



pc: World Vision International

Seen But Not Heard: A 3-Part Series to Lift Up Child Voices to End Violence

#2: Practical examples of child participation

9 AM ET / 1 pm UK / 4 PM EAT / 6 AM PT

Wednesday, October 28th, 2020

JLI Ending Violence Against Children Hub

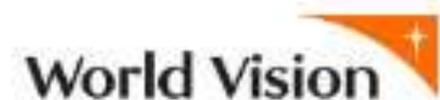
#ENDVIOLENCE



JOINT LEARNING INITIATIVE on
FAITH & LOCAL COMMUNITIES



Queen Margaret University
INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH
AND DEVELOPMENT



AGENDA

Welcome and Introduction (2 min)

Andrea Kaufmann, World Vision International and JLI EVAC Hub co-chair

Evidence on meaningful child participation & ending violence against children (10 min)

Dr. Selina Palm, Stellenbosch University

Panel: Practical examples of child participation (30 min) – moderated by Andrea Kaufmann

- ❑ *Deaconess Juliet Eneh, Christian Council of Nigeria*
- ❑ *Chintamani Yogi, Nepal*
- ❑ *Viraj Abeysekera, World Vision, Asia Regional Faith & Development, Sri Lanka*
- ❑ *Afshan Jamal, Islamic Relief Pakistan*

Breakouts facilitated by Andrea Kaufmann, Carola Eyber, Neelam Fida, Silvia Mazzarelli, Selina Palm and Stacy Nam (20 min)

Closing and invitation to webinar #3 (Nov 17, 8AM ET)

JLI VISION

Full and appropriate engagement of the capacities of faith-based groups in the achievement of humanitarian and development goals through effective partnerships with public sector and secular entities, as well as among religious groups themselves.

Active Learning Hubs



ANTI-
TRAFFICKING &
MODERN SLAVERY



ENDING VIOLENCE
AGAINST
CHILDREN



GENDER-BASED
VIOLENCE



REFUGEES



MONITORING,
EVALUATION,
ACCOUNTABILITY,
& LEARNING HUB

EVAC HUB

The EVAC Hub provides a unique platform for a global network of knowledge from academics, policymakers, and practitioners that are growing the evidence-base of effective faith-based partnerships to prevent and end violence against children.

A SHARED COMMITMENT

The EVAC Hub partners are committed to:

- convening an inclusive and diverse Hub to advance a core set of values and principles to end violence against children.
- to an evidence-based process focused on local faith communities and religious leaders
- to understanding ‘how’ to engage, and what works and does not in order to provide practical recommendations for practitioners



pc: Arigatou International

Evidence

Dr. Selina Palm, Stellenbosch University



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UNIVERSITY



Ending Violence against Children: Why Child Participation matters?

DR SELINA PALM

28 OCTOBER 2020

Ending violence against children requires changing social mindsets

Insights from JLI EVAC Scoping Study (2019). <https://jliflc.com/2019/06/evac-scoping-study-published/>

Child Participation was highlighted by all the faith experts interviewed in the study as a critical component of the task of ending violence against children. It plays a **dual role**.

- ✓ It enables children to learn directly how to protect themselves including the use of faith-based campaigns and activities *that address children directly* as participants.
- ✓ It reshapes social norms and communal understandings of *the child as a social subject to be heard and engaged*, not as patriarchal property to be owned. Involving children in meaningful ways helps recognise their agency and their inherent right to participate and be heard.

ROOT CAUSE OF VAC: CHILDREN SEEN AS SILENT OBEDIENT PROPERTY THAT BELONGS TO ADULTS

Key Message: Child centred approaches are seen as essential. Linking child participation and protection improves the child's social status, enables the voices of children to be part of the changes seen to be needed and avoids a passive victim lens.

Child participation as a means of protection for children

- **Involving children in community and family decisions** to challenge patterns of hierarchy and submission (the myth that children must be seen and not heard)

“In Thailand, there is a school...they have a parliament and children and teachers have an equal vote... if you believe in democracy you have to let children participate and build that in them. Not only chanting “democracy... Whether right or wrong, they have to dare to make decisions”. (EF, Buddhist, Thailand)

- **Equipping children to break the silence** on their own abuse and the abuse of others safely and understand that what is happening is not OK and is not their fault (the myth that children lie, cannot be believed or do something to deserve it)

“For example an expert from India pointed out that in relation to sexual violence the girl was not encouraged to speak about it...and if they talked the victim was further victimised...they are told it was them that asked for trouble” (GH, Hindu, India)

