

We contribute to:



Community empowerment

Community empowerment is an important theme for Help a Child. But what do we actually mean by it? Community empowerment is about people taking control (again) of what happens in their own communities and lives. Instead of waiting for governments or organisations to fix problems, empowered communities step up, speak out, and work together to create change. It's about shifting from being passive observers to becoming active participants.

At its heart, community empowerment means that everyone's voice matters. When people feel heard and respected, they are more likely to get involved and support one another. This can lead to stronger relationships, better communication, and creative solutions to local challenges. Whether it's organising a neighborhood clean-up, starting a local business, or advocating for better services, empowerment begins when people believe they can make a difference.

It also involves learning new skills, sharing knowledge, and building trust within the community. When individuals feel confident and connected, they are more willing to collaborate and take initiative. Over time, this creates a sense of ownership and pride.

Community empowerment isn't just about solving problems, it's about building resilience and helping people realize their collective strength. Read along with these inspiring stories about how community empowerment becomes visible in the programmes of Help a Child.



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls



Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Key statistics:



1,527

Self-Help Groups supported

27,704

members supported in Self-help groups
26% male | 74% female



76

Cluster Level Associations supported

143 reflection meetings held with community members

about actions to tackle challenges in the community

Results of communities taking initiatives:

Clean water supply

Access to medical care

Increased sense of control

Nutritious food in ECD's

A repaired road

Leadership

Planting development

of trees

Social cohesion



In Zilakoma, Malawi, years of marginalization left the community without adequate education, healthcare, or infrastructure. To address this, the Livingstonia Synod Action Programme (LISAP), supported by Help a Child Malawi, strengthened local leadership through the Child-Centred Community Development programme.

The Area Development Committee (ADC) received training to effectively advocate for their community's needs. For two years, committee members persistently engaged district authorities and their efforts paid off in the 2024/2025 financial year when district authorities allocated a new secondary school, clean water supply, and health clinic to Zilakoma. This progress highlights how empowered communities can drive sustainable development.



Solar powered water resource





INDIA IMPACT STORY:

The power of community change



Makaltala and Kankuria became the first communities to be included in the Kolkata Rurban Child Development project. When the Help a Child India team first visited the villages, they witnessed more than just poverty; they felt its weight.

Most families struggled to meet basic needs such as nutritious food, medical care and proper education. Financial stress had quietly robbed their homes of peace. Parents, overwhelmed and anxious, often became irritable. Children grew up amid tension, some carrying emotional wounds they could not express. Learning English seemed frightening. Computers were a distant dream. Confidence was rare. That was the beginning.

We started with parenting sessions at the Child Opportunity Centre (COC). Parents learned about their children's physical, cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual development. Gradually, homes began to change. Sundays became days of shared laughter and activities. Harsh words were replaced with conversations.

At the COC, children learnt through play. They started to speak respectfully, stopped using abusive language and began to play together regardless of gender. Boys and girls now play football together. Children who once feared English can now introduce themselves with confidence. Teenagers who had never used a computer before are now

learning software and developing skills for the future.

Women formed a Self-Help Group and started a piggery business. They opened bank accounts, broke through social barriers and started earning money in a dignified way. Inspired by this change, one pregnant woman opened a small puchka stall to support her family.

Today, the same community is stronger, more united and more hopeful. Where there was fear, there is confidence. Where there was silence, there is laughter. Hope has returned, bringing with it the courage to dream again.



1 Self-Help Group
supported

70 parents in
Parenting Groups
supported
(10 male | 60 female)



210 children enrolled
in EDC centres
(98 male | 112 female)

in India



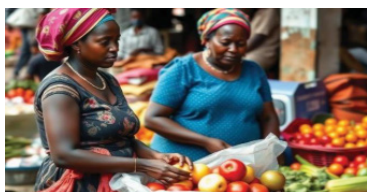


UGANDA IMPACT STORY:

A permanent home through Self-Help Group support

At 42, Paskulina's life was transformed through her involvement in the Self-Help Group (SHG). Before joining in 2016, she depended on subsistence farming and small-scale alcohol brewing, earning barely enough to provide food, clothing, medical care, and school fees for her family.

When AEE, partner organisation of Help a Child, organised women into SHGs under the Arivu Child Centered Community Development programme, Paskulina eagerly joined. Through consistent weekly savings and access to small loans, she started trading cassava residues. As her confidence and profits grew, she expanded to



buying fresh cassava directly from farmers and later diversified into selling beans and silver fish. She continually reinvested her earnings while maintaining her savings.

Beyond trading, Paskulina used loans to support agricultural activities such as land preparation and planting. Together with her husband, she cultivated cassava and tobacco. A successful harvest finally provided the means to begin building their long-awaited permanent home, starting with the foundation and walls.

As her borrowing capacity increased, she further invested in livestock. The growth and sale of goats enabled her to purchase iron sheets for roofing. By 2019, Paskulina and her family moved into their completed permanent house, leaving behind the exhausting annual task of repairing a leaking grass-thatched roof. She proudly reflects that she can now listen to the rain without worrying.

Through the SHG, Paskulina has strengthened her family's stability, paid school fees, and met essential household needs. Today, she and her husband manage several agricultural activities and a small trading business, ensuring steady income and food security for her children. Grateful for the support of AEE and her group, Paskulina remains committed to helping other women achieve similar progress and build brighter futures.

138



Self-Help Groups
supported

2,857 members
in Self-Help Groups
supported
(632 male | 2,225 female)

in Uganda



The Community Challenge

Did you know that community members actively design their own projects? At Help a Child, we believe that it is crucial for projects to be created by the community, not for them. After all, community members know better than anyone what challenges they face and what solutions are needed. A project will only be successful in the long term if it is intrinsically supported by the community and people feel a sense of ownership.



Before a project begins, ample time is taken to talk to the communities, get to know them and hear their views. This period, which we call 'The Community Challenge', involves numerous group discussions. Village elders, parents and young people are all invited to share their ideas.

The Community Challenge begins with an extensive introductory session to help us get to know one another. After that, the focus shifts to the community itself. What did the community look like in the past, and how has it changed? What threats and opportunities are there? People are then invited to share the problems they experience in their daily lives, as well as their ideas for resolving them.

Foundation of CCD programmes

All of these responses and ideas are compiled into the Community Action Plan, which forms the foundation of our Child-Centred Community Development programmes. We also believe it is important that community members can provide feedback or submit complaints to Help a Child. At the end of the Community Challenge, we therefore ask the community how this can best be facilitated. Suggestions often arise, such as organising open consultation hours or placing a suggestion box within the community.

This results in a project designed by the community and widely supported: a strong example of community empowerment.



Boat being utilised by villagers.

Communities in Bihar, India, prepared themselves for disaster

In Purnia, the community has organised a disaster management plan in cooperation with the local government. Seventy-five community members from twenty villages have received training in disaster risk reduction, preparedness, early warning systems and emergency response, in order to strengthen local capacities and form disaster task force teams.

These task forces have lobbied relevant stakeholders to promote disaster mitigation measures, including check dams, enhanced catchment areas and flood prevention initiatives. Rescue and evacuation support was operationalised in the five flood-prone villages of Pipar Tola, Jhandatola, Banstola, Kurwa Tola and Bandoga through the procurement and deployment of rescue boats.

This involved licensing boat operators and training community members in the safe management of boats, evacuation procedures and emergency rescue operations. Community task force teams were formed to oversee boat operations during floods and other emergencies. All boats were verified and approved by the Additional District Magistrate (ADM) to ensure they were durable, safe, and fit for purpose.