

# Child Development Policy

Tearfund, UK



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Tearfund believes that development is a process of realising the full potential of human life as God intended it to be. This is done through increasing an individual's confidence and ability to initiate change in their own lives and community, and increasing their freedom to make choices. Holistic development should affect an individual spiritually, physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially (Luke 4:18-19). The fruit of these changes should be evident in terms of changed attitudes, aspirations and behaviour in the life of the individual and the community, so that those who have received will in turn be able to give to others in need. Tearfund believes that spiritual change brought about through a renewed relationship with Jesus Christ is essential in order to sustain changed lifestyles.

The importance of children as both present and future actors in the family, community and society provides the most compelling justification for their meaningful inclusion in the work of Tearfund and its partner agencies. The biological window of childhood - especially pre-birth to four years - provides a unique opportunity to invest in human beings. All development activities supported by Tearfund either directly or indirectly impact the environment of children.

### **2.0 PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY**

This policy provides a set of ideas and principles that aims to guide Tearfund and its partners in their decision-making and practice in order that children's concerns and needs are better met. Tearfund believes that these principles can be adapted to all types of child-centred and community-centred projects, including child evangelism, discipleship and Christian education.

### **3.0 WHY IS CHILD DEVELOPMENT SO IMPORTANT?**

Most of the children in the world are poor, and the poorest people in the world are children. Despite being the the future leaders and changemakers in society, children continue to suffer from poor resource provision; abuse and neglect, and a lack of recognition for the role they play in their families and communities.

*From a Christian perspective*

- Children are created in God's image - they are complete human beings, Psalm 139: 13-16
- Children are a gift from God, Psalm 127: 3
- We have been given the responsibility for looking after orphans (and widows), Exodus 22: 22, Deuteronomy 24: 17, James 1: 27

The welfare and treatment of children is key to enabling them as individuals to reach their God-given potential and for increasing society's capacity to develop. Investment in child development has a proven correlation with future economic and social benefits to society.

### 3.1 What do we mean by Child Development?

Tearfund defines child development in the following way:

**Child development is a process of change during which a child is able to reach his/her unique God-given spiritual, physical, mental, emotional and social potential. The development of each of these dimensions should be promoted simultaneously, through interaction with his/her environment, and should be viewed as a continual lifetime process.**

## 4.0 ISSUES IN CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Policy change, research and action from United Nations agencies and child-centred NGOs have raised children's rights issues to the forefront of development. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child created a platform for international action and advocacy in favour of children. NGO research raised questions about the impact of the development process on children, and their role in it. Tearfund needs to situate its distinctive Christian perspective amongst these emerging issues.

- *Childhood: age, environment and hereditary factors:* Tearfund works with children and youth from 0 to 18 yrs.<sup>1</sup> This is the age range within which the definition of 'child' will be placed. Children's age, environment and hereditary characteristics play a complex role in their development. The interaction of these factors determines the pace and direction of children's development.
- *Childhood is historically and culturally defined:* Different cultural contexts create distinct family structures, social systems and interaction/socialisation. Within these environments the expectations of the role of children, and the child's perceptions of their own role, can be very different.
- *Participation: Children as Social Actors:* Children in developing countries contribute actively to households and the extended family in terms of economic income/unpaid labour, childcare etc. But they are largely 'invisible' when it comes to development policy, practice and decision-making because adults feel they know best for children and community development projects are oriented towards adults. A child's contribution towards community

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<sup>1</sup>Tearfund believes that the unborn child also has needs, and the right to life. Nutritional education for pregnant mothers is an important way of giving the child a good start to life.

development goes largely unrecognised. Children's perceptions of programmes designed for them go relatively unheard.

- *Child Rights: The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC):* The CRC lays out an internationally agreed framework for child rights. In signing the CRC, nations take on responsibility for child rights and are obliged to produce goods, benefits and services which deal with some of the basic rights laid out, e.g. right to healthcare; right to basic education; right to adequate nutrition. They also take on responsibility to ensure that certain rights may not be infringed, e.g. protection from discrimination, imprisonment without trial.
- *Parenting models:* A stable parenting model is alien to many children. That role may be taken on by extended family, by siblings, and between children living on the streets. The role of the parent or caregiver who provides care, love, guidance, teaching of essential truths, appropriate discipline and good role modelling is vital to the child's development. Placing importance on children's participation and rights should in no way undermine the parental and family role in the child's upbringing. It should be complementary to it.

## **5.0 PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION**

- Tearfund believes that any action taken to improve a child's chance to reach his/her God-given potential as a human being needs to seek ways in which to address survival, growth and development simultaneously and holistically.
- Tearfund believes that community-based action can lead to sustainable solutions to problems identified by the community, and that child-centred programmes can benefit from adopting community-based approaches.
- Tearfund believes that child development should not just be the concern of child-centred programmes, but of all partners working with both child-centred and community-centred programmes.

Whilst child-centred and community-centred activities both contribute towards children's development in different ways, Tearfund believes that they do not go far enough. Any community-centred programme should be sensitive to the needs of children, and child-centred projects should look to the wider needs of the child in its community context.

## **6.0 TEARFUND'S APPROACH: CHILD-SENSITIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

A more intentional focus should be placed on the needs of children within the context of their families and communities to fully maximise their potential. Tearfund suggests that a more *child-sensitive community development approach*

may enable both child-centred and community-centred programmes to reach this goal.

### **I Children participate actively, *depending on age and ability*, in all aspects of project work**

Children's participation in projects can occur at different stages of the project cycle from research and planning to evaluation, and crucially with various degrees of adult support and collaboration. The capacity of children to participate depends upon their age, cultural context and situation. Projects should start with the children's perspectives rather than using them as an afterthought in order that *project work is based on, or takes into account, children's abilities and needs*. Children should understand the reasons and effects of their involvement, and their participation should not endanger or manipulate them.

### **II Children are seen in the context of family, community and society in order to address root causes**

Conditions of poverty that directly impact children are not dealt with by traditional child-centred approaches, which tend to treat children in isolation, focusing on one or two aspects of children's development. Understanding structural causes of poverty, exploitation, abuse, and discrimination at local, national and even international levels can focus programme strategy towards bringing about change which has a positive impact on the child, family and community.

Working with other agencies in a multi-sectoral way broadens and enriches research activities, and effective collaboration can help communities *combat poverty through development projects and advocacy*. Tearfund recommends that partners identify the aspects of child development that they hope to influence, and what they are unable to influence. In this way, collaboration with other agencies can help to fill the 'gaps'.

### **III Advocacy work on behalf of children is based on legal and biblical principles**

Speaking out on behalf of the poor and oppressed through prayer, lobbying and other forms of advocacy forms a part of Tearfund's values statement.<sup>2</sup> Child rights (the CRC) provide the framework for advocacy on behalf of children, although both scripture and other legal/constitutional documents should be used alongside to support and clarify any action taken. Working within legal frameworks, and speaking out with a prophetic voice for Kingdom values, and against injustice and greed, is a powerful combination.

