterprise development programs: The linkages made with Ethiopian Small and Micro Enterprise (SME) Development Offices across the country are one of the program's strongest attributes. This effort links directly to the government's Poverty Reduction and Growth and Transformation Plans. After a group reaches graduation, it is linked to the local government SME office to receive additional and ongoing support, including technical and financial resources. Through these offices, groups are further linked to microfinance institutions to potentially gain access to loan facilities and business management support.

Pamoja Tuwalee adapted Pact's WORTH Women Economic Empowerment to suit the unique needs and capabilities of primary caregivers of the most vulnerable children in Tanzania. Pact is using the savings platform to effectively and efficiently implement interventions such as good parenting skills, child protection, gender-based violence prevention, and skills-building and early childhood development. Pact's use of the Appreciative Planning Approach has proven to keep caregivers motivated to work hard to realize improved savings, small business development, and investments in children's care and development.

**Lessons Learned:** Yekokeb Berhan and Pamoja Tuwalee have gained experience in implementing economic strengthening activities, including:

- Poor, highly vulnerable, HIV- and AIDS-affected families can save, invest, and grow—contrary to a common belief that they cannot. Even families in destitution can save and build resilience to future shocks; with a little support initially, they are able to change mindset, embrace a culture of saving, and become successful entrepreneurs.
- Economic wellbeing not only depends upon ES interventions; rather it results from the interplay of a multiplicity of interventions that target vulnerable households, including protection and psychosocial care, parenting skills, household gardening, and education support for children.
- Economic strengthening interventions help to keep children in their families. Through routine monitoring, Pact's programs have documented several cases in which caregivers have either been reunited with their children or prevented separation due to increased capacity to provide care. Anecdotal stories evidence caregivers reached by WORTH who were on the verge of giving away their children to be cared for by others or to seek work to support the family.
- WORTH reduces social isolation, improves caregiver emotional wellbeing, and increases household savings, assets, and/or income. Children feel more secure and safe because physical and protection needs are met at household level.

**Adaptation and Replication:** Yekokeb Berhan's economic strengthening approach and interventions are practical and based on local contexts and realities. Yekokeb Berhan uses training materials, which

were developed and/or adapted from either existing or past programs in Ethiopia or other countries with comparable contexts. The approach and interventions can easily be replicated or adapted in programs with similar contexts, primarily where the following factors exist: local community structures that can identify and link vulnerable households to social and economic support; local government structures that support community-based and civil society initiatives; communities and beneficiaries that believe in self-help and can be empowered to drive their own economic growth; and local market opportunities that can meet the demand for products produced by program beneficiaries, among others. The CSSG approach is simple, practical, and easy to apply even in low literacy and highly resource-constrained contexts. The training materials developed by Yekokeb Berhan for training and for technical support to community groups, CSSGs, and individual beneficiaries are simple, practical, and user-friendly and can be used by anyone with at least 12 years of formal education to establish and support economic strengthening interventions.

The WORTH model can be easily adapted to other contexts using the same approach used in adaption for OVC households. The weekly savings group meetings are robust platforms for integrating other interventions, such as HIV prevention and care, youth development, ECD, WASH, food security, and nutrition. Use of the highly effective and motivating Appreciative Planning Approach is adaptable for economic strengthening activities.

**The Way Forward and Scaling:** Yekokeb Berhan can be easily scaled-up in Ethiopia. The program's approach and interventions are simple and practical, and with stable community support structures and the support of local government and civil society, along with financial and technical resources, this program can be easily taken to scale throughout the country. Resources permitting, an initial pilot to engage destitute households and vulnerable children, themselves, in ES activities would help to build the evidence base required to inform future program decisions in this area. Currently, Yekokeb Berhan does not engage these two groups in economic strengthening activities. A small fraction of children—older MVC who are heads of household—have been engaged in limited activities, such as CSSG and vocational training. However, the number is too small to inform any decisions about the effectiveness of their involvement and potential tradeoffs.

The Pamoja Tuwalee program, including WORTH economic empowerment, can be scaled up. The strategic objectives of the program focus on strengthening existing structures and systems through empowerment activities so that families are able to improve the wellbeing of their most vulnerable children. Using the socio-ecological model, interventions can be designed to involve government, district councils, local CSOs and families so as to improve the care and protection of most vulnerable children. Involvement of Community Empowerment Workers is crucial since they provide support at community and household levels. Investing in Empowerment Workers through training, mentoring, and support will ensure the continuity of family and community-based support even after the program has ended.

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# ANNEX 9: ENHANCING ECONOMIC CAPACITY FOR RESILIENCE AGAINST BONDED SERVITUDE AND VULNERABILITY: THE KAMLAHARI PRACTICE ABOLITION PROJECT IN NEPAL

**Authors:** Hem Poudyal and Holly Christofferson

**Name of Organization:** Plan International

**Name of Program/Project:** Kamlahari Practice Abolition Project (KAP)

**Geographic Location of Program/Project:** Dang, Kailiali and Kanchanpur districts of mid and far-western development region of Nepal

**Implementing Partners:** Society Welfare Action Nepal (SWAN), Backward Society Education Nepal (Base), Nepal National Social Welfare Association (NNSWA), Freed Kamaiya Women Development Forum (FKWDF)

**Program/Project Period:** 6 years January 2010–December 2015

**Funding Sources:** European private donors

**Funding Amount:** \$2.6 million

**Theme(s):** Protection, education, livelihoods, capacity building, lobbying, reintegration, gender, and advocacy

## SUMMARY

The Kamlahari Practice Abolition Project aims to rescue and rehabilitate 4,500 Kamlaharis and strengthen the capacity of rights holders (Kamlahari children), and duty bearers (government/civil society organizations/families) to abolish the practice of Kamlahari and to ensure access to education, life skills, and sustainable livelihoods for rescued and vulnerable Kamlahari girls and their families in coordination and collaboration with concerned government agencies.

## DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

**Context:** The Kamlahari, a type of bonded child labor practice, exists in the five mid-western and far-western Terai districts of Nepal. Poor Tharu families send their girl children (aged 6–18)<sup>86</sup> to work as domestic servants for meager income or to pay off loans borrowed from local money lenders. Such bonded girls work as indentured servants, losing their freedom and opportunities for leisure, play, and

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<sup>86</sup> Girls as young as 6 years can become Kamlahari. If a girl continues with the same employer she will still be called Kamlahari at 20–25 years. If a new contract of bonded labor begins at the age of 19, then the girl is called Kamayia. The Kamayia practice has also been abolished. Most of the Kamlahari girls come from the Kamaiya families.

education, and are highly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Labor contracts are generally made in the month of Magh (mid-January to February), a month-long Tharu festival. The contracts are renewable the same month each year. The practice is so deeply rooted in some sections of Tharu society that there is a “misbelief” that girls sent as Kamlahari are more outspoken and forward-thinking with good exposure to the outside world. Some families consider this a normal practice and not a violation of child rights. Although economic poverty is the most important factor for families to sell off a girl child, it is not the only factor. Others include feudal social taboos, illiteracy, ignorance, isolation, and lack of voice or power. Plan Nepal’s Kamlahari Practice Abolition Project (KAP) sought the abolition of the practice, the realization of child rights, and more opportunities for children’s overall development.

Economic Strengthening Intervention(s): Most freed Kamlahari and their families engage in agriculture, despite being landless, nearly landless, or small landholders. Kamlahari often work as sharecroppers or leaseholders, or simply as agricultural wage workers growing cereal crops such as paddy, wheat, and maize crops. These three staple crops are not profitable, since Nepal receives huge amounts of cheap, subsidized grains imported from India.

To provide a profitable alternative to staple crops, Plan Nepal staff use a sub-sector analysis tool to pinpoint areas of comparative economic advantage for freed Kamlahari families during the pre-design stage. The tool includes methodologies to support conducting a detailed analysis of the sub-sector; map all sub-sector actor stakeholders; identify constraints and opportunities for promoting the sector, along with commercially viable options; and develop action plans. Plan’s livelihood program activities are largely influenced by the sub-sector action plans. Through sub-sector analysis and market price information from previous years, the project identified higher yield crops with higher income potential, such as vegetables. Based on the sub-sector analysis in all the three districts, fresh vegetable production was identified as the most economically promising sub-sector for large numbers of free Kamlahari families. The second most promising sub-sector was poultry and small livestock rearing.

**Recruitment and Selection.** Project participants include freed Kamlahari girls and their families who had sold their girls as Kamlaharis because of economic hardships, as well as equally poor and vulnerable households in the community who are at risk of selling female children because of economic hardship. They are selected for particular economic activities based upon their interest and comparative advantage in a particular sub-sector in their geographic areas. Partner NGO staff conduct home visits to identify potential participants and households, their interest, resources, and capabilities. Then the households and free Kamlahari (former bonded servants) decide together on what economic activity to pursue.

**Implementation.** When the girls are rescued and brought back home for rehabilitation, the project actively helps their families with alternate livelihoods to make sure that the girls are not sold off again. To provide a profitable alternative to staple crops, project participants are organized into “affinity groups” that have chosen similar economic activities, and the groups create their own action plans. Groups receive technical training in agriculture<sup>87</sup> and field support from technical staff. To reduce the risks connected with

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<sup>87</sup> For example, technical training for tomato production includes seed quality, nursery management, planting, use of natural fertilizers, irrigation, pest control, harvesting, post-harvest handling, processing, and marketing. The training is delivered by local NGOs in the local language, or by government officials assisted by the KAP trained agricultural technician. Training is organized for groups of 20–25 farmers, and also involves peer learning and group discussions.

starting a new business, participants also receive an in-kind, start-up grant of inputs, such as seeds, plastic sheets for the nursery, fertilizer, tools, and micro-irrigation support, but not cash.

To increase the access of freed Kamlahari girls and other women to financial resources, participants are then gradually linked to self-reliant groups (SRGs) of 15–35 women who engage in self-managed savings and lending activities and discuss social and gender issues that affect women and children. Plan and other development agencies use the SRGs as platforms for child and women-related communications. At the village development committee (VDC) level, the SRGs are organized into an Apex women’s cooperative that pulls together and manages the savings of the SRGs. In most cases, freed Kamlahari are among the cooperative members and occupy key leadership positions in the cooperatives. These cooperatives are quite young and need substantial capacity building support in order to be operationally and financially sustainable.<sup>88</sup>

Technical staff of partner NGOs and KAP livelihood and microfinance coordinators work in the community to provide on-site technical support and oversight. Partner NGOs also coordinate with the district agriculture office and district livestock service office to access technical support. Government officials are invited as resource persons during technical training and are invited to joint field monitoring visits to increase their engagement and program ownership. Government officials are also invited during the review-reflection meeting.<sup>89</sup>

Participants are also linked to the agro-vets who facilitate the supply of agriculture inputs. These agricultural and livestock technicians are themselves freed Kamlahari girls, who receive up to 11 months of training and in turn provide community-level agricultural training and backstopping. Other participants receive training to set up agro-input stores and become village animal health workers. The project also distributed 31 breeding animals for genetic improvement of local animal stock, and distributed 718 small animals (goats and pigs) to families facing acute economic hardships.

**Other Intervention Activities:** Economic strengthening is an important component of the Kamlahari freedom movement, but it is not the only intervention. Bringing former Kamlahari and other vulnerable Tharu community members out of the poverty trap requires access to education and life skills, as well as strengthening community-level protection systems. For this reason, the project includes life skills education for adolescent girls (11–19 years), psychosocial support<sup>90</sup> for the freed Kamlahari and other vulnerable girls, behavior change communication sessions with SRGs and parents on issues such as child marriage, discrimination, child labor, women’s rights, sanitation and birth registration, and mass awareness programs using community radio, Maghi campaigns,<sup>91</sup> and rallies. The program also provides child

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<sup>88</sup> To be sustainable, the women’s cooperatives require training and technical support on resource development, mobilization, product development, bookkeeping, internal controls, networking, conflict resolution and leadership, microenterprise development, and fund management for three to five years.

<sup>89</sup> Participants also receive marketing support, organizing weekly markets, establishing a market outlet for farmers, buying weighing equipment and bamboo and plastic baskets for vegetable transport.

<sup>90</sup> This includes counseling by a trained psychosocial counselor for freed Kamlahari children immediately following their rescue and at any time they require support.

<sup>91</sup> Plan together with other CSOs organize campaigns, rallies during the Nepali month of Magh (mid-January to mid-February) against Kamlahari practice. This is the biggest festival month of Tharu community. In Tharu language, it is called "Maghi" festival.

protection training to the female hostel operators and supports VDCs, District Development Committees, and District Child Welfare Boards (DCWBs) to prepare long-term plans to abolish the practice.

The project offers a nine-month life skills education program for adolescent girls (aged 11–19 years) to build awareness of the importance of protecting themselves and others from discrimination, abuse, and exploitation, and to fight against any form of violence. A total of 5,850 adolescents have completed this community-run training program of which 2,631 program graduates are organized in 131 girls clubs in the three districts and another 5,202 girls and boys are organized in 217 child clubs. The girls' groups and child clubs have been working together with the Child Protection Committees (CPCs) and women's cooperatives to raise awareness against the Kamlahari practice. Sixty-five CPCs have been formed in the three project districts.

**Follow-up and Monitoring Activities:** When a child is reported missing from the community, it is usually the child club and girls' club that notifies the partner NGOs of the issue. The partner NGO alerts the child protection committee that notifies the DCWB. The DCWB Chairperson, the Chief District Officer, issues a letter to the employer encouraging the child's release with a deadline for voluntary compliance. If the deadline passes, the DCWB conducts a rescue operation. The rescue team includes the District Child Protection committee, the Nepal police, NGO partner, and other CSOs working on the child protection issue in that community. If the employer refuses to release the child or becomes aggressive, then the police are authorized to put the person in jail.

When a child is brought back home, the NGOs are responsible for rehabilitation, counseling, school enrollment, and making periodic household visits together with other service providers, such as the district education office, to ensure that the child is studying and adapting well. KAP staff ensures that the girl is visited by Plan or its implementing partner to monitor her well-being.<sup>92</sup>

### **Gaps and Challenges:**

- The Kamlahari practice still exists despite being legally abolished and government and CSO concentrated efforts to eradicate it. In 2014, 308 girls were still working as Kamlahari, and 73 girls were recruited as Kamlahari.
- On June 17, 2013 the Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Welfare signed a 10-point agreement with the Kamlahari Abolition movement that included issuing identity cards and providing scholarships to victims; however the government has yet to fulfill these promises.
- There is no specific quota for the freed Kamlahari in the government-funded centers for technical education and vocational training. Girls who complete 10 years of schooling cannot afford to pay the tuition fee for private training institutions.
- Since the project has focused on providing economic and educational opportunities exclusively for girls and women, boys and young men feel discriminated against and jealous.

