

We contribute to:



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



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.



EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

One of the expertise areas of Help a Child is Early Childhood Development. What happens in the early years of a child's life lays the foundation for future health, education, and economic outcomes.

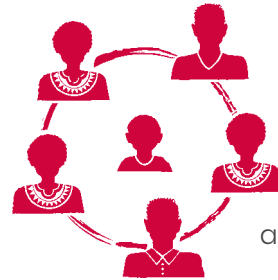
Because of climate change, conflicts, and secondary effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, a growing number of children under the age of five are at risk. Their development is negatively affected by poverty, poor nutrition, and a lack of access to basic services and early education opportunities. Help a Child aims to ensure that children from an early age receive the care and support they need to develop and to cope with growing global challenges and inequality. To increase impact, sustainability, and inclusion of the poorest households, Help a Child works at family, community, and governmental level. In 2022, our focus was on the upscaling of our parenting programme, the establishment of more ECD model and community centres, the integration of kitchen gardens and nutrition into our ECD centres, and systemic change through increased collaboration and sharing of expertise with local and national stakeholders.

Key statistics:



75,309
young children (0-7)
supported

525
ECD centres supported



14,930
parents involved
in parenting and
awareness sessions



INDIA

Creative ways to **defeat malnutrition**

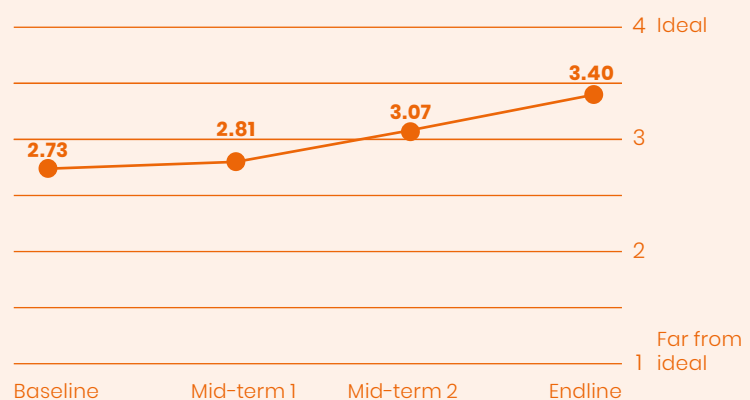


In 2022, we saw food prices rise around the world. For vulnerable households in our project areas, this is just another challenge on top of many others. Many families struggle to offer their children healthy and nutritious food.

Our ECD centres offer integrated health and nutrition services and are therefore increasingly important in addressing this need. In India, so called nutri-gardens were established near the ECD centres. Women were trained in mother and child health and informed about locally available resources for nutritious food. ECD caregivers received training from a specialized nutritionist. Growth monitoring was also arranged at the ECD centres and, together with government offices, we organized a campaign on malnutrition to reach out to tribal families.

Nutrition India (Child Status Index)

Average score for 'Nutrition' given by project participants in India halfway through and at the end of a CCCD project.





MALAWI

Developed: **early childhood teacher curriculum!**

To improve the quality of early childhood education in Malawi, collect evidence, and advocate for better ECD services, Help a Child started a collaboration with Nkhoma University in Malawi and Viaa Zwolle in the Netherlands.

Thanks to joint efforts, a curriculum was developed last year for a four-year Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Education and Development.

As part of this curriculum, knowledge exchange will take place through internships at the Early Childhood Centres of Help a Child Malawi. After successful submission to the National Council of Higher Education (NCHE) Senate in Malawi (March 2023), Help a Child hopes to expand the collaboration with Nkhoma University and Viaa to build a professional learning community for sharing knowledge and good practices.

RWANDA

Building a future for children together

Since 2018, five Early Childhood Centres have been built as part of the collaboration between World Servants and Help a Child Rwanda.

In 2022, Help a Child Rwanda again welcomed a group of enthusiastic volunteers from the Netherlands to support community-led construction of ECD centres. The exchange programme aims to contribute to mutually enriching

encounters through community visits, activities, and involvement of local youth in the project. To ensure sustainability, the centres were built in project areas of Help a Child, so the new centres can be linked to established community structures.





Parents should always support each other



Opening of a community-based Early Childhood Development Centre, realized thanks to the promotion and support of Parent Support Groups.

An ordinary Wednesday in Adumini, a community in Bileafe, North-West Uganda. Less ordinary is the sight of a group of people sitting together and talking. Men and women, of various ages and backgrounds. What are they discussing? Welcome to the monthly meeting of the Parenting Support Group!

Raising children is a beautiful but tough responsibility. Like everywhere else in the world, parents in Adumini often struggle alone, while most of their challenges are very recognizable to other parents. Poor harvests, for instance, or rising costs. And the fact that schools were closed for almost two years because of COVID. And what about the youngest children? Where will they

get the space to develop fully and prepare for school?

Self-Help Group 'Plus'

The support group meeting today in Adumini resulted from the initial phase of the Child-Centred Community Development programme in December 2020. To realize participatory programme design, implementing partner African Evangelistic Enterprise

(AEE) organized a series of group meetings to map challenges and opportunities. During these meetings, parents came to realize how much they have in common. The parenting support groups were born. Two years later, 28 Parenting Support Groups, with an average size of 60 members, are active in Bileafe and Katrini. Besides continuing with savings and loans, which are a familiar part of



Members of the Green Channel Support Group collecting their savings. The slogan on their T-shirt says: 'Together as one in peace and development.'



Hillary

regular self-help groups, Parenting Support Groups add an important component focused on creating a child well-being environment from household to community level. The group provides a common platform for all parents with different levels of income to learn different parenting skills from one another.

Bringing back the inner child

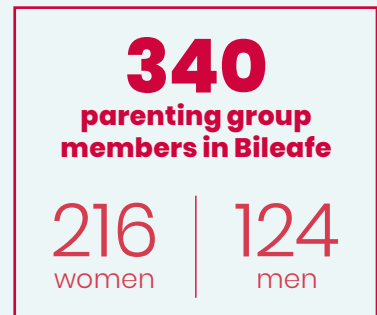
Useful guidance for this exchange is provided by the set of Parenting Challenge modules. Some commonly used modules in Bileafe are: 'Supporting children in their education', 'Protecting our children', 'Basic health and hygiene', and

'Feeding our children'. These topics are preceded by an introductory module. Here, parents first look at themselves. Who was I as a child? What good and bad experiences from my childhood do I take with me? How is this reflected in the bond with my child?

Discussing and reflecting on these kinds of topics, combined with practical assistance and saving money, turns out to be a powerful combination. Some support groups started advocating for an Early Childhood Centre to be established in their village. Since the start of the Parenting Support Groups, four community-based ECD centres have opened their doors!

Transformation

But an even bigger impact might be the changed attitudes of mothers and fathers. Like that of 37-year old Hillary. The Parenting Challenge urged him to reflect on his past behaviour. 'Parenting has transformed my life and my family. I learned to love my wife and my children. I now come home early to spend time with them and check their health and provide for their needs. I asked for forgiveness for missing out on my responsibilities.'



What is the impact of the parenting support group on your children's well-being? Answers from parents:

- Our family is better organized now.
- Better hygiene.
- When my child comes home from school, I make time for her and ask how she did.
- More peace and harmony in the house.
- I didn't have a latrine before. Now I have arranged one.
- I now know how to maintain a vegetable garden. My children eat healthier food now.