### **IV Measuring impacts: child-sensitive indicators and data**

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<sup>2</sup>See Tearfund's Mission, Beliefs, Values and Strategy document.



Lack of relevant *data* on children is one reason why they are often overlooked in development planning and practice. Data collected on academic achievement, nutrition and health can be broken down into age, gender, disability, ethnicity, wealth etc. in order to better understand the needs and abilities of children at different stages of, and the factors affecting, their development. This information can be used to inform programme decisions and practice.

Developing *child-sensitive indicators* can also help to assess the impact of programmes on children's well-being, and to show if the programme is making a measurable, qualitative difference to their lives. These indicators should be negotiated with children, parents and community members to reflect their priorities.

## **7.0 GOOD PRACTICE**

This policy outlines the following principles of good practice, for both child-centred and community-centred development programmes:

- 1 Identify regional needs and priorities with respect to children.
- 2 Use the four components from the child-sensitive approach as a basis for project planning.
- 3 Try to work at different levels:
  - Individual
  - Family
  - Community
  - Institutional
  - Policy
- 4 Influencing and advocacy (action to protect rights and change policy).
- 5 Focus on the following areas to increase effectiveness:
  - Provide good role models for children, both male and female, strengthening the parenting role where possible.
  - Improve facilitation skills, both in generalist community development and for working with children.
  - Build relationships with individuals, families, communities and agencies.
  - Look for ways of linking up with external resources and expertise.
  - Build networks and coalitions for joint action with like-minded agencies and community groups.
  - Keep informed about child issues and good practice.

## **8.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The basic principles suggested in this policy are:

- Seeing child development as a set of interrelated spiritual, physical, mental, emotional and social dimensions of change affected by environmental and hereditary factors, which should therefore be approached holistically.
- Moving child-centred interventions towards a more community-based development approach, broadening their impact on children's home, community and wider socio-political environment.
- Moving community-centred interventions towards a more child-sensitive approach in order to include children within the development process.

Interventions which reflect the principles outlined above should be given priority when evaluating project proposals. For example:

#### *Child-centred projects*

- Holistic, community-based child development programmes that target the most vulnerable children, and their mothers, where possible.
- Community-based Early Childhood Development programmes due to the critical nature of the development process during the 0 to 4 year biological 'window of opportunity'.

#### *Community-centred projects*

- Community-based development projects whose programmes seek to include children and are moving towards a child-sensitive approach.

This policy upholds Tearfund's funding criteria which exclude support for institutionalised care, such as orphanages. There may be exceptional cases where institutionalised care may be unavoidable, but these instances will be assessed on a case by case basis.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 What is Tearfund?

Tearfund is an evangelical Christian agency providing support in order to enable churches and evangelical Christian groups to effectively meet the needs of the poor. Tearfund does not initiate or manage projects (other than in certain relief situations) but aims to build up and assist the work of the church and Christians in a country or locality. Tearfund seeks to provide a channel for churches and individual Christians in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland to provide Christian help to the poor and vulnerable in the world.

Tearfund believes the Gospel of Jesus Christ is concerned with both the spiritual and physical needs of people and seeks to enter into partnership with churches and Christian groups in accord with our evangelical beliefs to share the love of God in both word and deed, meeting the needs of the whole person.

### 1.2 Partnership

Tearfund aims to be an enabling Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), establishing partnerships with the indigenous church wherever possible. These partnerships span a number of models currently present in the field of development, but are based on the theological principle that 'God has chosen to be in partnership with people in stewardship of the world.'<sup>3</sup> Tearfund recognises that it is not an equal partner with many of the churches and organisations it works with, but is committed to the process of building true partnership through developing relationships and praying with our partners. Tearfund values relationships involving shared vision, values, priorities for God's work in effectively bringing good news to the poor, mutual understanding, shared risks, joint accountability for the use of resources, respect and trust, and which work towards a common goal. Tearfund aims to involve partners in the development of its strategy and programme priorities.

### 1.3 Development<sup>4</sup>

Tearfund believes that development is a process of realising the full potential of human life as God intended it to be. This is done through increasing an individual's confidence and ability to initiate change in their own lives and community, and increasing their freedom to make choices. Holistic development should affect an individual spiritually, physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially (Luke 4:18-19). The fruit of these changes should be evident in terms of changed attitudes, aspirations and behaviour in the life of the individual and the community, so that those who have received will in turn be able to give to others in need. Tearfund believes that spiritual change brought about through a renewed relationship with Jesus Christ is essential in order to sustain changed lifestyles.

### 1.4 What kind of support does Tearfund provide?

Tearfund supports churches and Christian groups involved in relief and development work including agroforestry, community-based healthcare, vocational training, income generation, HIV/AIDS care and education, evangelism and Christian education, reconciliation and child development.

Support is provided in the form of advice, training, prayer, capacity building, finance, short or longer term personnel placements and scholarships. Projects working with children are supported

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<sup>3</sup>Valson Thampu, TRACI, taken from HIV/AIDS Briefing Manual published by Tearfund 1996

<sup>4</sup> See Tearfund's Operating Principles document (due in 1998)

either directly, focusing on specific sectoral interventions e.g. health/education/ nutrition, or through Tearfund's association with Compassion International who are involved in child sponsorship programmes.

The Tearfund Ten Year Strategy (1996) states that 'Tearfund has a particular interest in the needs of children'. This policy aims to move Tearfund towards contextualising the needs of children within its thinking and practices.

## **2.0 PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY**

This policy document is for internal Tearfund use in order to:

- articulate Tearfund's position on and policy towards Child Development within the context of its mission and philosophy on development
- enable Tearfund staff to make informed assessments and decisions about financial and technical support to partners working with projects that impact children
- provide guidelines and enable Tearfund to stimulate critical reflection and action with partners with respect to their own work with children, whether directly or through community-centred projects.

This policy document draws on the experiences of community development practitioners working with children, child development specialists, and a growing body of research in the fields of child development and community development. It attempts to learn from these experiences, and current global initiatives taken in favour of children, placing them in the context of Tearfund's stated mission, beliefs, values, strategy and approach to development through its partnership with evangelical Christian organizations in the UK and overseas. The policy seeks to address child development in the context of both sectoral interventions and broader community development programmes. Tearfund believes that these principles can be adapted to all types of child-centred and community-centred projects, including child evangelism, discipleship and Christian education.

## **3.0 WHY IS CHILD DEVELOPMENT SO IMPORTANT?**

### **3.1 What do we mean by Child Development?**

Tearfund is committed to working with the poor and powerless. Children are both the most powerless members of society, and the most numerous of the poor. And of children, the disabled and often young girls are the most vulnerable, depending on the context.

Globally, nearly one out of every three people is a child under fifteen years of age, and although they represent the future generation of citizens and leaders:

- resources are declining for children both at family and national levels due to the impacts of structural adjustment programmes and debt.<sup>5</sup>
- many children are subjected to a great deal of physical and emotional stress within both the family and wider society.<sup>6</sup> There is now strong evidence to suggest that negative experiences in childhood can result in 'societal problems caused by adults.'<sup>7</sup>

From a Christian perspective:

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<sup>5</sup> Tomkins, A. (1996).