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<sup>92</sup> After three to four years, rescued girls are visited at least once a year, and recently rescued girls are visited more frequently. There is always the chance that a child will be re-recruited into bonded child labor. That is why multi-layer protection mechanisms are put in place, including child protection committees, child clubs, girls' groups, and SRGs in the communities that act on such cases. If living conditions are poor, the child may also run away.

- The government's 10-point program is focused mostly on education. The government does not have specific economic enhancement interventions, such as provision of land, skills development or market linkages, for the Tharu community in general or free Kamlahari families in particular.
- Girls' school retention, low graduation rates (less than 40 percent from grade 10), and early marriage remain challenges.
- As girls are rescued and rehabilitated, some parents are pushing boys to drop out of school and start working as child laborers.
- Many Tharu families are afraid of taking the financial risk of starting new income-generating activities or diversifying their livelihoods in geographic areas of the country characterized by very low economic growth rates. Those new businesses that are actually launched require significant business development support.
- The self-employment initiatives undertaken by the girls are short lived. The girls find it difficult to succeed in a competitive market without linkages to mainstream businesses and financial services.
- It takes at least five years in a typical rural Nepali setting for women's cooperatives to become operationally and financially sustainable.
- Alcoholism is a growing challenge in the project area especially among men. Men migrate out of the country for significant periods of the year, but when they return, they remain drunk and do not work.

How were the challenges addressed? A number of challenges remain unaddressed, including land issues, poverty, lack of skills, lack of representation in state government, and the Tharu community's lack of access to power. However, through the KAM project's advocacy activities and business development services, linkages are taking place. Advocacy needs to occur consistently and at multiple levels to make a difference.

- Advocacy at the district level. At the district level, Plan and its implementing partners and other organizations are members of loose networks of CSOs that are working on the issue of Kamlaharis. These networks meet regularly (once every three months) or more frequently when they need to lobby and advocate. The Freed Kamlahari girls have also formed a "free" Kamlahari Development Forum in five districts that also lobbies and advocates on this issue. Other district-level entities engaged in advocacy and lobbying on the issue include District Child Welfare Board, VDC-level child protection committees, child clubs, and girls' clubs. For specific advocacy efforts all these entities work together to consolidate their efforts.
- National-level advocacy efforts engage with the poorly funded Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare to fulfill a 10-point agreement, and to provide a specific quota for the Kamlahari girls in the government-funded centers for vocational and technical training. The government has approved education guidelines, established scholarship provisions (Rs 1,700, Rs 2,500, and Rs 5,000) and a scholarship management committee in each of the five districts. In addition, stipends are allocated to orphans living in the girls' hostels.
- Plan is making efforts to promote economic security for the Tharu community by promoting access to community-managed financial services, SGRs, and women's cooperatives.

## OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

**Theory of Change:** Plan Nepal's theory of change states that enhancing household income of the freed Kamlahari girls and other vulnerable Tharu families supports reintegration and prevents these girls and their siblings from being separated from their families as Kamlahari. The project's goal is achieved by:

- Building confidence and assertiveness among the girls so that they will not acquiesce or otherwise accept bonded servitude
- Promoting awareness and sensitivity among parents so that they realize and understand their responsibilities toward their girls' rights
- Providing girls and their families with viable economic alternatives
- Developing the capacity of local social protection mechanisms that are vigilant and respond quickly to possible bonded child labor relationship
- Working with CSOs to lobby and advocate for protecting girls and the abolition of the Kamlahari practice

The project has been able to rescue and rehabilitate 3,728 Kamlaharis. Out of these, 2,568 girls are receiving education at a range of levels. Some start with a bridging course to prepare them for school, as well as education materials and special tutorial support for those completing high school exams. To date, 211 girls have completed high school and 171 are enrolled in higher education. Among them, 36 are studying at bachelor's level. The project also supports girls with the fee, uniform purchase, and stationary support in the first year of college, and educational material support in the second year, since they receive scholarships from the government at the end of the first year of college.

To date, the project has organized 7,407 freed Kamlahari, their families or other vulnerable women into 542 SRGs. The SRGs have been federated and registered into 24 women cooperatives to provide financial services to their members. There are plans to introduce money transfers and insurance in the future.

Recruitment of girls as Kamlahari has gone down. Most girls are in school or attend college, and school promotion rates are improving. Families are engaged in income generating activities. Community-level protection mechanisms, such as Child Protection Committees, child clubs, and girls' clubs are building capacity.<sup>93</sup> Women's cooperatives have been established and the government is more responsive and responsible. For example, in 2014 the district administration in Kailali district issued letters to employers to free Kamlaharis and took initiatives to rescue 113 Kamlaharis. Similarly, the government has criminalized the Kamlahari practice, signed a 10-point agreement with the rights holders' movement, and approved education guidelines to provide scholarship support to the freed Kamlahari girls.

Plan worked with the national level with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, and the Central Child Welfare Board. The freed Kamlaharis have formed their own organization in five districts; Plan supported them and other CSOs for several years to highlight the Kamlahari Practice Abolition on the local and national agendas.

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<sup>93</sup> These entities were started by the project for the most part, and were provided with some training, stationary support, and networking support.

**Target Beneficiaries:** The project targeted poor Tharu girls, including girls sent to work as Kamlaharis, as well as the families of freed Kamlaharis, and other economically vulnerable families. Some selection criteria used by community CPCs child clubs, girls' clubs, and SRGs to identify beneficiaries include land holding, family size, family income, and household food security.

**Evaluation and Evidence of Success:** The project goal is to abolish Kamlahari practice in three project districts of Kailali, Kanchanpur, and Dang by 2015. Indicators of success toward the overall goal include the following:

- The government enforces its declaration to abolish Kamlahari practice.
- All project districts are declared as Kamlahari-free districts.
- One hundred percent of identified Kamlahari girls are rescued, rehabilitated, and reintegrated back into their families.

The project also has the following strategic objectives and key indicators:

SO1: School-aged, freed Kamlaharis will enjoy their right to quality education.

- Government increased by 20 percent existing budget for Kamlahari scholarships.
- Out of the enrolled freed Kamlaharis in different grades, 60 percent of them complete the basic education cycle.
- Fifty-five percent of Kamlaharis passed SLC who registered for the SLC examination.

SO2: Reduce economic poverty and promote well-being of freed Kamlaharis and their families

- At least 60 percent of 2,000 freed Kamlaharis and their families progress out of national poverty line.
- At least 60 percent of 2,000 freed Kamlaharis and their families report adequacy of family income.
- At least 60 percent of 2,000 freed Kamlaharis and their families report increased family expenditure on food, education, and health.

SO3: Kamlaharis and vulnerable girls are protected and prevented from Kamlahari practices and other forms of violence.

- Four hundred forty-three Kamlaharis are rescued, rehabilitated, and reintegrated in community and 66 VDCs are declared Kamlahari free VDCs of three districts.
- At least 90 percent of rescued and vulnerable Kamlahari girls report that they are not experiencing any forms of abuse and exploitation and protected from child marriage.<sup>94</sup>
- Fifty percent will be prosecuted punished, out of Kamlahari-related reported cases.
- Points (1, 5, 6, 7, and 8) of the 10-point agreement signed by Kamlahari struggle committee with the government on June 7, 2013 are implemented.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Child marriage instigated by parents is declining across the country; however elopement is an emerging issue. Child marriage is addressed through the project's life skills education and behavior change communication interventions.

<sup>95</sup> These implementation points include: 1) Formation of a high level committee to carry out investigation of the death of 13-year-old Srijana Chaudhary who worked as a child laborer in Lalitpur and punish the culprits as per the law; 5) Revise existing

The project conducted a baseline assessment in 2010 and did a mid-term evaluation in 2013. The mid-term evaluation included three interrelated components: 1) quantitative data collection and analysis to understand the Kamlahari practice through structured questionnaires; 2) qualitative data collection and analysis based on in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation among key informants; and 3) stakeholders' assessment and recommendations of the Plan Nepal program, including their assessment of the realization of child rights and program constraints.

The data showed that 95 percent of former Kamlahari children were enrolled in primary and secondary school, and some even enrolled at tertiary level. There have been some school dropouts primarily in the age 15–29 category. Of those who dropped out of school, 26.6 percent cited lack of funds, followed by 25.9 percent who cited early marriage as the reason for leaving school.

**Vulnerability:** Plan generally carries out a child rights situation assessment to find the most deprived and marginalized households and children. For this project, however, the vulnerability criteria were simple—participants were Kamlahari, freed Kamlahari, and their immediate families. As a preventative measure the CPCs, child clubs, and girls' groups, women's SRGs, and Badghars (community leaders) identified other vulnerable families by taking into account economic poverty, landlessness, likelihood of being trafficked, and chance of facing violence.<sup>96</sup>

#### 4. LEARNING

##### **Innovations:**

- Prior to this project, the plight of the Kamlaharis was not on the national agenda. During the first phase of the KAP, Plan Nepal was the only organization to raise the issue of Kamlahari girls at a national-level conference held each year and attended by child rights organizations, the media, and other relevant organizations. During the project and as part of a National Girl Child consultation in 2007, Plan Nepal in collaboration with Friends of Needy Children and the National Youth Foundation advocated strongly regarding the Kamlahari issue, inviting government authorities and major political parties to learn about the plight of the girls; media was encouraged to cover the issue in radio, print, and electronic media, and brought the issue to the attention of national fora and government. By 2010 the Kamlahari issue was in the forefront of national consciousness, and ex-Kamlahari girls participated in the national conference on child labor, and lobbied with the organizations concerned. These efforts succeeded because of Plan's intentional approach to engage stakeholders at the household,

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scholarship guidelines/directives free Kamlahari education to increase the amount of scholarship for the free Kamlahari girls; 6) As the Kamlahari practice is against the existing law of Nepal, we hereby agree that the government declares that all the girls working as Kamlaharis are declared liberated and government will speed up the process of freedom and rehabilitation of the freed girls. All those employing children will be brought under the scope of the law. 7) Immediate process to start to issue identity card to the freed Kamlaharis; 8) Begin the process to ensure identification and property rights of the children born from the sexual exploitation of the girls while working as Kamlaharis.

<sup>96</sup> Vulnerable families can be characterized by the following criteria: landless; single parent household; disabled or alcoholic parent; large family; indebted. One or more of these factors could be enough for a girl to be vulnerable to becoming Kamlahari or trafficked.

community, district and national levels, and build local capacity. In the district-level networks Plan and the Free Kamlahari development forum meet to plan and implement their advocacy agenda. Plan built capacity to network CSOs, and develop organizational capacity of individual CSOs, in project management and monitoring, networking, negotiation, and public speaking.

- The Kamlahari practice will not be fully abolished by only focusing on the economic dimension of the issue. Plan Nepal, therefore, has applied a holistic approach with multiple levels of engagement. Its interventions include economic security, protection, participation, capacity building, lobbying, and advocacy. Plan engages in these efforts at the child, household, community, district, and national levels. Awareness-raising is also critical. Parents, the community and employers have to understand that sending a daughter as Kamlahari and employing a girl child is a serious violation of the rights of a girl child.
- The emergence of community social structures, such as freed Kamlahari owned and operated women's cooperatives has united the freed Kamlaharis, and will evolve as a women-led social movement that will also ensure women's sustained access to financial services.
- The project is exemplary in its promotion of a multi-layered community-based child protection mechanism that includes CPCs, child clubs, and girls' clubs, and providing these entities with training and awareness raising so that vulnerable girls are protected against being considered for recruitment.

#### **Lessons Learned:**

- Although a Kamlahari girl's human rights are violated (including mental, physical, and sexual abuse), at the employer's house she is generally given food and clothing and basic incidentals, such as soap. She may also be able to watch television. If back home she is denied these basic essentials, she may run away from home. These basic needs, therefore, will have to be ensured upon returning home prior to the girl's rescue.
- Kamlahari practice is a socioeconomic ill that is closely intertwined with other social norms and beliefs. Addressing these interrelated factors requires a holistic approach.
- Lessons learned based on discussions with families and women regarding the project focus on women: Women are saving and using their income for family welfare, particularly for their children's education and medical expenses; because women are less mobile than men, the chance of their enterprise continuing is higher; when women have more economic capacity, they have greater self-confidence and assertiveness; it may possibly lead to a decrease in gender-based violence. These observations need to be further researched.
- Anyone working on the Kamlahari issue should work closely with the government agencies, since any efforts led by the government have more clout and are more sustainable than those led by a CSO or outside agency. Yet, it can be challenging to work with government officials depending on their attitude and level of engagement on the Kamlahari issue. With changes in government, there are gaps in knowledge transfer with new officials taking key positions. Briefing government officials consistently is key.
- Parents of Kamlahari should be provided with an alternate livelihood. Otherwise the family will devise other means to send children into child labor. Monitoring is essential. For example, the mother will indicate that she is employed but in actuality, the girl child may be the household member working. There also will be pressure on a boy child to work as a child laborer when his sister returns home.

- Freed Kamlahari girls require additional tutoring and coaching to catch up with their peers in school.
- Providing freed Kamlahari girls with technical and vocational training rather than supporting higher education social science degrees increases their likelihood of becoming employed.
- Freed Kamlahari girls are generally shy about taking leadership of the women cooperatives. Special attention must be given to make sure that leadership is not hijacked by other women in the community.
- Poor women like freed Kamlaharis require integrated and ongoing support rather than isolated, one-time training. To succeed they need knowledge and skills training and coaching, access to effective financial services at their doorstep, and easy access to market.
- Mobilization of traditional Tharu leaders such as Badghar is helpful for any new community initiative.
- Media partnership<sup>97</sup> is very helpful especially during the “Maghi campaign” and for getting the public and government’s attention on the issue.
- Joint monitoring visits with the government officials and media in the community are effective to inform them about program outcomes and impact of the program.

