

Nigeria Community Booklet

National Standards for Improving the Quality
of Life of Vulnerable Children in Nigeria



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USAID ASSIST Project
Applying Science to Strengthen
and Improve Systems

University Research Co. LLC (URC)
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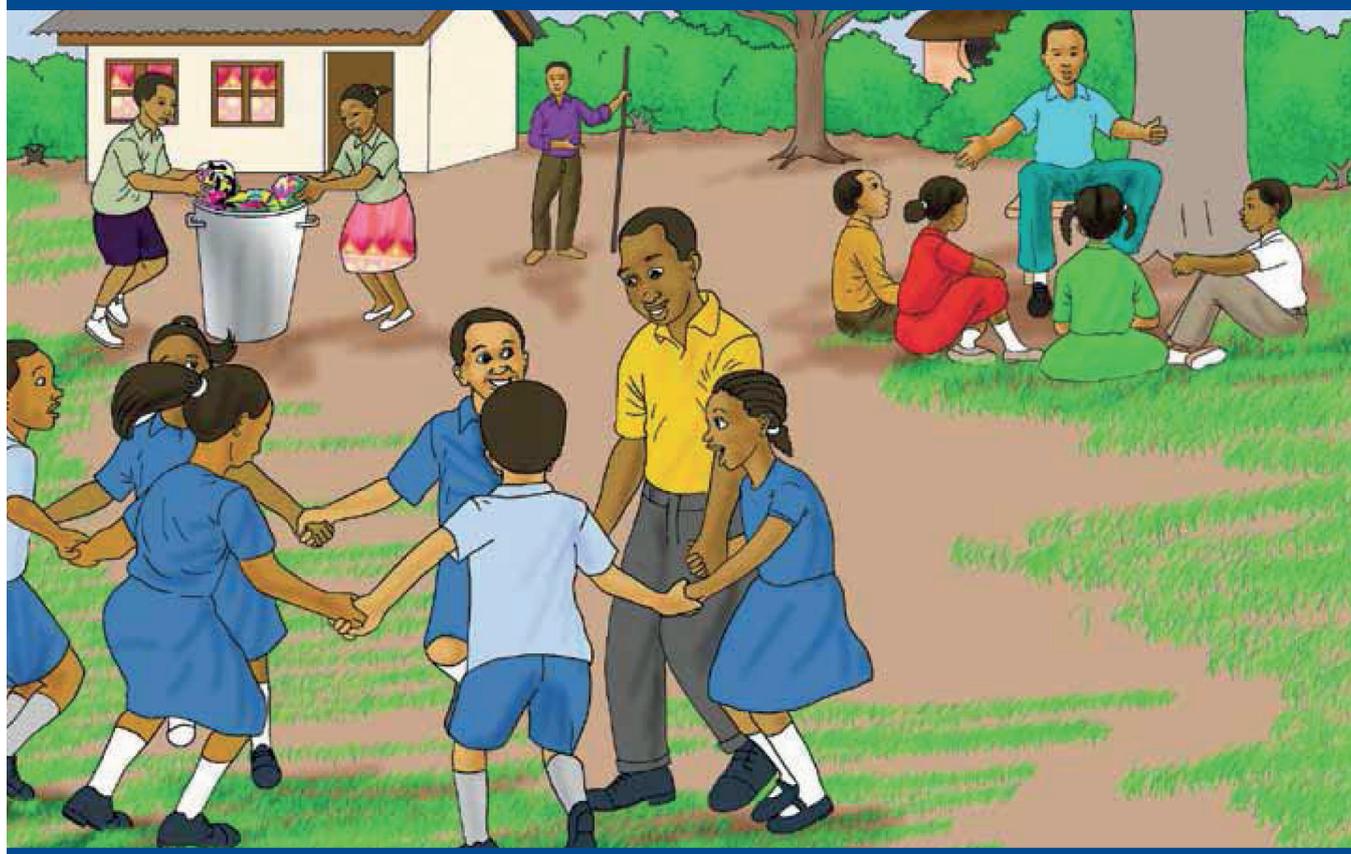
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IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

