

We contribute to:



CHILD PROTECTION

Worldwide, approximately three out of four children aged 2–4 are beaten regularly by their caregivers. And one in four lives with a mother who is a victim of intimate partner violence. These numbers from UNICEF are horrific and demand action.

The stress levels of parents and caregivers, and the often related domestic violence, seriously endanger the safety of children.

In another year of implementation, Help a Child has been addressing this need for protection in humanitarian contexts and fragile areas where parents and families are bearing the consequences of conflict (actual or imminent) and trauma. For example, by facilitating child-friendly spaces, through sometimes innovative forms of psychosocial support for children and caregivers and through awareness campaigns targeting key decision-makers.

In CCCD project areas, on top of their 'normal' daily challenges caregivers are confronted by difficulties such as unusual weather conditions due to climate change, COVID-19 and the closure of schools. Many countries report increased child-protection risks due to these circumstances. In India, Help a Child is involved in facilitating and coordinating the Childline service in two states and as a result has gained valuable yet alarming information about how COVID-19 has affected the safety and security of children. In many cases we have been able to intervene and change situations for the better.

1 NO POVERTY



End poverty in all its forms everywhere

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Key statistics:

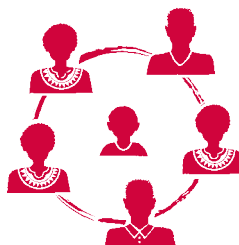


4,261

children groups supported

237

teachers and members of parent-teacher-associations trained about child protection in schools



350

members of Child Protection Committees trained



More empowerment, less child abuse and exploitation



Help a Child uses the Child Status Index as a tool for measuring child well-being in the communities where development projects are being implemented. The scorecard covers eleven dimensions of child well-being, such as nutrition, shelter and emotional health. For each, community members award a score between 1 (very bad) and 4 (ideal situation).

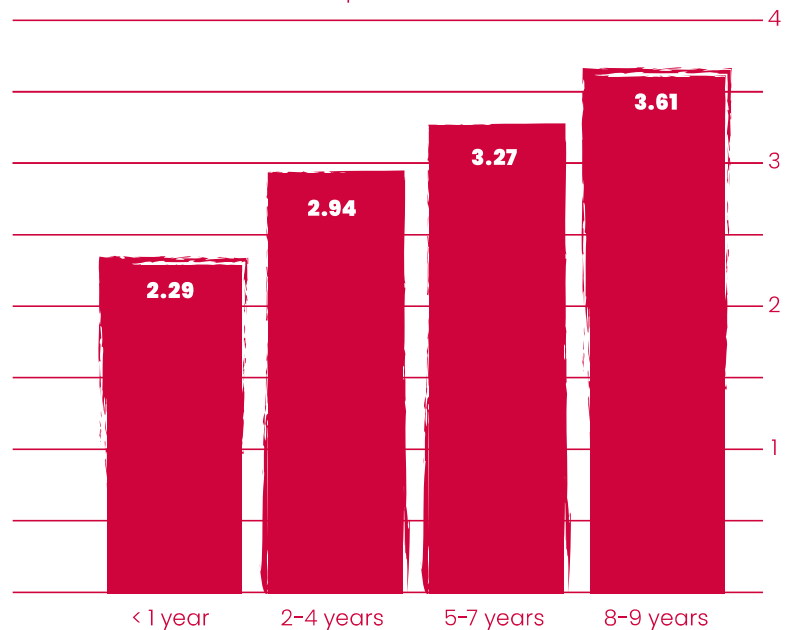
It is encouraging to see that community members report a clear improvement in 'protection from exploitation and abuse' during the course of their projects. Cumulative data from all community empowerment projects funded by Help a Child show that child abuse and exploitation are certainly designated as a concern at baseline (average score of 2.29). Through the various phases of the project, the participants continue to give higher scores for protection against these harmful practices, resulting in a score of 3.61 during phase-out.

Questions asked to score this element include "How many child abuse cases are known in your community?", "Are children and pa-

rents aware of and do they respect child rights?" and "Do children often miss out on schooling due to work responsibilities?"

Child Status Index

Protection from Abuse and Exploitation





SOUTH SUDAN

Sports and play for a healthy mind

Despite growing awareness of the need for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) for children in disaster-response zones, there is still a lack of evidence-based interventions. In collaboration with War Child, Save the Children, Unicef, and SOS Children's Villages, and with support from the DRA Innovation Fund, Help a Child has contributed towards the implementation and upscaling of TeamUp in South Sudan. This is an inclusive psychosocial support-group intervention with structured movement-based group

activities for all children aged 6–18 years. Through joint learning, embedding in the local context and upscaling through a regional

training-of-trainers scheme, we aim to integrate TeamUp into our joint-response programming as a complementary intervention.



SOUTH SUDAN

Building a safe environment in Baggari

How do we create a safe environment together? That is the central question discussed by various community groups participating in What's Up?!, a method developed by Help a Child some years ago. In 2021 we expanded it to Baggari. Forums were organized for children, youth, parents and community leaders. Each stakeholder group defined a list of its main protection concerns and developed a community action plan.

The children came up with effective coping strategies, such as 'Never go where you don't feel safe' and 'First seek advice from elders if you want to visit nearby villages'. The youth participants produced a detailed action plan and voluntarily

organized meetings in four villages to convince other young people to refrain from acts of violence. In the parents' group, child marriage was raised as a concern. This resulted in a plan for sex education for young girls. Other points in the action plan are reporting cases of child abuse and raising awareness in the community about child protection and development.

A concern raised by the community chiefs was that they had not been provided with copies of the Local Government Act Children's Act. This point was picked up by cluster partner UNHCR, which organized a two-day workshop for the dissemination and understanding of these statutes.