<sup>6</sup> Garbarino, J. (1995).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

- Children are created in God's image - they are complete human beings (Psalm 139: 13-16).
- Children are a gift from God (Psalm 127: 3).
- We have been given the responsibility for looking after orphans (and widows) (Exodus 22: 22, Deuteronomy 24: 17, James 1: 27).
- Jesus challenged the status of children in society and cultural norms (Matthew 18: 2-3).
- Parents are given a commission to love and teach their children (Ephesians 6:4).
- Children have a key place in the Kingdom of God (Matthew 18:10).

The welfare and treatment of children are key to enabling them as individuals to reach their God-given potential and for increasing society's capacity to develop. Investment in child development has a proven correlation with future economic and social benefits to society.<sup>8</sup>

Definitions for child development focus on the different aspects, or dimensions, of a child's physical and psychosocial make-up. This section attempts to outline a set of essential basic needs for children that include all of these aspects, and use them as a basis for Tearfund's own definition of child development.

### 3.1.1 *Basic needs*

The idea of an easily definable set of basic needs for children is a controversial one. Much of what we see as 'needs' is culturally-bound.<sup>9</sup> Cultural/contextual expectations and possibilities, as well as age and population, need to be taken into account when speaking of children's needs.

*A day care centre in London will have a very different idea of what the needs of the children are in comparison to a village day care centre in Kenya due to mediating influences<sup>10</sup> such as cultural beliefs, values and norms, as well as parental needs and expectations. This will be manifested in the type of care given, the daily schedule, those who are entrusted with the care, and what's adequate in terms of building, materials, resources etc. Needs are also different for the population being served; street kids will have different needs to those identified of working children, or handicapped etc.*

However, it may be possible to create a set of 'basic needs' which are universal essentials for a child's full development. Tearfund believes that spiritual growth is one of these essentials. Figure 1 categorises basic needs under survival, growth and development. The lines linking the categories recognise that these processes occur simultaneously and that each affects the other.

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<sup>8</sup>Myers, R. (1995). Chapter One

<sup>9</sup>Woodhead, M. (1996).

<sup>10</sup>Cochran, M. (1996).

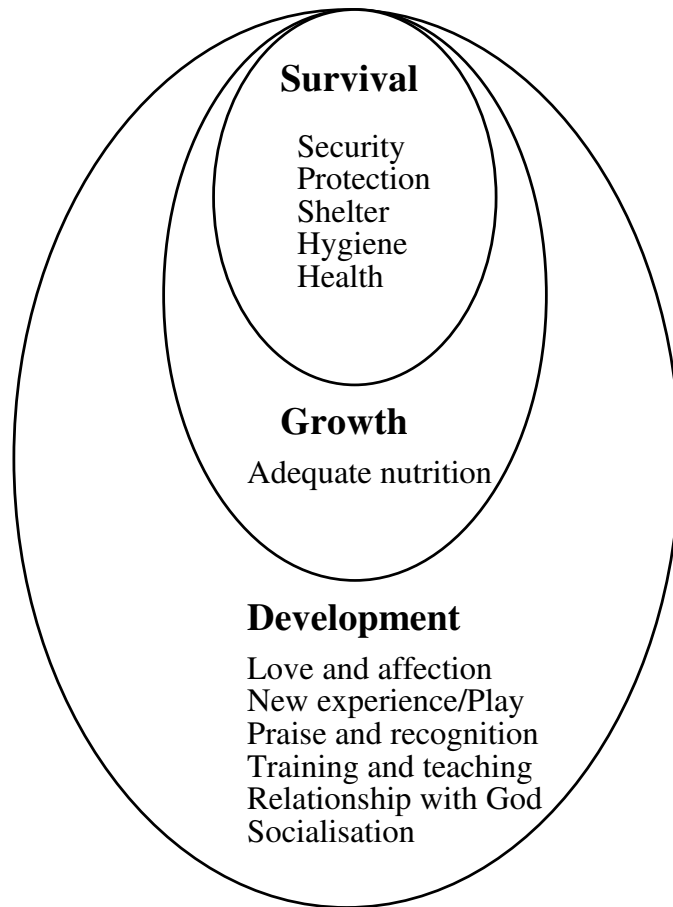


Figure 1: Basic Needs

### 3.1.2 *Child survival and growth*

The social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development of a child interconnects with the notions of child survival and child growth:

- Programmes for *child survival* concentrate on avoiding death, often through immunization and health projects that aim to reduce infant or child mortality rates. More positively, they seek to promote a healthy state at birth and in the early months and years of life to increase the chance of the child living.
- Child growth, commonly associated with feeding programmes and nutrition education, refers to a measurable increase in child height and weight.

### 3.1.3 *Spiritual, physical, mental, emotional and social dimensions of development*

Child-centred programmes commonly focus on one or more aspects of a child's development. For example, schools concentrate on the intellectual and social growth, whereas health programmes focus on physical aspects. Tearfund recognise that children can come to a very real and lasting experience of God's love in Jesus, and encourages opportunities for their spiritual growth through exposure to the Gospel message. The definition that follows aims to incorporate all dimensions of a child's development into a more holistic framework that corresponds with Tearfund's Christian perspective on development outlined in 1.3 and its Operating Principles:

*Child development is a process of change during which a child is able to reach his/her unique God-given spiritual, physical, mental, emotional and social potential. The development of each of these dimensions should be promoted simultaneously, through interaction with his/her environment, and should be viewed as a continual lifetime process.*

This definition can be broken down into its separate characteristics:

*Unique God-given potential*

The sequence, rate, character and quality of development will vary from child to child. It will also be affected by children's biological make-up, and the environment and culture in which they grow and develop. Individual gifts and characteristics are given by God. It is part of the challenge of the body of Christ to enable each member of the body to realise the unique giftings that each individual has through encouraging a living relationship with Jesus Christ.

*...should be promoted simultaneously*

Developmental dimensions are interlinked. Changes in one dimension can both influence and be influenced by changes in the development of the others. Although the conceptual distinctions between the dimensions are clear, they are organically interrelated. Thus, an approach to programming for child survival, growth and development requires that attention be given to the 'whole child' and is totally integrated. 'Improved development, including psychosocial development, will have a positive effect on nutrition and health (disease and infection) and on the chances of survival.'<sup>11</sup> These three interdependent notions, when addressed, respond to children's basic needs and contribute to their well-being.

*...through interaction with his/her environment*

Children respond to, learn from and seek to affect their biophysical and social environments. Fostering development, therefore, requires a lot more than simply providing stimulation. Responding to and encouraging children's initiatives help them actively to construct their own environment, build self-esteem and take on increasing responsibility. The family and wider community (especially the school and the church) play key roles in creating a responsive and stimulating environment for their children.

*...and should be viewed as a continual lifetime process.*

The development process starts in the womb and continues throughout life. Whatever happens at a given moment can help prepare the way for the future, both positively and negatively. Developmental delays can occur if children survive and grow in a harsh environment. However, children's resilience in their early years means that a positive change in circumstance can have a recuperative effect on their development.