### **Recommendations:**

- To be successful, NGOs and government need to work hand in hand.
- Partner NGOs from the same ethnic group have wider acceptance.
- It is imperative to understand the complicated reasons that contribute to and perpetuate the practice. This might require spending several months in the same community to understand the inner dynamics.
- Service delivery may not be as developmentally fashionable as lobbying, advocacy, and capacity development for donors, but freed Kamlaharis require service delivery for some time no matter whether it comes from government or NGOs.
- Design an approach that pushes freed Kamlaharis toward self-reliance, including being competitive in the market. It is also critical to address their initial essential needs for survival.
- Start with a small pilot.
- Take a holistic approach since the problem of “servitudeness” is a result of multiple, interrelated factors.

**The Way Forward:** Adaptation and Replication: The root causes of bonded girl child labor are similar around the world—ignorance, indebtedness, economic poverty, feudal values, gender discrimination toward girls and women, and lack of effective law enforcement. Plan Nepal’s experience and lessons learned could be useful in other countries facing similar situations. It is critical to study the issue and specific causes in the country or region before designing any intervention.

The remaining Kamlaharis can be freed through regular government, community, and CSO interventions. The challenge remains to permanently address the economic aspect that is contributing to and

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<sup>97</sup> It is not “engaging” or “using” media but working together in partnership on the issue. Plan used to do media partnership during “maghi” campaigns, and then during the rest of the year the media covered the project news without requiring any project expenditure.

perpetuating the bonded labor practice. The women cooperatives have just started to grow and include more families and communities. They need to expand horizontally and vertically. They also need to continue to develop their capacity to provide effective financial services to ultimately prevent indebtedness to local money lenders that lingers as the main reason for the bonded labor practice. In addition Plan and the government need to seek alternate livelihoods for the freed Kamlaharis so that they are not re-recruited as Kamlaharis in order to survive.

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# ANNEX 10: EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC GAIN

**Authors:** Pete Kent: Railway Children. Alison Lane: Juconi.

**Name of Organization:** Railway Children

**Name of Program/Project:** Reintegration of Children on the Streets in East Africa

**Geographic Location of Program/Project:** East Africa—Nairobi and Kitale in Kenya, Mwanza in Tanzania

**Implementing Partners:** Undugu Society of Kenya, Child Rescue Kenya, Caretakers Tanzania

**Program/Project Period:** Multiple Timeframes—January 2012 onwards; end March 2016 and 2017

**Funding Sources:** DFID, Comic Relief, BIG Lottery Foundation, The Vitol Foundation

**Funding Amount:** Approximately US\$1,000,000 per annum

**Theme(s):** Trauma recovery, family strengthening, economic strengthening, targeting, vulnerability, children on the streets

## SUMMARY

This program aims to provide meaningful support structures for children detached from their families and forced to survive on the streets of cities across East Africa. Interventions are developed based on the premise that the most appropriate place for a child to develop and to thrive is in a family home; the reality is that a significant number of children on the streets are there because of multiple deprivations in the families they have come from typified by high levels of neglect, violence, and abuse, exacerbated by and perpetuating levels of poverty in the home. Informed by knowledge of neuroscience, trauma theory, and attachment theory, we know that repeated exposure to violence or neglect has a debilitating impact on brain development and functioning and on the ability of children to engage positively in social settings and to form healthy relationships, in turn creating an intergenerational cycle of violence between mothers and fathers and their children,<sup>98</sup> and so on. This program attempts to use the strength of the therapeutic relationship of the project worker as the key ingredient in providing children, parents, and caregivers with the experience of a healthy relationship, which through a positive attachment, helps them develop healthier relationships of their own, with their children, and in their communities. In turn, these changes create an environment where families have the potential to use the economic opportunities available to them that would otherwise be too difficult to manage. A significant body of evidence correlates traumatic events in early childhood to negative outcomes later in life.<sup>99</sup>

## DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

**Context:** The project was developed in response to research findings showing poverty, family violence, breakdown of relationships in the home, and lack of educational opportunities as significant drivers behind street involvement in large urban centers in the region. Approximately 400 children sleep on the street

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<sup>98</sup> Jack P Shonkoff and Deborah A Philips, Eds. 2000. From Neurons to Neighborhoods, The Science of Early Childhood Development. Washington DC: The National Academies Press.

<sup>99</sup><http://www.acestudy.org/>

in Mwanza; estimates are over 500 in Kitale, and over 5,000 in Nairobi. In addition, local partners were frustrated by high drop-out rates and poor results of both economic empowerment and reintegration strategies. Before the start of this project, “family reintegration” was in reality child relocation because local NGOs had few resources with which to understand and respond to the complexities involved. In response, the Emotional Support for Economic Gain (ESEG) program was designed from elements of family strengthening that had been effective, anecdotally at least, in a certain area of the program, and /or in an international partner. The key intervention areas can be broken down into: Bio-Intensive Agriculture Support, Business Skills Training, Vocational Training, Educational Support, Welfare Support, and Self-Help and Support Groups, underpinned by developing and sustaining emotionally consistent, accepting, and non-judgmental relationships between family members and one or more project workers. The bio-intensive element was adapted from an agricultural college called Manor House in Kitale and piloted there before being expanded into other program areas.

The business skills element takes lessons from Street Kids International and the application of their model at Mkombozi, in Moshi and Arusha, Tanzania. The vocational support is provided as per the approaches developed in the Undugu Society of Kenya in terms of linking to existing small-scale trades people in the beneficiary communities. The emotional empowerment element of ESEG is constructed entirely on the trauma-informed methods developed by the JUCONI Foundations of Mexico and Ecuador. Evidence of transformational results in terms of a reduction in the level of violence in the family home, and a corresponding increase in mothers’ and caregivers’ abilities to respond appropriately to and provide for the needs of children that had been significantly street involved, has been central to shaping the design of this program.

### **Economic Strengthening Intervention(s):**

**Bio-Intensive Agriculture (BIA):** BIA is offered when there is access to some land (although a lot of food can be grown in sacks), water, and beneficiaries who express an interest in engaging in BIA. Families are linked to a project agricultural worker employed full time. They receive training on the BIA techniques both onsite at their own plot and also in groups on the project show farm. Inputs provided include tools, seeds, and help in identifying and getting manure. This is an approach that uses high- and fast-yield vegetables that can be grown organically in cycles that complement each other and maximize the fertility of the soil. The food grown can be used for their own consumption or sold on to contribute to household income. The agricultural worker draws up a contract, signed between the project and beneficiaries, which includes agreements within the home around divisions of labor, particularly how much children are expected to help out on the plot and how this needs to balance with school work and time for play.

**Business Training and Grants:** Business training and grants are offered when families are interested in running their own business. Training includes basic numeracy, budgeting, accounting, and some market research to determine the viability of possible business ideas. Initial capital grants are then provided and or materials and stock purchased for beneficiaries. Top-up training is given after some time and there is a second opportunity for more capital if the business progresses well. As with the BIA inputs, an agreement is drawn up between the project and beneficiaries that includes clauses about divisions of labor particularly about the extent children are expected to play a role.

**Vocational Training:** Vocational training is offered where families and or young people from the age of 14 upwards are interested. Trade-choosing workshops time in the field visiting potential work sites; decisions are informed from market research that determines what skills are most relevant in that area, including goods and services that are scarce, or that have a low level of customer satisfaction related to them. Young people are then linked to a tradesperson who is contracted and paid to provide an apprenticeship experience for the young person. Tools are provided and in some instances assistance with transport and food. A contract is drawn up with the tradesperson outlining expectations around behaviors, attendance, and that they must keep project workers informed about any issues. Training timetables need to be flexible to enable the young person to continue to earn money.

**Other Intervention Activities:** The program's core intervention is the emotional empowerment framework, which helps each family member acquire the emotional stability to be able to think differently about themselves, change their outlook on life, and develop more beneficial relationship strategies. This shift in behavior is what enables the child who has been out of the family to reintegrate successfully. After all, the economic hardships suffered by the child on the street are no less than those in the family home and are often in fact, worse. The difference between hardship in the home and hardship on the street is that at least with the latter, it does not come with the unbearable emotional pain caused by being rejected and abused by the people who are supposed to love and protect them. The determining factor in sustaining reintegration, therefore, is not the number of meals the child receives, but the warmth of the care and attention they receive from their family. Equally, it is the emotional empowerment that gives family members a sense of self-worth and enables them to become receptive to learning and able to work together to apply the economic strengthening strategies described above. These strategies are not in themselves innovative. Our understanding and experience when working with people with the profile of the family members who participate in ESEG is that they are secondary to the emotional empowerment framework, which is essential to creating a structure within the family and the competencies and attitudes that mean the economic training can be adopted and sustained.

Child and family matrices developed between the participating organizations and JUCONI provide a profile for beginning to understand the unique situation of each street-attached child and/or family. The matrices look at key factors that will influence the level and type of support needed. In the case of the street-attached child, factors include age, length of time on the street, health (including HIV status), special needs (such as disabilities), substance abuse, income, gang involvement, education (level and access to), geographic distance from family, and key adults in the family and their relationship to the child. The family matrix also includes food security, what is known about relationships, levels and types of violence, involvement in local community, and broader family and community support networks. The matrices give an initial idea of how challenging reintegrating the child and achieving sustained up-take of a strategy for improving the family economy is likely to be and allows the organization to plan and prioritize resources accordingly. Experience has shown, for example, that the younger the child the less time she or he has been on the street and the fewer NGOs they have been involved with, the "easier" reintegration is likely to be; however, families where there is no healthy adult (mental health issues or HIV or similar), or where the distance between the street location and the family home makes working with the family on a regular basis impossible, pose more complex challenges.

It becomes clear from the initial diagnostic picture the matrices provide that, even in the least challenging cases, the issues are complex, systemic, and entrenched; although this argues for an equally systemic and complex response, it also indicates that leveraging sustainable change requires tackling the root cause. Family functioning is at the root of both the separation of the family—the child leaving the family for the street—as well as economic empowerment, which also requires the family to be able to function successfully as a unit, whatever its composition. The ESEG program, therefore, starts in the family home, strengthening individuals and their relationships so that when economic strengthening strategies are introduced, they are recognized as opportunities and the family can take full advantage of them.

Families are visited at home by a team of two social workers (frequently paraprofessionals, selected for their innate relationship skills), ideally once a week. The purposes of these visits are several, the most important of which is to show commitment to the families. Attachment theory and trauma theory posit that we learn from experience and through repetition or the scale of their impact these are internalized to become part of each individual's way of being and behaving. When we look at the intergenerational histories and experiences of the families in the program, we understand that they cannot commit to themselves—to making the changes economic strengthening requires and sustaining the effort—because they have not experienced commitment from anyone in their lives; they cannot consistently show warmth and care for each other (to achieve the response the returning child needs or the cohesion and cooperation between members which economic strengthening requires), because they have not experienced it themselves.

Our first task, therefore, is to provide each family member a relationship in which to experience acceptance, being dependent, and taken into account, in other words being cared for, which will lead to them being able to do this for themselves and others. This relationship mirrors the functions provided by a “good enough mother” and is at the core of an “attachment” relationship. Staff are trained to use a strength-based approach, where no judgments are made and acceptance is unconditional; I may not agree with the way you are disciplining your child, but that does not make you a bad, unlikeable, or unacceptable person. I also recognize that you are disciplining your child because you want them to behave and do well, and that is admirable. Time is spent specifically caring for and giving family members the experience of being looked after by a person who provides a constant relationship in which they are accepted for who they are. The very process of consistently going to visit the family, at the same time, on the same day, and keeping to our word, being clear about what we can and cannot do, fulfilling our promises, provides emotional satisfaction that has a powerful impact over several weeks and months; the majority of the families we work with have perhaps never in their lives experienced being cared for, consistently being held in mind to this extent.

Staff are trained to be listeners, and to observe what is happening in the home, to be attentive to what people are communicating non-verbally as well as verbally, and to make a point of recognizing strengths and recognizing what is important to participants. Conversations are about them and their lives, hopes, and fears, not about what we want them to do or be or change. If a mother mentions that she used to like playing hop scotch, or that she would like to sing in church, or that she likes doughnuts, then staff will make a mental note of that and will ask about church, and whether she sang, they may bring doughnuts, or they may have a game of hop scotch in one of their sessions when her children are home. This is what we mean by showing we care and this is why the most important ingredient in recruitment is innate

relationship skills. These are the kinds of signs of affection that parents subconsciously provide for their children in good enough relationships with manageable levels of stress. This approach creates a trusting and safe relationship where communication can be more frank and meaningful. Deep seated and painful issues from the past that cause strife in the present, can be shared and healed through being understood, witnessed, and mourned. I hit my children because that is what happened to me, but I can choose to do things differently. I was abused by my mother's partner and that affected me in these ways, and I am not going to continue to let it happen to my children.

This consistent focus on the individual and absolute respect for them as the experts in their lives and what they want to achieve translates into genuine "empowerment"; the individual comes to see themselves as someone worthy of the care and concern of someone else, (their social worker and the organization they are from), and begins to believe in their own strengths, resources, and capacities and their self-esteem increases. As their self-esteem grows, they increasingly want to take charge of their lives. They become able to envisage a different future and now have the energy that comes from seeing that they have opportunities they had not previously seen. It is at this point economic strengthening strategies can be introduced. The economic strengthening strategies become the means to the ends they want for themselves rather than imposed obligations and, therefore, are more readily adopted and sustainable.

Work with the family is now about accompanying them in identifying other resources, linking them to community supports, reminding them of their strengths and resources as a family, making them aware of their successes, helping them identify the strategies to solve their own problems, thus strengthening their capacity to negotiate with each other and successfully negotiate the family involvement in society. The ESEG program tries to include this approach across all of the interventions with beneficiary families. This level of care is often intuitively given by innately fantastic social workers, family workers, and street workers in programs across the world, because they care on a fundamental human level. This program brings intentionality of this approach into the program design, and trains staff to consciously care and helps them understand why they should do so, not just because it's the right thing to do, but because it also brings about real change. It is these aspects of the ESEG model that make it highly relevant and feasible to apply everywhere. Each of the economic interventions described above, are delivered in a way that reinforces the fact that we care so are in themselves part of the development and maintenance of a therapeutic relationship between project staff and beneficiaries making all elements of the support package—emotional empowerment, education, and economic strengthening—complementary in a way that binds them into a reinforcing virtuous cycle for the family.

In relation to economic strengthening for young people on the streets, an important precursor to any economic strengthening activities is to assist in obtaining an ID card. Getting an official national ID can take time; as an interim measure, a project ID card is given that at least enables youth to show to authorities that they are affiliated in some way to a project, and gives an incredible sense of identity and belonging to young people who are very much on the margins of society. Anxiety about a lack of ID is one of the most important issues that young people present. In Kenya, in particular in the light of Al Shabab, a lack of any ID can leave young people in a very vulnerable position when often associated with petty crime and more serious criminal gangs in the areas in which they survive.