SOUTH SUDAN

Stress coping programme for young children

In South Sudan, more than 4.3 million people have been displaced due to protracted conflicts. Sixty-three per cent of them are children. Although people often believe that children are “too young to understand”, young children from displaced families frequently do face challenges such as loneliness and lack of secure attachment.

To address the social and emotional needs of young children and their parents in humanitarian contexts, the participatory group programme Build your own Buddy

(BoB) has been designed and piloted among preschool children aged 5-7 in Jur and Wau River counties.

Through simple stories and creative play, the programme offers six strategies to cope with emotions and stress as a consequence of trauma. The programme was developed by Help a Child and TNO in co-operation with ARQ National Psychotrauma Centre and funded by the Dutch Relief Alliance Innovation Fund. At the close of the pilot in November 2021, many people expressed how BoB fulfilled a need in their communities.



For more testimonies and analyzed data, go to www.helpachild.org/bob.

“At first I looked at BoB as childish, but over time I discovered that the programme suits our situation. All the adventures in the manuals look like they have been selected to match what we are going through and what we really need.”

- Parent



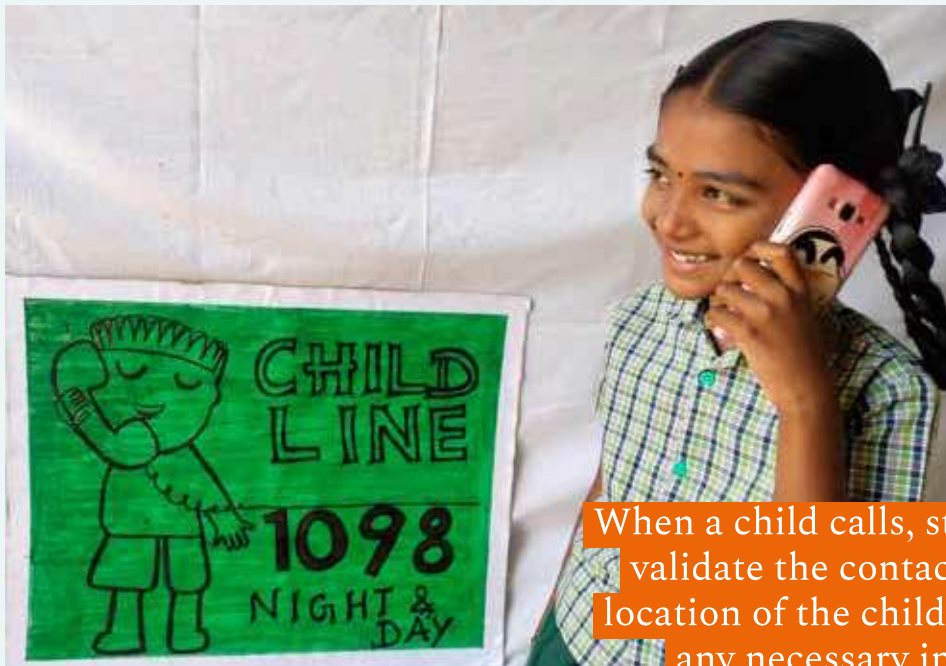
Top: Children reading the BoB storybook together at home.

Bottom: Mother and daughter performing the ‘butterfly hug’ to stimulate positive thinking as one of the six stress-coping strategies.



Childline 1098: around-the-clock child protection

Child protection is a serious and even growing concern in India. The high number of child abuse and child trafficking cases can be related to extreme poverty, caste differences, alcoholism and negligent parenting. COVID-19 has only worsened these realities, as children dropped out of school en masse and parents were less able to provide for their needs due to unemployment. This is reflected in the number of calls and the gravity of cases processed by Childline 1098, the national free emergency phone service for children.



When a child calls, staff immediately validate the contact, find out the location of the child and coordinate any necessary intervention.

Help a Child of India operates Childline in two districts: Dangs in Gujarat and Tiruvallur in Tamil Nadu. In both projects the teams work around the clock to ensure 24/7 availability. Each team consists of ten staff: eight call takers, one counsellor and one project coordinator. When a child calls, staff immediately validate the contact, find out the location of the child and coordinate any necessary intervention. This is done together with the local police and child-protection committee officials. Childline takes up the legal issues and ensures the child is safe. The teams also conduct awareness-raising programmes at public locations such as bus stands, schools, railway stations and police training colleges to make the Childline service better known.

In Dangs, on average 17 new cases are handled each month. Puspita Nayak, Child Protection Specialist for Help a Child of India, reports, "Last year in Dang we prevented 32 child marriages and helped with six physical abuse cases, two sexual abuse cases and two missing child

cases. We also admitted 15 children to sponsorship programmes. We are happy with each case that can be followed up. At the same time we realize that this is just the tip of the iceberg, as many children from poor families do not have access to a phone at all."

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected children's safety, actual and perceived, at all levels. Puspita: "We notice that COVID-19 has made children more afraid of death. We also hear that parents are hesitant to go to a hospital out of fear of becoming infected. Cases of child marriage and abuse have gone up. We also hear more stories about children who are depressed or even want to take their own life. This is very heartbreaking. At the same time it shows that child protection and our work for Childline have become more important than ever."

The Dangs Childline opened in 2018 and since has processed 1200 cases. Tiruvallur Childline launched in 2019 and has supported 2160 children so far.

Nature of calls received by Childline 1098

- 1 **Child marriage**
- 2 **Child labour**
- 3 **Child sexual abuse**
- 4 **Child physical and emotional abuse**
- 5 **Medical help**
- 6 **Emotional support and guidance**
- 7 **Missing child**