#### **4.0 ISSUES CONCERNING CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE (see appendix 1)**

##### **4.1 Childhood: age, environment and hereditary factors**

Child-centred issues are currently the focus of growing international attention. The following research, policy and programme initiatives and issues have forwarded thinking concerning the place and role of children in socio-economic development practice:

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<sup>11</sup>Myers, R. (1995).

- The 1990 World Summit on Children argued for the 'first call for children' in development programmes.
- UNICEF (1996) stated that 'children should be placed at the heart of development.'
- The UN drafted and accepted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1989
- Increased global awareness of the prevalence of sexual abuse and exploitation of children has led to political and legal action to protect children.
- The proven benefits of, yet lack of investment in, Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes.<sup>12</sup>
- Participatory research with children which has created new perspectives on childhood and child development.
- NGO research which has challenged traditional concepts of children's role in the development process, and the assumption that the benefits of community development interventions 'trickle down' to children.<sup>13</sup>

Tearfund work with children and youth from 0 to 18 yrs.<sup>14</sup> This is the age range within which the definition of 'child' will be placed. However, Tearfund recognises that many cultural traditions initiate children into adulthood in their early adolescence. This creates different expectations, roles and therefore distinct needs for these 'children'.

Children's environment (family size,<sup>15</sup> birth order, family life, geographic setting, poverty etc.) and hereditary characteristics (physical appearance, disability, ethnicity, caste, class, etc.) play a complex role in their development and well-being. The interaction of these factors determines the pace and direction of a child's development.

Children's capacities also change with age. The early childhood years between the ages of 0 to 4 are often referred to as critical years in the development of intelligence, personality and social behaviour. Fifty percent of intellectual development potential is reached by the age of four.<sup>16</sup> During these years, children are largely dependent upon adults for meeting basic needs and are self-oriented. They have few responsibilities and decisions are taken on their behalf.

The 'middle childhood' years between five and twelve are a time of increasing responsibility and awareness of the needs of others for most children, as well as spiritual receptivity. Most children begin to take an active part in household chores and sibling care, and are entrusted with limited decision-making.<sup>17</sup> Many children begin to work at this age.

Formal education opportunities end for the majority of children at thirteen. They continue to work either with parents or on individual income generating activities, often in the informal economy. In contrast with children living in the Third World, most First World children go through compulsory secondary education until the age of sixteen.

#### 4.2 Childhood is historically and culturally defined

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<sup>12</sup>UNICEF (1993). Young, M. E. (1996).

<sup>13</sup>Development projects can affect, for example:

The workload that children have to take on in the household; their access to and patterns of education; the amount of leisure time they have; power relationships of boys and girls; health; income earning capacity and self-esteem of working children; parental time with children and levels of childcare and early childhood stimulation; the values of boys and girls to both men and women and how this affects fertility decisions regarding the education, work and labour of children in the household. Hinshelwood, E. (1996).

<sup>14</sup>Tearfund believes that the unborn child also has needs, and the right to life. Nutritional education for pregnant mothers is an important way of giving the child a good start to life.

<sup>15</sup>See Tearfund's population policy (forthcoming).

<sup>16</sup>Bloom, B. S. (1964).

<sup>17</sup>Punch, S. (1997).



Concepts of childhood are historically and culturally specific. The Western concept of childhood has its roots in the 18th-century European Enlightenment period. Its premise is that children should be secure and protected and emerge from a period of innocence into adulthood having received the necessary education and social skills to cope with the transition. This is a foreign concept to many Third World cultures where the children are active members of an adult society from a very young age, contributing to household income, childcare and subsistence activities.

The family plays a central role in the children's experience. Families provide the primary environment that shapes the behaviour and development of children. Different cultural contexts create distinct family structures, systems and interaction/socialisation.<sup>18</sup> Within these approaches the expectations of the role of children are very different. The high value that the West places on individualism, self-reliance and familial independence contrasts sharply with the interdependent models of extended family in most Third World countries.

Many childcare policies formulated in developing countries have adopted the Western model of childhood. This could be due either to the child development models espoused and imposed by multilateral or bilateral donors, or to a sense that indigenous people assume that their models are less worthy and scientific than those used by the West. This creates a mismatch between the projects implemented along policy guidelines and the realities of the children's lives.

#### 4.3 Participation: children as social actors

It could be argued that the sense of alienation, indifference and antagonism that children in First World countries feel is rooted in their 'enforced inutility'.<sup>19</sup> State and agency policy commonly focuses on what they and the community can do for the children, rather than what the children can do for their community. Opportunities for learning life skills and taking on increasing levels of responsibility and a more stable self-identity are often lost. Whereas children from Third World families are perceived to have more 'utilitarian' value than their Western peers, and contribute actively to household and extended family, both are largely 'invisible' in development policy and practice, in the formal economy, and in decision-making.

In community development projects, children (especially between the ages of five and fifteen) have been left out of any decision-making processes, mainly because adults feel that they know what is best for children; most community development programmes are oriented towards adults, and because their contribution to the development process goes largely unrecognised, children constitute a 'silent, obedient labour force'.<sup>20</sup>

Scripture points us to incidents that demonstrate children's ability to take on responsibility and leadership. For example, Josiah the boy king led his people back to God (2 Kings 22:1-2), and David took the stand for Israel against Goliath (1 Samuel 17:29-33). Children's voices were also heard. Eli listened carefully to Samuel after God chose to speak directly to him.

Tearfund recognises that children are social actors and have the potential to become change agents in the environments with which they interact. Children are characterised by their openness, enthusiasm and imagination. There are many examples of children teaching their siblings simple health messages,<sup>21</sup> and even their own parents how to read and write. Parents of children involved in a project in Kenya describe how their children brought their family and friends to Christ, and instituted family prayers. Children's strength of feelings about social issues and rights for child workers have led to children's movements in India and Peru which changed government policy and action.<sup>22</sup> In the UK, children get involved in action research projects in inner cities; raise

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<sup>18</sup>Kagitcibasi, C. (1996).

<sup>19</sup>Bronfenbrenner, U. (1970).

<sup>20</sup>Tomkins, A. (1996).

<sup>21</sup>Hawes, H., & Scotchmer, C. (1993)

<sup>22</sup> Stephenson, P. (1997).

money for different appeals and have become active in local affairs. Child-headed households are a regular feature of many communities around the world due to a number of factors, including war, natural disasters and familial breakdown. Adolescent children provide and care for their siblings, taking on responsibilities usually apportioned to adults.

#### **Example from the Field**

##### ***Child-headed households: Orphans in Uganda***

The AIDS epidemic in Uganda has left many children without parents. The traditions that govern inheritance place the house and land of the deceased into the hands of the father's family. This can leave the children and surviving widow destitute as the extended family cannot afford to care for them. Fear and misunderstanding of AIDS also leads to families blaming the widow for the death of the husband.

