

Documentation of Community-Based Child Protection Mechanisms in Ethiopia



**Implementation Process, Best Practices
and Lessons Identified from ChildFund's
Child Protection Approach in Ethiopia**

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Forward

ChildFund Ethiopia's development approach is based on life stages, Theory of Change and focuses on the wholesome development of the child from birth to adulthood. This approach ensures the children in life stage one, 0-5 years are healthy and secure, in life stage two, children aged 6-14 years are educated and confident and have positive relationships in supportive homes and communities; and finally, life stage three, youth aged 15-24 years are skilled and involved in their communities. It is our vision that all children realize their full potential. Child Protection is a cross cutting theme in all we do. We place special emphasis on child protection throughout our approach because violence, exploitation and abuse can reverse the developmental gains in an instant. It is to this end that ChildFund Ethiopia supports Community Based Protection Mechanisms (CBCPM) in the communities where we work.

It is my hope that this document will be a useful resource to those seeking to learn on how the existing structures in their communities can be strengthened and how a functional system can serve to protect the children and provide the linkages through which children can seek redress and support when faced with abuse. This documentation work helps the knowledge users to be acquainted with the roles and responsibilities of the CBCPMs.

Lilly Omondi

**Country Director
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Acronyms

AIDO	Addis Integrated Development Organization
CBCPM	Community-Based Child Protection Mechanism
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CCC	Community Care Coalition
CFCO	Children's and Family Charitable Organization
CFDA	Child and Family Development Association
CFDCO	Child and Family Development Charitable Organization
CO	Country Office
CRC	Child Rights Committees
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
DA	Development Agent
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FMoH	Federal Ministry of Health
HEW	Health Extension Worker
HTP	Harmful Traditional Practices
KII	Key Informant Interviews
MoWCY	Ministry of Women, Children and Youth
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OVC	Orphan and Vulnerable Children
SNNPS	Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples State
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
WCY	Women, Children and Youth
WDA	Women Development Army



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Executive Summary

Introduction:

Child Protection is a cross-cutting theme in all ChildFund's programs in Ethiopia. The Community-Based Child Protection Mechanism (CBCPM) is one of the approaches in its Country Strategic Plan (CSP). As part of its bigger vision to see ***a world in which all children realize their rights and achieve their potential***, ChildFund Ethiopia designed various activities to be implemented in the Addis Ababa City, rural and urban areas of the South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples State (SNNPS), Amhara and Oromia Regional States of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE).

The CBCPM mainly works on strengthening the functional capacity of existing child protection mechanisms so that they are able to effectively prevent and respond to child protection concerns including violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. During the strategic period, ChildFund Ethiopia has been working with 13 local implementing partners (NGOs/CSOs), strategic partners from the government sectors (Ministry of Women, Children & Youth Affairs, Health, and Education), technical and academic partners at different levels. Moreover, children themselves, care givers, influential personalities, community groups, religious and community leaders, etc. have been actively working as actors of the approach.

The purpose of this documentation work is to come up with knowledge management and communication material that highlight activities implementation process, best practices and lessons identified from the CBCPM approach for future learning and replication. The first chapter of the documentation work, the background, illuminates the problem context in Ethiopia, theory of ChildFund's child protection and its major objectives as well as aims, methods and the process followed during documentation.

The second chapter describes three thematic areas selected as best practices (strengthening functional capacity of CMCPM (CRC), care and support provided by the strengthened mechanism (CRC) and advocacy), process of implementation and key achievements. Challenges faced during activity implementation and ways by which how they were overcome, key lessons identified and overall understanding as conclusions explained under chapters three, four and five respectively.

Community-Based Child Protection Mechanism (CBCPM):

Child Protection is a cross cutting theme in all ChildFund's development interventions in Ethiopia. The Community-Based Child Protection Mechanism (CBCPM) is an approach incorporated in ChildFund Ethiopia's Country Strategic Plan (CSP) for the years 2019-2021. During the strategic period, ChildFund Ethiopia has been working with 13 local implementing partners (NGOs/CSOs), strategic partners from government sectors, technical and academic partners at different levels in the Addis Ababa City, rural and urban areas of the South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples State (SNNPS), Amhara and Oromia regions. Moreover, children themselves, care-givers, influential personalities, community groups, religious and community leaders, etc. have been actively working as actors of the approach.

The purpose of this assignment was to capture and document the implementation process, best practices and lessons identified from ChildFund's Community-Based Child Protection Mechanism (CBCPM) approach in Ethiopia. In order to address the objectives of the assignment, a qualitative research type and approach was employed. Information data were generated from KIs, FGDs, observations, and document review. The best practice documentation was based on set criteria including relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, innovativeness, community and stakeholders' participation, collaboration and coordination. In order to reach at plausible conclusions in this regard, an approach that ensured community engagement, participatory, and Human-Centered Design (HCD) adopted for data collection at each step.

Results of this assignment crafted case/success stories that demonstrated best practices from the approach that could be adopted by other development practitioners in related community problems through scaling up. Summary of the implementation process, major achievements, identified best practice elements and lesson learned presented on this report are based on the thematic elements covered in this documentation work: Enabling functional CBCPM (ChildFund's Six Pillars of System Strengthening); CBCPM services including referral and networking at the three Child Development Life Stages; and Advocacy.

Strengthening Functional Capacity of CBCPM:

ChildFund's CBCPM approach in Ethiopia started its intervention by identifying local partners and supporting them to conduct child protection mapping. From various existing child protection mechanisms, Child Right Committee (CRC) was been selected as a preferred CBCPM by the organization and its functional capacity strengthened accordingly. The community mapping falls under the very first pillar of the six called surveillance followed by prevention, response, coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation and documentation. Summary of implementation process, major achievements and best practice elements based on the six pillars are highlighted herein.

Pillar One – Surveillance: Led by a technical person trained by ChildFund Country Office and assigned in the local implementing partners' *woreda* level offices, CRC members were trained and participated during problem identifications. The surveillance was based on ChildFund's guiding manual designed not only for mobilizing communities to understand existing problems, but also plan and take actions against identified child protection issues. As a result, CRCs identified existing child protection concerns on which members from all sectors agreed, prioritized issues and designed action plans that could address most concerns. Conducting surveillance at the initial stage ensured the relevance of the planned interventions/activities and catalyzed participation of stakeholders against the identified child protection bottle necks in their respective areas.

Pillar Two – Prevention: Based on the findings of the surveillance, the CRC structures have designed strategic prevention action plans at family, community and institutional levels. Strengthened CRCs resilience to reduce child protection risks and creating protective environment in the respective intervention areas. Likewise, means of resource mobilization and targeted organizations that support the initiative, guidelines, monitoring and evaluations and reporting procedures throughout the structure have been clearly put for the prevention work. This ensured the effectiveness of the interventions through CBCPM approach. The approach also helped in ensuring sustainability. In some target areas, based on emerging new child protection concerns, capacitated CRCs have been developed innovative prevention and protection strategies against emerging risks and child protection concerns.

Pillar Three – Response: The CRC mechanism is becoming a strong and legally accredited child protection institution that undertakes actionable measures to mitigating child problems like abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence. Among core indicators of CRC’s viability are the fact that its areas of response is founded on the result of continuous and appropriate surveillance it conducts. In most implemenation areas, the CRCs are effectively implemented their action plans that include response (support and care) activities and reached more at risk and child survivors. The approach, following participatory and need-based identification and implementation strategy, ensured ownership and thereby sustainability concerns so far.

Pillar Four – Coordination: Smooth and well-functioning internal (vertically at all levels from federal to *kebele* levels and vise-versa, horizontally among stakeholders and with the targeted community, etc.) and external (donors/funders, other government and non-government institutions, etc.) communication proved level of effective coordination in the CRCs. Utilization of existing structures for child protection concerns, especially from the government, may have differences from place to place in rural and urban areas. Nevertheless, the intervention enabled CRCs clearly shared duties and responsibilities and effectively coordinate preventive and responsive actions.

Pillar Five – Monitoring and Evaluation: Even though there is a difference in terms of duration and frequency for *kebele* and *woreda* levels CRC, members meet to hear reports, review and evaluate performances, decide on emerging and existing risks and share responsibilities. Capacity strengthening in this Pillar ensured active participation of the CRCs’ members and other stakeholders that helped to improve their efforts on prevention and response activities. Some CBCPM/CRCs may need improvement and capacity building support on using monitoring and review meeting findings for timely decision making.

Pillar Six – Documentation: The CRCs have a record book on which they document all activities they implement for future use. They document results from such works and share among the general community as necessary. CRC members file training materials, reports, photo and video images from activity implementation, etc. both in hard and soft copies. However, CBCPM/CRCs in most implemenation areas need capacity building support and improvement on documentation and knowledge management.

CBCPM Services at the Three Child Life Stages:

One of the specific objectives of strengthening the CBCPM is to ensure strong and functional institution that provide child protection services related to child issues in the country at the Three Life Stages. Based on community mapping and surveillance findings, the CBCPMs/CRCs agreed on the assessment result of the mapping including reactivation, prioritized child issues, membership, activities, roles and responsibilities among others. Preventive and responsive activities were implemented under each of the three child development stages based on the agreed action plan. Summary of implementation process, major achievements and best practice elements based on the three Life Stages are highlighted herein:

Under Life Stage One (Age 0-5): Awareness creation on issues of infants in this age category has been implemented through targeting at parents/families, caregivers, neighbors and the general community. The CRCs have been promoting basic child rights in relation to practicing HTPs, parental care, malnutrition, child abandonment, denying attention and care, etc. It was tried to increase the understanding of the community that families are accountable for committing any practice against child rights or failure to provide what they deserve as part of child right principles is considered including child right violation that potentially cause legal punishment.

There have been activities implemented by the CRC in response to child protection concerns. The CRC facilitates and/or provides lifesaving, care and support, referral and legal services to child right violation issues on children in this Life Stage. In all target areas of the CBCPM, the committee received several cases of child right violations and child protection concerns including abandoned children (infants), maltreatment, malnutrition, parental care, etc. and tried to respond in different ways.

Life Stage Two (Age 6-14): Prevention activities through awareness creation, training and strengthening child-friendly environment are major activities implemented to prevent child right violations mainly among children in the Life Stage Two. The CRC facilitates trainings to the youth members on building healthy life skill, sexuality education, etc. in cooperation with local stakeholders.

The CRCs, in collaboration with their stakeholders, identified children at risk and survivors of trafficking, child labour, sexual abuse, domestic violence, neglect and other forms of violence against children in this Life Stage. The CRCs established temporary

transition centers, facilitated reintegration and referral services to survivors. Activities related to care and supports by the CRC include financial and material resource mobilization, facilitating emergency services, reintegration services and referral pathways that ensured participation of families and the wider communities.

Life Stage Three (Age 15-24): Adolescents and youth accessed sexuality and reproductive health trainings and services facilitated by the CRC. Adolescents trained and practiced extracurricular activities in the strengthened clubs that developed their self-confidence and laid strong foundation for their future self-actualization.

In order to strengthen enabling and youth friendly environment, the CRCs have been facilitating referral systems to adolescent and youth with various institutions where they can develop their soft and hard skills. The targeted school adolescent and youth groups take part in advocacy campaigns to influence government structures give due consideration for the practicalities of policies and strategies.

Advocacy:

ChildFund Ethiopia, through its CBCPMs approach, has been working on drafting national School Related Gender-Based Violation Prevention and Response Policy together with other governmental and nongovernmental partners. The document is expected to be ratified and put in effect very soon. School peer educators, child parliament members and youth volunteers through the close support from the CRCs have been implementing awareness creation activities that influenced the government and partners for effective implementation of the existing child protection policies and strategies as well as considering amendments of emerging issues. They use events like World Children's Day and other national holidays and festivals to disseminate messages in this regard.

In summary, the whole ChildFund's Child Protection CBCPM approach ensured active and meaningful participation of community members including children and other stakeholders. The approach, in most implementation areas, is also believed ensuring sustainability of achieved results. The CBCPM is not only strengthened the system and institutional capacity of the CRCs, but also strengthened resilience to effectively prevent child right violation and child protection risks, created protective environment and provided responses to those at risk and survivors of child rights violations.

