

### What is CoH for CP?

Channels of Hope for Child Protection (CoH CP) is a programme methodology that motivates and builds capacity in faith communities to address violence against children including various forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation. It equips them with factually correct information and insight, and guides them to be powerful change agents. CoH CP is usually implemented as part of a wider approach to strengthen the local child protection system.

CoH CP brings together faith leaders from different denominations and uses guiding principles from scripture, interactive activities, debates, scientific information in a community participatory, interactive methodology to address harmful attitudes and motivate and equip participants to actively respond in a helpful way to issues affecting the well-being of the most vulnerable children and families in their communities. World Vision staff follow up twice yearly to build the necessary capacity and to make sure the catalysed faith groups link with other local community interventions.

CoH CP builds on the desire of faith leaders and communities to protect children and become better parents within their own families; to promote peace and overcome violence; to nurture good and expose evil by speaking the truth in love; to strive for authentic justice that brings healing and reconciliation. CoH CP aims to ensure that children can celebrate who they are and become who they were created to be with the love, respect and help of their parents and faith communities.

### Why CoH for CP?

Violence against children is often the product of deeply entrenched, long-lasting beliefs, values and culture. Faith leaders and their communities can play a vital role in child protection, but many are inactive or maintain harmful attitudes, norms, values and practices that contribute to such violence. Religious texts teach that God has a special heart for children, whom adults are to love, protect and honour. However, religious teachings are sometimes confused with culture and there are difficult scripture passages and theological interpretations that fuel harmful attitudes and practices towards children. For example, some faith leaders read stories about polygamy, violent punishment of children and child marriage in their holy scriptures and apply them to their modern contexts.

Though laws may bar such harmful practices, they remain in many areas; laws do not change attitudes or socio-religious beliefs. Faith leaders wield considerable influence over culture and the behaviour prescribed or prohibited in their communities. CoH CP addresses these root cause, deep convictions.

The unmatched moral authority of faith leaders and their power to embrace change and influence communities can be channeled to powerfully address violence against children and benefit child well-being. By catalysing faith leaders, there is potential to transform whole communities to address their own root causes and better honour, protect and care for children.



*A large crowd including children watch a youth drama about child trafficking at a school in Cambodia.*

**Photo:** Jon Warren/World Vision

*"I need to educate [others] about the validity of [the truth that] children are also made in the image and likeness of God just as adults are. Children should be placed in high esteem, with love, care, discipline, guidance, protection, and participation."*

Pastor CoH  
CP, Sierra  
Leone 2012

## CoH CP programme content

CoH CP explores and addresses the following issues:

- Violence against children in various forms such as physical abuse, neglect, child labour, child trafficking and domestic violence.
- Positive parenting and discipline.
- The effects of violence against children.
- A competency-based faith focused response to child protection issues and violence against children, including psychosocial support, child safe faith communities, reporting and referring protocols and linking with formal services.

## Outcomes

- Faith communities are catalyzed (i.e., sensitised, educated and mobilized) to actively address violence against children and social issues that make children vulnerable, thereby helping ensure children are better protected.
- Faith communities become persuasive voices to actively challenge stigma, negative attitudes and harmful practices toward children within their communities.
- Increased number of children who experience more positive relationships with peers, family and community members.
- Faith leaders are transformed to protect children and can share positive messages from scripture as guiding principles for their response to CP issues.
- Increased uptake of child protection services.
- Strengthened child protection systems.
- Safer environments for children with less instances of violence, safer places to play, more loving family and community environments that recognise children's rights and freedom.
- Equality of all children increasingly promoted regardless of gender or ability.

## Advocacy

Advocacy readily stems from all issues addressed by CoH CP. This methodology provides opportunities to advocate for child protection, child rights (abuse prevention, birth registration, postponing marriage until 18, and the prevention of exploitation of children, including trafficking) and justice issues regarding equality of children such as gender issues and disabilities. It reinforces other advocacy interventions by inspiring faith leaders to speak out and stand up for justice. It also helps bridge gaps that often hamper national- and local-level advocacy efforts by encouraging hierarchical structures of faith groups to voice local issues at national level and filter down national messages, policies, and campaigns to the ground.

## Use in other groups

CoH materials have been successfully adapted to fit various ecumenical Christian and Muslim contexts. They also have been used effectively with various non-faith groups including teachers, community leaders and youth. In these cases, the curriculum can be used without the faith-specific content.