Fourteen year-old Alfred heads up a household with three siblings: 'UWCM (Uganda Women's Concern Ministries) found us when we were very badly off. We were just walking and moving around. There were four of us. Our father died when he was harvesting millet, and our mother just died. Our brother is mentally ill. We live on our own in a hut in the community. The community do not help us at all. In fact, they want to take things from us - even our relatives.'

Child-headed households are now common in many villages. The surviving children provide for their siblings by working on local farmers' plantations, 'digging' their own vegetable and maize plots. UWCM listens to the children's stories, and respects the special needs that they have: 'They gave us a hoe to dig with,' says Alfred, 'and now we prepare food like millet, sweet potatoes and other things'.

Children have a voice that is rarely heard or taken into consideration. There are few established mechanisms through which children's voices can be heard. However, when they have participated in the planning, implementation and evaluating of projects this has proven to be very valuable. It is important that mechanisms for allowing children's voices to be heard are developed and instituted *in negotiation with parents and the community*. This process not only broadens the base of participation in the community, and allows for a community-based approach to resolving community problems, but it also encourages children to learn experientially about citizenship roles and democratic process.

#### **4.4 Child Rights: The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**

The CRC lays out an internationally agreed framework for child rights, and has become an important advocacy tool. In signing the CRC, nations take on responsibility for child rights and are legally obliged to produce goods, benefits and services which deal with some of the basic rights laid out, e.g. right to healthcare; right to basic education; right to adequate nutrition. These are referred to as *positive rights* as they require State provision and investment in order to be met. They also take on responsibility to ensure that certain rights may not be infringed, e.g. protection from discrimination, imprisonment without trial, child exploitation. These are referred to as *negative rights*.

NGOs and other institutions can work together to lobby government and work alongside it in order to help address the rights promoted in the CRC. Not all countries have signed up to the CRC, and some argue that its principles have a Western bias, and need to be used appropriately within their own specific social and cultural context.

#### 4.5 Parenting models: parents, extended family, foster parents and sibling care

The role of the parent, or someone who provides care, love, guidance, teaching of essential truths, appropriate discipline and good role modelling is vital to the child's development. Scripture clearly describes parental roles as guiding and instructing their children, without exasperating them (Ephesians 6:4). Children are also called to obey and honour their parents (Ephesians 6:1-2, Exodus 20:12). Placing importance on children's participation and rights should never undermine this 'parental' and family role in the child's upbringing. It should be complementary to it.

Families are under great pressure in many parts of the world. Traditional family 'units' are increasingly becoming separated by divorce, economic hardship and death. Many single parents struggle to support their families, and rely heavily on their children for income and household help. A stable parenting model is an alien concept for many children. The parent role can often be taken on by members of the extended family or elder siblings. In some cases, such as with children living on the streets, alternative family forms and structures develop based around an agreed code of conduct and social obligation. Sensitivity towards roles within families, and groups of children living on the street, is key to effective programme planning to strengthen parenting skills.

#### 5.0 PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION

- **Tearfund believes that any action taken to improve a child's chance to reach his/her God-given potential as a human being needs to seek ways in which to address survival, growth and development simultaneously and holistically.**

Traditional child-centred programme approaches have tended to be sectoral, dealing with one or more aspects of a child's development in isolation. The advantage in this approach is that staff are often highly specialised in their fields, and resources can be directed effectively to achieving clear goals, having an immediate impact on the individual children. However, the long term impact on the child is limited due to 'the failure to address root causes of deprivation, poor social and physical environment, exclusion and lack of equity.'<sup>23</sup>

#### **Example from the Field**

**A child-centred intervention:** A supplementary education project in Kenya incorporating spiritual instruction addresses educational deficiencies and introduces children to the Gospel, but minimal parental and community involvement means that important aspects of the children's lives remain untouched. Problems faced by the parents in the community are not considered to be the mandate of the project, and project staff are unsure as how to respond to their efforts to organise. The parents only meet once a month to be told how their children are doing, and what they are expected to contribute in terms of time and resources to the functioning of the project. Their hope rests in the future benefits that their children may bring. The project does little, however, to build the capacity of the parents and community to improve their own lives, and the home and community environment of the children.

- **Tearfund believes that community-based action can lead to sustainable solutions to problems identified by the community.**

Good development practice should feature a community-owned and managed programme which is locally resourced, and has developed outside links with government and non-governmental

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<sup>23</sup>Tomkins, A. (1996).

sources for training, equipment and educational materials. The community may also be involved in other projects or actions that are trying to deal with the root causes of the poverty.

#### **Example from the Field**

**A community-centred intervention:** A community development agency in Central America aims to empower the community to resolve its problems and address the root causes of their poverty through a series of integrated, community planned projects. The project staff list children as indirect beneficiaries of everything that they do, although they have no real indicators to prove it. The agency is complacent with the assumption that whatever they do is going to have a positive impact on the children. Is this really true?

- **Tearfund believes that child development should not just be the concern of child-centred programmes, but of all partners working with community-based programmes**

Interventions that benefit children adopt different philosophies and approaches (see appendix 2). Welfare and service provision such as orphanages and individual child sponsorship characterise the approach of many child-centred agencies. These projects tend to focus on sector (health, education, nutrition) or population (street children, disabled, orphans). A growing number of NGOs now practise more participative, community-based development approaches to their work with children. These projects attempt to involve children and communities in a process that impacts not only the children but also the environment that surrounds them. Tearfund favours the latter approach while recognising that a wealth of expertise and experience exist in, and should be drawn from, the more assistential, welfarist approaches.

Whilst child-centred and community-centred activities both contribute towards children's development in different ways, Tearfund believes that they do not go far enough. Any community-centred programme should be sensitive to the needs of children, and child-centred projects should look to the wider needs of the child in its community context.

Figure 2 (overleaf) diagrammatically represents the nesting of these principles within a philosophy of practice. The diagram centres around meeting the basic needs for child development. Child-centred programmes should aim to address these needs holistically, seeing the child both as an individual and as part of a wider community. The outer ring suggests that both child-centred and community-centred programmes should move towards a community-based approach for child-sensitive development.