CHAPTER ONE BACKGROUND



1.1. Child Protection Situation in Ethiopia

Child protection deserves to be a priority across the world. Children, of all ages, experience abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation. Some of the violence against children is being considered as legal, state authorized and/or socially approved. According to a research financed by the United Nations, about 150 million girls and 73 million boys worldwide are raped or subjected to other forms of sexual violence each year (African Child Policy Forum, 2016).

Through devoted intervention of the Ethiopian government and with direct collaboration and support of various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), various child protection interventions have been implemented over the past 3 decades. A number of legislative and policy instruments have been introduced in Ethiopia including those that aim to address violence against children, harmful traditional practices, child justice and other child protection issues. The government has established a National Strategy on the prevention of Harmful Traditional Practices (2013) and the National Roadmap to End Child Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (2019). Moreover, the Revised Family Law (2005) by the state remarkably addressed not changed child problems related to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitations among children in the country.

1.2. About ChildFund and its CBCPM Approach in Ethiopia

ChildFund is one of the many NGOs/Civil Society Organizations (CSO) actively engaged in helping communities in the long term to transform themselves into places where children have what they need to live at their potential throughout their lives: access to healthcare, nutrition, learning opportunities, safety and caregivers equipped to ensure these essentials are in place. The organization has been operating in Ethiopia for over 50 years. Currently, ChildFund supports 13 Community-Based Child Protection Mechanisms (CBCPM) in four regions of the country - Amhara, Oromia, South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP), and Addis Ababa City (ChildFund, 2021).

The organization has so far reached over a million Ethiopian citizens. Following its 2019-2021 Country Strategic Plan (CSP) design, ChildFund Ethiopia Country Office (CO) has been able to reach more than 120,000 children and over 49,000 families directly.

ChildFund Ethiopia's intervention is in the thematic areas of care and development of infants and young children, providing quality learning opportunities and enhancing achievements in education and to create and strengthen enabling environments for leadership and livelihood skills development for the youth.

Child Protection is a cross cutting theme in all ChildFund's strategic plans. The organization places special emphasis on child protection throughout its approach because violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation can reverse the developmental gains in an instant.

According to ChildFund's definition, Community Based Child Protection Mechanisms (CBCPMs) are groups or networks of community members who work together to address abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children (ChildFund, 2018). This latest source in its impact assessment report further stated that a CBCPM can take the form of a formal committee that addresses multiple types of harm, or a less formal group that works on one particular aspect of child protection. Their focus is on strengthening child protection, responding to incidents of harm against children, and referring cases to social services where necessary.

Figure 1: ChildFund's Child Protection Approach



Adopted from ChildFund International's Community-Based Child Protection Referral Pathways: A Resource Manual, 2018

In order to understand the child protection situation in Ethiopia, ChildFund supported community mapping in selected areas of the

nation. The mapping was conducted with three specific objectives: to identify forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence that children experience in each life stage; to understand the root causes of violence against children and to understand how child protection systems are functioning respectively.

The CBCPM conducted in 2018 with the support of ChildFund found out that Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs), labour exploitation, abduction, rape, physical abuse (i.e., corporal punishment), verbal harassment, emotional abuse, child prostitution and early marriage, child trafficking and migration are still major child protection issues and risks in the community. On the other hand, the mapping witnessed that there was a system at all levels of government structures that stands to protect children from various forms of abuse and respond to such maltreatments.

The Child Right Committee (CRC) was one of the many mechanisms working on the issues of child protection. However, the system or mechanism was not functionally strong and able to respond to child protection issues as required. Both the formal and informal structures in place were characterized by low integration, coordination and weak referral linkage when reporting and managing cases (ChildFund, 2018).

The Child Right Committee (CRC):

The CRC is a formal child protection mechanism formed by the government of Ethiopia with identified functions of investigating child rights/protection related cases and referring/linking to appropriate services, facilitating provision of different support such as medical treatment, legal protection, shelter, counseling, food, etc. supports in coordination with voluntary individuals, institutions and community-based organizations. The CRC was networked with all levels of government administrative structures, in its major members at *woreda* and *kebele* levels with its representatives assembled from formal government sector offices (Education, Health, Justice, Women and Children Affairs, Labour and Social Affairs, etc.), Child Parliament representatives, and informal institutions (religious and community leaders, Community Based Organizations (CBO) like *iddir*, youth league, etc.).

While at *woreda* level, CRC is chaired by the Women and Children Affairs (includes youth in some regions) Office, *kebele* level CRC is represented by the *Kebele* Manager. In Addis Ababa City Administration, members go as high as 24, whereas, at rural *woreda* and *kebele* levels the number of members ranges between 10 and 12 persons.

Figure 2: Organizational structure of CRC at woreda level

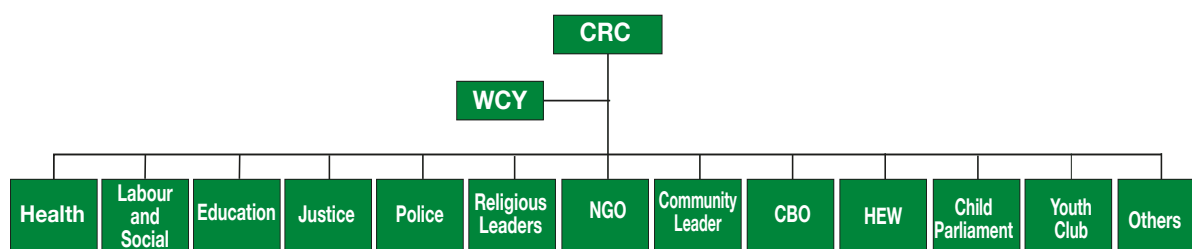
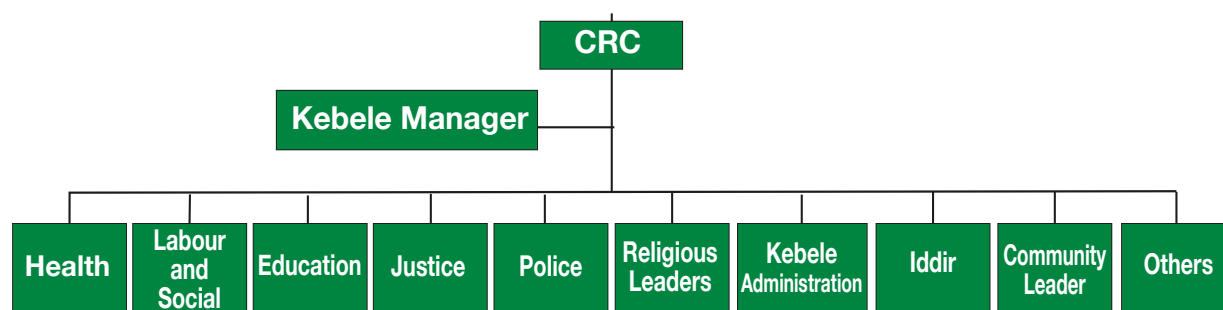


Figure 3: Organizational structure of CRC at kebele level



ChildFund Ethiopia decided to strengthen its response to child protection related issues based on the findings of the Community Mapping. It designed CBCPM - focused activities and has been implementing activities using the existing CRC government structures as one of the major CBCPM. The CBCPM approach, therefore implements, an integration of different approaches including community-based approach (families and communities have their own ways of protecting children from abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence in the home, school or community); child-centered approach (children's voices and experiences at the center of our work); and change through advocacy (Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children).

1.3. Objectives of ChildFund's CBCPM Approach

General objective: To reduce violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children through strengthening functional Community-Based Child Protection Mechanisms (CBCPM) and effective referral linkages by 2021.

- Specific objectives:**
- To strengthen institutional capacity of the existing Child Rights Committees (CRCs) to enable them effectively play preventive and responsive roles in child protection incidents;
 - To address child protection related concerns (abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence) among children in the intervention areas through supporting CBCPM interventions by the CRC on child wellbeing and development services in the three child life stages; and
 - To strengthen school and community-based child protection systems at various levels through supporting advocacy interventions towards a workable Standard Operating Procedure [SOP] of the CBCPM.

1.4. Documentation Objectives, Methodology and Process

Documentation

Objectives:

Objectives of the Documentation - Specific objectives of the documentation are:

- To document the process and implementation of CBCPM approach by the ChildFund and its local partners with best practices and lessons learned;
- To develop short case stories on key achievements from the CBCPM approach of systems strengthening, capacity enhancement, response and coordinated interventions;
- To show how the systems strengthening intervention of the CBCPM approach contributed to the child protection concerns in the selected regional states of Ethiopia;
- To illustrate outcomes achieved from the CBCPM approach and thereby illuminating the factors that positively and negatively impacted the achievements;

Documentation

Process:

Child protection problems in Ethiopia generally, and in the areas targeted by ChildFund in the country specifically, is complex and the response to bridge the gaps is equally challenging. Taking steps forward, documentation and learning from past interventions to contemporary communication and knowledge management systems is very important.

Documenting implementation and best practices helps to generate important information and lessons learned for future consideration so as to apply them in the communities with similar challenges. Accordingly, a documentation team was established to document the process of supported CBCPM approach in Ethiopia and reflect upon key processes in the child protection activities implementation, identify best practices and lessons from the intervention areas. The findings presented in the document are produced from participatory and reflective sessions with staff and key stakeholders at multiple levels of the CBCPM approach. The thematic elements covered are:

- i. Enabling functional CBCPM (Systems - add s Strengthening)
- ii. CBCPM services including referral and networking at the three child development life stages
- iii. Advocacy

Case and/or success stories from communities in the implementation areas and institutions were identified and documented in the report. The documentation process followed ChildFund's theory of change - informing the community and building their awareness on existing laws that protect children, enabling and empowering them to question their previous practices and create continuous campaigns till changes occur. Promoting the change through the participation of children themselves and the wider community at large to adopt the new behavior has been duly documented (ChildFund, 2015 www.childfund.org).

Methodology and Approach:

This documentation work mainly employed a qualitative research type and approach. Based on reviews of periodicals, assessments, monitoring and evaluation reports as well as discussions with relevant technical staff of ChildFund and partners, issues of prioritization for the documentation work have been drafted and enriched along the way. In order to address the objectives of the assignment, primary and secondary data were generated from Key Informant Interviews (KII), Focus Group Discussion (FGD), observations, and document reviews to identify good practices and lessons in implementing the CBCPM approach.

Documentation of implementation process, best practices and lessons identified from the ChildFund's CBCPM approach is based on major criteria widely used for similar development programs in the contemporary world. These include relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, innovativeness, community and partners/ stakeholders participation, collaboration and coordination. In order to

reach plausible conclusions in this regard, an approach that ensured community engagement, participatory, and Human-Centered Design (HCD) was adopted for data collection at each step.

Based on the objectives of ChildFund's CBCPM approach, a checklist/semi structured questionnaire was arranged in a logical format and order. Then, data collection checklists were translated into the official vernacular language of the target areas (Amharic and Afan Oromo). Moreover, findings from the field documentation were presented at a participatory validation workshop and participants comments have been systematically analyzed and included in this report.

While synthesizing and analyzing the collected data, due attention was given to make the data analysis and the interpretation proficient and clear so as to ensure comprehensive findings or results are presented fully, understandably, and fairly.

Validation Workshop: A total of 32 individuals participated on the validation workshop held in Adama town. Attendees were representatives from NGO/CSO implementing partners, government stakeholders including WCY Offices and other sectors of the six sampled implementation *woredas* in SNNPS, Amhara and Oromia regional states and the Addis Ababa City.

Organizing the Workshop: Interactive discussions supported by various activities such as keynote remarks, brainstorming of expectations, plenary sessions, and informative presentations were conducted during the two days' workshop. Thematic based discussions that followed presentation of the field report guided by agreed discussion framework created vibrant deliberations. At the beginning of the workshop, a consultant who led the documentation process presented basics of best practices and lessons documentation that helped the participants take notes and freely respond and share important issues.