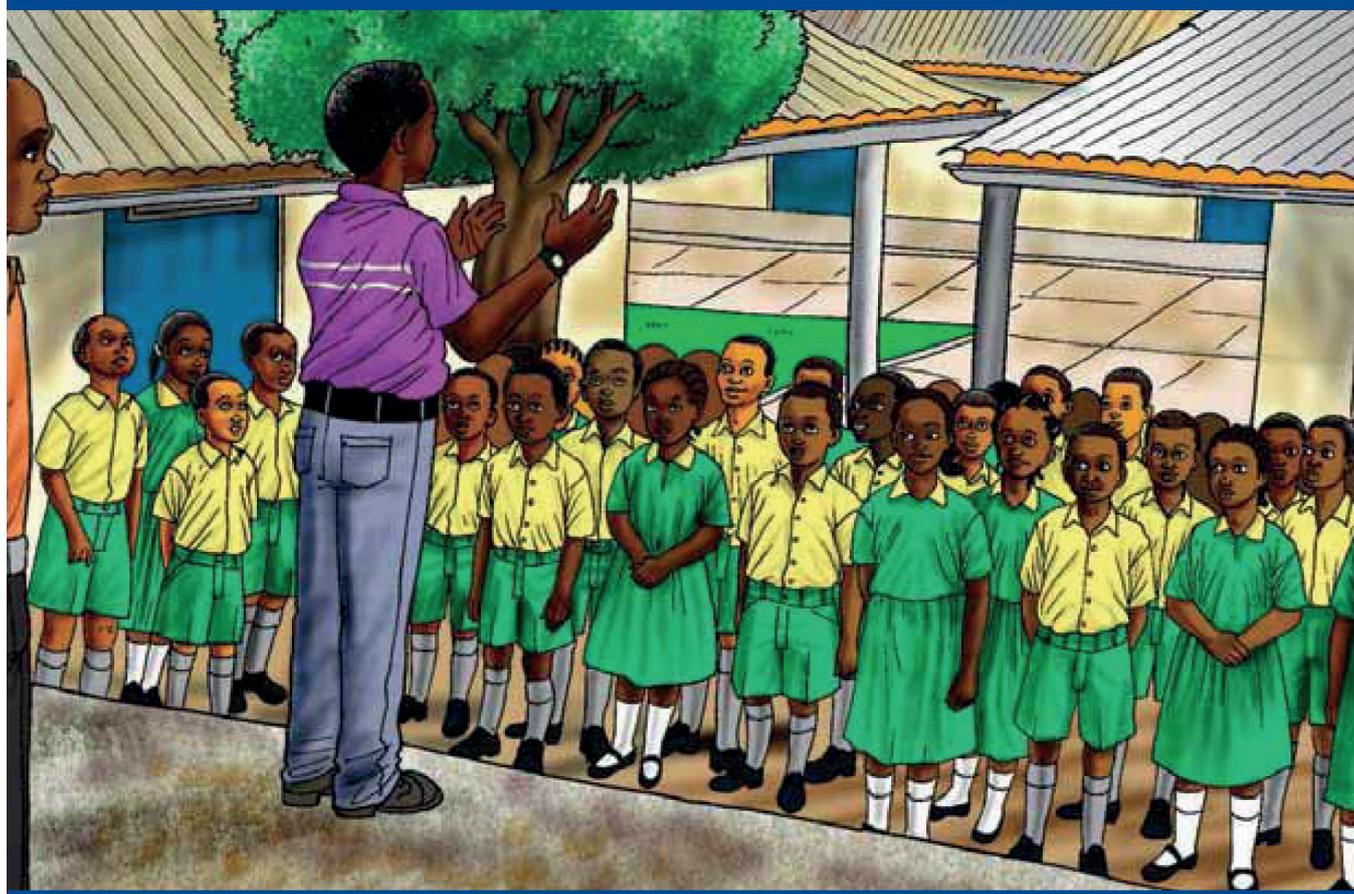


The National Standards for Improving the Quality of Life of Vulnerable Children (VC) in Nigeria provides guidelines for providing quality services to children and their families.