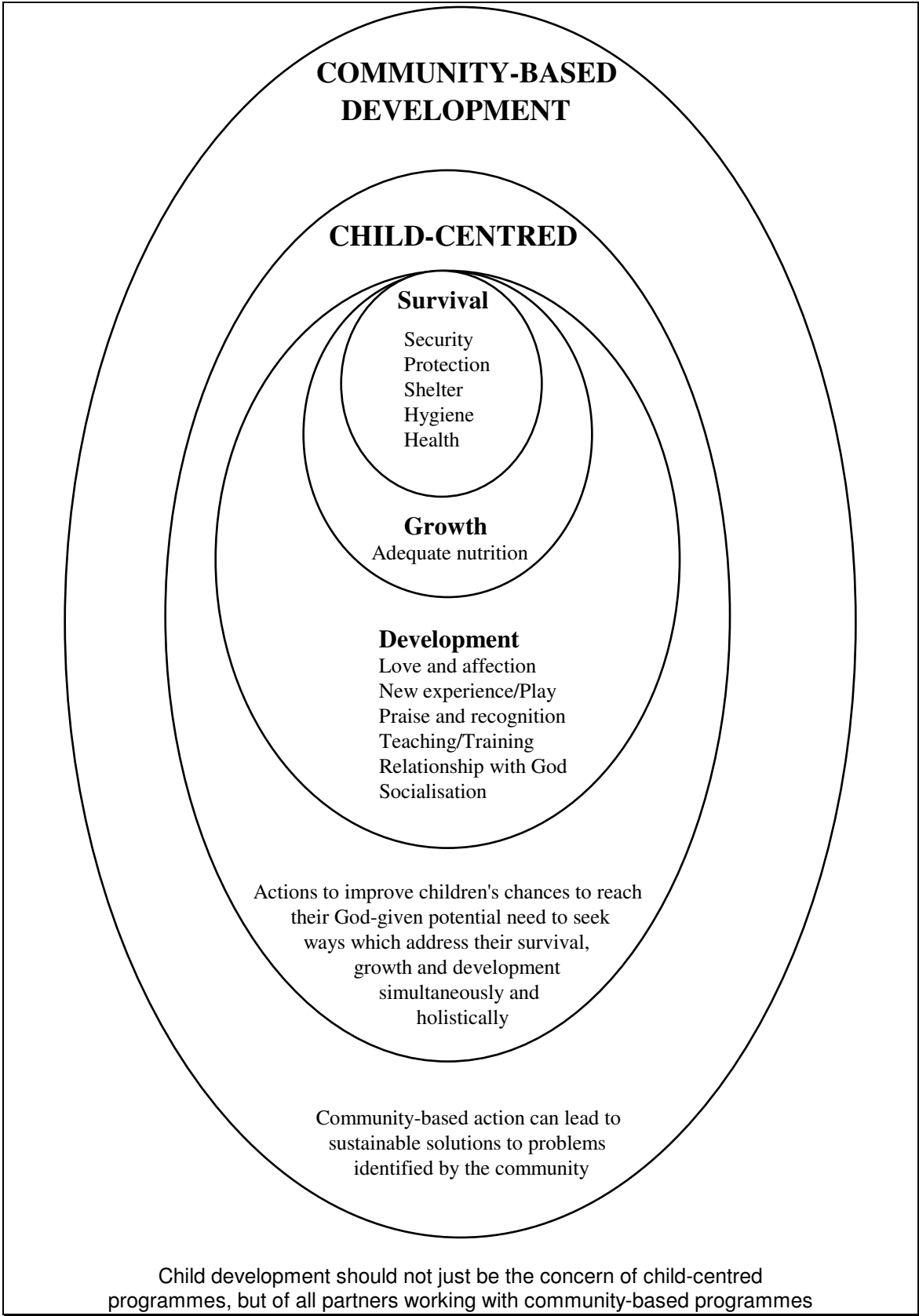


Figure 2: Principles for Guiding Development Interventions that Benefit Children

## 6.0 TEARFUND'S APPROACH: CHILD-SENSITIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A more intentional focus is needed on the needs of children within the context of their families and communities to fully maximise their potential. Tearfund suggests that a more *child-sensitive community development approach* may enable both child-centred and community-centred programmes to reach this goal.

### 6.1 Four key principles<sup>24</sup>

The following four components of a child-sensitive community development approach describe the areas that Tearfund partners can focus on in order to identify their strengths and weaknesses in terms of programme impact on children. They present options for making child-centred sectoral programmes more community-based, and community-centred development programmes more child-sensitive, and identify the issues which Tearfund feels are important to address when considering programme planning and impact.

#### **I Children participate actively, *depending on age and ability*, in all aspects of project work**

Children's participation in projects can occur at different levels and with various degrees of adult support and collaboration (see appendix 3: Hart's 'Ladder of Children's Participation' for a useful guide to children's participation and appendix 4: matrix for understanding different levels of participation). The capacity of the children to participate needs to be assessed according to their age, ability, cultural context and situation.

##### **(i.i) Needs assessment**

*Project work should be based on, or take into account, children's abilities and needs.*

Assessment should start with children's perspectives, rather than using them as an afterthought. Try to gain an understanding of children's roles in the household and community, and what issues are relevant to them. This includes allowing children to identify their own needs and interests along with adults in participatory ways, and enables the project to begin with children's capabilities and build on their strengths rather than focusing on their weaknesses. This goes towards ensuring that the practice is in the children's interest, and that children positively benefit from the project, even if it does not directly involve them.

#### **Example from the Field**

##### ***Listening to working children in Honduras***

'In Honduras, in San Pedro Sula, we supported a programme for six years that provided a day centre for working children. It was situated in the market where the children work. We did an evaluation about a year ago. You know, for the first time effectively children were asked what they thought, and perhaps what they wanted. The programme staff were rather surprised to find that children didn't want to go to the centre, because it was in too dangerous a location, and that it should be somewhere nice so that their parents wouldn't mind them going and coming in the evening. So I think that's just a really good example of how important it is to ask children at the planning stage, or it's not going to work.'

SCF Desk Officer for Latin America

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<sup>24</sup> Adapted from Theis, J. (1996)

### **(i.ii) Research,<sup>25</sup> planning, monitoring and evaluation**

A variety of 'participatory' methods exists which can be adapted to different groups of children, as well as for a range of research issues, situations and activities. The most familiar of these are grouped beneath the family of practices known as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), many of whose methods are now being adapted for use with children. Children's input into planning, monitoring and evaluation can be facilitated via the use of these methods. Methods that allow visual expression, such as drawing and role play, enjoy a greater degree of success than those which rely upon the spoken word. However, the choice of method depends upon the capacities of the children, considering which will make them feel at ease, yield the best data, protect them from exposure to painful or difficult information, and so on. Partners should work on creating conditions for enabling children to get actively and meaningfully involved in the processes of research, practice and influencing.

#### **Children can participate in research by:**

- Choosing or selecting themes and topics
- Conducting the actual research
- Interpreting or explaining the data
- Being involved in analysis
- Disseminating research results
- Planning policy and programme responses based on research findings

Taken from Boyden, J. and Ennew, J. (1997) *Children in Focus* Radda Barnen and UNICEF

### **(i.iii) Ethics and Practice of Child Participation**

The practice of children's participation is still in its formative stages. Tearfund encourages partners to explore the possibilities and limitations of children's involvement, but recognises that many questions remain unanswered.

Tearfund wishes to create a space for learning and research so that partners can develop their own response appropriate to the context within which they work. Partners need to assess their own organisational capacity and skills and the appropriateness of any action that involves children as participants.

Involving children in development activities raises ethical issues. In many countries, parental consent for working with children is a legal requirement. Informed consent should be given both by children and parents. Children should understand the reasons and effects of their involvement, and their participation should not endanger or manipulate them.