Participants were briefed on general framework and core topics to be considered during documentation of development programs/projects: problem background in the context of a specific community, the new approach and implementation of planned activities, achievements, challenges faced and ways followed to overcome those problems, community ownership and lessons learned from the practice. Accordingly, the consultant clearly conversed that three key best practice elements were identified by the documentation team from the CBCPM approach in all targeted areas. The three thematic

areas were strengthening CBCPM approach (the CRC), the three Life Stages approach/care and support services by the CRCs including referral system and advocacy interventions.

Representatives of presented their respective implementation and major achievement reports and the house made reactions and enrichments. Finally, the way forward by the ChildFund delegate and recognition certificate award ceremony became a conclusion for the workshop.

Outcomes of the Workshop:

The preliminary finding of the documentation was fully validated and endorsed by the attendees. Thereof, some concerns were raised by the participants. While most of the concerns aforementioned as missed points from the documentation work were in fact addressed in the original document but uncovered during the PowerPoint presentation, constructive discussions were made on some crucial points and agreed to be addressed in the final report.

Nomenclature: The CBCPM is neither a project nor a program; it is one of the sub-themes from the child protection cross-cutting thematic areas of ChildFund's development support in Ethiopia. It is part of functional capacity building approach in response to its overall interventions to alleviate child protection concerns in the country. It is accordingly addressed throughout contents of this documentation work.

Missed Case Stories: Partners were interested in having their activities to be included as case stories such rape and abduction as part of the documentation work. Most of the cases they mentioned were intentionally excluded from the original documentation work that will be official and distributed among all actors of the CBCPM approach and the public. Both ChildFund's child protection policy and the Ethiopian law seriously acknowledge managing child records and sensitive information in a manner that is respectful, professional, and confidential and complies with applicable laws.

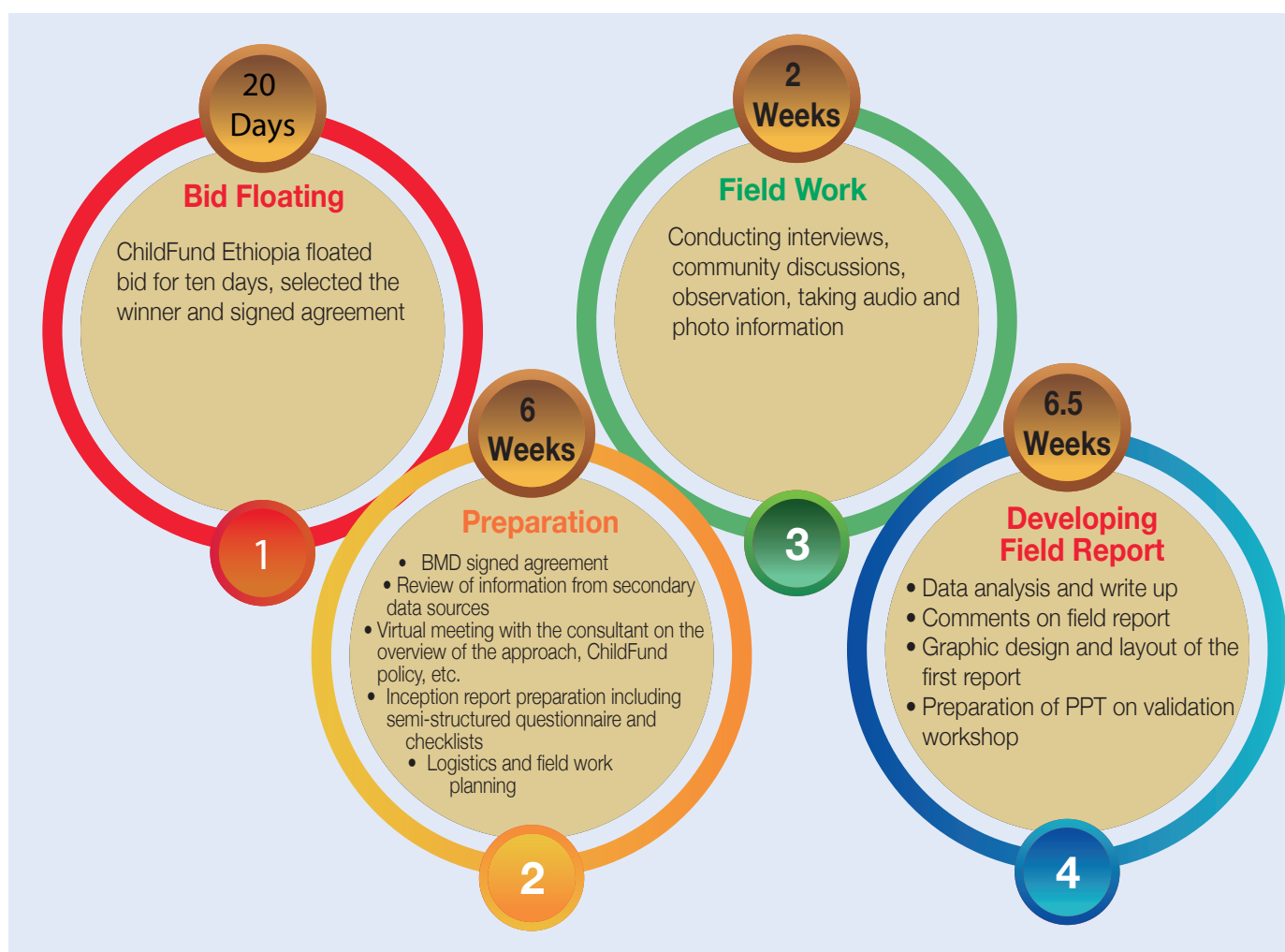
Community Care Coalition (CCC) Vs. CRC: While some participants believe that the CCC is one of the CRC members, others understand CRCs are one component of the CCC. Moreover, there were irregularities of the CCC's presence, functionality and levels of participation in the CRCs works. Then, the document revised and addressed accordingly.

Best Practice Documentation Criteria: It was perceived that best practice selection criteria were not followed by the documentation team as they were not visible as subtitles in the outline. However, relevance,

effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, collaboration and innovation (recommended by the ChildFund) were among few criteria followed during selection of best practice elements and case/success stories. As the consultant, media communications specialist in profession, briefed about the basics of development program/projects right after the opening session, there is no one-fits-all approach for such works. Nevertheless, learning identified from the CBCPM approach has been listed for each of the major criteria of best practice selection in this document.

Documentation Format: Partners commented that the documentation work should have delivered in an electronic (documentary film) format. All participants appreciated the idea and recommended for future consideration after they understood that it was not the scope of the current documentation work.

Summary of implementation process, best practices and lessons documentation activities on ChildFund's CBCPM approach in Ethiopia is indicated through a process diagram below.





Participants of CBCPM approach documentation validation workshop
08 Septemebr 2021, Adama, Ethiopia

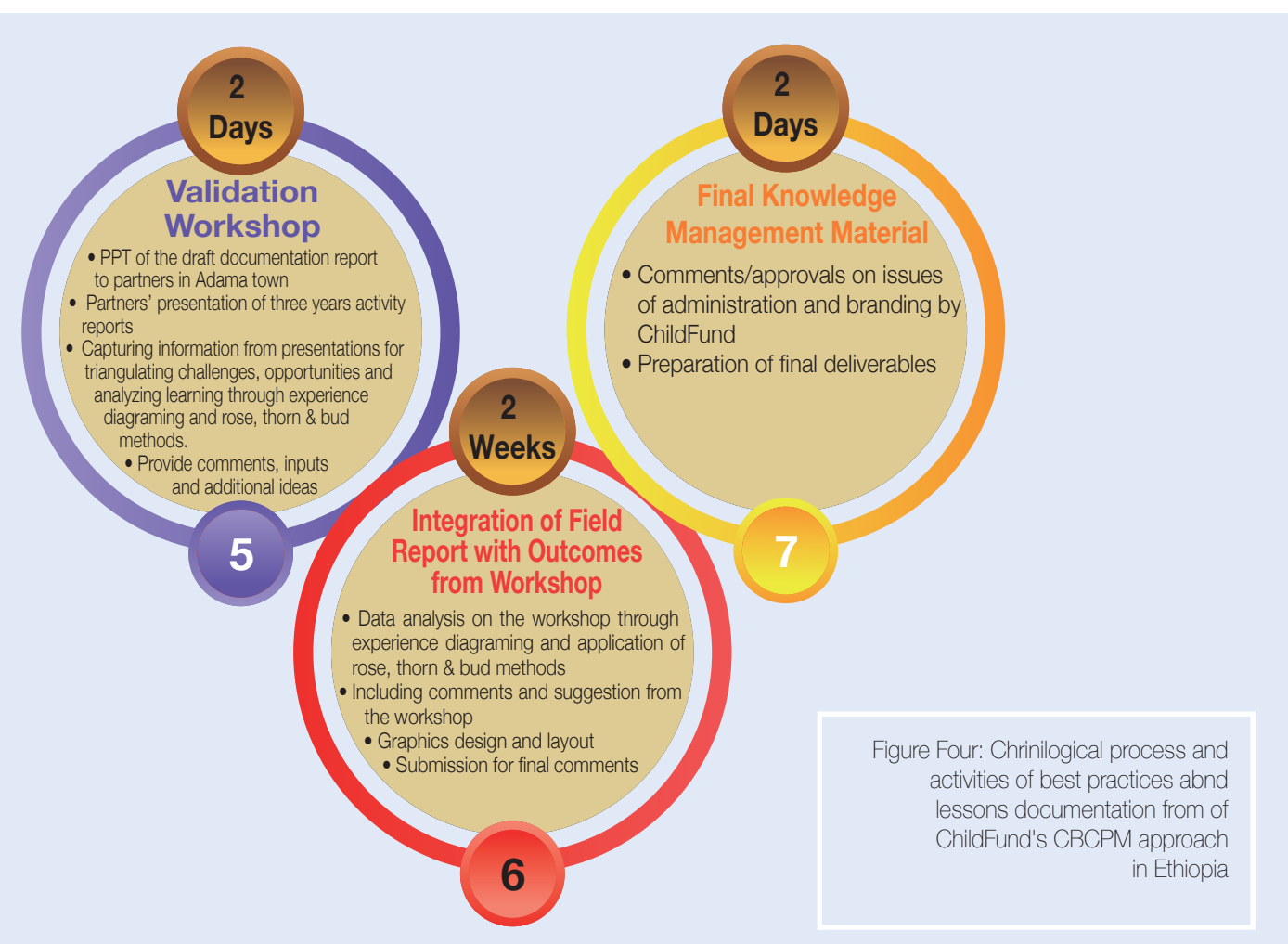


Figure Four: Chronological process and activities of best practices and lessons documentation from of ChildFund's CBCPM approach in Ethiopia

CHAPTER TWO BEST PRACTICE ELEMENTS AND CASE STORIES



The CBCPM approach in Ethiopia works towards strengthening the functional capacities of the CRCs targeting key components that include planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating initiatives for child protection. It has identified six pillars of functional capacities that are central to the outcome of child protection endeavors.

2.1. Strengthening Functional Capacity of CBCPM

ChildFund's CBCPM approach in Ethiopia started with identifying local partners and supporting them conduct child protection mapping. Community mapping falls under the first pillar of the six known as surveillance. The mapping was conducted with three specific objectives; to identify forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence that children experience in each life stage; to understand the root causes of violence against children; and to understand how child protection systems were functioning.

Results from the CBCPM mapping supported by ChildFund's guideline's proved that various child protection mechanisms existed in the study areas, however they were weak and haphazardly coordinated to prevent and respond to major concerns of children which include violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Major formal and informal child protection structures include *idirr*, school clubs, Child Rights Committee (CRC), government sectoral offices (including WCYAs, labour and social affairs, health, education, justice, police, etc.), religious and community leaders, youth forum members, etc. were in existence.