Guiding principles of the quality service standards

- 1.** Make sure that programs meet all the important needs of children, including health, nutrition, education, legal protection, psychosocial support, shelter, and economic stability.
- 2.** Make sure that programs are right for the child's age, meet the special needs of boys and girls and children with disabilities, and are the right fit for the community.
- 3.** Help parents and community members understand how important it is to support and strengthen parents and caregivers so that they can care for and protect their children.
- 4.** Make sure children, families and the community participate in care and support activities and in decision making on their own care.
- 5.** No one organization can meet all the needs of vulnerable children and families. Work in teams with people who do different work than you to provide full services.
- 6.** Know the needs of each vulnerable child and each household and give the right services all the time.
- 7.** Give services according to the National Standards for Improving the Quality of Life of Vulnerable Children in Nigeria.
- 8.** Make sure that the service gets results and makes a difference in a child's life. Measure and monitor those results over time.

WHAT ARE QUALITY SERVICES?



Quality care for vulnerable children means giving the right mix of services for each child, family, and community, and is based on what we know to be best practices.

There are ten points that help us to make sure services make the lives of VC and households better than they were before:

1. Safety

Do no harm to the children, households and communities as you provide services.

2. Access

Make sure there is nothing stopping VC and their households from getting the services he or she needs.

3. Effectiveness

Services meet the real needs of the VC and the household.

4. Technical performance

National service standard are used when giving services. Staff are trained in the care and support of VC.

5. Continuity

Ensure consistent and timely care to VC and households. Refer VC to other service providers and follow up to ensure that the child gets all the care s/he needs.

WHAT ARE QUALITY SERVICES?



6. Efficiency

Avoid wastage and giving out services VC do not need. Only provide services that are needed.

7. Compassionate relationship

Services are provided with respect, trust, privacy.

8. Appropriateness

Services are the ones that an individual VC need. Consider the age, gender, economic status, disability and culture of each VC, caregiver and community when providing services.

9. Participation

Ensure VC, caregivers and their communities have a say and are involved in what and how services are given, and in decision making on their own care.