## **II Children are seen in the context of family, community and society in order to address root causes**

*Root causes of poverty:* Conditions of poverty that directly impact children are not dealt with by traditional child-centred approaches which tend to treat children in isolation. Understanding structural causes of poverty, exploitation, abuse and discrimination at local, national and even international levels can focus programme strategy towards bringing about change which has a

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<sup>25</sup> Research can be defined as a process of gathering information to inform decision-making. The ideal is to involve the beneficiary group in the research process in order that the information may be relevant, owned by them and used as part of an ongoing process of research, reflection and action at project level.

positive impact on the child, family and community. Information gathered can contextualize project activities, and be used to advocate with and on behalf of the children.

*Both participative and traditional (surveys etc.) research techniques* are useful for identifying, understanding, and catalyzing appropriate action for dealing with the causes of problems affecting children, e.g. impacts of government policies on children, cultural concepts about childhood, local childrearing practice, religious/spiritual practices, attitudes towards children. Well designed and presented research can effectively impact policy decisions, and help in planning informed programme responses.

*Mothers and parenthood:* A generally accepted view among development agencies is that mothers are more likely than fathers to ensure that their children receive benefits. Strong correlation also exists between female literacy and levels of children's education. Working with mothers in a variety of social, spiritual, economic, educational and health activities is therefore a good first step in benefiting children. However, all attempts should be made to include fathers where present, and to build on parenting skills and strengthen families.

*Building partnerships and networks* with other NGOs and institutions can help to widen agency impact. Working with other agencies in a multi-sectoral way broadens and enriches research activities, and effective collaboration in areas where the partner lacks expertise can help communities combat poverty through development projects and advocacy.

*Strengthening civil society* is a key factor in building an effective, functioning democracy. A strong civil society can create greater government accountability and responsiveness to needs identified by the people. Tearfund and its partners can contribute towards this process by: facilitating child, family and community participation, organization and ownership of projects; concentrating on building the capacity of community-based organizations (CBOs) (churches, PTAs, youth groups etc.), networks and coalitions to resolve problems; lobbying for change alongside CBOs; mobilizing and encouraging the use of local resources, skills and knowledge.

### **III Advocacy work on behalf of children is based on legal and biblical principles**

Speaking out on behalf of the poor and oppressed through prayer, lobbying and other forms of advocacy forms part of Tearfund's values statement.<sup>26</sup> Child rights (the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - CRC) provide the framework for advocacy on behalf of children, although both scripture and other legal/constitutional documents should be used alongside to support and clarify any action taken.

Raising awareness of child rights with children and parents is a sensitive task. Tearfund believes that this should be done within the context of scriptural teachings about parenthood (see section 4.5) and service (Philippians 2:4). However, children's rights are not optional. Tearfund sees the CRC as a useful tool to lobby for tougher policies and State action to be taken against the abuse of children at local, national and international levels, including child prostitution, exploitative child labour, child soldiers, imprisonment, drug and sexual abuse.

A critical and flexible approach to the CRC should be taken, and scriptural truths should guide all advocacy actions. The CRC should be used inclusively along with general human rights conventions and other legal documents, and should not focus on the child at the expense of others. A focus on child rights may be important when a specific issue, such as child abuse or exploitation of child labour, is a problem in the region. Working within legal frameworks, and speaking out with a prophetic voice for Kingdom values and against injustice and greed, is a powerful combination.

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<sup>26</sup>See Tearfund's Mission, beliefs, values and strategy document.



### **Example from the Field**

#### ***Parental 'ownership' and the rights of a child in Peru.***

Maria is a child sponsored through Compassion International. She lives in a small house on the fringes of Lima, Peru. Her teachers at the local church's Student Centre noticed that she arrived late to her classes and was very withdrawn. Burn marks on her fingers raised suspicions of abuse. One of the teachers found out that Maria's mother angered easily, and punished her whenever she did something wrong, or arrived late from school. The punishments varied from beatings to forcing Maria's fingers into the flames of their kerosene stove. Even though the pastor of the church visited the mother and tried to talk to her, she said that it was none of his business. She argued that she 'owned' Maria and could treat her in whatever way she wanted. The Compassion Country Director then visited her house, and told her that Maria had legal rights to protection from abuse. He used both scripture and the CRC to advocate on Maria's behalf. Persuaded of the legal implications of her actions, the mother's thinking about her assumed 'right' that she could maltreat her child began to change.

### **IV Measuring impacts: child-sensitive indicators and data**

Lack of relevant *data* on children is one reason why they are often overlooked in development planning and practice. Traditional ways of measuring children's intellectual progress, school attendance and physical growth are useful and give quantifiable outcomes against which objectives can be measured. However, simply counting the numbers of children who, for example, have been immunised or fed or go to school tells us little about which children in the community are being reached, and how the programme impacts their lives. Often disabled or working children can slip through the net, or one ethnic group preferred over another. Quantitative data collected on household occupancy, academic achievement, nutrition and health can be broken down into age, gender, disability, ethnicity, wealth etc. in order to better understand the needs and abilities of children. It also allows project staff to identify and prioritise the most vulnerable children. The information can then be used to inform programme decisions and practice.

Developing *child-sensitive indicators* can also help to assess the impact of more community-centred programmes on children's well-being, and to show if the programme is making a measurable difference to their lives. These indicators should be negotiated and agreed *locally* with children, parents and community members to reflect their priorities. Child-sensitive indicators could measure the impact that a potable water project has on the children in terms of the extra burdens this places on children physically, time spent queuing for water and time lost from school. The data can be further broken down to see how the intervention affects gender and age groups. Projects can then be adjusted and adapted according to the needs of the children.

### **Developing child-sensitive indicators**

Child-sensitive indicators should be based on the spiritual, physical, mental, emotional and social dimensions of child development as defined in section 3.1.3. For example:

A handicraft project run by women in the Mosquito Coast region of Honduras involves gathering tree bark; pounding the bark into strips; mashing roots and bark to make dyes, and then cutting and sewing the dyed strips to make the final wall-hanging or table mat. The women plant trees and manage the plantations in order to provide a sustainable resource base. The process is labour intensive and part of the work is done by children.

The women's groups develop project indicators that measure income generated; quantity and range of products, and environmental impact. They do not attempt to measure how these

activities and the extra income affect the children. Child-sensitive indicators could be developed that measure the impact the project has on a child's: school attendance, informal education to build life-skills and recreation time (mental and social development); health, nutrition and levels of parental care (physical and emotional development), and opportunities to be involved in Christian education - youth clubs etc. (spiritual and social development).

## 7.0 GOOD PRACTICE

There is no magical blueprint or quick fix that can guarantee that a project be successful in every situation. This section aims to summarise the key areas which Tearfund and its partners should build on in order to adopt a more child-sensitive community development approach. This is **not** a 'how to' section: 'how to' run a street kids programme, or 'how to' implement an unaccompanied minors programme in a refugee camp. There is a great deal of literature available on sectoral interventions which Tearfund staff and partners should have access to. The experiences related in those publications can be analysed and lessons learned and adapted to fit the context within which each partner operates. However, the following characteristics of good practice should be common to most programmes.

Tearfund recognises that partners are at different levels in terms of organisational capacity and development training. The ability and pace of partners to adapt and incorporate these ideas in their practice will vary accordingly. Policy recommendations are in bold.