- **Equipping children as agents of change** within adult programs in non-violent and spiritual ways (the myth that children can only receive spiritual wisdom from adults and not give it)

“Some of the parents...they will give testimonies, ‘I used to abuse my children a lot, not giving them food or this, but as soon as they asked us to pray more often...’, you will find the parents changed. The way they are abusing their children, or not giving them food. And that is how prayer changed the household, even to stop violence in the home because children were insisting to pray. They are the ones leading prayers, just simple prayers but a big change to the household”. (UV, Christian/Muslim/Traditional, Tanzania)

Tips on leveraging child participation

- **Build child-friendly spaces in religious programs** rather than punitive silencing hierarchies. Involve age-appropriate, play-based methodologies and nurture resilience in vulnerable children who may have experienced adversity or trauma. Listen to children to ensure responsiveness to their needs

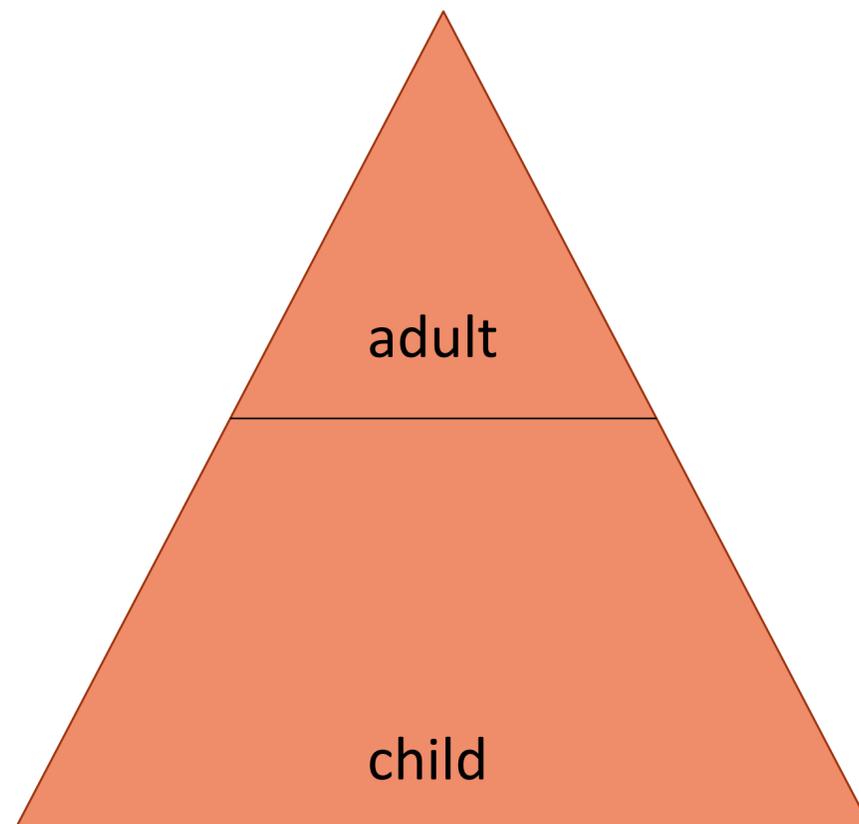
a child-friendly madrassa is “not only about (not) hitting children” but is also “different pedagogies and ways of participatory teaching...being more creative and involving the children a little bit more” in the educational process.

- **Involve children in spiritual practices** – such as the reinterpretation of sacred texts that have been used in harmful ways