**Follow-up and Monitoring Activities:** This is slightly different in each city depending on the funding conditions. If a reintegration case is far from the project location little intensive work is possible; follow up is via telephone or through local authorities. Nairobi currently provides for the most intensive and closely monitored work. Here, a **checklist** is used to identify when a child and family are ready for reintegration. Reintegration happens as early as possible knowing that work with the child and family will likely be intensified once the child is back in the family to provide support for all family members to adjust positively to the change. Using the checklist of protective and resilience factors, cases are scored and classified according to complexity using a traffic light system. Those that are “red” are automatically discussed in case analysis sessions with the whole team to develop hypotheses about the underlying issues and assist the case worker in developing strategies for how best to move forward with the case. Families are not graduated from the program until they are “green.” The same traffic light system is used in Mwanza, where in the prevention program, families will remain in the caseload from one to two years. The economic strengthening activities are monitored and recorded in simple, practical measures around crops produced, income generated from business, and whether or not employment is gained. Further indicators are included in some areas that include increase in the number of meals per day and real income levels.

**Gaps and Challenges:** The premise on which the ESEG program was developed and that is the focal point of this summary is that in work with families whose profile includes intergenerational poverty and street involvement, ***the missing piece is in understanding that the lack of work skills and employment is not the cause of their poverty and family separation, rather it is symptomatic of the deeper, underlying problem of the traumatic impact of intergenerational family violence, poverty, loss,<sup>100</sup> and exclusion.*** A wealth of neurological evidence<sup>101</sup> explains how repeated exposure to the stresses and pain of poverty and violence reach toxic levels and impact energy levels, memory, self-esteem and self-awareness, capacity to think and take decisions, and lead to loss of hope and a sense of helplessness,<sup>102</sup> all of which are frequently relieved through substance abuse, self-harming, and risk taking. The gap, therefore, is in tackling these underlying issues through creating emotional stability and a network of supportive relationships as a necessary precursor to creating the conditions in which energy and attention can be applied to learning new work skills and following through on them consistently.

The strategy for emotional empowerment takes into account that we learn most effectively through experience and that our capacity to care for others—to hold them in mind, empathize, and respond to their emotional needs—is transmitted to us through our earliest relationships. When these relationships have been deficient or their effect has been damaged by subsequent traumatic experiences, experiencing again a caring relationship that mimics that of a “good enough parent,”<sup>103</sup> is both healing in itself and provides the safe context in which to process or re-assess life experiences and question the efficacy of coping strategies (substance abuse, violence). This enables the parent to draw on this experience to care for their child—in this case the child that is reintegrating back into the family as well as other siblings—with the quality of relationship that will satisfy their emotional needs and break the intergenerational cycles

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<sup>100</sup> The human brain is able to withstand the toxic level of stress which accompanies eventual losses, however, it is not able to withstand the frequent types of loss associated with poverty: loss of loved ones through death and abandonment; loss of health, frequent forced moves from one property to another; insecurity in livelihood.

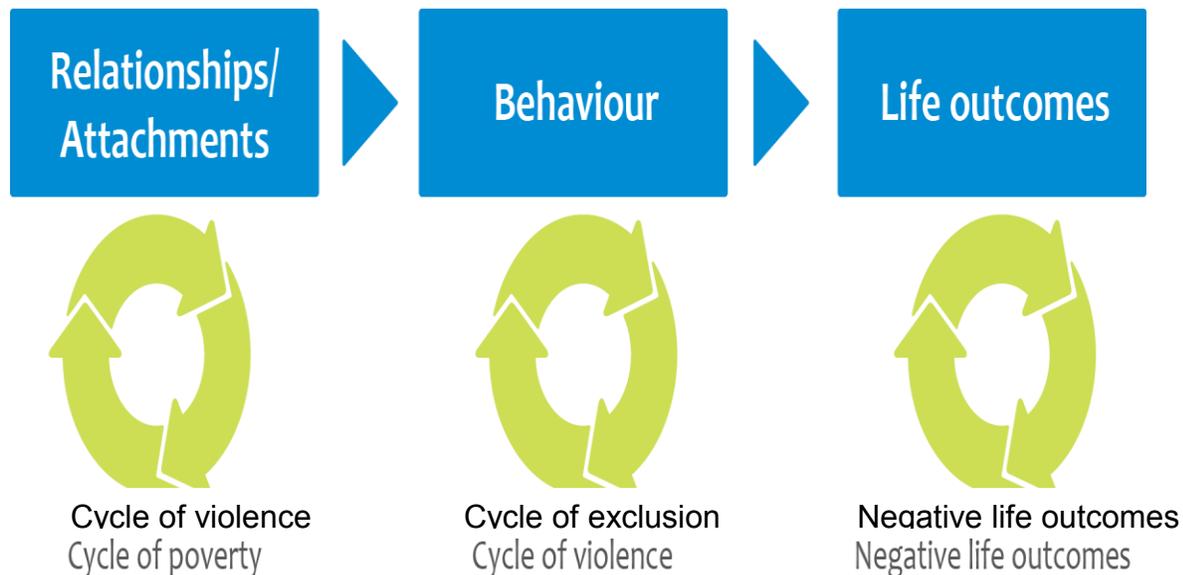
<sup>101</sup> Felicity de Zulueta. 1993. From pain to Violence The Traumatic Roots of Destructiveness. Whurr Publishers, Ltd.

<sup>102</sup> Sandra L. Bloom MD. 1997. Creating Sanctuary: Toward the Evolution of Sane Societies. New York: Routledge.

<sup>103</sup> The concept of the “good enough parent” was developed by the pediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott.

of poor and violent parenting. The characteristics of this quality, “attachment” relationship can be reproduced sufficiently well through a professional therapeutic relationship provided by a paraprofessional “carer.”

## OUTCOMES AND IMPACT



**Theory of Change:** The quality of attachment relationships, (particularly in the first three years, but also across the lifespan), impact on our behavior. If we are secure in our relationships then we are likely to have healthy self-esteem, be emotionally integrated, and be able to modulate and adapt our behavior to cope and respond appropriately in everyday situations and initiate and maintain good relationships outside the family. These skills are integral to being able to manage at school, hold down a job, or choose a partner (life outcomes).<sup>104</sup>

The adults and children who participate in the ESEG program, grew up in unpredictable and violent families. Neuroscience has shown that this alters brain development and functioning. It leads to poor self-esteem, an inability to manage emotions appropriately, impulsivity, learning difficulties, and to antisocial behaviors such as substance abuse, gang involvement, and delinquency. This leads children to be excluded—other children do not want to play with them, teachers do not want them in the classroom. These behaviors and the resulting exclusion lead to poor life outcomes: low levels of education, inability to hold down work, and poor relationship choices.

Although some children and youth may be on the street because of lack of education and training opportunities, the children youth and adults who participate in the ESEG program show marked behavioral difficulties and are “hard to reach”—they cannot recognize opportunities, cannot sustain participation in activities provided on the street, are frequently isolated from peers, and their behaviors make it difficult to engage and connect with them to work with them. These are hallmarks of trauma; the need for a

<sup>104</sup> Patricia M Crittenden. 2008. Raising Parents: Attachment, Parenting and Child Safety. Routledge.

response goes beyond providing “external solutions”—education and skills training that require a certain level of preparedness in their attitudes, behaviors, and ability to learn.

To achieve sustainable change for the children, youth, and adults with the profile described above, we need to heal the effects of violent relationships to be able to change behaviors. A therapeutic approach, going back to the “relationship” level and providing a powerful antidote through a relationship promotes self-esteem, provides the safety in which to explore and process the painful experiences that continue to cause harm, and help people change the way they relate to themselves and others. This emotional preparation is an essential foundation for them to be able to develop the internal resources—patience, perseverance, trust—needed to be able to learn a new skill. Teaching vocational skills and other economic strengthening strategies before having this essential foundation is equivalent to building on quicksand.

For our target population of children on the streets and their families, change can only occur when there is a consistent and persistent effort to connect with people on an emotional level. A significant proportion of our beneficiaries may have never developed the strong attachments essential for healthy development in babies and children; equally they have often been exposed to repeated incidences of violence, loss, and neglect. These experiences have a further debilitating effect on their ability to form healthy relationships and to fit in to society. These emotional deprivations can be reversed when children and caregivers are provided with a relationship that gives the experience of healthy interactions that are consistent and persistent. These enable people to regain self-worth and to begin to process experiences in a healthier way, experiences that would otherwise interfere with their ability to take advantage of support provided, or indeed to give care and affection to their own children. This takes time; a lifetime of neglect and abuse cannot be reversed in days or weeks. Although the inputs around training, tools, grants, and ongoing support are essential to generate income, the change occurs, in terms of engendering the capacity to be able to grasp the training, master the tool, or manage the grant through the consistency of a non-judgmental, accepting, persistent person showing that they care. That feeling of being cared for creates new ways of feeling, understanding, and ultimately behaving toward others. Neurologically, these interactions create new pathways in the brain that allow for healthier behavior and interaction. Until these skills and capabilities are nurtured, it is very difficult for people to maintain the concentration, grasp the concepts, and negotiate the relationships that are required to succeed in the world of work, or in business.

**Target Beneficiaries:** Our main target groups are children and young people on the streets who are identified as having difficulties sustaining participation in street outreach activities and whose behaviors—level of aggression, introversion—make it difficult to connect with and engage them. The economic strengthening elements, described earlier, are provided for adult caregivers in the homes in which we reintegrate children, or directly for young people on the street. There were no specific adaptations to the practicalities of the interventions per se. What is absolutely critical, however, is “how” the project worker delivers training and provides inputs. Interventions are not standalone but part of the eco-systemic approach. In this space interactions with beneficiaries occur, delivered in a way that is consistent with all other interactions—non-judgmental, accepting, and empathetic. We have observed for our work in Mwanza how individual youth businesses have a very low success rates.

Accordingly, we have adapted business support methods to facilitate setting up group businesses. We suspect that these are more effective due to the increased sense of accountability individual youth feel

toward the group, and that they are able to utilize a number of individual strengths and time of each member. For example, if an individual youth does not know how to read and count, running their own business, including managing capital and savings, is difficult. However, they can still take part in running a group business by contributing other strengths and skills if one or several of their peers may possess literacy/numeracy skills. In a group business the youth will need to demonstrate accountability toward their peers, both work-related and social, through keeping time, doing the work, sticking to commitments and being financially transparent, but also through looking after one another by pooling their resources when a member has a personal emergency, and through demonstrating socially acceptable behaviors that help them manage the relationship with their peers. We believe that these factors provide a stronger opportunity for the youth, whose lives are extremely chaotic, to manage themselves and the work involved in running a small business.

Another adaptation has been made in providing capital to family members and youth alike in Mwanza; we have started providing loans as opposed to grants. As part of a three-stage skills training process, parents are helped to develop a business plan against which they are given an interest-free loan from the organization. They sign a contract with a repayment plan; the returned money will go to a second loan to themselves or a different parent. We have found that parents who start a small business are more likely to carefully consider the timing of the loan and how to make best use of it. The majority make an effort to pay it back, and we believe that this is partly out of the accountability they feel toward the organization and their dependants, and partly knowing that they may access more credit when the loan is paid off.

**Evaluation and Evidence of Success:** All interventions are measured and evaluated using indicators relating to attendance, crops grown, earned income, and so on. More importantly for this program, progress is monitored in terms of dynamics within the family home and whether the situation is improving for the child, measured by their remaining presence at home, number of meals eaten per day, attendance in school, and in families with more intensive work, the quality of interactions in the home and reductions in levels of violence.

The most important measure of success across our programs, and indeed one of the main objectives of our work, is whether reunified children, and vulnerable children in preventive family work, stay at home and in school. The following are achievements against this goal:

- In our most recent reporting period Railway Children's programs in Kenya and Tanzania achieved more than an 80 percent success rate in reunifications, achieved through a variety of supports and inputs as described above.

The program's preventative work in Mwanza, achieved the following in the first year (2013/2014) of a three-year DFID/Vitol-funded project:

- Targeting 60 households achieved a significant improvement in food security. At baseline, 53 percent of the families were able to have only one meal a day or less. At the end of the year this number had dropped to 5 percent.
- In a sample of 40 of these families, only 27 percent of children aged 7–14 were attending school

regularly at baseline. Less than a year later, 77 percent were attending regularly. This part of the program had a strong focus on economic empowerment and increased food security was just one outcome.

The measuring tool/checklist currently used in the ESEG program to measure family functioning responds to both staff and organizational capacity. ESEG staff developed the tool/checklist in collaboration with JUCONI.<sup>105</sup> The version developed for East Africa is more simplistic than that used in Mexico and uses sets of indicators that were developed by project staff and considered to be appropriate in the East Africa context. We plan to introduce and adapt other standardized tools used in the JUCONI programs as our staff become more proficient at using evaluation tools.

❖ **Vulnerability:** Both the tool/ checklist used by family educators and the method used for case analysis touch on risk and harm factors as well as protective and resilience factors with regard to: a) children's developmental needs ( particularly emotional and behavioural development, family and social relationships and self-care skills); b) parenting capacity, with special attention to basic care and safety, emotional warmth, guidance and boundaries and stability; c) family and environmental factors including income, employment, housing the family's social integration and wider support network.

#### 4. LEARNING

**Innovations:** Innovations include 1) an eco-systemic family approach, 2) services are delivered through a home visiting program in recognition of the significant difficulties parents face in sustaining participation, 3) emotional empowerment takes precedence, 4) specific on-going skills training for staff, and 5) time invested in each family.

**Lessons Learned:** This program draws the emotional support elements entirely from the work of the JUCONI Foundations in Mexico and Ecuador. Project staff and managers within partner organizations and within Railway Children Africa have received ongoing training and taken part in exchange trips to Mexico over a period of six years. Experiential analysis of the work in East Africa does now seem to bear out the starting hypotheses that the methodologies developed in Latin America are also of benefit to children and families in East Africa. These methodologies are built on the hypothesis that emotional empowerment and the creation of a family with at least one caring adult capable of supporting the child emotionally is a prerequisite to enabling economic strengthening with this specific population; for children from abusive homes, economic improvement alone does not seem to be enough to keep them at home. Given that the key ingredient and key tool in this approach is the project staff themselves, and the way in which they interact with beneficiaries, we feel that those essential elements of non-judgmental, consistent, accepting recognition of strengths is as relevant in East Africa as it is in Mexico. The practical tools used to carry out activities need to be adapted, for example the fish bowl used in Mexico has become a fish pond in Kenya, but the underlying principles and approaches seem to be relevant across these diverse cultures.