The Child Right Committee (CRC), an existing structure established by the government, was found to be best suited and in line with ChildFund's CBCPM approach, according to the mapping. Each partner hence came up with a three-year proposal on the identified child protection concerns at each life stage, child participation (resilience), attitudes of the community and capacities of the CRC mechanism among others. ChildFund Ethiopia provided technical and financial support as well as assigned a focal person who provided technical backup to ChildFund's CBCPM implementation approach

- .i. Surveillance:** In the formal public service structure of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), various organs have vested duties and responsibilities of coordinating and administrating child protection services. Start sentence with The Ministry of Women, Children and Youth (MWoCY), Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoISA),

Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) and Federal Justice have their own proclamations, regulations, strategies and implementation guidelines concerning children's issues. Having their structure at all levels going from federal to the *woreda/kebele*, all of them work independently in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating child rights and protection efforts. However, though significantly improving, cases of abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence are still rife. In order to ensure child protection concerns are proactively addressed, ChildFund Ethiopia implements a CBCPM approach that promotes a strong system through coordinating existing structures functionality at all levels of implementing child protection services.

Led by a technical person trained by the ChildFund Ethiopia and assigned to the local Implementing Partner's *Woreda* Office, the CRC members at *woreda* and *kebele* level provide training and participate in the process of tackling and addressing their problems. The surveillance was based on ChildFund's guiding manual designed not only for mobilizing the communities to understand existing problems, but also plan and take actions against child protection issues. Accordingly, the CRC at *kebele* and *woreda* levels have been implementing the following major activities against the identified child protection concerns in their respective areas:

- Members have been participating in continuous assessment, identification and reporting of child protection concerns including abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence to the CRC;
- Approved the CRC bylaw
- As per shared duties and responsibilities, participated in financial and resource mobilization;
- Took part in preventing and mitigating child protection risks including rape, abduction, child abandonment, domestic abuse, child marriage, child labour, etc.
- Mobilizing the local communities including religious and community leaders on activities on prevention and response of child protection concerns;
- Created networking and referral linkages with child protection services providers like governmental and non-governmental institutions,
- Participating in performance monitoring and evaluation activities;



Child Rights
Violation Court
Case Dropping -
Risk Factors for
Abduction, Early/
Child Marriage and
Rape

Case Story

Child rights violations like abduction, early marriage and rape were serious problems facing children in school and out-of-school in the Dugda *woreda* of Oromia Regional State. With its capital Meki situated 127kms South of Addis Ababa, the *woreda* is known for its high number of daily labourers working in small and medium level fruits and vegetable farms as well as commercial horticulture productions

Ato Shimelis, a prosecutor who was transferred from one of the remotest part of the country (Bale) to the area recognized the prevalence of the practices during his first year of service. According to the prosecutor, not only was the area recording many cases of child rights violation, but also, incidents of legal cases being dropped were high. Ato Shimelis shared the concern to the CRC of the Meki town in which he volunteers to work on child protection related activities in addition to his regular job as a lawyer. He also expressed concerns over the exceptionally high number of cases reported during some seasons.

ChildFund Ethiopia in collaboration with its implementing partner called Dugda Children's and Family Charitable Organization (CFCO) trained the CRC on conducting proper surveillance on child rights and child protection concerns prior to ChildFund's CBCPM approach starting the proposed activities implementation. From core approaches of the CBCPM, enabling CRC to conduct continuous surveillance of child protection issues is one. Based on the training, the committee members conducted an assessment led by the prosecutor.

Result of the assessment showed that during harvesting seasons, farm owners demand for daily laborers increase significantly. As a result, adolescent children and girls from poor families who are forced to work to earn an income, become vulnerable to abduction, early marriage, rape among other violations, either in or out of the farms. In most cases, families of the survivors supported by the CRC develop court cases but most of them fail to persist to the verdict date. The committee members found out the following reasons for the case terminations:

- (1) Parents agree for arranged abduction but one of the family members may refuse and together with the CRC takes the



CRC members, Dugda woreda, Oromia region

matter to the court. Social mediator meddles between the victim/ survivor and the family on one side and the assailant on the other side to drop the court case before the verdict. (2) The girl agrees to marry the man but afraid of discussing with her family. She agrees for abduction arrangement in secret but families open court charge and either the abductor or his families discontinue the procedure through bribery. (3) Assailants use peer pressure to drop cases through convincing either the victim/ survivor or her relatives.

FGD participants, Dugda woreda, Oromia

The discussants agree that they learned from the surveillance results that people use the money they earn from selling their products to commit violence against children and eliminate liabilities through bribing judiciary and enforcing bodies and compensating families.

In addition to recommending implementation of awareness creation interventions among the community about the law, the CRC planned further action based on the surveillance. “We decided to strengthen advocacy through a special engagement of the administration for serious measures to be considered in the policy,” as pointed out by a CRC member participating in FGD..

ii. Prevention:

For each of the child protection concerns identified during surveillance the CRC structures have designed strategic prevention action plans at family, community and institutional levels. Likewise, means of resource mobilization and targeted organizations that support the initiative, guidelines, monitoring and evaluations and reporting procedures throughout the structure have been clearly established to support prevention measures. Accordingly, the following activities have been accomplished.

- The CRC is mandated to implement awareness creation activities in the community, especially families, on appropriate and positive parental care, prevent HTPs, and shared responsibilities of the entire community;
- Promotion of child rights as an integral part of basic human rights and the CRC to advocate for with strong participation of its members from the police, lawyers, etc.
- Strengthen the relationship and integration of informal child protection mechanisms and institutions with the formal (CRC) for better result;
- Improving the attitude, knowledge and behavior of the community on identifying hot spot areas and issues of child concerns including violence, neglect, abuse and exploitations and reporting to the CRC;
- Volunteers, peer educators, members of child parliament, youth and women clubs, etc. identified and collaborated for the promotion of child protection;
- Public holidays, international and national children's and women days, large community gatherings like religious and market places, school children, etc. identified and included in the CRC manual as channels of information dissemination and communication on child protection;
- Visibility promotion among children, parents and the wider local communities about objectives, goals and services by the CRC on child rights violations, prevention and response;
- Enhanced knowledge of school children on child rights and child protection issues through awareness creation and capacity building activities which have enabled children themselves to be community mobilizers;

CRC – Knowledge for Breaking Child Rights and Bureaucracy

Case Story

Like everywhere in Ethiopia, there are many governmental and non-governmental organizations that address problems related to child rights violations in Siraro *woreda*. Since many formal and informal institutions work independently to alleviate child rights violation and child protection related concerns, violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, they have not been successful to in effectively achieving objectives set to this age group for many years. Moreover, the awareness of the community including families and children themselves on basic child rights has been low. As a result, corruption, misuse of public power (political power), wealth, family and peer influence have become an impediment in preventing and responding to child protection concerns in the area.

The Head of *kebele* Social Affairs or Women and Children Office is generally accountable to the *Woreda* Administrator or Head of Security according to the government structure. They were under complete control of the *Woreda* Administrator, as such they sustain intimidations while handling rape or abduction cases. A wealthy person can use his money to terminate police investigations or court procedures. Sector offices have titles and responsibilities but lack power to exercise in practice.

FGD participant, Siraro woreda, Oromia



CRC members, Siraro woreda, Rophi Sinta kebele, Oromia region

Using the CBCPM approach enables the system to work better due to its holistic and inclusive approach. Under this approach, children themselves, families, community members and the CRCs are empowered to prevent and respond to child rights violations before they reach those who may abuse their powers. creation intervention, they already owned the CRC approach. A committee member from religious leaders told during a discussion for this documentation, “it [CRC] completely avoided clan, religious and power influence during any form of child rights violation incidents.”

Due to the transparency of the CBCPM approach and powers given to members (10-13) and sectoral offices, mismanagement of court cases through corruption and political influence, became very difficult.

Using the CRC enables communication with all sectors that deal with child rights and child protection issues with different responsibilities and powers from one source in a single frequency.

We don’t need to visit police, justice, social, health, women and children, religious, etc. offices at different locations, for example, for a child’s case whose right is violated because of early marriage.

Kebele Chirman, Rophi Sinta, Siraro woreda

The CBCPM approach created a strong institution that effectively averts such risks because it comprises of members from different organs who represent the entire society, are unified and act in one voice with power.with full power.



CRC Coordinator, Siraro woreda, Rophi Sinta kebele, Oromia region

iii. Response:

The CBCPM mechanism is becoming a strong and legally accredited child protection institution that undertakes actionable measures to mitigate child rights violations including abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence. Among core indicators of CRC's viability is the fact that its areas of response are based on the result of continuous and appropriate surveillance. Primary and secondary information sources collected from selected ChildFund's CBCPM approach intervention areas indicated that the CRCs are an effective child protection system in responding to child protection concerns.

- Identified and/or agreed with potential partners/stakeholders from the government and NGOs to provides financial and material resources for the care and support services provides to families of the poorest children to secure their nutrition and related supports. In areas where the CRCs easily access funds from CSOs/NGOs and government sources, they signed agreements of cooperation. In the circumstances of shortages of funds from outside sources, they engage local communities to respond to their resource mobilization activities.
- Clearly identified local capacities and needs are enabling the CRCs to respond to incidents of child rights violation and child protection concerns on time, successfully avoiding possible crises, reducing level of harms, facilitating referrals, and supporting survivors and those at risk.
- Engaging local communities during identification and assessment of potential risks and vulnerability as well as in the response and implementation process increased their level of accountability and strengthened community ownership;
- Using existing and workable child rights and child protection related laws, policies, standards and regulations the CRC is able to practically exercise its capacity and build children's resilience;
- Child-centered awareness creation interventions during prevention activities have built the CRC's profile and increased its visibility as a strong mechanism of receiving reports on child rights violations and responding on time;

Vigilantes of Child
Rights Violation:
Communities
Rescue School
child from Gang-
Rape Attempt

Case Story

“I have never thought my dreams of becoming a teacher would be abandoned due to abduction, (early) marriage, or even rape, anytime” says 16-year-old Tsion Amanuel. She continued “because, we always witness the work of CRC everywhere like in school, in the village, at the church and in the market that these bad practices are almost becoming a history.” Tsion has a strong confidence in her parents who always support her to become a brave student. It is clear that the close presence of the family equally enabled her to become one of the top scorers of grade 7, when she stood 3rd in the 2020/21 academic year.

“I was a little bit late before noon” said Tsion when she recognized a group of strange youngsters emerging out of a nearby bush who then tried to entangle her. It was a regular job at the small river where she had to take her family’s cattle for their daily intake of water. “I avoided looking too nervous and started screaming as much as I could,” Tsion remembers the situation with a little smile on her





face. While defending herself against them, she also mentioned the name of her strong and energetic uncle so that she could confuse their attention. “I was lucky that some people who were working in nearby farms reached out for help before the attackers did anything harmful and I left the area safely,” she added.

However, things didn’t go smooth after the incident as Tsion thought the bad encounter was over. The situation was further complicated as her families decided to retaliate and fight members of the group one by one. Moreover, some people started gossiping that “I might have been actually sustained a gang-rape that my brothers wanted to avenge my hurt” which in turn elicited frustration on her even though she knew she was completely safe and intact.

“Anger management skills I learned in our school helped me a lot to escape the assault,” says Tsion, thereby acknowledging the support by the

CRC in her *kebele* and Siraro *woreda* of the West Arsi zone of the Oromia Regional State. According to her “the CRC members have been continuously counseling me to pursue my education while at the same time telling the community the truth that I was unharmed.” The CRC in the Rophi Sinta *kebele* brought the suspects to the court and they were punished according to the law. Not only did Tsion go back to school after a month, she also started fighting child right violations with the support of the CRC and the community.

The CRC in Siraro *woreda* now has Tsion as one of its success stories in the fight against child violence. Besides, they awarded her with a bicycle, Birr 200 and school materials like bags, books, “The protection by the CRC and violence protection methods and techniques I learned from my school helped to further strengthen my school attendance and revived my dream of becoming a teacher!” declared Tsion.

iv. Coordination: CRCs, most specifically at *woreda* and *kebele* levels, have clear roles and responsibilities set in their bylaws that enable them to effectively coordinate implementation of child protection activities. Smooth and well-functioning internal communication (vertically at all levels from federal to *kebele* and vice-versa, horizontally among stakeholders and with the targeted community, etc.) has proved effective coordination within the CRC members. Similarly, the external communication (between CRCs and donors/funders, other government and non-government institutions, etc.) has been going on in the way that it witnessed shared responsibility and collaboration. Utilization of existing structures for child protection concerns, especially from the government, may have differences from place to place both in rural and urban areas of the project targets. The following are some key indicators of coordination efforts in the CRCs.