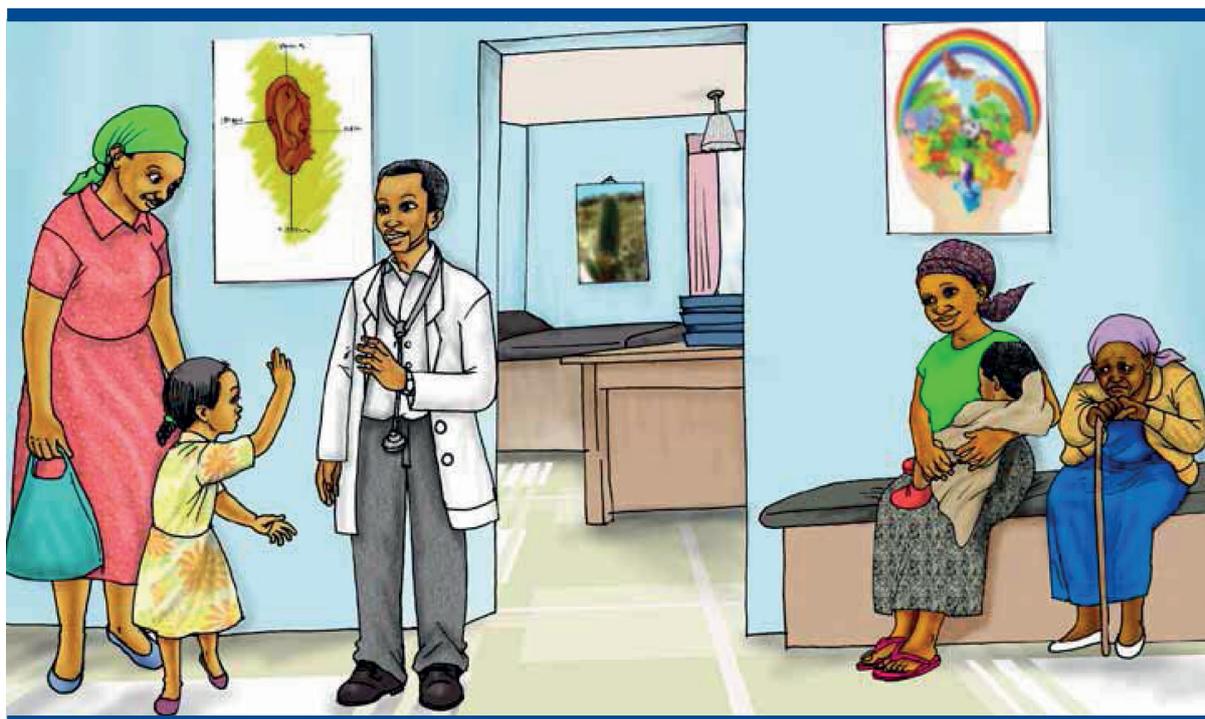
10. Sustainability

Ensure services are designed so that the community can continue them without depending on outside people or programs.

CORE SERVICE AREAS

The National Standards for Improving the Quality of Life of Vulnerable Children in Nigeria identifies seven core service areas that are important in providing all the needed care and support to vulnerable children.

The National Standards tell us what results we want to achieve and how to do that.



1 HEALTH

Desired Result

VC and other household members receive, and are able to pay for health services that ensure their well being at all times.

How

- Make sure all children aged 0-5 years go to the clinic, get immunization and are treated when sick.
- Help the VC and their households to prevent sickness like malaria, TB, HIV, diarrhoea, etc.
- Support children and households with chronic illnesses and help them learn to take care of themselves.
- Promote use of safe water, clean home environment, use of latrines and rubbish pit and, provide hygiene education.