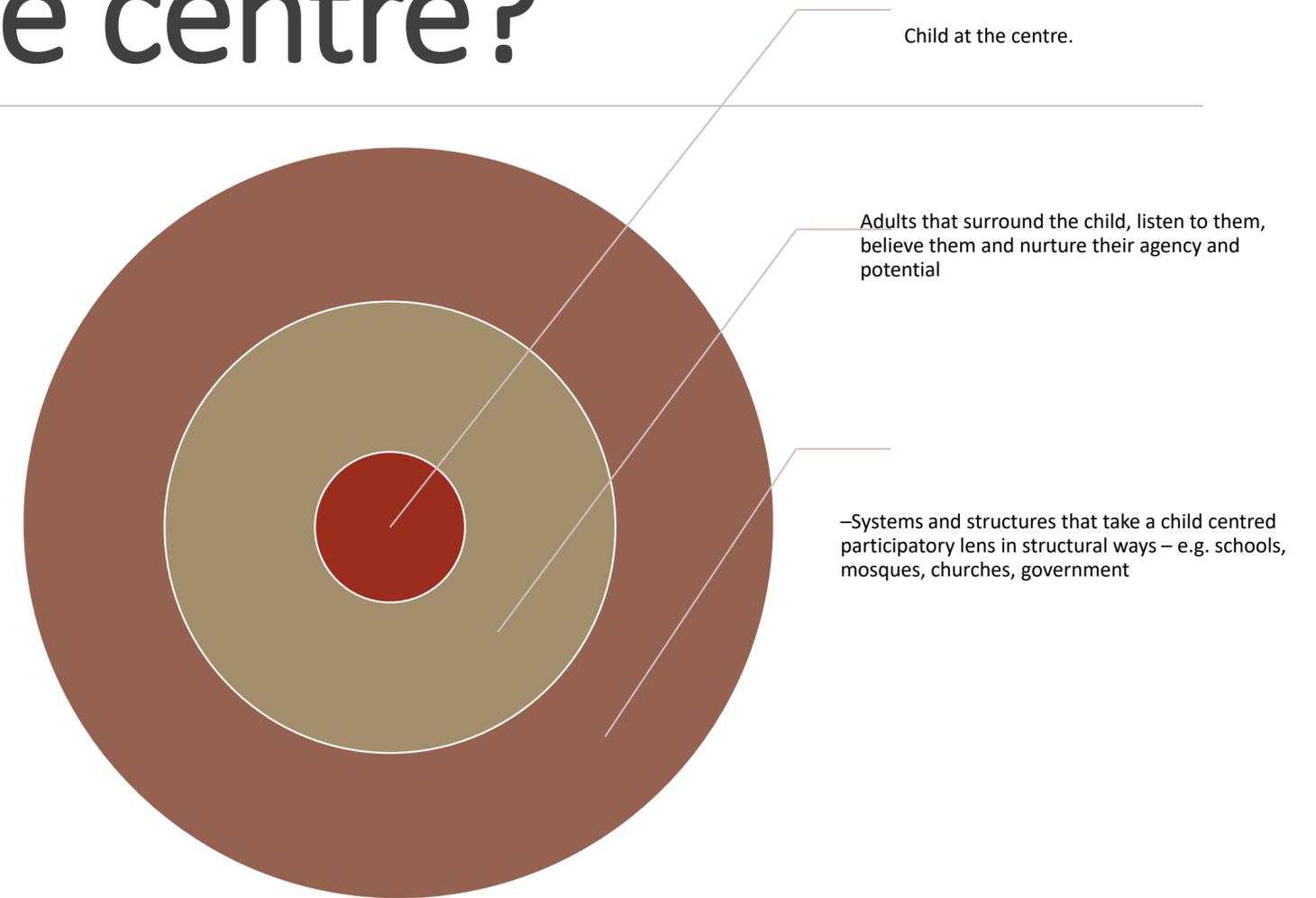
The story of Isaac is the most disturbing story in the Bible. It can be understood either as a paradigm for child sacrifice or as a polemic against child sacrifice. It speaks directly to the core issue of ending violence against children as you can take this text and say it is okay after all God told Abraham to sacrifice His son for a greater purpose. Viewed widely in Judaism as a polemic against child sacrifice, it lays the foundation of, Who are we? How do we deal with this? (WX, Jewish, USA).

- **Promote child voices and healthy intergenerational spaces** for mutual respectful engagement between adults and children within and through the use of faith spaces and faith traditions

How do we see children? At the bottom or in the centre?



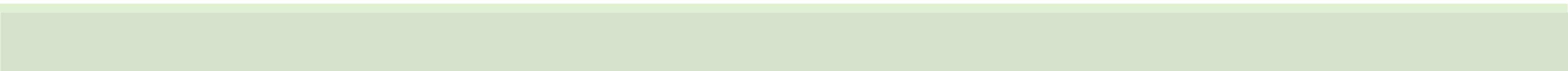
“We set up a pattern where children are at the bottom of the pile and people think they own their children...children must be seen and not heard, and they are ours to do whatever we like with them. We say things like, “I brought you into this world I can take you out.” (CD, South Africa)



“(T)he real thing that we need to do is change childhood to being a place where children are nurtured and cared for and helped to grow to their full potential”. (CD, South Africa)

Practical Examples of Child Participation

JLI ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN HUB



Practitioner Panel



Mrs Juliet Eneh (Nigeria)



Dr Chintamani Yogi (Nepal)



Viraj Abeysekera (Sri Lanka)



Afshan Jamal (Pakistan)

Deaconess Juliet Eneh
Christian Council of Nigeria



Presentation on Child Participation to End Violence Against Children

Deaconess Juliet Eneh
Christian Council of Nigeria

**Child speaker at the
United Nations
Periodic Review.**



Summary of child participation in Christian Council of Nigeria and Methodist Church Nigeria

Christian Council of Nigeria is ensuring that children participate in the effort of the church to end all violence against children.