- Ministry of Women, Children and Youth (MoWCY), a national government organ to lead child protection services, is coordinating the CRCs at all levels.
- The CRCs have functional mechanisms for coordinating identification, prevention and response to risks and incidents of child right violations and child protection concerns. CRCs in most areas targeted by the ChildFund's CBCPM approach have also subcommittees formed according to existing supportive situations: Prevention, Response and Resource Mobilization. Duties and responsibilities for each subcommittee are clearly set in the CRC manual.
- The CRCs created safe and effective systems for receiving issues of child right violations/child protection cases and facilitating/responding to such emergency needs. The CRC brings its members from major social, administrative, justice and community based institutional structures. Members have cultural, natural and legal vested responsibilities towards child protection related issues both independently and in group. This planted confidence in children, families and community members to report child protection concerns following information flow mechanisms from a single household (a child) to neighbor (*gote/ketena*), then to *kebele* community, *woreda*, etc. as the specific cases may require.
- Child protection concerns are addressed in close collaboration with other service providers through referral systems that include informal (traditional) systems. Most CRCs have formal documents (such as Memorandum of Understanding, Action Plan, Minutes and Reports) collaboration for accessing health, legal, economic, psychosocial including parental, food, shelter, education, etc. Some CRCs also drafted/have Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that clearly guide the referral pathway and communication strategies among service providers in their respective areas.
- The CRC has a structure for policy advocacy by engaging and integrating senior officials at all government administrative structures as members of the committee.

Working with *Ketena* Structure Strengthens CBCPM services in Addis Ababa



CRC members, woreda 06 (Addis Ketema Sub City) Addis Ababa

Case Story

The area surrounding cross country bus station in Merkato, especially *Woreda 06* and *Woreda 07* of Addis Ketema Sub-City are known for its old slums and congested houses and majority of its population is low income earners. Child rights violations and child protection concerns including child labor, rape and poor parental care are deep-rooted and have posed a major challenge to the government and other child protection actors. The CRC approach is a mechanism established by the government of Ethiopia to prevent and respond to such violations. In 2019, ChildFund Ethiopia in collaboration with an implementing local NGO called Addis Integrated Development Organization (AIDO), reached on an agreement to respond to the problem through strengthening implementation of CBCPM approach.

The approach fully explored the development of a unique government structure in the *woredas* in coordination with the CRC. *Woreda 06*, for example, is divided into seven '*Ketenas*' and each '*Ketena*' is further divided into blocks (made up of adjacent houses). Each block has six members. The CRC, thereof, networked with coordinators of a '*Ketena*' and block in order to make continuous supervision, prevention and respond to child right violation and child protection related problems.

Three sub-committees under each CRC, Selection, Crime Prevention (and Response) and Resource Mobilization, leads implementation of child protection related interventions. Awareness creation using coffee ceremonies, social gatherings like *iddir*, big events including World Children's Day, Day of the African Child etc. are some key methods of prevention. The Selection sub-committee leads assessment and identification of children from poor families and other highly vulnerable/at risk children for care and support. The CRC in *woreda 06* and *07*, in collaboration with AIDO and with financial support from ChildFund and other institutions facilitates care and support services to one child from a poor family of three children in a household.

"Coordination between the *Ketena* structure and our CRC is bringing great success," said Sergeant Maeregu, a member representing the *Woreda* Police Office. He added, "the structure helped us to easily track rape cases, abandoned children, and trafficked children working with traditional weavers in several shanty houses." Other referral services facilitated by the Committee include legal support, childcare centers, food and other basic items to children and poor families among others.

v. Monitoring and Evaluation:

Even though there is a difference in terms of duration and frequency for *kebele* and *woreda* levels CRC, members meet to hear reports, evaluate performances, decide on emerging and existing cases and risks and share responsibilities.

vi. Documentation:

The CRCs have record books in which they document all activities they implement for future purposes. They document results from such works and share among the general community as necessary. Moreover, decisions from court proceedings on child rights violations are documented and used as case stories and lessons for awareness creation activities. CRC members file training materials/process, reports, photo and video images from activity implementation, etc. both in hard and soft copies. However, the documentation and information management system at *woreda* and *kebele* levels are traditional, and highly exposed to damages and missing.

**Major Achievements
(Objective I -
Strengthening
Functional Capacity
of CBCPM):**

The following are some key achievements under specific objectives of ChildFund's CBCPM approach.

- From various existing child protection mechanisms, the CRC was selected as a ChildFund's CBCPM and its functional capacity has been strengthened;
- Enabled CRCs to encompass members from existing child protection mechanisms, shared duties and responsibilities and effective coordination for preventive and responsive measures;
- CRCs identified existing child protection concerns which members from all sectors agreed on and prioritized issues and designed intervention action plans
- Community-based, participatory and need-based identification, implementation and monitoring and evaluation ensured ownership; and
- Strengthened CRC's resilience to prevent child rights violation risks; enabled the committee to avert possible risks that might have caused physical and psychological trauma to children and empowered their institutional capacity to effectively address child protection concerns.



Figure Five: ChildFund's CBCPMs system strengthening (preventive and responsive capacity) at six pillars.



2.2. CBCPM

Services at the Three Child Life Stages

One of the specific objectives of strengthening CBCPM is to ensure the existence of strong and functional institution that provide child protection services across the three life stages. After ensuring the functional capacity of the existing government structure, ChildFund mainly started to strengthen community involvement in the planning, implementing and monitoring and evaluating activities. Local implementing partners remain catalysts, capacity builders, facilitators of linkages, and initial funding contributors so as to move the mechanism forward up until it is able to mobilize resources from the government, the wider community and other sources sustainably. Therefore, the local and community members are analysts, planners, implementers, assessors, and beneficiaries at the same time.

Overview of the Implementation Process

Community level CRC chaired by the *Kebele* Manager took part in the community mapping which was led by the *woreda*-level implementing partners from NGOs. The Committee agreed on the assessment result of the mapping including reactivation, prioritized child issues, membership, activities, roles and responsibilities among others. Types of members at the *kebele* level are almost the same throughout the targeted areas and are composed of the *Kebele* Manager, Labour and Social Affairs, Women and Children, Health Extension Worker (HEW), social worker, Development Agent (DA), school director, religious leader and community leader (elder) among others.

Their Action Plan is approved by the *woreda* level CRC before they start implementation.

Life Stage I: *Supporting parents and caregivers to develop responsive and protective parenting practices, as well as promoting and supporting safe and caring environments, high quality nutrition and health care, and high-quality developmental stimulations to produce healthy and secure infants between 0 and 5 years old.*

Harms to children including ill-treatment, neglect, circumcision, uvulectomy, milk teeth extraction, child abandonment, etc. were among serious problems among infants in the rural intervention areas identified during CBCPM mapping. Child malnutrition was a common problem in all intervention areas including Addis Ababa. The degree of malnourishment was wide and deep among poor families and young parents who left the country in search of better jobs in foreign countries. Poverty, lack of awareness about child rights and protection, lack and/or limited access to childcare centers were among risk factors shared by most communities in the area. The CRC developed workable action plans that included preventive and response measures.

Because of the low level of community's understanding about basic child rights, parents used to believe they have a sole responsibility and right over their children including causing any harm that may potentially jeopardize their physical or psychological conditions. Almost in all rural and urban areas of ChildFund's CBCPM approach intervention, the problem of infant abandonment was common because of poverty, unwanted pregnancy, rape etc.

i. Prevention

Awareness creation on issues of infants were implemented by targeting parents/families, caregivers, neighbors and the general community. The CRC has been promoting basic child rights in relation to practicing HTPs, parental care, malnutrition, child abandonment, denying attention and care, etc. This intervention sought to increase community understanding that families are accountable for their children and for committing any ill practices that violate their children's rights including failure to provide what they deserve, and that such violations can result in legal punishment. Community mobilization on public holidays, using school children, interpersonal communication through CRC members like HEWs, Women Development Army (WDA), social workers, etc. has been utilized as methods of information dissemination.

In both urban and rural areas visited for purposes of this documentation, changing community attitudes and practices on child abandonment was addressed as a priority area of concern. In this regard, awareness creation activities were implemented as well as the identification of risk factors, hot spot areas and communication with concerned entities to prevent such incidents.

Continuous information dissemination by responsible bodies to reduce and mitigating violations against child rights including the CRC and steps thereof were also implemented.

In the targeted rural areas, HEWs and WDA are the front key role players in the CRC in preventing child rights violations. They use the advantage of their regular home-based visits to watch out for cases of child abandonment, maltreatment, nutrition and parental care problems, etc., and report to their committee members. The CRC then takes possible measures as per its existing capacity and response plans.

Being a member of the CRC, we have the power in the community as part of our mandate to abolish HTPs like child labour exploitation, uvulectomy, parental care, child abandonment, etc. which were prevalent in the *woreda*. As a HEW, our power is to increase awareness and reach reach a consensus with families in tackling child rights violation. We try to convince and work with our colleagues to prevent and make them legally accountable for violating their own children's rights.

Health Extension Worker, Siraro woreda, Oromia

ii. Response

The CRC facilitates and/or provides lifesaving care and support, referral and legal services to child right violation cases affecting children in this life stage. In all target areas, the committee received several cases of neglect/abandonment, maltreatment, malnutrition, lack of parental care, etc. and tried to respond in different ways. Lifesaving is the first reaction by the members for cases of child neglect and abandonment. Although people report such cases to the police first, any member of the CRC may get the information. While police investigation and case development happens as required, other members of the CRC facilitate the provision of healthcare and other urgent needs to the survivor/victim.

The police, as member of the CRC in addition to its regular duties, respond to child rights violations. For example, in case of abandoned children, we responded immediately and organized cases so that the committee can facilitate the provision of appropriate solutions including legal procedures, health services, facilitating domestic adoption, etc. Just in this year [2020/21], we have successfully facilitated gudiffacha to nine children.

FGD participant, Oromia Regional State, Dugda Woreda

During the last three years of the CBCPM approach implementation,

the CRC has provided or facilitated the provision of care and support services on child protection. The response in this regard is different from one target area to the other based on the Committee's resources and capacity. The CRC members provide temporarily milk powder, sanitation materials like diapers, clothes, and other food items to vulnerable children and their mothers through mobilizing local resources. In Siraro *woreda*, they mainly rely on the support from ChildFund's implementing partner Child and Family Development Association (CFDA). While the survivors are provided with transition centers (safe places) in some areas, either members may take infants to their own places or connect with other volunteers from the community until a formal referral is facilitated.

The CRC in all ChildFund's CBCPM approach intervention areas try to solve incidents of child rights violations through dialogues as a first measure depending on the gravity of the case. In cases that necessarily requires legal procedure, they present to the court through prosecutors.

Referral service is another major role played by CRCs play in the CBCPM approach. They facilitate alternative childcares including foster care, *Guddifacha*, local/domestic adoption and childcare centers.

Key Achievements:

- Awareness creation on issues of child rights and child protection specifically infants parental care implemented through community mobilization campaigns and trainings
- Community-based response mechanisms to child rights violation problems related to neglect/abandonment, HTPs, malnutrition, etc. strengthened
- Facilitated referral services to survivors of child rights violations with childcare centers, formal and informal child care providers
- Targeted communities enabled to know how and where to report child protection concerns/cases to the CRC
- Communities take action on families that violate their own children's rights e.g., through corporal punishment, and report such cases to CRCs.

Enabling CRC to Further Child Protection Services:

Case Story

Not all families in Gulelle Sub – City, Addis Ababa, are able to send their children to school despite education being a basic right. Although many factors contribute to deprivation of education to children in *woreda* 07 in the Sub City, problems related to poverty take the lion's share.

In order to ensure child rights are protected and that children live free from any kind of harm, the government of Ethiopia legalized Child Right Committees (CRC) among many initiatives. However, the mechanism didn't bring the desired result in short time. Lack of coordination and weak institutional system were among the bottlenecks. ChildFund has collaborated with the government and a local implementing NGO in the area, Sheger Child and Family Development Charitable Society (SCFDCS), to address child protection concerns. An approach almost similar to the CRC, CBCPM has been utilized in the *woreda* since 2019.