CORE SERVICE AREAS



2 NUTRITION AND FOOD SECURITY

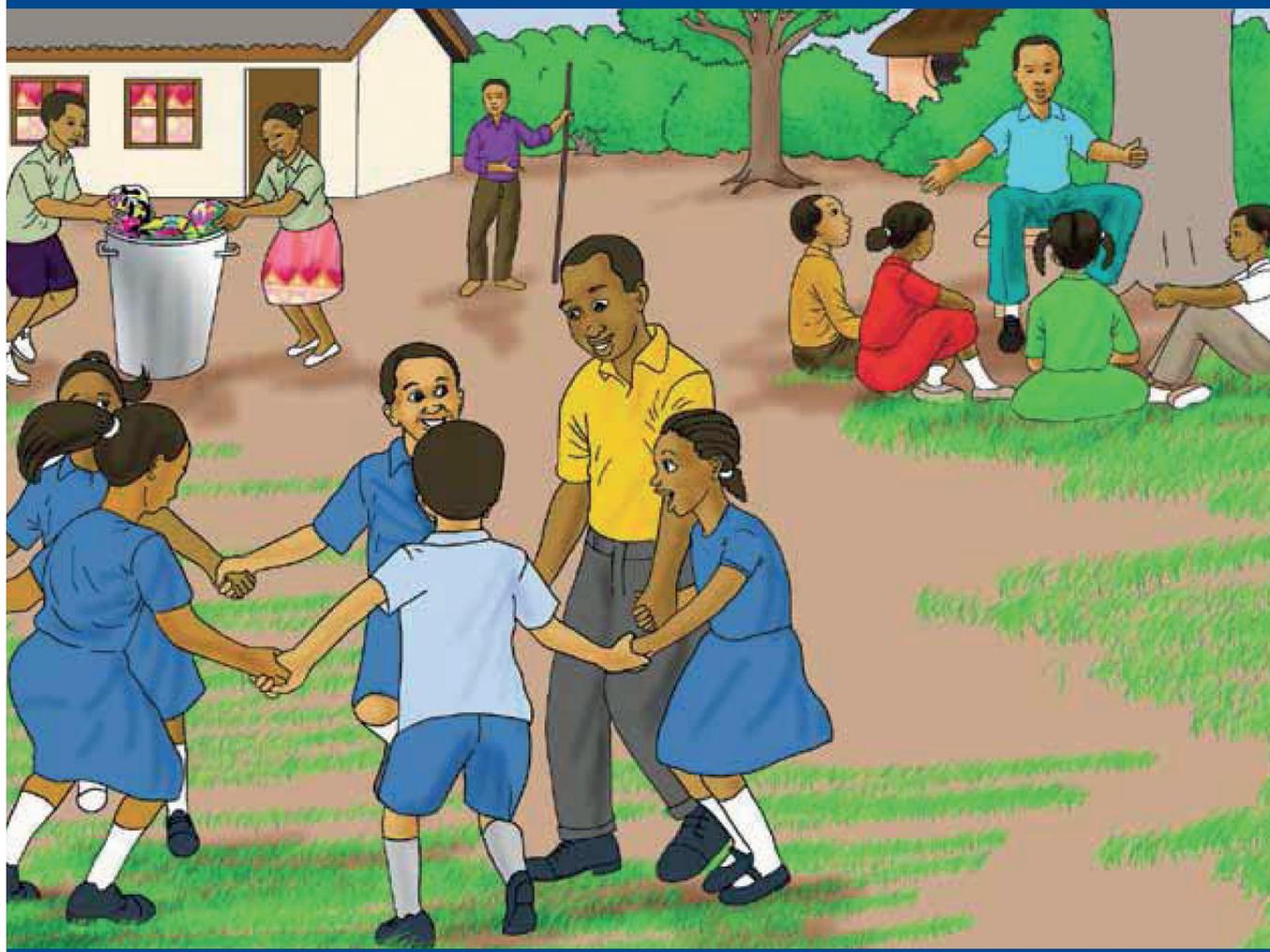
Desired Result

VC and other household members have enough nutritious food to eat throughout the year and are not afraid of where they will find food for tomorrow or the next day.

How

- Make sure that children and their families are able to produce or buy food every day for home use throughout the year.
- Make sure children eat a balanced diet and are growing well compared to other children in the community.

CORE SERVICE AREAS



3 PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

Desired Result

VC are emotionally stable, happy, contented and interact freely with people and are connected with people who provide love, care and supply them with the things they need to do well.

How

- Help children and their households to cope with their situation.
- Support VC and their households to play, work and communicate well with each other and with adults around them.
- Support VC in learning life skills that will help them live well.