The World Council of Churches in collaboration with the Christian Council of Nigeria organized workshops for the children in four geo-political areas of Nigeria to enable them participate in issues concerning their welfare. Top in their report was violence against children, followed by the disturbing fact that only twelve out of the thirty-six states in Nigeria have signed the Child Right Act to law as at 2017. The children also reported that their voices are not heard even when they are abused or violated, the adults would not believe their story and they would be warned to remain silence for fear of stigmatization.

The World Council of Churches through those workshops sponsored two children as child-speakers to Geneva Switzerland for the United Nation's Pre-Universal Periodic Review of Nigeria.

Methodist Church Nigeria also created avenue(Christ Care Unit) for the children to express themselves and report any kind of violence both from home and outside the home.

In Christ Care, we mentor teenagers on what their rights are, how to protect themselves and how to make reports when in distress.

Recently some children reported sexual abuse from homes and schools (before and within the COVID pandemic), and the matter is currently in court and the perpetrators still in police detention waiting for sentencing.

The Christian Council of Nigeria also organized workshop for caregivers of children for "out of shadow experience" in which we were given hotlines for report of any case of violence against children.



Some of the key challenges in child participation to end violence against children

1. The major challenge we have is that parents are yet to come to term with the fact that the children are ready to talk. Some parents feel that their children are exposing their family secret in doing so, especially when the violence took place within the home by a family member or relatives.
2. Adults generally would not want the children to expose what happened to them within their organization for the fear that their family, church or school would be stigmatized.
3. Some of the organizations that promised to seek for justice for the children are not measuring up to the expectation, leaving us in Christ Care to fight this battle alone or with the support of some parents who have seen the need for the justice their children deserve.



How we have overcome these challenges

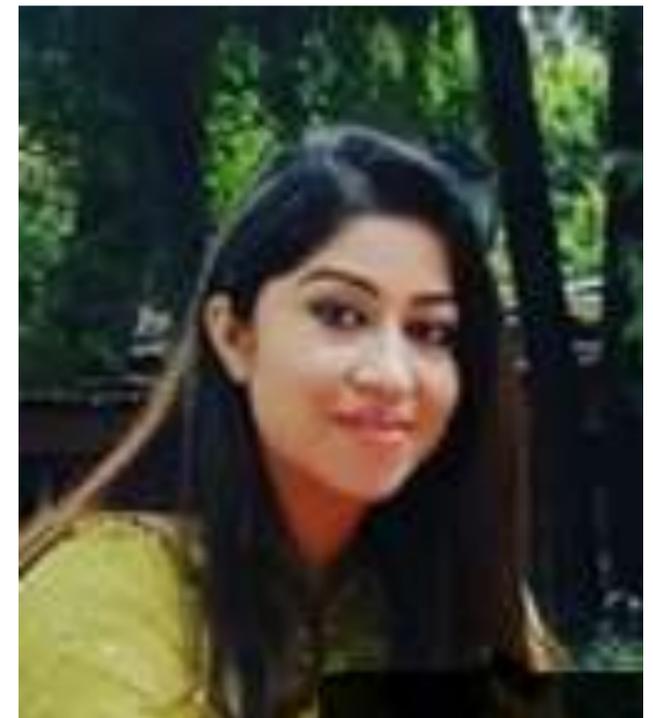
1. Using the WCC Churches' Commitment to Children, We are organizing special sessions for parents, teachers and care giver of children at different levels, educating them on the need to protect children against any form of abuse and violence, and to allow the voice of the children to be heard when they are in need or pain. Some of the parent have showed their support in seeking for justice for their children.
2. The processes of registering an organization with toll free line response in Nigeria is very rigorous and demanding, that has affected the progress of the work we do for the children. But we do not wait for the registered organizations to respond since that has not been helping us enough. We go ahead to make reports to the police in collaboration with the parents, and that has been yielding more results. The only challenge with this is that we can only attend to the children who come to us or that we identify, many more are still there unidentified and unheard.
3. At the grassroots, we have a safe space for the children to talk to us. We do not only hear their story, we follow it up from the moment of arrest through the court proceedings to the time of sentencing. (We have next court proceeding coming up on the 10th of November 2020). We do not stop at that either, we give them psycho-social support therapy to prevent any post traumatic disorder.