"Our CRC had been functional for a couple of years even before 2019 but number of children it supported was only three," regrets a member of the committee, Ashagaru Gassobi. The performance of the CRC has completely improved according to members of the committee since the launching of CBCPM project. Another member, Alemtsehai Woldu agrees with her colleague's stance, "during the last three years, we facilitated a monthly payment of Birr 350 for 15 children and mobilized another Birr 35,000.00 for the poorest families who are unable to support their children." Seven families were reached with the money for the purpose of starting income generation activities.



CRC members, *woreda* 07 (Gulelle Sub City) Addis Ababa

A Community-Based Organization called *iddir* has been playing a vital role for the success of the CRC. Moreover, the committee has increased number of its supporters to include public servants, NGOs, business communities, etc. through properly implementing various trainings on resource mobilization techniques provided by SCFDCS.

The Addis Ababa City Administration launched a school feeding program two years ago which was a relief to the CRC, although the feeding is limited to breakfast and lunch. There are many children without access to dinners. “We have discussed the problem with the government and managed to facilitate takeaways for 29 school children we identified as the most at risk,” remarked Lijalem Aschenaki, a member from education sector.

The CRC members in the *woreda* 07 also celebrate improved knowledge among the community following coordinated awareness raising activities they carried out during the last three years. “SCFDCS is always within our reach and it is the secret of the promising results we have achieved so far,” said another member calling for more response, “our problem is much complicated and needs long period of sustained efforts.”

Life Stage 2: *Promoting and supporting positive relationships in supportive homes and communities, literacy, numeracy and life skills, as well as healthy and active participation of children in community life to create educated and confident children aged 5 to 12 years.*

While cases of rape, child labour and child trafficking are of major concern in Addis Ababa and regional ChildFund's CBCPM target areas, early/ forced marriages, abduction and domestic abuse are the core concerns in the rural and urban areas in communities reached by the CBCPM approach in Ethiopia. Interventions to increase knowledge of child rights and child protection among children, parents, communities and public institutions as well as improve coordination between child protection mechanisms have been implemented to create educated and confident children.

Awareness creation, training, promoting and supporting safe and friendly school environments, identifying and leading responses to child rights violations, organizing and facilitating services (economic, psychosocial and education/health) to survivors were among major activities implemented through ChildFund's CBCPM approach in response to the problems.

i. Prevention

Prevention efforts through awareness creation, training and strengthening child-friendly environments are major activities implemented to prevent child right violations mainly among children in this age category. The CRC members implement tailored and integrated awareness creation interventions on the identified problems related to child protection concerns by the participatory surveillance. Trainings were provided to CRC members on major issues of child protection awareness creation methods and duties and responsibilities of each member during implementation of the CBCPM approach in the planned timeframe.

In relation to child trafficking and child labour problems, key messages including risk factors, hotspot areas, peak times of the practice, ways of identifying those at risk and survivors and dealing with them, measures to be taken, facilitating reintegration and referral services, etc. have been disseminated in the community. In Dugda *woreda* (Oromia) and nearby areas, fruits and vegetables harvesting seasons by small scale and medium level farming were the peak time the CRC intensified interventions. Commercial farming areas of horticulture producers were also targeted for their high demand for human labour.

In the SNNPS like Aynage and Sodo-Bu'i *woredas*, child labour and trafficking prevention through awareness raising activities are

conducted throughout the year because the areas are crossed by the main road to Addis Ababa and exit to Kenya, in addition to farming seasons. Moreover, the CRC increase community mobilization during religious festivities as child smugglers use times of high mobility as an advantage for child trafficking. Community awareness raising activities were also implemented by the committee members in Addis Ababa. In the *Woredas* 06 and 07 (Addis Ketema Sub-City) and *Woreda* 07 (Gulelle Sub-City) targeted areas, issues of child trafficking and child labour, especially engaging children in traditional weaving/tailoring were addressed through community sensitization. Messages were continuously distributed to increase awareness among the community on how to identify cases and reporting mechanisms.

In the targeted rural areas, awareness raising activities have been implemented to prevent harmful practices that violate child rights including early and forced marriage, abduction and domestic abuse. Likewise, rape and domestic abuse were key areas of concern addresses by committees in Addis Ababa.

“Our major effort in this regard is to create awareness among the community,” said a lawyer contacted during the documentation work in Dugda. Ato. Shimelis, who is a prosecutor in the primary level court in Meki town continued, “we teach the people that an act that violates child rights in any form is just a crime committed or attempted on a person which is prohibited by the law.” All members of the CRC representing the legal system including the police, prosecutors and other judges agreed with Shimelis. The CRC use case stories of individuals who received legal punishments for committing rape, abduction and negotiated child marriage for awareness creation.

The CRC disseminate information through school child clubs, children's parliaments and child and youth out-of-school volunteers. These groups educate children and their families about its services, how and where to access the committee to report cases and get available care and supports services. CRC members in Siraro *woreda*, where HTPs were found highly prevalent during CBCPM mapping, work with school peer educators and child volunteers to disseminate information about child protection concerns in social, religious, cultural and public gatherings.

Whenever families tried to keep their child from school and order to do home and out-of-home chores like fetching water and collecting fire wood, looking after livestock, etc., children started discussing

with their parents that they were violating their rights. In some cases like when the discussion goes beyond their capacity to stop their family's' actions, they report to the CRC.

FGD participants, Siraro woreda, Oromia

Awareness creation activities have been implemented to address risky behaviors and practices in and out-of-school environments and ways to avoid them. As members of the CRC are recruited from all segments of the community, they are everywhere in the community. Using interpersonal communication approaches (home-based visit, community discussions, peer educators, child parliament members, volunteers, etc.), both children and the wider communities have been informed to be cautious and not to expose themselves to harm by avoiding risky areas like places where drug addicts are common, bars and restaurants or walking long distances alone in such areas etc. It is not only the CRC members who are vigilant and report such cases but community members also take the lead in reporting such matters and exercising caution.

The CRCs, in addition to creating awareness on prevention measures, also promote referral services for vulnerable children whose rights have been violated. They educate children and communities about the type of children targeted for care and support and other related services.

CRC Struggles Mitigating Domestic Child Abuse

Case Story

Ruth Gebrie (name changed) was only 12 when her mother died. In of June 2021, when we arrived at her home, she was reading her grade five exercise book sitting in front of the door. Both the father and mother were supporting their children, including Ruth's two sisters and two brothers from a meager income they earned as daily laborers. Before Ruth's mother passed away, she gave her a stern warning that she should leave home immediately and join her mother's relatives in Shasemene, about 280 kilometers from her home village.

Shortly after, even before Ruth who was not able to properly internalize the meaning of death that snatched her mother, she started recognizing that her father was behaving strangely. Every evening he would come home drunk and try to grab her and hold her tight to his body and go to bed naked. "Whenever I respond with disagreement to his unusual acts, he replied with a beating and even told me to leave home," Ruth said. After some months, she informed her neighbor, Wro Zewdie (name changed) about what was going on. Wro Zewdie has been supporting the kids since the death of her mother. Zewdie shared the matter to the CRC members and they came to realize that the father has been attempting incest on her.



The CRC in her *woreda* has been implementing ChildFund's CBCPM approach in partnership with a local NGO and financial and technical support from the ChildFund. In order not to exacerbate the problem, the CRC facilitated referral service of the children to a local childcare center. In the meantime, the CRC members provided a psychosocial support to the father and the children returned to their home. Facilitated by the CRC, peer educators also intensively guiding and counseling Ruth on how to avoid risky situations of such abuse not only from her father but also everywhere in school and out-of-school environments.

"The problems we have concerning Ruth and her two siblings are that their father's income is too small to provide enough food and other expenses," said her reliable neighbor Zewdie. In this year (2020/21), the *Woreda* CRC supported the family with Birr 2,100.00, beds, blankets and other home equipment in collaboration with local NGOs. Ruth was also supported with school materials and some clothes.

Ruth is looking forward for a better tomorrow now but still facing serious shortages of money for school transportation, personal sanitation, etc. "We have facilitated credit and saving services for the father by connecting him with a local financial institution so that he can help his family," said the secretariat of the CRC. Ruth takes care of her siblings by doing house chores while pursuing her studies. She told us, "I cook some food for us, clean the house, keep my brother and sister's hygiene while doing my homework and study during my free time". Ruth continued reiterating her future dreams with confidence, "I want to continue with my education, graduate from a university and become an artist."

ii. Response

The CRC, in collaboration with its stakeholders, identified children at risk and survivors of trafficking, established temporary transition centers, facilitated reintegration and referral services. Though the practice is common almost in all targeted areas, Sodo, Dugda, (SNNPS and Oromia respectively) and *Woreda* 06 and 07 in Addis Ababa City were reported to be extremely high risk areas. Committee members intensify their response during harvesting time as both intraregional and interregional child trafficking reaches its climax in the case of Dugda and Sodo *Woredas*. Child traffickers also use holidays for a better chance of evading check points.

During the Meskele festival (the Founding of True Cross) season, the number of child trafficking cases increases. We strengthen

search and control activities at check points established for this purpose through assigning our CRC members. The police, local security, Women and Children Affairs and *kebele* administrators/managers play a critical role during this time.

FGD participants, Sodo – Bu'i woreda, SNNPS



“Every member of a family, including children themselves, is a policeman concerning issues of child right violations,”

Comander Abebe Balcha, CRC member, Sodo Bu'i

Similarly, with support of AIDO (ChildFund’s implementing partner in Addis Ababa), a check point has been established at the main bus station found in Merkato area and CRC members have carried out legal procedures and provided related services to the vulnerable.

Activities related to care and support by the CRC include financial and material resource mobilization, facilitating emergency services, referral pathways that ensure participation of families and the wider communities. In most targeted areas, the CRC works with existing Community Care Coalition (CCC) mechanism which is established by the government to strengthen social services to its citizens. The CCCs support the CRC through contributing resources including finances for provision of care and support to vulnerable children and their families.

Through coordinated efforts by members of the CRC, several attempted cases of rape, abduction and early/forced marriages have been successfully terminated in ChildFund’s CBCPM implementation areas.

We have established an association called “Yenege Yehitsnat

Tesfa,” which translates in English as, “Children’s Future Hope”. It works through local resource mobilization for provision of support to Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC). The association has 40 active members and they contribute money from their pockets to provide emergency support for needy people. “Yenege Yehitsnat Tesfa,” works towards increasing its members to 40,000 in the near future.

FGD participants, Sodo, SNNPS

Moreover, the CRC has also facilitated legal, psychosocial, medical and economic referral support to survivors of domestic violence. Members conduct scouting in the areas where there is high possibility of child rights violation and ensure that the violators are accountable for breaching the law, in case they are found.

... we suspected a household head in our village for raping his housemaid who was 13 years old. The court found him guilty sentenced him to 15 years in prison. Similarly ... a mother who abandoned her 2-year-old baby was caught red-handed by the CRC members and was brought to the court. She was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

FGD participants, Bu’i, SNNPS

Such formal and informal measures taken by the CRC in response to child right violations are always documented as case stories and are used during awareness creation implementation activities.

In areas where seasonal child labour is a serious problem, the CRC makes an organized search, controls and leads legal measures. Dugda *woreda* in the Oromia regional state is a case in point. The ever-increasing commercial and small-scale horticulture farms require extensive labour where thousands of children and the youth flock to earn income. In addition to the local residents, children from neighboring regions like the SNNPS quit their education and start working in flower, fruits and vegetable farms for low wages. The CRC not only addresses child labour issues, but also violations like rape, abduction and forced/early marriage. This support has enabled several children to go back to school.

Likewise, the CRC is extensively working to address child labour and abuse cases in *Woreda* 06 and 07 (Addis Ketema Sub-city) of the Addis Ababa City. Using an existing government structure called *Ketena* (a specific area composed of blocks of houses) established by the government, the local community reports individual traders who exploit children trafficked from rural areas to engage in traditional tailoring/weaving by keeping them locked in houses for several days and nights.