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<sup>105</sup>JUCONI is currently undertaking a piece of research on attachment relationships in conjunction with Baylor College of Medicine at the University of Texas, which includes pre- and post-testing with a control and intervention group. Results from this research will be available in 2016–2017.

It is interesting, but not surprising, that it is only really now, several years on from instituting a therapeutic approach to working with families, that we are seeing more consistent results in terms of creating change in the families with whom we work in East Africa. There is across the agencies that provide services for children on the streets in East Africa a high level of awareness of the development discourse and the discourse of child protection. Project staff can talk in an informed manner about traumatic effects of violence, about safety, about protection and most eloquently about rights—but the reality of their connectedness to the actual emotional needs of children and families is often very different. We have learned that to be able to provide a truly supportive relationship for damaged children and families requires extensive skills training; this needs to start with experiential exercises that enable staff to connect with and understand their own experiences and feelings. The ability to connect to the uniquely painful situation of each child and parent, to keep each in mind, and contain their emotions so that healing can begin to take place requires staff to be emotionally stable and to have a strong “emotional stomach.” Our experience shows that with the appropriate training staff can acquire the skills to help the hardest to reach families and that organizations can provide the supervision and support the staff carrying out this work require, providing a foundation on which to bring in economic strengthening activities for some of the most marginalized families.

This is extremely challenging work, but we do believe it’s possible and we are seeing transformational changes in very difficult cases. In Tanzania, a high proportion of families in general are affected by violence that goes beyond the legal levels of corporal punishment. From our experience this includes the families we work with; countrywide, three-quarters of boys and girls experience physical violence and nearly one of every 10 girls experiences sexual violence. In respect to physical violence, relatives and family members are among the main perpetrators.<sup>106</sup> In delivering our work and responding to the needs of these families, we believe the underlying theories and principles are universal, and can be applied in any context, though the content in terms of the activities and the materials used will vary depending on the context. Key underlying principles of consistency, persistency, non-judgmental acceptance of clients, a shift in perspective from “What’s the matter with you?” to a focus on “What happened to you?”<sup>107</sup> and a response that builds on strengths, models the behavior we want to see and provides a palpably different quality of relationship that will result in positive changes for the hardest to reach families in any context, and will provide the requisite foundation for effective economic strengthening activities.

**The Way Forward and Scaling:** We believe these approaches can be scaled up—and indeed have to be if we are to truly reach the most marginalized—but it is important to emphasise that we are not advocating this level of investment in and support for everybody. There may be elements of the economic strengthening work that we do that would be useful in larger poverty reduction programs, but they are not particularly innovative. For those populations that have suffered multiple deprivations, of which families with children on the streets are almost always included, economic strengthening will not be sustainable without emotional support to underpin it. This approach provides a framework for that. The greatest challenge in scaling up would be in ensuring any training and coaching provided genuinely supported the development of an environment that creates the safe emotional spaces for children and families to re-learn how to engage with each other, and to care for each other in meaningful ways.

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<sup>106</sup> "Violence against children in Tanzania." United Republic of Tanzania. 2011.

<sup>107</sup>Sandra Bloom.

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# ANNEX II: KEEPING CHILDREN OFF THE STREET IN ETHIOPIA: THE USE OF IGA SUPPORT AND SELF HELP GROUPS WITHIN REINTEGRATION AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS

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**Name of Organization:** Retrak

**Name of Program/Project:** Reintegration of Street Children and Community-Based Child Protection in SNNPR, Ethiopia

**Implementing Partners:** Retrak Ethiopia

**Program/Project Period:** October 2012–September 2015

**Funding Sources:** Cordaid

**Funding Amount:** 8,557,681 ETB (US\$475,426) over three years

**Themes:** Prevention, reintegration, street children, Ethiopia, savings and loans, self-help groups, income-generating activity (IGA) grants

## SUMMARY

Retrak Ethiopia is currently piloting a project combining economic strengthening and child protection strategies to reintegrate children from the streets and prevent further family separation. As part of the reintegration process income-generating activity (IGA) grants and business training are provided, alongside psychosocial support and parenting skills advice. The prevention program uses a savings and loans self-help groups to economically and socially empower women and deliver key child protection messages, which are further reinforced through wider community education. The mid-term review of this project has shown an improvement in children's wellbeing; increased savings and plans to increase income; greater understanding of children's needs, good parenting skills, and the risks of street life, child labor, and trafficking; and an increased desire to return and keep children at home. In addition to the 160 children reintegrated by Retrak from the streets, several mothers themselves brought children home from the streets or child labor, and 96 children were rescued and reintegrated from trafficking situations.

## DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

**Context:** Across the world there are thousands of children living on the streets. Retrak has 20 years' experience across East Africa of providing these children with the care they desperately need and seeking ways to reduce the number of children turning to the streets. In the last seven years, Retrak Ethiopia has provided over 1,200 children on the streets with transitional care, as well as worked with families and

communities to enable reintegration or independent living. A survey in 2010 estimated there are about 11,000 children on the street of Addis Ababa alone, with inadequate capacity to meet all their needs.<sup>108</sup> Since 2013, Retrak Ethiopia has implemented a combined reintegration and prevention program targeting SNNP Region where 31 percent of children in our Addis Ababa program originated from, and especially focusing on Hadiya Zone, which accounts for 50 percent of the SNNPR children.<sup>109</sup> This is a very poor area with many families relying on food aid for several months of each year. School dropout rates are high as children seek work in Addis Ababa or are trafficked or sold directly into exploitative labor in farms and cities. Retrak's research shows that the driving force for children to leave their families is extreme poverty plus family breakdown.<sup>110</sup> Accordingly, this project includes both child protection and economic strengthening elements.

**Economic Strengthening Intervention:** The reintegration element of the project uses Retrak's Family Reintegration Standard Operating Procedures<sup>111</sup> which were developed with input from our experienced social workers in Ethiopia and Uganda and based on the *UN Alternative Care Guidelines*, the *Convention for the Rights of the Child (CRC)* and *attachment theory research*. An economic assessment is a key part of this process to determine whether it is in a child's best interests to return home. When families are traced, and/or at placement, the social worker assesses the economic status of the family using their professional judgment, a simple check list, and a wellbeing assessment of the child and care-giver. The social workers provide guidance on small business set up and development, and, if appropriate, provide an IGA grant. Grants maybe used to set up new businesses (for example, making local bread, selling eggs or cheese) or diversifying existing businesses or farm practices. Progress of the IGA is monitored through follow-up visits and phone calls. Some families who did not initially receive an IGA grant may receive a grant when they are followed-up. In the first two years of this project 160 children were reintegrated in SNNPR, and 239 caregivers supported.<sup>112</sup> Seventy-seven percent of families of reintegrated children received an IGA grant since some families are assessed to be relatively economically secure.

The prevention element of the project is a pilot approach based on a savings and loans Self Help Group model used widely in Ethiopia by the Kale Heywet Church and Tearfund. Under guidance of local government, Retrak Ethiopia undertook a vulnerability assessment of three *woredas* (local areas) to better understand the vulnerability factors. This was followed by a participatory community survey and home visits, in collaboration with local government officials and community leaders, to identify potential beneficiaries. Women were invited to an envisioning workshop where the SHG approach was explained and SHGs were formed. Women were targeted in line with research that indicates that female-targeted SHGs can build savings, women's agency, and increased spending on children.<sup>113</sup> This has also been the experience of Tearfund in Ethiopia who recommend that SHGs should target women to achieve their

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<sup>108</sup> UNICEF, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and Street Invest, *Street Children Headcount 2010*, (Addis Ababa, 2010).

<sup>109</sup> Retrak monitoring data (2011).

<sup>110</sup> Joanna Wakia, *Why children are on the streets?* (Manchester: Retrak, internal document, 2010).

<sup>111</sup> Retrak, *Retrak Standard Operating Procedures: Family reintegration* (Manchester: Retrak, 2012).

<sup>112</sup> Retrak, *Mid-term review of "Reintegration of street children and community-based child protection in SNNPR, Ethiopia"* (Manchester: Retrak, 2014).

<sup>113</sup> Josh Chaffin, *The Impacts of Economic Strengthening Programs on Children* (Child Protection in Crisis/Women's Refugee Commission/University of Columbia Mailman School of Public Health, 2011).

social empowerment.<sup>114</sup> Eighteen SHGs were formed over a one-year period, involving 355 women, who are supporting a total of 1,557 children. The groups meet weekly to save (often as little as 4–5 ETB or US\$0.25/woman/week) and to participate in training in savings and loans and small business skills. After 12 months the women were able to begin borrowing money from their group to set up or develop small businesses (selling bread, eggs, cheese). They have been able to repay the loans with interest.

**Other Intervention Activities:** Retrak Ethiopia’s reintegration program begins through outreach on the streets of Addis Ababa to identify children living on the streets, followed by further support and assessment at a transitional center. To reduce the number of children reaching the streets of Addis Ababa from Hadiya and other areas, Retrak Ethiopia opened a second center in Hossana (the main town of Hadiya Zone) in 2014, also providing outreach and transitional care. Once families of the children in the centers are traced through phone calls and visits, the social worker verifies the causes of family separation and assesses the situation of the family. They are supported to build family reconciliation and offered guidance on effective parenting skills.

Similarly, in the prevention program the women SHG members, through their weekly meetings, receive training in parenting skills and child protection and are made aware of the dangers of life on the street and trafficking. This is an addition to the Kale Heywet Church/Tearfund SHG model, which is key to reaching our project’s prevention goals. The work with the SHGs is complemented by child wellbeing clubs in local schools and sports clubs for out-of-school children to educate them about the same issues. Teachers are trained as volunteer mentors and interested children are encouraged to join the clubs. The clubs then plan peer education activities to raise awareness among children about dangers of life on the street, trafficking, child protection, and child rights. Activities include role playing, debates, and sports competitions. Many of the women in the SHGs have children who attend the clubs and schools so there is reinforcement of the messages. In the same communities, we provide community education with community leaders, government officials, religious leaders, and bus drivers/loaders. The activities with bus drivers and government has led to children being rescued from trafficking and reintegrated by the government, as well as the prosecution of traffickers.

**Follow up and Monitoring Activities:** Reintegration is monitored through follow-up visits and phone calls. These follow a case management system set out in Retrak’s SOPs toolkit and includes child and caregiver wellbeing assessments. As a family progresses, follow-up is reduced, with attempts to ensure local community support. Eventually, once they have demonstrated their capacity to care for their children, they are phased out of the program.

Women in the SHGs are followed up each week since regular attendance at the SHGs is mandatory and enforced by the groups with fines for non-compliance. One of the strengths of the SHGs is the practical support that the groups provide to participants when families have health or other problems. As the groups mature, these new initiatives have included forming other social groups such as *Idirs* (funeral savings groups), taking complaints to government agencies, and lobbying for their rights. Retrak Ethiopia staff undertake regular home visits for the women using the same child and care-giver wellbeing assessment (six-monthly for each SHG member and a selected child in their family) and an annual economic survey.

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<sup>114</sup> Isobel Carter, *Releasing Potential: A facilitator’s learning resource for self-help groups* (Addis Ababa: Tearfund Ethiopia, 2013).

**Gaps and Challenges:** Ninety-eight percent of children who are reintegrated by Retrak Ethiopia return to families in rural communities, spread across almost the entire country. Of the 160 children reintegrated into SNNPR under this project, only 37 returned to Hadiya Zone where the new transitional center and prevention work is located. With such dispersed locations, it is difficult for Retrak Ethiopia to adequately assess and follow-up families in relation to their IGA grants, as well as being challenging to link families with local microfinance institutions, provide small business skills training in groups over a period of time, or

### Retrak model for returning children to safe homes



organize families into support groups all of which could boost their IGAs. In addition, the provision of IGA grants and training at the time of reunification is fraught with difficulties. During placements the focus is on reconciliation; it is an emotional time when families are not well placed to take in new information. The return of the child often creates a community “event” making it difficult to discuss sensitive matters linked to economic support, while managing expectations of handouts, and without encouraging other children to come to the streets. The difficulties of rural travel and budget and staff time constraints limit face-to-face follow up. Even within the combined project it was challenging to link the reintegrated children’s families with the prevention activities due to the geographic spread of families. Retrak Ethiopia is currently undertaking research into this area to generate further learning and solutions.

The main challenge in the prevention program has been a strong “dependency syndrome” in the Hadiya area. Past experience with other government and NGO initiatives, has led to a widespread belief that it was not possible for beneficiaries to save and establish small businesses without some cash payment or grants in kind. They expected that at some point Retrak Ethiopia would provide a cash payment. However, the program continued to follow the established SHG model, and, after two years, the women now believe in their ability to help themselves with the support of the group. The SHG Plus approach is not a “quick fix”: it requires attitudinal change in beneficiaries and in the community.

### OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

**Theory of Change:** Retrak’s overall theory of change is that by supporting children, families, communities, and governments, it can enable children to escape the abuse, exploitation, and stigma of the street to return to or remain in safe and caring families and communities.

Retrak’s model for successfully returning street children to safe homes is based on a conviction of the

central importance of children connecting to and forming secure attachments with a caregiver (Retrak, 2011).<sup>115</sup> There is, therefore, equal emphasis on working with the children and their families and communities. This process begins by reaching out to children and families in their own spaces, allowing Retrak to understand their situation and build trusting relationships. These trusting relationships provide the basis on which to then provide support to overcome barriers to (re)forming positive attachments, either through child-centered transitional care or individual parenting and economic support. Finally, to ensure that the success of placements continues and that children’s and families’ wellbeing improves, ongoing assistance is provided through follow-up visits and phone-calls and links to local community support.

Underpinning the community prevention SHG approach is a belief in the potential of every woman in a vulnerable family to solve her problems within the support of a group. The three interwoven factors driving change are:

**Retrak model for preventing family separation**



1. Economic empowerment facilitated by savings and loans: In the short term families are

able to meet their basic needs and cope with shocks. This enables them to continue saving and take out loans for small businesses (either new or diversified existing ones) and as these become more profitable, they can grow and maximize the benefits. Women involved in SHGs become economically secure and able to provide for their families’ needs, save, and invest to increase family income.