CORE SERVICE AREAS



4 PROTECTION

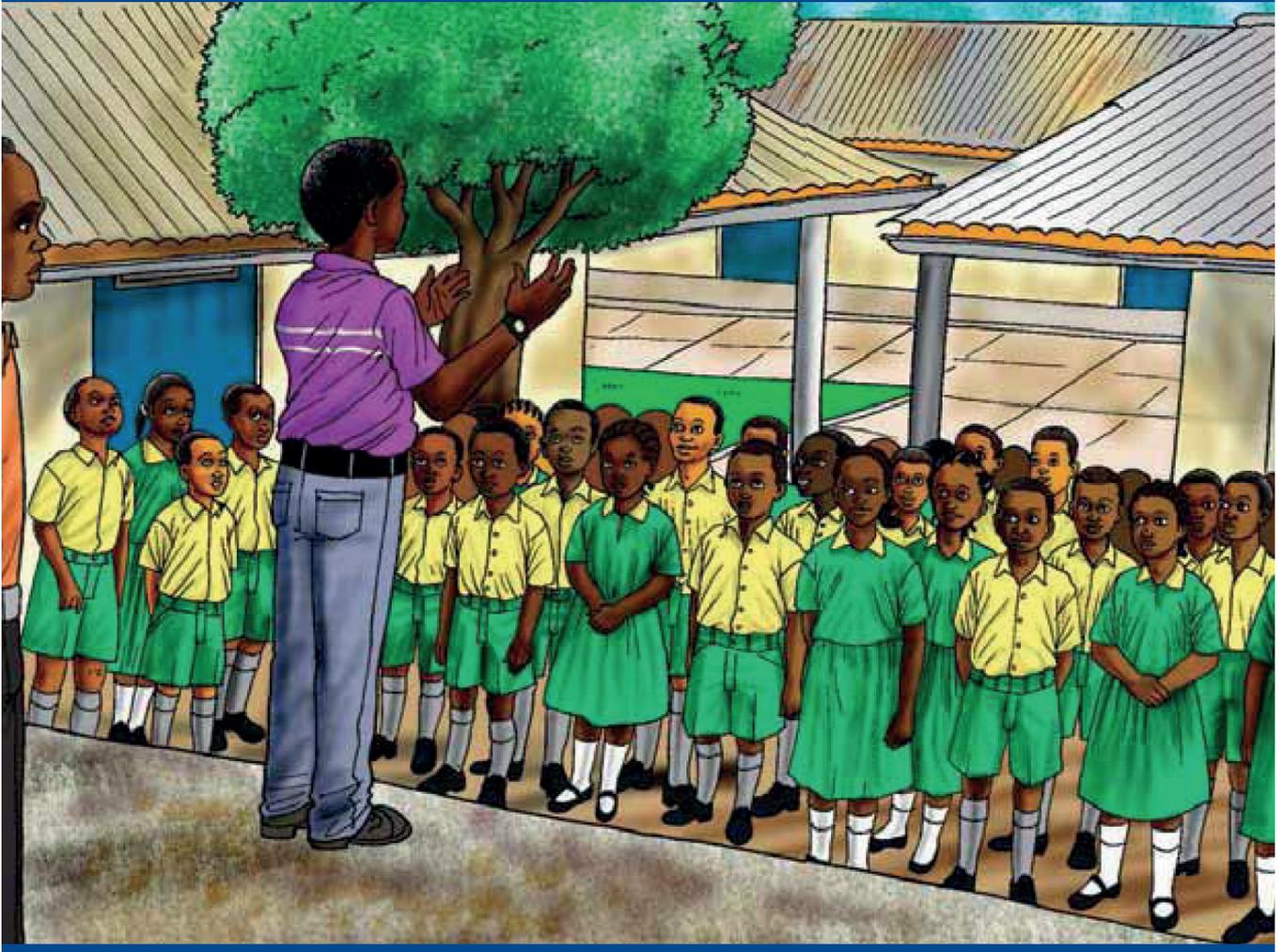
Desired Result

VC are protected from all forms of child abuse, violence, exploitation and discrimination and the child has access to legal protection when needed.

How

- Educate VC, caregivers and the community on child rights and responsibilities.
- Work with the project team, the community and the government to make sure abused and neglected children are rescued and helped.
- Help VC and caregivers to get legal documents like birth certificates and other important documents.