Special session with parents and religious leaders



Dr Chintamani Yogi & Kriti Shree Giri
Nepal



YOUTH SOCIETY FOR PEACE

Youth Society for Peace (YSP) was established in 2003 in collaboration with the youth of Shanti Sewa Ashram (SSA). In a society that sorely misses the contentment of a peaceful existence, it is becoming increasingly important that the youth of today (who are the leaders of tomorrow) have access to a community of like minded peers who will mutually nurture their peaceful vision for the future. In this way, YSP hopes to refine and to promote their vision into the wider world and encourage peaceful practices and a sense of social responsibility.

Our Objectives

- To help youths understand the importance of peace & to practice it in their daily lives .
- To involve the youths in creative activities by building upon their infinite potential.
- To encourage young people to serve the poorer communities, war victims & orphans.
- To create a global forum of young people from which they can share their problems, skills, experiences & wisdom.
- To help youths to realize their own spirituality and their responsibilities as a human being.
- To create and maintain links with other youth organizations such as those we have with Children of the Earth in order to share ideas and visions.



Viraj Abeysekera
World Vision,
Asia Regional Faith & Development
Sri Lanka



Ending Violence Against Children

Child Participation within Faith Communities to End Violence Against Children

Viraj Abeysekera
World Vision International

Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities
28 October 2020



It Takes a World to End Violence Against Children



Objective: Bring faith leaders and children together to fight VAC that has negative – and sometimes irreversible or even fatal – consequences on the lives of children.

Faith leaders: from Christian, Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim traditions

Children: from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines and Sri Lanka, representing multi-faiths



“We recommend...for the faith leaders to utilize access of religious spaces and create space for children and young people. We request them to have correct and collective interpretations of religious teachings, influence other sectors such as school and business for the protection of children...”

Voice of the Children

Partnerships between children and faith leaders create a space for children to influence and meaningfully contribute to peacebuilding and community development.

Participation of the CHILDREN

Context

- Civil war for more than 3 decades in Sri Lanka
- Multi-religious, multi-ethnic community
- Injustice, inter-ethnic violence, inter-religious conflicts

Response

- Bring Christian, Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim faith leaders together and committed to their role in creating a space for children to share their thoughts and jointly contribute to address social problems.
- Children's forums were organized with children from across faith traditions.

Result

The initiative resulted to improved relationships and collaboration between children and faith leaders. Hence, negative suspicions among different faith communities were significantly reduced.



“When World Vision approached me regarding a gathering of children of different faiths, I was skeptical that it will achieve anything. However, when I saw the Muslim children from my community identifying the same issues as that of the children of other faiths, tears rolled down my cheeks as I realized that children have the same problems and concerns whatever their faith.”

A Muslim faith Leader

Overcoming Challenges

Challenges	Responses
Children are not in a safe environment to raise their voices	Consult children, educate adults about active listening and how to create an enabling environment to hear children's voices
Children are not fully aware of the risks they face	Educate children on child rights, protection and harmful behaviors
Cultural and traditional beliefs are counter to the rights or well-being of children	Educate parents on positive parenting

Faith Leaders as catalysts – Mobilizing adults and children through their sphere of influence (*educate communities in the religious ceremonies, activities, and in special events*)