2. Social empowerment facilitated by the group process and skilled group facilitation: Initially group members support each other through challenges (such as, sick children) and then set up informal networks from which they have been excluded (such as, funeral savings groups). The poorest and most marginalized women thus become proactive in addressing personal problems and later advocate for their rights and participate in policy formation and the formal economy to improve their community.

3. Family strengthening supported by education and sensitization: In the short term families become aware of child protection issues and parenting techniques that enable them to try new methods. As their understanding grows they recognize child abuse and rescue children from exploitation and families are reunited. Families become cohesive to face challenges together and have a strong sense of agency in their own lives.

The overall impact of both the reintegration and prevention approach is cohesive and resilient families and communities, resulting in children and caregivers who are safe, healthy, educated, emotionally well, and free from extreme poverty.

**Target Beneficiaries:** Retrak’s reintegration programs initially target children found living on the streets and then their families. It is the children’s choice to join Retrak Ethiopia’s transitional programs; they and

<sup>115</sup> Retrak, *Retrak’s model: journeying together* (Manchester: Retrak, 2011).

their families are fully engaged throughout the process. Families who do not have sufficient income to support their children are targeted for the IGA support, as assessed through family interaction and wellbeing assessments.

In the prevention program, initial area targeting was based on the prevalence of children on the streets of Addis Ababa. Further targeting at community level was through government guidance, and community surveys and home visits, in collaboration with local government officials and community leaders. Beneficiaries are below the national average in terms of possessions and agricultural assets. On average the SHG members own 0.75 hectares of land and have a cash income of ~530 ETB (US\$27)/mth compared with the national average of <2 hectares and 744 ETB (US\$39)/mth.<sup>116</sup> The indirect beneficiaries are the children in these poor families.

**Evaluation and Evidence of Success:** The measure of success in this project is children remaining with their families and showing an improvement in wellbeing. Since we know that vulnerability to leaving home and moving to the streets is caused by a combination of poverty and family breakdown,<sup>117</sup> leading to a lack of care and neglect of children, Retrak focuses on measuring the wellbeing of children as a proxy for vulnerability. This includes the provision of basic needs parental care, and exposure to neglect and abuse.

Retrak has adapted the Child Status Index to track children's wellbeing from the streets through into reintegration, as well as during prevention interventions. These wellbeing assessments reveal that children's wellbeing improves during reintegration in all areas measured (food and nutrition, shelter and care, protection, health, psychosocial wellbeing, and education). Significantly, children's wellbeing continues to improve for up to and beyond 12 months after placement.<sup>118</sup> In this project, after two years 160 children were reintegrated (against a three-year target of 126) and 81 percent showed an improvement in wellbeing overall (against a three-year target of 80 percent).<sup>119</sup> This includes improvements in food, shelter, and access to health care and education, reflecting the economic wellbeing of the families and providing some evidence that economic strengthening has been effective. Wellbeing assessments as part of the prevention program revealed that after two years, 67 percent of children in SHG families had improved wellbeing (three-year target: 80 percent), particularly in the area of parental care (46 percent) and access to education (17 percent).<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Retrak, Mid-term review of "Reintegration of street children and community-based child protection in SNNPR, Ethiopia"

<sup>117</sup> Wakia, Why children are on the streets?

<sup>118</sup> Su Corcoran and Joanna Wakia, Evaluating Outcomes: Retrak's use of the Child Status Index to measure wellbeing of street-connected children (Manchester: Retrak, 2013).

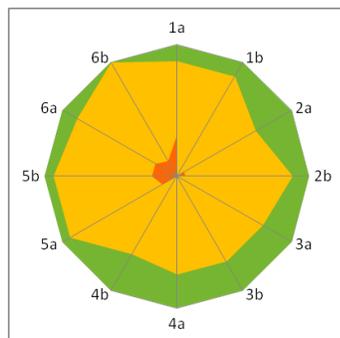
<sup>119</sup> Retrak, Mid-term review of "Reintegration of street children and community-based child protection in SNNPR, Ethiopia."

<sup>120</sup> Retrak, Mid-term review.

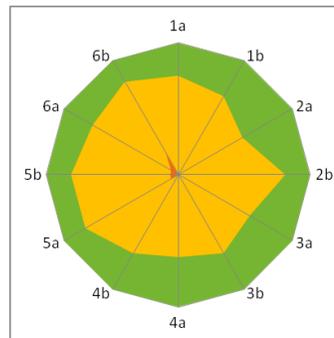
### Reintegrated children wellbeing

Spider diagrams show the cumulative percentage of children with each score, good to very bad, at different assessment points.

**Placement in reintegration  
(n=16)**

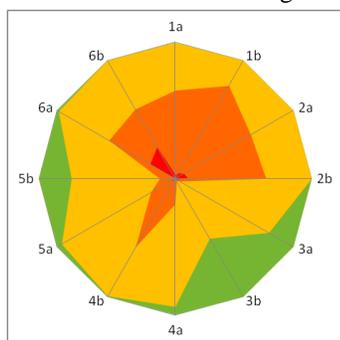


**Follow-up in reintegration  
(n=16)**

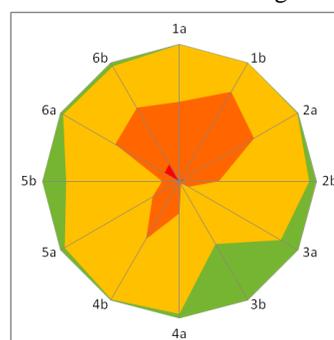


### Children of women in SHG wellbeing

**Assessment point 1 (n=150)  
(6.5–8.5 months after SHG registration)**



**Assessment point 2 (n=150)  
(11–13 months after SHG registration)**



■ Good   
 ■ Fair   
 ■ Bad   
 ■ Very bad

Domains: 1a Food Security, 1b Nutrition and Growth, 2a Shelter, 2b Care, 3a Abuse and Exploitation, 3b Legal Protection, 4a Wellness, 4b Health Care, 5a Emotional Health, 5b Social Behavior, 6a Education Performance, 6b Education Access

In addition to these wellbeing assessments, the prevention program also uses other tools that build on the experience of similar initiatives in Africa to track economic and child protection outcomes. These are: an economic survey for each SHG household (annually, one completed), community child protection mapping (midway and end, one completed), and Most Significant Change stories (annually, one completed). At the two-year point, 18 SHGs had been established (three-year target: 15), with a membership of 355 (three-year target: 255). The mid-term review<sup>121</sup> revealed that savings had reached an average of 240 ETB (US\$12) per household, 94 percent of SHG members have plans to increase their income and 25 percent reported improved work skills. The review demonstrated that SHG members are more aware of the risks children face on the streets or through child labor and there is an increased desire to return and keep their children home. A greater understanding of children's needs and good parenting skills was recorded,

<sup>121</sup> Retrak, Mid-term review.

and several mothers had located their children in exploitative labor locally or on the streets in Addis Ababa and had brought them home and re-enrolled them in school. Records also showed that 96 children had been rescued from trafficking and reintegrated with their families and three traffickers had been convicted.

A further indicator of social empowerment is the development of cluster level associations (CLA), which bring together several SHGs in a local area after a two- to three-year period. The CLAs allow the women to advocate for policy change to address important community issues and participate in the formal economy. Retrak's project is already seeing the beginning of this process with one SHG wanting to address the poor sanitation in their community through a CLA. In 2015, further SHGs will move to establish CLAs. As this process matures, the need for the external facilitation ceases.

## LEARNING

**Innovations:** In the prevention program, Retrak is using the SHG approach to address poverty, parenting skills, and community attitudes that are key factors that push children out of their families. We are using this approach innovatively by including a weekly educational component with a strong child protection emphasis to strengthen families to care for children. As a result, families have rescued children from the street or exploitative labor and prevented future separation. Other NGOs that use the SHG approach have had similar results in economic and social empowerment in Ethiopia and elsewhere but have not had the same child protection and family strengthening results.<sup>122</sup>

**Lessons Learned:** Retrak's reintegration programs in Ethiopia and elsewhere, have demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach in enabling street children to return to family care with improved wellbeing. However, we are aware that the economic strengthening element, including targeting, variety of support, follow-up, and monitoring, needs to be looked at more closely. We have begun this process through our current research project, which we hope will enable us to develop a clearer model and assessment criteria to use in a future pilot project. Initial results appear to show that when a child's wellbeing is assessed to be at risk (a score of 1 or 2) then the IGA is used to provide basic needs; once a child's wellbeing shows no risk (a score of 3 or 4) then the IGA is able to provide a profit above provision of basic needs.<sup>123</sup> We anticipate, therefore, that future work will include the use of the graduation model to ensure that any economic strengthening intervention is appropriate to the needs of the family and that there is a logical progression of support as the family's economic wellbeing improves. To address the challenge of dispersed families the pilot will also include the use of solar-powered digital auditory players to provide small business skills and parenting training in local languages. This pilot project will allow us to assess the effectiveness of these interventions, including undertaking a gender analysis, to look at women's agency and family dynamics. This is important to understand more clearly given both the evidence around women's likelihood to spend on children and the fact that many children return to single-mother families or to blended families (in some contexts neglect and abuse from stepparents is a significant push factor).

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<sup>122</sup> Isobel Carter, *Releasing Potential: A facilitator's learning resource for self-help groups* (Addis Ababa: Tearfund Ethiopia, 2013).

<sup>123</sup> Forthcoming research by Hannah Winchmann, Retrak.

The first two years of Retrak Ethiopia's pilot prevention program has already proved successful in protecting children from family separation and promoting reintegration. The combination of child protection education, women's empowerment, and economic strengthening is powerful; on their own they may not be sufficient. We have demonstrated that by incorporating discussions on parenting skills, child protection, and child development into a SHG approach it is possible to impact children's wellbeing even in the early stages of building up savings and loans.

The graduation model does not explicitly underpin the SHG approach, but it was evident during implementation that there is a progression in economic wellbeing and that women use their savings for different purposes as the groups mature. Initially women applied for small loans to provide for school fees, health-care expenses or food. As they developed a culture of saving, they then set up additional savings for protection against economic shocks (for example, for funerals, school fees, and cultural celebrations). After 12 months, as their savings built up, women took out loans for promotion of family wealth through establishing small businesses. As their skills in saving, repaying loans, and establishing profitable businesses increased, the women became socially empowered.

**Adaptation and Replication:** Retrak is successfully using its Family Reintegration SOPs with several projects in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, and Uganda, and have had considerable interest in them from much further afield. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the provision of IGA grants and business training with families are closer in proximity to each other and the main project site is more successful because it can be tailored to the local situation. To help generate further learning about how to build families' economic capacity within reintegration projects that target dispersed families, Retrak is looking to pilot a project, based on the graduation model, in several locations in both Ethiopia and Uganda.

Retrak Ethiopia's prevention program, with a child protection emphasis, could be replicated in other rural areas of Ethiopia or other countries where there are strong factors that push children to the streets. The SHG approach with women is a proven, sustainable approach to reduce poverty, empower women, and increase spending on children. After establishing the particular child protection and family threats in a given context, it is possible to incorporate education about these issues into the weekly SHG meetings to strengthen families to care for children. The other interventions that accompany the SHG activities need to target the particular issues in a community can be identified through community child protection mapping methods. The biggest challenge in replicating this project is the desire for a quick-fix solution. This project is effective but it takes time (a minimum of three years) to achieve change, but this change has the potential to then be sustainable and continuous.

**The Way Forward and Scaling:** Using Retrak's Family Reintegration SOPs to build the capacity of social workers employed by both government and NGO sectors, and trying to bridge the gap with community-based programs, will allow many more vulnerable children on the streets and in institutions to be reintegrated with their families and/or communities. Essential to achieving scale up is building political will for policies and the allocation of suitable resources. Retrak has successfully piloted a joint-government project in Ethiopia with a large government girls' home and is in the beginning stages of a USAID DCOF-funded project in Uganda to work, in part, with children in government remand homes. Our experience to date is that building a common understanding of the principles underlying the reintegration process allows individualized programs that fit the organization's and child's situation.

The prevention program using SHGs could be scaled up when communities of need are identified through assessments of family vulnerability, both economically and socially. It is a cost-effective approach with each community development worker facilitating six SHGs, monitoring five child welfare clubs, and organizing community education in a local area. In Retrak Ethiopia's project the cost/beneficiary/year is only US\$4. With appropriate training in the SHG approach, facilitation skills, small business skills, child protection, and effective parenting skills, community development workers with basic training (diploma or degree in development) can be equipped to implement this approach. From Retrak's experience, it is important that the community workers come from the local community, understand the culture and speak the language. When they live in the local area respect for the program grows and both male and female Community Development Workers are equally effective. With the support of key stakeholders (UNICEF, government agencies, and donors) and appropriate capacity building of community workers in targeted communities, this is an approach that can be brought to scale to cover the most vulnerable communities.

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# ANNEX 12: PREVENTING FAMILY SEPARATION AMONG ULTRA-POOR FAMILIES IN BURKINA FASO: INTEGRATING ECONOMIC STRENGTHENING WITH SENSITIZATION ON CHILD RIGHTS

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**Name of Program/Project:** Child Protective Effects of Economic Strengthening and Child Rights Interventions among Ultra-poor Families in Burkina Faso

**Geographic Location of Program/Project:** Burkina Faso, Nord Region

**Implementing Partners:** Trickle Up, Aide aux Enfants et aux Familles Démunies (ADEFAD)

**Program/Project Period:** October 2013–April 2016

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**Theme(s):** Economic empowerment, prevention of child separation, Graduation Approach, asset theory, women's economic empowerment

## SUMMARY

The Nord Region of Burkina Faso is characterized by extreme poverty that has a significant impact on children's nutritional and education status, child protection outcomes, and child separation. Specifically, children who are separated from their families due to work, marriage, or to attend religious schools have an increased risk of exposure to hazardous work and physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. The evaluation study tests the effect of a women's *economic empowerment program* (Trickle Up) alone and a *combination of economic empowerment and child rights sensitization program* (Trickle Up Plus) to prevent family separation and violence against children. The evaluation study is currently being conducted by the team from the University of Chicago using a three-arm cluster randomized controlled trial with 360 extreme-poor households from 12 impoverished villages in Burkina Faso. The study is testing the efficacy of these program components in preventing family separation and will give insights into the relationship between socio-economic factors, women's empowerment, child separation, and child wellbeing outcomes.

## DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

**Context:** This study takes place in the Nord Region of Burkina Faso, which is located in the semi-arid Sahel region near the border with Mali. Many families in this region live in abject poverty. The Nord Region is characterized by extreme poverty and ongoing food and nutrition crisis due to low soil productivity and cyclical droughts. There is an increase in child protection risks (for example, child labor, labor-related

family separation, low school attendance) during the “lean season,” after the previous season’s harvests are depleted and before the new harvests. During this time children are often sent to work in other regions or countries, often in hazardous conditions. Many children are separated from their families to engage in work in gold mines, cotton fields, or cocoa plantations in the south of Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, or other neighboring countries.

Extreme poverty is the primary driver of family separation worldwide, and living outside of family care increases children’s vulnerability to violence and exploitation, including exposure to the worst forms of child labor (for example, slavery, debt bondage, transactional sex, forced or hazardous work). For this reason, humanitarian agencies often use economic approaches (microfinance, cash transfers, income-generation schemes, skills training) to shore up household economies. The impact of family-based economic interventions on children’s welfare to prevent family separation has rarely been tested, however. Approximately 1.25 million children in Burkina Faso are working to add to their families’ incomes or because their families cannot support them. In addition to poverty, cultural norms and a lack of information are also believed to play a role. In search of better opportunities and unaware of the risks, parents may choose to send their children away for work.

Outcomes for adolescent girls are particularly abysmal. Girls in particular are at risk for exposure to transactional sex and sexual abuse when separated from families and sent to work as domestic servants or maids to the capital city, Ouagadougou. A Population Council study estimates that one in three sexually active 12- to 19-year-old girls receive money or other items (primarily clothes or jewelry) in exchange for sex and 8 percent of girls experience coerced sex.<sup>1</sup> In addition, girls are often faced with early and forced marriage to reduce financial burden on the family. According to a study by Population Council in Nord Region, about 80 percent of girls in Nord do not attend school, 65.5 percent report early sexual debut (under 18), and 59 percent report early marriage (married by age 18).<sup>124</sup> Boys face the risk of being sent away for sub-optimal educational arrangements such as religious schools outside of their community. Many of these religious schools, known locally as *madrassas*, are known in Burkina Faso to force their students to engage in begging and hazardous work as an exchange for boarding, and to practice corporal punishment.

*Key factors that were adjusted based on the Burkina Faso context.* Trickle Up has been working in Burkina Faso for over a decade, during which time it has adapted its economic intervention to the local context (as described in the next section). The context of child separation and their specific vulnerability factors led to the addition of a child sensitization component. The child sensitization component was developed by Trickle Up’s local partner Aide aux Enfants et aux Familles Démunies (ADEFAD). ADEFAD has extensive experience in addressing child protection in the province where the intervention takes place. Moreover, the child sensitization component was completed with input from the project’s Community Collaborative Board, which includes members from the Ministry of Social Protection, the University of Ouagadougou, and national and regional child protection experts.

A preliminary qualitative assessment demonstrated that, in some instances, adolescents themselves may choose to leave home in search of work, often in defiance of their parents’ wishes. This behavior is driven

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<sup>124</sup> Population Council. Key Data Points on Adolescent Women in Nord and Sahel regions of Burkina Faso, 2012.

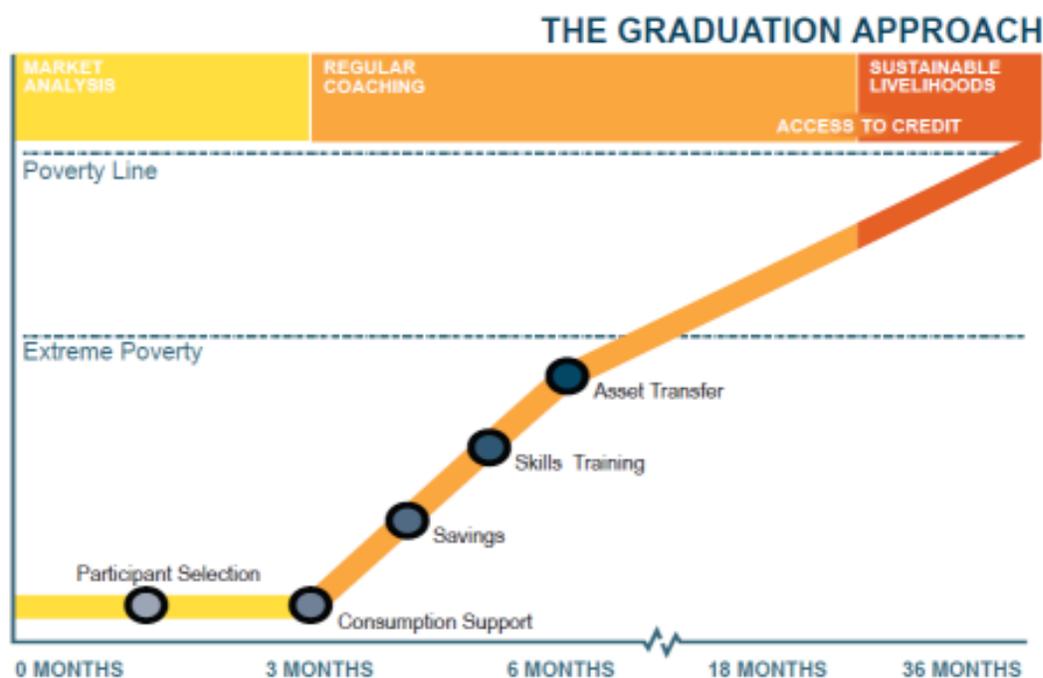
by both basic needs but also the desire for “luxury” goods (clothes, cell phones) that they are not able to obtain otherwise. Peer pressure exacerbates the drive for obtaining luxury goods. The extent to which changes in the household economy, women’s influence in the household, and sensitization of caregivers can help influence children’s own decision-making processes is not yet known, and will be assessed particularly through post-intervention qualitative evaluation. Learnings may impact whether a component targeted specifically at adolescents should also be included in future programs.

**Economic Strengthening Intervention(s):** In partnership with local agencies, Trickle Up utilizes a carefully sequenced set of time-bound economic interventions designed to move families sustainably out of extreme poverty, based on the Graduation Approach (see Figure 1). This approach for populations considered too poor to be reached by or sufficiently benefit from micro-finance and other development approaches was developed by BRAC (formerly Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) and globally piloted by the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP) housed at the World Bank and the Ford Foundation with 10 organizations, including Trickle Up. Trickle Up’s interventions are aimed at female primary caregivers. Economic strengthening activities include:

- Savings group formation and training to provide participants with a safe place to save, access to credit at reasonable interest rates, and the opportunity to build social capital
- Livelihood planning and household management training
- Seed capital grants to jump-start or expand livelihood activities (for example, vending, animal husbandry)
- Bi-weekly to monthly one-on-one mentoring and coaching on livelihood development conducted by field workers

Although the exact timing and nature of components vary between regions, the basic sequencing of the Graduation Approach is depicted in the diagram below (in Burkina Faso, as in many countries, the intervention is 24 months instead of 36).

Figure 6



The sequencing of the intervention is basically the same for each household, although the livelihood planning stage takes into account both local market conditions and the resources available to and limitations faced by each household. This includes determining what other income sources are available to the household, the availability of labor and other productive resources, and the households' most pressing needs and vulnerabilities (for example, number of dependents, sickness in the household). Such factors can influence the types and sequencing of livelihood activities themselves, for example by promoting short-cycle, quick-return activities early on for households with no buffer, complemented with longer cycle, more profitable activities later on. Sequencing around the lean season is also important, with the program ideally starting well prior so that participants have time to establish economic activities and amass sufficient savings in their groups so that they need not rely on irreversible coping mechanisms when their harvests are depleted in the first year.

The training and follow-up monitoring and coaching are aimed at imparting skills, building confidence and motivation, and also ensuring that the seed capital grant is used for productive purposes. This helps to counter dependency by stressing it is a one-off transfer aimed at facilitating investment in productive activities—a type of investment that extremely poor households are usually otherwise unable to make.

“Graduation,” or moving out of extreme poverty, is assessed according to a range of factors, including increased savings, income, diversification of livelihood activities, food security, and participation in the community. Although not all participants are expected to graduate within the two-year time period, ongoing membership in savings groups continues to provide social and financial support after the end of the program.

**Other Intervention Activities:** The Trickle Up sequence of economic strengthening activities is complemented by sensitization activities around child protection being implemented by ADEFAD. Sensitization is taking place first at the level of the savings groups, with follow-up then being done at the household level. It is integrated into mentoring and coaching activities, following the formation of savings groups. The evaluation is currently testing whether the added sensitization component deepens any protective effects that may result from the economic intervention alone. The sensitization includes information about:

- The dangers of sending children away from home for work (in gold mining sites, or to other towns to work as domestic servants) or to serve as Talibés in religious schools
- The negative consequences of early and forced marriage
- The importance of school enrollment, attendance and performance for girls, including the opportunity cost of domestic chores
- Cultural attitudes and expectations around gender that underlie girls' vulnerability to violence

**Follow-up and Monitoring Activities:** Household-level coaching visits after the training are an essential component of Trickle Up's economic empowerment interventions. Coaching visits strengthen the economic empowerment activities and address challenges as they arise, including referring cases to support services and authorities when needed. Follow-up visits also serve as an important tool to increase participants' confidence to interact in social and economic capacities. Trickle Up monitors the quality of coaching, sensitization activities, and referral processes. At this stage no formal follow-up services have been planned following the two-year program intervention; however, it is expected that ADEFAD will remain in contact with the savings groups and village authorities to provide support when required.

**Gaps and Challenges:** Various challenges have been faced in operational and programming activities. First, there was difficulty in selecting comparable villages for the economic intervention, and gaining support from local authorities to implement an evaluation study. Although villages are selected based on poverty level, using local statistics and the knowledge of local partners and authorities, other factors, including ethnic mix, also needed to be taken into account. Further, markets in the areas that have been selected for intervention tend to be weak, which limits opportunities for livelihood development. This is addressed through the livelihood planning process, which includes market assessments, and by encouraging participants to diversify livelihood activities, including investing in livestock for which ready access to markets is not necessary for profitability.

Another challenge is that participant capacity to absorb training messages and manage their activities varies. This is being addressed by increasing the coaching support. Almost all participants are illiterate and therefore it is challenging to teach basic accounting and other means to track income. When savings groups are first set up field staff provide support with the basic accounting required with Village Savings and Loan Associations (most transactions are recorded with stamps) and then help the group to build this capacity or identify someone who can provide such support for the longer term. Training and monitoring methods have also been designed for this context; coaching is intended to provide "just-in-time" training to enable participants to put skills into use as they need them, increasing their retention without needing to have them written down. Intra-household dynamics, including domestic abuse (sometimes exacerbated by alcoholism associated with mining sites) have also negatively impacted some women's ability to develop

livelihood activities. Field agents follow-up on such cases by providing increased support and motivation to affected participants, and attempting to address the situation by engaging the husbands, village chiefs, and village council members. Based on monitoring, this approach generally appears to be successful although intra-household dynamics can remain problematic.

Other challenges include the lack of sufficient spots for girls in village schools, limiting the potential benefits of sensitization around the importance of staying in school. The timing of the program has also presented challenges. Due to some delays in commencing the evaluation, the program began in the rainy season, a time when many of the participants could not devote a large amount of time to training, planning, and commencing new livelihood activities because of their farming responsibilities. This led to delays in training and the disbursement of seed capital grants.

Challenges for the evaluation have included developing measurement tools sensitive to the cultural and socio-economic context, and the difficulty of accurately assessing household and child outcomes that are highly seasonal. Capturing the nuances in household and child-level decision making—in which children may choose to leave the household even against their parents' wishes—and how they are impacted by the economic strengthening program along with gaining reliable data on some sensitive topics like transactional sex has also been difficult, and are being complemented by qualitative assessment (which will include in-depth interviews and focus group discussions). In addition, the tools needed to be translated from English to French and then translated to Moore, the local language. Pre-testing and adaptation of the evaluation tools took a substantial amount of time. Political riots linked to government transitions have slightly delayed both evaluation and program activities.

## OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

**Theory of Change:** Trickle Up uses a “pathways” approach to economic strengthening that is based on the premise that extremely poor households must stabilize their household consumption and build skills, confidence, and social connectedness to be able to invest in longer term, higher yielding activities, and productively use credit. It is assumed that there is very little knowledge in money management, and entrepreneurship, and little access to capital. In addition, the child right’s sensitization component is considered a beneficial complement to sensitize adult members of the household who have little knowledge of child rights and the negative effects connected with child separation, child labor, and early marriage.