Volunteers organized through the support of the ChildFund in Dugda

woreda identify child survivors of rape, abduction, punishment, child labour, etc. to the CRC. The CRC facilitates referrals to charity organizations should reintegration with their families be impossible. The volunteers, mostly known at *woreda* level as peer educators, facilitate access to educational opportunities for school-aged children and adolescents who are survivors of such violations.

In creating safe and enabling school and out-of-school environments, the CRCs supported school clubs like mini media, school girls clubs, parents' committee, etc. with financial and material support. Schools identify risky behaviors and circumstances to child right violations and share among the members so that all members including the Police, Women and Children, Labour and Social Affairs, community and religious leaders act to mitigate potential harms.

Key Achievements:

- Tailored awareness creation and training opportunities provided to school and out-of-school children on issues of child protection.
- School children played key role in the process of promoting child protection including surveillance, prevention and response.
- School enrolment increased while dropouts reduced in the targeted areas.
- CRCs mobilized resources through engaging children themselves, youth groups, children's parliament and the wider community to strengthen care and support to survivors of child right violations, children with poor families and at risk/vulnerable children.
- Referral services facilitated to children from poor families, at risk and survivors of child right violations.
- Safe and youth_friendly institutions supported and children networking facilitated.
- Attempted child right violations including child trafficking, child labour, rape, domestic abuse, etc. aborted and perpetrators brought to justice.
- Children saved from rape, abduction, early/child marriage attempts.
- Child-friendly and safe school environments improved because of awareness creation interventions through trainings, etc.
- Improved child justice through engaging the legal bodies in the CRC.
- School and out-of-school children developed resilience to problems related to child rights violations in their communities.

Peer Educators Support Narrowing Child Rights Violation

Case Story

Just three years ago, I myself who is now leading documentation of best practices of ChildFund's CBCPM in Ethiopia, witnessed a 17-year-old school girl who was cut on her face using a surgical blade by a violent gang in Meki town, Dugda *woreda*. Such gender-based violence affecting school children forced Biftu Birra, 18, to fight for child rights. Now promoted to grade 12 with excellent performance, Biftu is also a peer-educator in her school.

"People, especially men, with poor knowledge about basic child rights commit violence, abuse, neglect and labour exploitation on children in my community," said Biftu. Further classifying, "correspondingly less educated school and out-of-school girls including young and adolescent children and their mothers at large are survivors/victims of child rights violations," she stated. According to the peer-educator, HTPs like child marriage, abduction (family-arranged and/or by the girl herself), psychological trauma, etc.), rape, child labour, domestic abuse and many were prevalent in the communities in Dugda *woreda* and nearby areas.

Using ChildFund's CBCPM approach, ChildFund's implementing partner CFCO has been working with previously existing government structure known as Child Right Committees (CRC) since 2019. The CRC was working with schools with an overall objective of creating safe and child-friendly school environments through improving



Meki town peer educators (from left to right - Fasika Abera and Biftu Birra)

knowledge of the school community. The approach also puts children at the center of child right protection interventions in the wider community.

In collaboration with the school, the Dugda CRC has been providing trainings to school children on child protection concerns and supporting school clubs like girls' clubs, mini-media and sport clubs to enable them take part in the prevention and response. Biftu was recruited from a club in her school called *Gumii Shamarranii* - meaning, 'Girls' Club' and became a peer-educator. Based on the knowledge we acquired, we advise our school mates, our family and the community using different events like performing drama, poems, etc.," Biftu reported.

The peer educators meet every two weeks to report about assignments they handled, and discussed problems related to child rights that they encountered. They have steps to follow when they encounter problems that they cannot able to solve. "For issues beyond our group, we discuss with our teachers assigned as focal persons by the CRC in our school," Biftu stated.

Not only have the peer educators worked on prevention of child rights violation but they also responded to address identified problems, according to Biftu.



"We mobilize small money to support children from poor families with personal hygiene materials like sanitary pads. We collect our school uniform after completion of grade six and give it to students who need it most and sometimes raise money to buy school materials." added strong-willed Biftu.

The peer educators highly recognize the contribution of the CRC to the knowledge and skills that Biftu and her colleagues have acquired.

“I had never thought of supporting other people before the training,” adding “I can now stand on a stage and speak confidently and convince people easily, yet I couldn’t even be able to look a stranger in the eye previously.”

Biftu confirmed that many people including her family, teachers, officers from WCAs offices and others support her work in child right protection. “Some community members who I have never seen personally who remember my stage performances greet me with respect,” she asserts proudly. The peer-educator calls up on all child protection actors to sustain the knowledge and practice improvement in the community and work for more behavioral change at the grassroots level.

Life Stage 3: *Promoting employability, healthy sexual and reproductive health and supporting youth and adolescents to become change agents at family and community levels so as to produce skilled and involved youth between aged 15 to 24.*

According to the results of the community mapping conducted prior to launching ChildFund’s CBCPM, inability of the family and social services provision mainly by the government to enable young children and adolescents transit to the youth age group increases their future vulnerability to aggressive and violent behavior. The assessment listed risk factors including unemployment, unfriendly youth-adult partnership, delayed response to youth needs by government, poor youth working culture, peer-pressure, social media, drug abuse, family conflict, and absence of life skills among others. As a result, some youth end up being among violators of child rights instead of being part of the change agents and champions for good.

ChildFund’s CBCPM approach, through strengthening capacity and functionality of the CRC, has been working to make the youth change agents in the struggle for child protection in the targeted areas.

i. Prevention

The CRC, using existing formal and informal youth structures as an opportunity, has been trying to engage the youth in awareness creation activities. The Youth League is a formal government structure that has participated in the intervention not only as a supporter but also as a member of the CRC with duties and responsibilities. With support from ChildFund’s CBCPM approach, the CRC facilitates trainings to the youth members on building healthy life skills, sexual and reproductive health education, etc. in cooperation with local stakeholders.

AIDO and CFDCO, ChildFund’s implementing partners in Addis Ababa, support child protection campaigns on together with various clubs like girls’ clubs, HIV/AIDS clubs, Anti-Drug clubs, etc. The CRC hence further networked with other NGOs to strengthen awareness creation. “As a member of CRC, we work on youth awareness creation and mobilization campaigns on different events like World Youth Days,” stated a member of the committee from ‘Sibeana’ (local NGO working on child ethics).

In some targeted areas like Dugda and Siraro *woredas* in the Oromia region, ChildFund’s CBCPM approach implementing partner involved a youth group within the informal structure called *kerroo* to volunteer to conduct awareness creation activities. A Youth Program Development Officer and Focal Person for the ChildFund’s CBCPM approach at the CFDCO, implementing partner in Dugda *woreda* Kasim Feyisa says, “trained youth volunteers collaborated with CRC members in promoting child rights and addressing child protection concerns especially in the rural areas and financial resource mobilization elsewhere.”

ii. Response

ChildFund’s CBCPM approach prioritizes targeting the deprived, excluded and vulnerable adolescents and youth in this age group. In order to strengthen enabling and youth-friendly environments, the CRC in coordination with lead implementing partners in each of the targeted areas and through engaging potential stakeholders has been implementing several activities.

The CRC has been facilitating referral for adolescent and youth to various institutions where they can develop soft and hard skills. The Sodo-Bu’i Child and Family Development Charitable Organization (CFDCO), lead implementing partner, in Sodo *woreda* is a good case in point. The CRC in Bu’i town of the *woreda* supported by ChildFund’s CBCPM approach and the local government (Labour and Social Affairs Office) facilitated a girls center to the most vulnerable ones where they can live and pursue their education. “Most of these girls are from poor families



Abreham Sukare, head of the Sodo Woreda Labour and Social Affairs Office

in the rural areas and are forced to walk long distances to school in unsafe environments,” said Mr. Abreham Sukare, Head of the *Woreda’s* Labour and Social Affairs Office. ChildFund also provides financial support to the girls to cover costs for technical training school and other expenses.

ChildFund’s CBCPM approach in partnership with its local implementer AIDO works with CRCs to connect young adolescents and youth with youth clubs where they can develop skills and knowledge while reducing risks. Football clubs and school clubs are among these youth-friendly places. “We have networked six boys and girls to a football club in Addis Ababa in 2021. We support the club with sport and promotional materials like giveaways for awareness creation campaigns” remarked a CRC member from *woreda* 06. Similarly, the CRCs facilitate technical, material and financial supports to school clubs. School adolescents and youth develop skills like drama, music, poetry, traditional sports, journalism and communication, etc., in addition to putting them at the center of child protection system.

ChildFund’s CBCPM approach supports strengthening of youth associations and closely works with members to enable them take practical action in response to child rights violations like child trafficking, rape, abduction, labour exploitation, etc. The CRCs in Aynage and Sodo *woredas* (SNNPS) take part during resource mobilization for money and food items like grains. like grain and money to support children from poor families during peak times of food shortage. “Our youth volunteers from Youth Association in the town (Bu’i) are always at the forefront during our campaigns to renovate houses of poor or older persons and Person with Disabilities (PwDs) who have children or caregivers,” acknowledged CRC member in Sodo *woreda*.

Key Achievements:

- Adolescents and youth members accessed sexual and reproductive health trainings and services facilitated by the CRC,
- Youth clubs strengthened thereby targeted adolescents and youth groups acquired soft and hard skills.
- School adolescents and youth trained and practiced extracurricular activities in the strengthened clubs that develop their self-confidence and laid strong foundation for their future self-actualization,
- Targeted school youth groups took part in advocacy campaigns
- to influence government structures to give due consideration for the implementation of favorable policies and strategies.



Bogalech Girma, working on her home assignment, Bu'i town

Building a Brighter Future for Youth with Disabilities

Case Story

In 2002, Bogalech Girma was born with only two fingers on each of her upper limbs. She was rejected by her mother and father. Back then, communities in rural areas in Sodo *woreda* considered such birth as punishment for the family's sins. Neighbors requested the new baby's grandmother to take care of her but she responded with cruelty. She suggested parental infanticide. Elders' resistance forced the grandmother to change her mind, "We did not let them to kill the baby because it had eyes, ears and legs," said a neighbor, about Bogalech who is now 19 years old. The grandmother finally agreed to welcome the 4-month-old baby.

Thanks to a kind neighbor, Ato Negus, Bogalech was later freed from a locked home to interact with the world and supported to go to school. Ato Negus bought her exercise books and other school materials. After she was promoted to grade nine, she faced another challenge. "I had to walk 12 kilometers daily from home to Bu'i town and back, to get to the nearest high school if I wanted to continue with my education," She said. The school in Bu'i town was too far, even worse she would be harassed sexually while on the way, and she simply could not endure the torture anymore. Through the support of Sodo *woreda* WCYAs office and a local NGO, Bogalech managed to pursue her education till grade 10.

Sodo-Bu'i Child and Family Development Charitable Organization (CFDCO), with support from ChildFund Ethiopia, supported the CRC in the area. The CRC facilitated a referral service to this local NGO where Bogalech joined an Information Technology

(IT) College in the town. “I operate one of my legs to use the computer-mouse and the key board with the other leg,” says Bogalech demonstrating her skill. She is now strong at Level – 3 and always has the psychological and financial support from the CRC and ChildFund’s CBCPM approach implementing partner – CFDCO.

On top of a monthly payment of Birr 200.00 per month, the organization also supports her with food items, personal hygiene materials and college expenses. The CRC in Bu’i town, in collaboration with the *woreda* Labour and Social Affairs Office facilitated a free dormitory for vulnerable girls including Bogalech where they can safely live and continue their education.

A graduate candidate in Information Technology, Bogalech Girma is looking forward for to achieving two goals in her life, “I want to become an IT officer in a big organization and cherish my parents with by forgiving them even though they once wished death upon me.”

2.3. Advocacy

ChildFund Ethiopia, through its CBCPMs approach, has been working on drafting national School Related Gender-Based Violation Prevention and Response Policy together with other governmental and nongovernmental partners. As it is clearly indicated in ChildFund Ethiopia's Strategic Plan, the organization has been supporting advocacy efforts focusing on school and community-based violence prevention and response policies..

School peer educators, children’s parliament members and youth volunteers with close support from the CRC have been implementing awareness creation activities that influenced the government and partners to effectively implement existing child protection policies and strategies as well as consider amendments by including emerging issues. Events like World Children’s Day and other national holidays and festivals have provided a good platform to disseminate these messages.



