

Community-based **ECD centers**



Explained: community-based ECD centers

What are community-based ECD centers?

Community-based ECD centers are early learning and development centres that are set up, sustained and monitored in close collaboration with communities and are linked to existing community structures. Children (3–6 years) receive care, education and attention.

The goal:

- Ensure that all children in the community have access to quality early childhood education and care.
- Local resource mobilization.
- Connecting to local needs.
- Work multi-sectoral to ensure holistic Early Childhood Development (ECD) care in line with national standards.



Why is it necessary?

The first years of a child's life are undeniably important. They are crucial for their future learning, health, social development, and productivity. Nurturing care and early learning opportunities are even more important for children who already lag behind due to poverty, disability, or marginalization. In Sub-Saharan Africa, children face increasing challenges due to global inequality, climate change, and crises. Scaling up access to ECD services offers a key opportunity to address these inequalities, break the cycle of poverty, and improve outcomes later in life. These factors are cornerstones for both society's growth and the child's well-being.

How does it work?

STEP 1:

Community mobilization, assessing communities' needs and start parenting education.



STEP 2:

Strengthen links with local government and stakeholders in education, child protection, nutrition, and health.



Building or upgrading an ECD center in line with national standards.



STEP 3:

Establishment of ECD management committees responsible for continuation of the ECD.



STEP 4:

Through Self-Help Groups (SHGs), communities generate revenues to enhance ECD services.



STEP 5:

Capacity building of ECD teachers through training and linkage to model ECD centers.



Key interventions

Parenting Groups and SHGs form the entry point to address the importance of ECD and to mobilize the community. To support this process Help a Child uses participatory group-based methods like The Parenting Challenge and The Community Challenge.

Monitoring through the ECD Quality Scorecard: Help a Child developed a monitoring tool for ECD management committees with focus on: ECDC Infrastructure, Access to ECDC, Teaching and Learning Quality, Learning and Play Materials, ECDC Management and Holistic ECD Services.

An ECD model center is a high-quality and sustainable center that serves as a knowledge and training hub for surrounding local ECD centers and a source of inspiration. Help a Child works with ECD model centers as 'centers of excellence' in rural regions, which significantly increases the quality of surrounding centers.

Construction, upgrading, and equipping facilities for various ECD models – ranging from home-based ECD centers to ECD centers of excellence.

Long-term sustainability is realised by putting the community itself in the driver's seat of their own change.

What makes the community-based ECD centers unique?



Long-term integration of ECD into broader community development efforts.



Help a Child's Parenting & Self-Help Group approach as entry point.



Sustainable ECD system change through focus on 3 circles around the young child; the home, the community and the institutional circle (governments and local stakeholders).



Focus on the quality of the center (hardware), the quality of education itself (software) and the sustainability of the center.

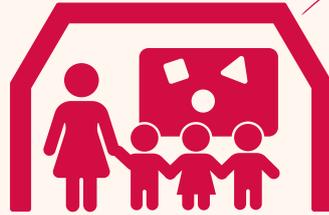


Multi-sectoral approach to ensure holistic childcare and child development.

Evidence & Track Record

Countries with Community-Based ECD centres:

- ✓ Rwanda
- ✓ Malawi
- ✓ Burundi
- ✓ Kenya
- ✓ Uganda
- ✓ South Sudan



In 2023:

60,000+ children reached with ECD interventions

16,000+ parents trained in parenting

+/-400 ECD centers supported by Help a Child

60+ ECD centers built & renovated

CBECD Evidence

Help a Child carried out a **three-years evaluation study into school-readiness in Rwanda**. The study shows a positive influence of (Help a Child's) Early Childhood Education programmes on the age of primary school enrolment, on primary school performance and on school attendance. For the past six years, Help a Child Rwanda has been recognized as a preferred NGO for implementing, advocating, and building capacity on a holistic ECD approach at an effective cost.

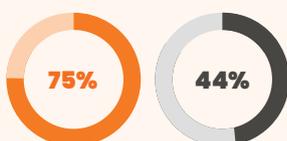
A 2018 external evaluation of Help a Child programming showed that community structures like Self-Help Groups continue to function even 2 years after phase-out. This social capital contributes to sustainability of Help a Child's ECD approach.

Evaluation of the Parenting Challenge in Malawi over three years showcased positive outcomes, including increased enrolment in ECD centers, sustained feeding programs, enhanced parental involvement, and improved practices in toy-making and parenting meetings.



Results of a study into school-readiness

TIMELY PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT



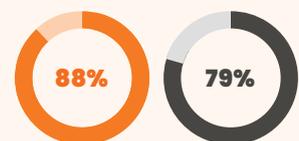
75% of children in target group started P1 at 6-7s compared to 44% of children in control group.

PRIMARY SCHOOL PERFORMANCE



66% of children in target group performed above average, compared to 36% of children in control group.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE



88% of children in target group have a good attendance compared to 79% in the control group.

About Help a Child

Help a Child provides a future for children in need, their family, and their entire community. Our DNA allows us to do that in a way that defines us, and is unique for our way of working. Our guiding principles are:

Sustainable impact

Help a Child creates sustainable Impact for children. We want to support children living in poverty and crises to have a better future. We achieve this by empowering our target groups, enabling them to independently enhance their living conditions and increase their resilience and coping mechanisms to deal with the crises they face.

Empower people

As a Christian organization, we believe that every human being and every child is uniquely created in the image of God. All our efforts need to result in people who have the strength and perspective to improve their own situation and the confidence to develop within their own context.

Holistic care

Help a Child understands that poverty and crisis are multidimensional, therefore we believe in holistic approaches. Providing children with a better future is a comprehensive goal, encompassing multiple domains. We support children to be Healthy & Strong, Educated for Life, Social & Emotionally Developed and living with Hope & Dignity. As an organization, we focus on what we do best and cooperate with other actors to achieve the rest.

Engage our Constituency

Our reason to exist is children in need, our right to exist is our constituency. To engage people in the Netherlands in our work is crucial in a world in which we are connected as brothers and sisters. As an organization we feel the obligation, due to our shared values of compassion and love, to create awareness and to function as a bridge between the families in the Netherlands and families in need worldwide.

Motivated by Christian values

We believe that the motivation with which we do our work makes a difference. As Help a Child colleagues we are inspired to love, called to justice, moved to mercy, invited to reconciliation, motivated to stewardship and dependent on God. These Christian principles inspire us to give our best in all circumstances.

WHERE WE WORK