The Graduation Approach, which stresses the development of human, social as well as financial capital, is also consistent with “asset theory” developed by Michael Sherraden<sup>125</sup> that links family economic wellbeing and stability with improved child outcomes. Asset theory posits that assets (for example, savings, educational opportunities, economic opportunities in the form of income-generating activities/microenterprises) have important long-term psychological and social benefits for individuals and families with limited financial resources that go beyond economic opportunities (for example, investing in child’s education, protecting children from risk situations). Using asset theory, the study hypothesizes that if extreme-poor families are able to meet their household needs they will be less likely to send their children away for work or to other hazardous situations. As shown in Figure 2, below, improving the

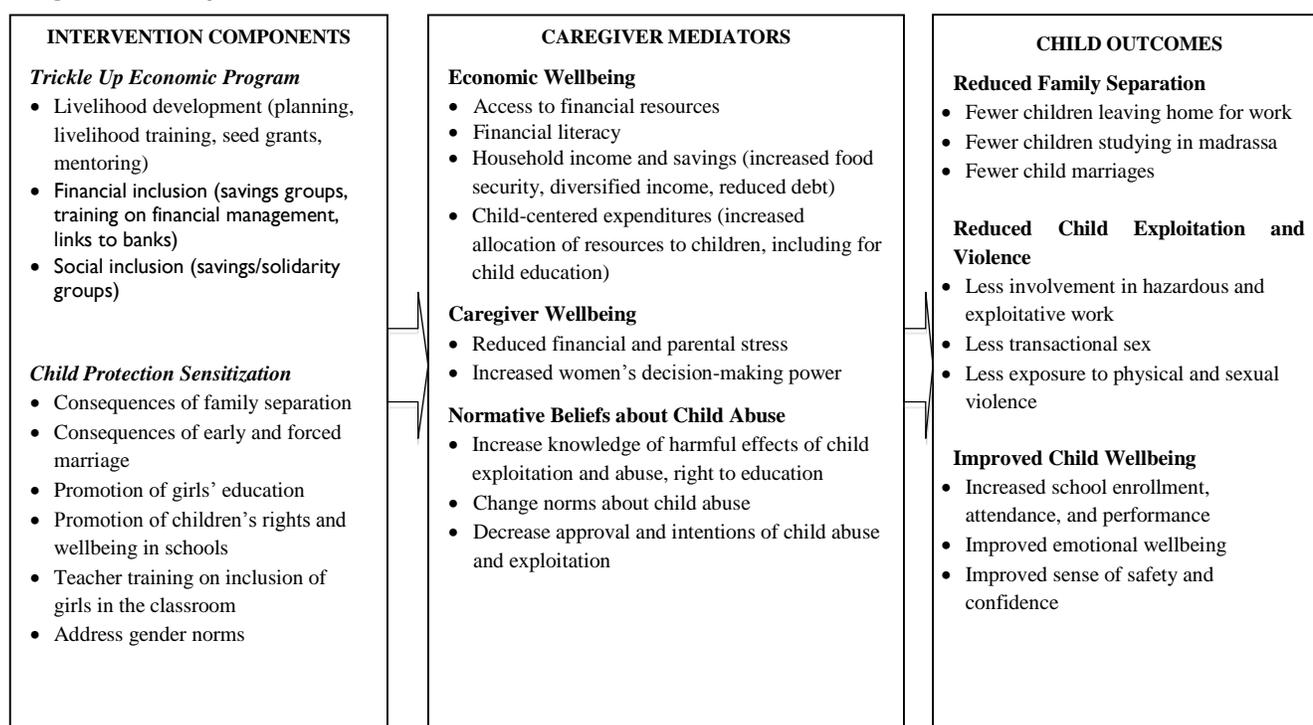
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<sup>125</sup> Sherraden, Michael, 1991, *Assets and the Poor*, a New American Welfare Policy, Inc., Armonk, NY.

extreme-poor household's ability to meet basic needs should prevent them from sending their children out of the home to seek work or marrying girls off at an early age. In addition, if families have the resources to allocate for children's education, they are less likely to send the child for alternate, sub-optimal educational arrangements such as religious schools outside of their community.

**Target Beneficiaries:** This intervention targets families through a) economic strengthening of female members of the households and b) child rights sensitization of all members of the household. The program is premised upon the proposition that a combined approach of economic empowerment and child rights sensitization leads to the reduction in family separation. The program does not directly target children, although monitoring data suggest that they do often participate in economic strengthening activities. The sensitization component includes messaging aimed at ensuring that this involvement does not negatively affect their education or wellbeing.

**Figure 2. Conceptual Model**



The intervention targets children and female caregivers in extreme-poor households, defined as those who are among the poorest of the extreme poor in Burkina Faso. Women are targeted both to promote women's empowerment as an end in itself, and because women often direct a greater proportion of the resources they have available to support their households. By economically empowering women Trickle Up has noted that they tend to play a more active role in household decision making, which can have particular impact on decisions around girls' education and marriage. Trickle Up has been working in Burkina Faso and Mali for over 10 years; the economic strengthening program has been adapted to the local context prior to the start of this specific project. Adaptations that have been made include program duration, coaching, savings group methodology (Village Savings and Loan/VSL model was adopted two

years ago), and revising specific content and training modules to reflect local market conditions.

**Evaluation and Evidence of Success:** Globally, past Trickle Up activities have had a demonstrable impact on the livelihoods of women. Specifically, there has been an increase in families who reported a decrease in hunger and an increase in livelihoods and assets. With respect to women’s empowerment—one hypothesized mediating factor—women have reported increased decision-making power in the home, including regarding decisions around their children’s schooling. RCTs of six other Graduation pilots show an increase in food security, savings, assets, income and consumption, and significant cost-benefits (exact figures are currently embargoed). This current evaluation is novel in that it evaluates the impact of the Trickle Up intervention on child separation. The intervention is currently being implemented and the evaluation study is in progress. At present, only baseline data have been collected and one-year follow-up data will be available in fall 2015. The baseline and follow-up assessments included a number of outcome and mediator variables; the key constructs are described below.

*Economic wellbeing and livelihood development.* To assess household financial situation, women provided information about household expenses (for example, school fees, school supplies, children’s clothing, and health-related expenses), debt and access to financial institutions and programs, diversification of income sources; food security; savings behavior and access to and usage of credit; household assets (both productive and consumer); housing; economic activity and income of both women participants and the broader household; consumption patterns and coping mechanisms in times of need. Questions assessing economic wellbeing are adapted from the Household Hunger Survey,<sup>126</sup> Demographic and Health Survey (DHS),<sup>127</sup> and Niger National Survey of Household Living Conditions.<sup>128</sup> Self-report data will be supplemented with administrative data from savings groups.

*Family separation and other child protective outcomes.* Children and mothers were asked about family separation (location, reasons), involvement in child labor (patterns and conditions), exposure to violence, exploitation, and the worst forms of child labor (for example, hazardous labor, transactional sex, slavery, or debt bondage), child marriage and studying in religious schools (madrassas). In addition to self-reported data from children, mothers provided information about family separation and child protective outcomes for all her remaining children under the age of 15, including those who do not currently reside in the household. Questions about child labor were adapted from the International Labour Organization (ILO) SIMPOC Survey<sup>129</sup> and exposure to violence was assessed using the Child Abuse Screening Tool Children’s Version (ICASTCH).<sup>130</sup>

The three-arm cluster randomized controlled trial (RCT) with baseline and one-year follow-up includes 360 households. Each selected household includes a female primary caregiver with one randomly selected

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<sup>126</sup> Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance III Project (FANTA). (2011). Household Hunger Scale (HHS): Indicator Definition and Measurement Guide. Washington, D.C.: FANTA.

<sup>127</sup> ICF International. 2011. Demographic and Health Surveys Methodology - Questionnaires: Household, Woman’s, and Man’s. MEASURE DHS Phase III: Calverton, Maryland, USA.

<sup>128</sup> Niger National Survey of Household Living Conditions. (2011). Survey and Census Division, National Institute of Statistics. Niger.

<sup>129</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO). Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC). ILO.

<sup>130</sup> Developed by the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN). Runyan, D.K. et al. (2009). The development and piloting of the ISPCAN child abuse screening tool. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 33(11):826–832.

child between the ages of 10–15 who is also able to participate in the evaluation. The study evaluates the efficacy of an *economic empowerment program* (Trickle Up) and a *combination of economic empowerment and child rights sensitization program* (Trickle Up Plus) to prevent child separation and potential subsequent exposure to exploitation, abuse, and hazardous working conditions among children. The three arms of the trial are: the Trickle Up Program, Trickle Up Plus, and the waitlist, which serves as the control arm. The control arm participants will receive the intervention upon completion of follow-up interviews.

Participants were selected in two stages. First, 12 impoverished comparable villages were selected based on socio-economic status (poverty ranking and food insecurity), geography, population size, and distance from urban center. Second, within these communities, families living in extreme poverty were identified using a Participatory Wealth Ranking exercise in which community members themselves determined the main characteristics of poverty level, followed by household-level verification of poverty status (including ownership of livestock, productive equipment, land, housing construction, number of dependents). Within each household one female caregiver was recruited if she cared for a child between the ages of 10 and 15. Households with 10- to 15-year-olds were selected because this is the age range deemed most vulnerable to separation, early marriage, and dropping out of school. Consent for participation was first taken from the male head of household. In the case of multiple wives, male heads of households were requested to nominate a wife; if the poorest wife was not selected, her participation was requested instead of the nominated wife. Eligible and consenting female caregivers and children (360 women and 360 children) were interviewed at baseline. To minimize cross-arm contamination, randomization was conducted at the village level and eligible households from the same village were assigned to the same condition (four villages/120 households per arm). Baseline data were collected in October 2014 and one-year follow-up data will be available in the fall of 2015. (Trickle Up is also seeking funding to enable a two-year follow-up data collection.)

As cited above, the study included measurement tools that have been previously used and tested for cultural relevancy in multiple international contexts. Furthermore, the evaluation tools and research protocol were reviewed by the local Community Collaborative Board to adapt to the context of Burkina Faso. The study protocol has received ethical approval from both the University of Chicago Internal Review Board and the Burkina Faso Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation Ethics Committee for Research in Health (ECRH). Data collection was conducted by graduate students from the University of Ouagadougou, trained by the study principal investigators from the University of Chicago. The interviewer-administered surveys with mothers and children lasted about 40-60 minutes and were conducted separately at the participant's home. Given the sensitive nature of these questions, data collectors are trained to assess whether children were in need of immediate support. In cases where abuse is suspected, data collectors were trained to refer to ADEFAD, which was then able to refer children to child protection authorities.

The baseline data have provided insight into the characteristics of participants and key child protective outcomes, including separation of children from families due to work, migration, or marriage. The study interviewed women and children from 360 households. Ninety percent of households experience moderate to severe hunger (skipping meals, eating smaller meals, going to bed hungry or going without a meal for the entire day). The overwhelming majority of participants (98 percent) were Muslim and lived in large households consisting, on average, of 10 people.

Female caregivers were, on average, 37 years of age. All mothers were currently married with 39 percent living in polygamous marriages with at least one other wife. Of the 360 interviewed women, only 2.5 percent of women were literate and were able to read and write (in French or Moore, local language). Women, on average, had four children under the age of 15. Nineteen women (5.2 percent) reported having at least one child under the age of 15 who lives away from the home and 25 percent had a child who attends a madrassa. One percent of mothers reported having a girl between the ages of 12 and 15 who is married and 4 percent reported having a girl under the age of 11 who is promised in marriage.

Of the 360 interviewed children, 16 (4.4 percent) had been separated and lived away from their families to work in gold mines, sell goods, or engage in domestic work in the capital city Ouagadougou. Older children, children from larger households, and those not attending school were at higher risk of being sent away to work. When separated from family, children reported working an average of 40 hours per week. Of children who worked, 47 percent were working under hazardous conditions and 49% were exposed to physical and emotional violence at work. About 12 percent of children were forced to beg on the streets and about 1 percent were forced to exchange sex for money or steal.

**Vulnerability:** There are multiple vulnerabilities of child separation in the Nord Region of Burkina Faso. Vulnerabilities were assessed using validated tools designed and tested for multiple countries. Moreover, longitudinal data from the evaluation study will give further insight into the association between these vulnerabilities and the child separation outcomes. Child vulnerabilities assessed include exposure to hazardous work, level of education, child abuse, and sexual abuse. In addition to these factors, the evaluation study will also test the association between mother's vulnerabilities such as exposure to domestic violence, lack of financial autonomy (limited access or control over household assets and resources), and psychological distress on family separation.

## LEARNING

**Innovations:** The effectiveness of the Graduation Approach upon which Trickle Up's intervention is based has been validated and used in multiple country contexts. There has yet to be an evaluation on the impact of the intervention on child separation, however. Moreover, the Trickle Up Plus arm of the intervention has an addition of a child rights sensitization program, which is intended to raise the awareness of all members of the household about the risks of child separation, child labor and early marriage. Therefore, this project and evaluation will give further insight into the effectiveness of an economic strengthening program, and the previously unexplored combination of economic strengthening and child rights sensitization activities for preventing family separation.

**Lessons Learned:** The project has completed baseline data analysis; more insight and recommendations will be developed once the 12-month follow-up data analysis has been completed. The Trickle Up program and the Graduation Approach have been successfully tested and adapted in multiple countries and contexts. This is a pilot for the Trickle Up Plus program; learnings will inform future design of Trickle Up programs, and will be shared with others in the Graduation community. These learnings will include whether adding a sensitization component on child protection for caregivers is worthwhile, and may also include whether other interventions targeted directly at children may also be required to reduce family separation.

The Graduation Approach for people living in extreme poverty is an interdisciplinary methodology that emerged from economic development organizations in response to the fact that economic initiatives such as microfinance were not reaching the poorest and most marginalized. Graduation initiatives target these populations with the goal of moving them out of extreme poverty through a carefully sequenced series of interventions in a sustainable and time-bound manner. Trickle Up participated in a CGAP–Ford Foundation initiative to pilot the graduation model in eight diverse locations, beginning in 2007, and has since continued to use the Graduation Approach. The program showed positive impact with regard to household food consumption and security, income, total assets, resilience to shocks, trends and hungry seasons, diversified livelihoods activities, savings, access to credit and basic social services, and economic and social empowerment.

In Burkina Faso, Trickle Up has focused on rural areas in the Nord Region. Additional emphasis has been placed on the savings group methodology to strengthen women’s economic and social participation and decision making; the groups are important sources of solidarity for women, including providing a venue for problem solving and mutual support to address economic and social problems and enhance opportunities for their children. Only women who have the potential to engage in economic activities are selected, which excludes some of the elderly and people with severe disabilities, although efforts are made to integrate women with disabilities whenever possible.

Given the complex nature of multi-generational and polygamous households in Burkina Faso, we used two definitions of household: *concession* (larger household, including co-wives and their dependents, in-laws, and family patriarchs) and *ménage*, which referred to smaller households consisting of the woman, her spouse, and their dependents, excluding the families of co-wives and their children, who often reside on the premises but are not enrolled in the intervention study.

**Adaptation and Replication:** The Graduation Model has been previously scaled in a number of contexts, including by BRAC in Bangladesh, and is now being integrated into government programs in a number of countries, including Colombia, Peru, and Ethiopia. The most challenging component to scale is the coaching component of the intervention because of the human resources and management requirements to ensure quality. Both the child sensitization component and the economic empowerment trainings have a coaching component.

At the moment, Trickle Up is also engaged in another evaluation project to test the best means to ensure quality in coaching when scaling through local partnerships and determining the impact of performance-based incentives, and enabling adaptations to coaching mechanisms such as using village-level agents and mobilizing support from established savings group members. These learnings will inform future replication.

In India, where Trickle Up also implements the Graduation Model, there are promising experiences in further analyzing the “lean season” as the high-risk period for migration and child separation and coordinating with government officials to ensure the additional services be delivered to families during that period to forestall migration. The linkage of economic strengthening and child protection issues is critical to inform program design in other contexts and also to coordinate with government services in the timing and transfer of benefits that could also serve to stabilize families during high-risk periods.