CORE SERVICE AREAS



5 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

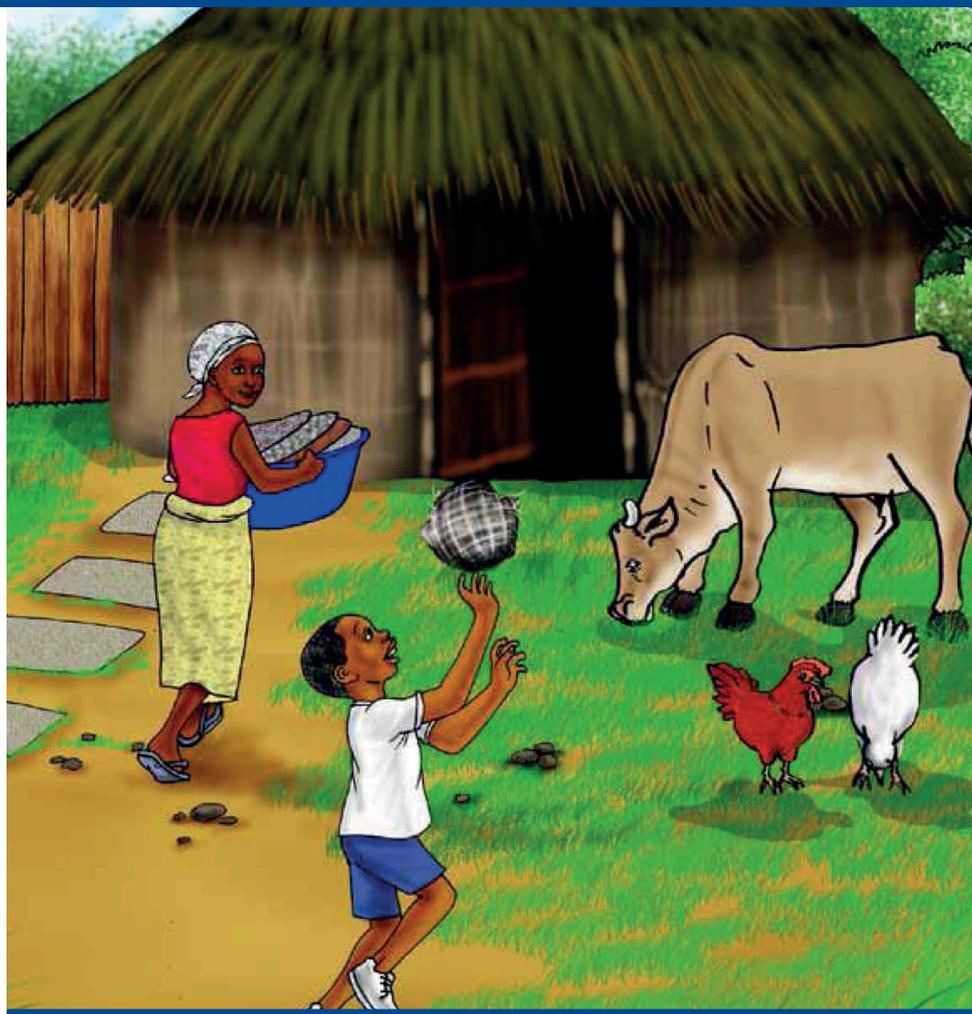
Desired Result

All children achieve their full potential through access to continuous education that ensures appropriate learning from early childhood in homes, schools and communities.

How

- Make sure you identify school age children and help them join school. Work with the family, the VC and the school to ensure that VC attend school every day, complete their home work and are promoted to the next class every year.
- Help older children either go on to secondary school, join a vocational training center or learn life skills to be able to take care of themselves.

CORE SERVICE AREAS



6 SHELTER AND CARE

Desired Result

Children have stable shelter that is adequate, dry and safe and at least one adult who provides consistent care, attention and support.

How

- Make sure children live in a safe, dry and clean house.
- Help the VC and households to get clean clothes and bedding
- Make sure that all children have at least one adult caregiver to provide love and support. Pay special attention to child-headed households, children with elderly, sick or disabled parents.

CORE SERVICE AREAS



7 HOUSEHOLD ECONOMIC STRENGTHENING

Desired Result

Households have sustainable income to meet the basic needs of VC without getting help from someone who does not live in the house.

How

- Support caregivers and children to start activities that can help them get money for household use.
- Link caregivers to savings and loans programmes for skills building and money management.
- Monitor households to ensure they are able to take care of their needs without support from other people over time.

What are the roles and responsibilities of community volunteers in providing quality services VC and their Households?

1. Do a needs assessment for each child and for each household before services are provided using the Child Status Index (CSI) and the Household Vulnerability Index (HVI).
 - Do a baseline assessment when you first begin working with a child and family and then repeat the assessment on a regular basis to check for changes.
 - Assess all 7 service areas, not only the services you provide. It is important to understand all of a child's needs.
2. Create a plan of action based on the needs assessment and follow it.
 - Decide which services are most in need and address those areas first.
 - Talk with the children and family to make sure they agree with the plan of action and are ready to work with you to implement it.
 - Use a child-focused, family-centered plan, knowing that families should be the primary providers for children.
 - Find another service provider to help the child and family if you cannot provide a service they need.
 - If you refer a child for other services, follow up to check whether they received the service and if it was helpful.
 - Regularly check the plan to make sure that all needed services are being provided AND that all provided services continue to be needed.
3. Work with other service providers to build service networks in the community.
 - Do mappings of service providers in the communities so that providers know where needed services can be found.
 - Work as a team with other service providers to provide the best care for children.
 - Build on resources already available in the community rather than creating new structures.
4. Learn and share with others what are the best practices in working with VC and families.
 - Provide services to VC and their families based on the Nigerian National Standards for Improving the Quality of Life for VC.
 - Work with other community stakeholders (schools, churches, mosques, CBOs, NGOs, council of elders and Beneficiaries Welfare Committees etc) to discuss and address the needs of VC and their households.
 - Continuously learn about what is working and what isn't. Test new ideas about how to make things better.
5. Help gather information for continued learning.
 - Fill in reporting forms and share with the necessary people regularly.
 - Compare information before, during and after a service is provided to see if progress is being made.
 - Talk with children and their families regularly to see what their needs are, if services are helpful or not, and what changes are happening in the child's life.

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