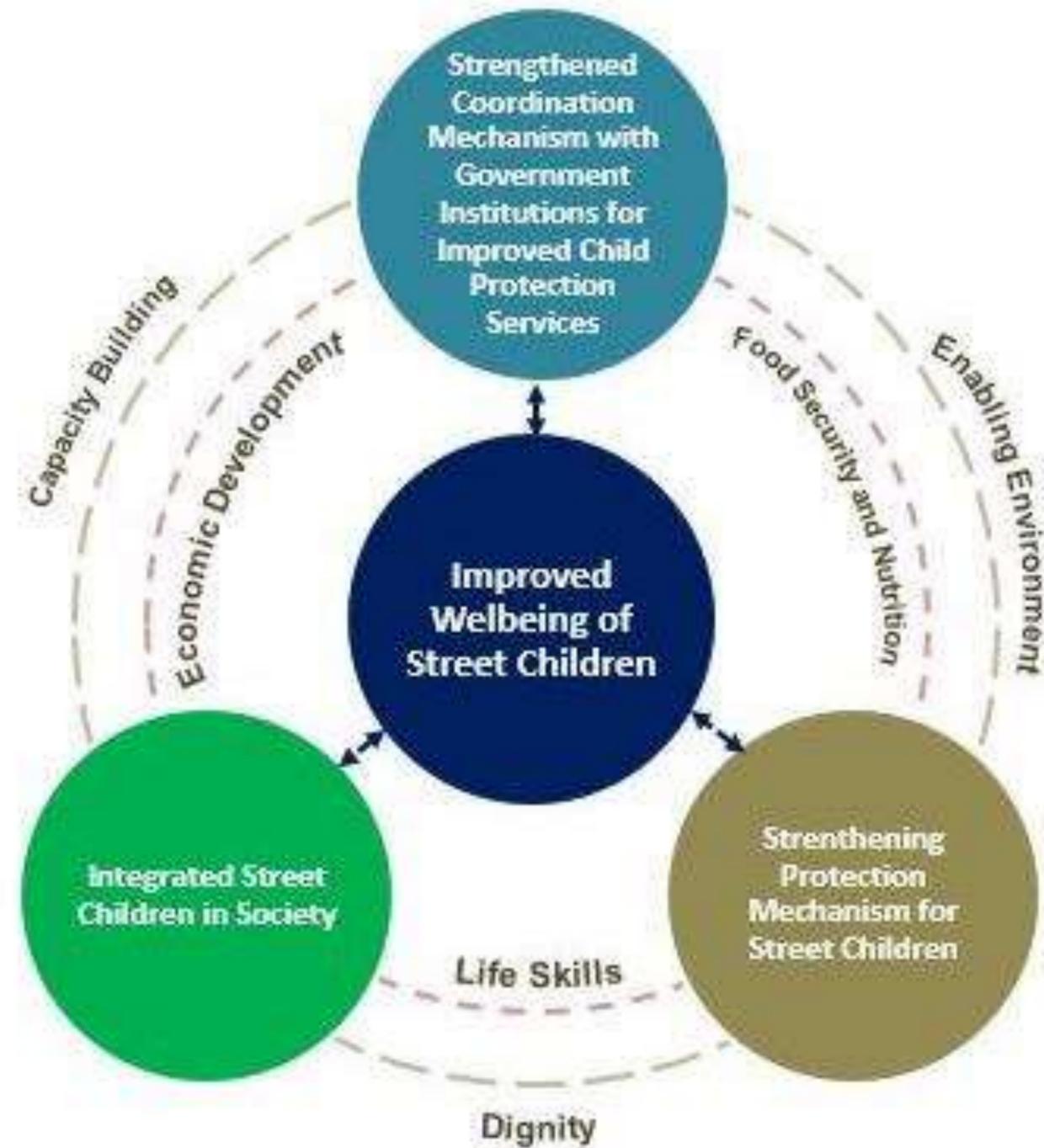
Afshan Jamal
Islamic Relief Pakistan





PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AT RISK (POCAR)

CHILD PARTICIPATION



KEY CHALLENGES

- Identification, engagement and mobilization of children and their families
- Economic challenges of families
- Limited or no cooperation from employers
- Mobilization and expectations of community
- Limited capacity of service providers to meet needs of children and their families
- Limited awareness at community level on child rights
- Organized gangs preventing children from accessing education
- Retention of children
- Lack of interest and buy-in from key stakeholders

MITIGATION STRATEGY

- Community mobilization and formation of Child Care Groups
- Engagements with Literacy Department
- Strengthening NFBEs and creating child friendly spaces
- Engagement with state departments and strengthening support mechanisms
- Livelihood support to the families to ensure social protection
- Broad-based campaigns on child safeguarding
- Long-term and broad-based partnerships are required for improved coverage
- Comprehensive advocacy drive

Thank you

Breakout Groups

Facilitated by: Andrea Kaufmann, Carola Eyber, Neelam Fida, Silvia Mazzarelli, and Stacy Nam (20 min)

Breakout Questions

- What has worked with regards to child participation to end/prevent/respond to violence against children and why?
- What are the barriers to child participation?
- What are possible solutions?

Report Back

NEXT WEBINAR

November 17th at 8 AM ET/ 1pm UK:
Intergenerational Dialogue

Register here: <https://arigatouinternational.org/weekoffaithinactionforchildren/>

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