CHAPTER THREE CHALLENGES FACED AND WAYS MANAGED



Most of the challenges the CRC encountered during the last three years of ChildFund's CBCPM approach implementation period are directly and indirectly related to resource limitations namely financial, material and human (trained skills). Natural and man-made hazards also posed obstacles to the implementation process. COVID – 19 pandemic, prolonged droughts (in some areas like Dugda and Siraro), security issues (political) are also among other major challenges.

- **Absence and/or poor childcare centers:** In some targeted areas especially in rural communities, this challenge resulted in difficulties in provision of referral services for survivor infants

and young children who sustained various violations. In such circumstances, the CRC started mobilizing material and financial resources from the general community, government institutions, private sector, and any other possible sources. CRC members also share the little they have and provide shelter at their own homes for short transition periods.

- **Lack of child-friendly courts and facilities:** This is existent in all ChildFund's CBCPM approach intervention areas. Delays in court procedures create favorable condition for suspects escaping from police investigation. To address this issue, CRCs are now lobbying the government to avail child courts starting from their level upwards throughout the structure.
- **Child rights violation court case dropping:** Case proceedings related to violations of child rights (suspects of rape, early/child marriage, labour exploitations, etc.) dropped before reaching the final decisions are high. Suspected individuals influence the survivors through their families and peers to quit opened cases. Sometimes, suspects use their power (wealth, intimidation, political power, bribes, etc.) and lawyers to avert justice. The CRC strengthened their coordination and management system through including the justice officers as members. This is making the committee a strong institution withstanding external influences and promoting child protection.
- **Inconsistent/Irregular meeting:** This negatively impacts prevention and response activities to child rights violations. Regular monthly meetings at *kebele* and *woreda* levels may be postponed for two or more rounds because of financial resource limitations among other reasons. CRC members in some areas are trying to address this through facilitating recognition, rewards, and promoting a sense of ownership.
- **Member turnover:** In addition to effectively utilizing the CRC bylaws that recommend restructuring of members on annual basis, the mechanisms identified strengthening documentation systems and data backup to reduce the impact of challenges caused by high member turnover.
- **Insecurity:** Lack of political stability in some of ChildFund's areas of intervention especially in rural communities posed serious problems during outreach activities. Implementing partners in Oromia like Dugda and Siraro *woredas* were forced to use local

community structures including Abbaa Gadaa and informal youth structure called 'qeerroo' to facilitate implementation activities.

- **Neglected/Abandoned Children (infants) and referral systems:** Based on perceived benefits and observing the positive change on a child after placement at alternative care centers, some biological parents change their minds and complain about their children once the CRC members effectively facilitate such referrals. In response to the challenge, the CRCs make such families and care givers accountable for the violation that they committed against the child.
- **COVID 19 pandemic:** While the problem was not so serious in rural areas, it significantly affected implementation in towns and in Addis Ababa city. Law enforcers were unable to keep suspects in temporary detention rooms because of the highly contagious nature of the virus. Moreover, courts were closed leaving all cases pending. Such situations created favorable conditions for perpetuations of child rights violation. As a result, CRC centers were over saturated with families and caregivers of survivors. Service providers used personal protective equipment, sanitation materials and reduced/ avoided physical contacts in response to the challenges. They also used traditional problem solving mechanisms.

CHAPTER FOUR THE CBCPM APPROACH AND LESSONS IDENTIFIED



The main sources of the lessons identified and listed in this document are provided by the CRC members at *kebele* and *woreda* levels and communities in the targeted areas. Furthermore, each identified issue was analyzed against set criteria for selection and documentation of good/best practices, lessons and success/case stories and

process of implementation for development programs. Although the purpose of this work is to conduct documentation of the CBCPM, which is different from conducting evaluation, information collected from different sources including children and their families, helped to develop some recommendations..



Child protection issues prioritization session for future intervention during the validation workshop, Adama

The Approach: Conducting community mapping (surveillance) in identifying and prioritizing the most underlying child protection problems, levels of vulnerability and risk factors as well as capacity of the community and gaps enables planning and implementation to address the prevailing problems.

Learning:

- Adopting a child-centered and community-based approach in the functioning institutional system enabled child protection mechanism (CRC) to have a strong voice and increased its visibility – CRCs become assertive and strengthened their team spirit.
- Engaging communities at the grass root level in the CBCPM during problem assessment, planning, implementation, and monitoring and Evaluation not only contributed to a strengthened system but also enabled the provision of care and support to

children and families exposed to problems related to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitations. Trained CRC members from local communities at *kebele* level identified prevailing problems related to child rights violations, prioritized the concerns against their capacity including resources to counter their negative effects, planned and implemented prevention, response and referral services.

- Integrating informal child protection mechanism (social wealth) with formal mechanism helped promising results in addressing child rights violations and strengthening child protection interventions.
- Effectively utilizing the opportunity of existing government structures like HEWs and WDA in identifying and reporting potential risks and harms to infants and young children enabled the CRC to prevent or mitigate or reduce their effects of child rights violations including abandonment, neglect, rape, malnutrition, etc.

The Approach: Setting clear objectives for each of the identified child protection concerns through surveillance and involving the right concerned groups including children themselves in the prevention and response interventions enables the achievement of best results.

Learning:

- CBCPM strengthened shared responsibilities among the CRC members formed from directly responsible sectors that share common objectives of child protection to prevent, avert or reduce the impacts of possible risks that might have caused physical and psychological trauma to children and empowered their institutional capacity to effectively implement activities. While HEWs and WDA proved their enormous contributions to their CRC members through identifying and reporting child rights violations related problems, members from the legal system (police, lawyers, attorney, etc.) played great roles in legal interpretations and law enforcements thereby improved the child justice.
 - o We, therefore, learned that it is crucial to promote their contributions for future results.
 - o We also understand that inconsistent/irregular meeting of the CRCs negatively impact on the prevention and response activities to child rights violations. Member recognition, rewarding and promoting sense of ownership among members is recommended.

The Approach: Strengthening functional capacity of existing CBCPMs established for similar/related goals and objectives increase efficiency in implementation.

Learning:

- The CBCPM approach resulted in reduced duplication of efforts and relieved some members of excessive workload.
- Strengthening existing child centers and childcare services providers like Civil Society Organizations/NGOs is crucial in prevention and response in child protection.
- Strengthening documentation culture for communication and knowledge management. High turnover from members representing different sectors/ bodies results in temporary work flow hitches resulting in longer time taken for the new comer to get acquainted with the program or cases.
- Level of performance among the CRC is different from place to place based on the capacity and willingness to utilize existing opportunities that their environment offers, social wealth for example. Experience sharing, learning and exchange forums between CRC members in different areas would contribute to better results.
- Strengthening integration of informal child protection mechanisms with formal mechanism helps to achieve good result in implementing child protection interventions.

The Approach: Community involvement at the six pillars of CBMCPM (surveillance, prevention, response, coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation and documentation) and related knowledge development indicated sustainability of the approach.

Learning:

- Fair and transparent community participation disproves wrong perceptions and myths in child development. Communities learned that the saying that goes “he who knows more than the owner is a witchcraft,” is wrong concerning child protection. The community replaced the old saying with, “protection of children from abuses and violations concerns me too.”
- The CBCPM approach ensured that knowledge and skills of the CRC members was used in conducting surveillance, identifying activities and implementation of interventions. CRC members also monitor and evaluate their own performance. Moreover, the CRCs are effectively raising resources for prevention, care and support services. Therein, we can conclude that sustainability of

the approach has been ensured as the community has owned the mechanism.

- o We learned that more capacity strengthening support is needed especially in conducting formal monitoring and evaluation through training and facilitating skilled man power.
- o Since there is no permanent and dependable source of funding allocated by the government or other parties, it is advisable that ChildFund continues to support the CRCs.
- The CBCPM ensured shared responsibility and ownership among stakeholders and communities regarding child protection that enabled the CRCs to achieve and exceed their objectives.

The Approach: The CBCPM approach enables strengthening existing child protection mechanisms to effectively and efficiently implement preventive and responsive child protection activities that could also be replicated to address similar community problems.

Learning: The following are new learnings by the CRC from the CBCPM approach recommended for future interventions in response to similar community problems.

- Strengthened coordination and integration introduced by the CBCPM approach enabled communities to effectively respond and mitigate other fast onset disaster, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The government and all actors working on unsafe migration problems in Ethiopia are advised to properly utilize CRC's approach and initiatives in responding to child trafficking and irregular migration.
- Having adaptive strategies is crucial to meet ever-changing child problems. For example, migration was formerly a serious problem. Currently, issues of migrant returnees including minors are becoming a serious problem.
- Work on advocacy for inclusion of gender issues in the civics and sexuality curriculum in such a way that it magnifies girls/women participation.

The Approach: Strong collaboration and coordination within members of CBCPM and partners/stakeholders increased implementation performance and created a strong voice for child protection.

Learning:

- Strengthening the relationship and coordination with other similar

structures such as Community Care Coalition (CCC) in some target areas where confusion in accountability was observed at certain levels.

- CBCPMs, most specifically CRCs at *woreda* and *kebele* levels, have clear roles and responsibilities set in their bylaws that helped them to effectively coordinate implementation of various child protection focused activities.
- CBCPM strengthened collaboration and coordination among the CRCs which gave them strong voices to influence the government to properly enforce child protection policy and strategy and/or add in amendments where needed.

CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUSION



The primary objective of ChildFund's CBCPM approach is to strengthen functional capacity of existing child protection mechanism, the CRC, has been achieved and its future progress is promising. The CBCPM approach has strengthened the functional capacity of the CRC at *woreda* and *kebele* levels which exemplified by committee members action in conducting surveillance, designing and implementing activities and facilitating referral systems. CRCs are reliable watchdogs in strengthening child protection services and are alleviating child protection concerns – violation, abuse, neglect and exploitation. One of the major reasons attributed to this success is that ChildFund's CBCPM approach was designed to address existing gaps and community members believed in it.

CRCs, most specifically at *woreda* and *kebele* levels, have clear roles and responsibilities set in their bylaws that helped them to effectively

coordinate implementation of child protection activities. Smooth and well-functioning system, vertically at all levels from federal to *kebele* and vice-versa, horizontally among stakeholders and with the targeted community, etc., has been strengthened during the last three years.

Regarding prevention interventions, the CRC mechanism is becoming a strong and legally accredited child protection institution that undertakes actionable measures to mitigate child problems including violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. ChildFund's CBCPM approach created a strong institution that effectively averts such risks because members are formed from different organs representing the entire society that created unity and act in one voice with full power.

Due to the strengthening of the CRC's functional capacity, it effectively coordinated child protection services that mainly on prevention and response, including referral systems for children vulnerable affected by child rights violations. Awareness creation activities improved communities' understanding of child protection, how to identify child rights violations and where to report them. Moreover, a sense of ownership and strong accountability developed by the CRC that governs members resulted in proactive response to address harms that may inflict children's mental and physical health. The knowledge level of parents also indicated that there is an improved understanding by parents about child care, especially for infants and young children.

CRCs have been providing and facilitating referral systems for children who are most at risk at the three developmental life stages. Through mobilizing resources, the committees tried to ensure safe and caring environments, high quality nutrition and healthcare, and high quality developmental stimulations to produce healthy and secure infants between 0 and 5 years old. Regarding vulnerable children in Life Stage two, aged 6 to 14 years, with active participation of children themselves and the wider community, children from poor families were supported. As a result, remarkable results have been gained in creating safe school and out-of-school environments that supported the creation of educated and confident children.

ChildFund's CBCPM approach and others partners are advised to fully utilize HEWs and WDA in order to improve identification and reporting systems of harms to infants and young children. Besides,

strengthening existing Childcare Centers and services providers like NGOs/CSOs is crucial in prevention and response to child rights protection in the future.

In summary, ChildFund's CBCPM approach has not only strengthened the system and institutional capacity of the CRC, but also strengthened its resilience to prevent child rights violation; enabled the Committee to bounce back possible risks that might have caused physical and psychological trauma to children and empowered their institutional capacity to effectively facilitate and provide care and support services.

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