### 7.1 Identifying needs and priorities

Regional issues, Government service provision, community priorities, especially needy groups, and geographical location drive the nature and the extent of interventions. **Priority needs and issues in the area in which Tearfund partners work should be identified, and appropriate strategies developed to address them.**

All interventions ideally should start with and be formed by the people who will benefit from them, and this policy suggests that this should include the children. Agencies that walk alongside the people in partnership will allow for experiences and ideas to be shared and adapted according to their specific situation and needs.

In the case of **emergencies (conflict and natural disasters)** where survival is at stake, the community may neither have the capacity nor the collective will to help. Agencies should look for ways to build the capacity and self-sufficiency of the community, and to find ways of addressing the developmental needs of children while ensuring their survival and protection.

Replication is not advisable. It assumes that all human beings operate in the same way, despite culture, context and traditions. Many failed development projects have borne witness to this mistaken assumption.

### 7.2 Child-sensitive community development analysis

**Tearfund partners should utilise the four components for child-sensitive community development (see section 6.0) as a basis for project planning, implementation and evaluation - including impact indicators.** They could start with one or two of these components - perhaps those which seem most relevant to the project. An important first step is simply listening to children, and considering the implications of what they say and why they say

## **Example from the Field**

### **Listening to children**

Traditional project planning for children rarely takes into account the opinions and perspectives of the children that they benefit. The following examples from a variety of NGO interventions show the value in searching for ways to include children in the planning process.

#### ***Listening to street children in India***

'...all along I said that the principle by which the organization would work would be on democratic principles, which means that the children participate in deciding what activities they would like to have and how they would monitor it and evaluate it. You know, all these things are very easy to say, but it's quite difficult to implement. And we always talk to ourselves and were never asking children, [yet] it's based on what the children say that we are running our activities.

...It was the time of a very popular festival in India. So the street educators thought that, you know, we will have a big celebration in Central Park and Connaught Place, get all the kids from the various contact points, and we'd have fireworks and sweets and everything. So the street educators then called the children to a meeting and said: 'This is it, and each one of you will be contributing so much money for it.' So they thought about it and they said: 'Why should we?' You know the kids said: 'The winter is coming, and this festival comes just before winter sets in. And you see that with that money we could buy sweaters instead of buying those sweets and those fire crackers, you know we can buy sweaters.' That stumped the street educators. And I must say that we then realized that although we keep saying that the children are the ones who are deciding, actually it was we who are deciding, and we hadn't taken the children's opinion of what they wanted to do; how they would like to celebrate. Also, that they might not even have wanted to celebrate the festival. We took it for granted that, being children, they would like to celebrate, and therefore we decided for them.'

Rita Panicker, Founder and Director of Butterflies, Delhi, India

#### ***Listening to children as active members of the community in India***

Children can bring a revealing voice into the debate and decision-making in their communities. They know who is who, and who is doing what in the village, which is why children add value and insight to PRA exercises. Kavita, Assistant Director of The Concerned for Working Children (CWC) in Bangalore, describes how children played an important role in defining where a new pathway should be built in their village:

'Men wanted it in one direction, all the women and children wanted it in another direction. For a long time they kept arguing about the merits and demerits of this pathway. Then one child got up and said: 'I know exactly why all of you wanted it. Because that's the closest route to the wine shop in the village.' All the men laughed and hollered and the women and children said: 'Yes, now we know, now we know and we will not let that happen!'

The process of inclusion not only broadens the base of participation in the community, and allows for a community-based approach to resolving community problems, but it also encourages children to learn experientially about citizenship roles and democratic process. These children form part of a working children's union where they develop technical and decision-making skills, carry out action research projects that expose some of the injustices of child labour, and monitor and evaluate the work of CWC.

### 7.3 Levels of working

Working at the level of the individual child has immediate results for the child, but does not address the root causes of their poverty. **Tearfund suggests that partners look for ways of working with the family, the community and at institutional and policy levels.**

#### **Example from the Field**

##### ***Playing a part in multi-level change***

Uganda Women's Concern Ministries (UWCM) emerged as a response to the AIDS epidemic that has swept Uganda and devastated many families and communities. UWCM focused on the women and children who were left powerless in the wake of the death of the father, helping to provide spiritual outreach, counselling, emergency supplies, school fees and credit and grants for land and income generation opportunities to widows. From an initial response to the survival needs of individuals, UWCM now recognises that many of the root causes of the problems cannot be addressed at an individual or 'micro' (local) level. Women and children are denied basic human rights due to tradition and superstition; community capacity to help the victims of AIDS is hampered by poverty, distrust and lack of organisation, and the need far outstrips UWCM's capacity to respond.

In response to this situation, UWCM built up links and joint projects with other local NGOs, local government agencies for development and welfare, and community-based organisations such as the church and local community groups. It established agreements for collaboration with multi-lateral donor agencies such as the UN Development Programme who were working on community development programmes in the region. In 1996, UWCM became involved in the development of government action plans for children based on the CRC and agreements made by the Ugandan government at the Summit on Children in 1990. This national move towards recognising and improving rights and conditions for women and children in Uganda has created an opportunity for change at 'macro' and 'micro' level which can help with the issues faced by the individuals and communities that UWCM work with. UWCM has learned that working to improve and transform the lives of individuals relies as much on local intervention and support as it does on change at family, community and structural levels, and that it can play a part in all of them.

### 7.4 Influencing and advocacy

Partners can participate in changing people's and institutional behaviour towards, and perspectives and assumptions about, children, and get involved in advocating on behalf of, and with, children at local as well as structural/policy level. Advocacy work should be based on work that is being done with children, or their families and communities at project level, to give it depth and credibility. Advocacy should not be undertaken just for its own sake. **Tearfund suggests that partners focus on issues that are of particular relevance to their situation, whether they are child rights or structural/policy issues.** They should not get caught up in the demands of lobbying and networking to the detriment of their original purpose of addressing children and community concerns.

**Tearfund is committed to supporting partners in advocacy issues at an international level, mobilising Tearfund support networks to pray, lobby governments and influence decision-making at policy level.**

### 7.5 Role models: parents and other caregivers

Children need good role models, both male and female. **Encouraging parental responsibilities towards their children and developing a caring community around the children should be part of a programme's goals.** Special attention should be given to mothers.

The commitment and Christian witness of project staff is also a key element to nurturing the spiritual, social and emotional aspects of children's development.

### **Example from the Field**

#### ***Working with children and parents in Mexico***

Armonia shares in the lives of poor communities living precariously on the fringes of Mexico City. Many of the projects based out of the so-called 'urban transformation centres' supported by Armonia focus on children. The centres host a variety of children's activities from health and nutrition to homework clubs and recreation. However, Armonia also emphasises the importance of including parents and strengthening families as part of a holistic approach to child and community development. Adult literacy classes, community weddings, house construction, wholesale food stores and Christian education offered by Armonia all serve to build up the children's families and transform the environment in which they live.

### 7.6 Facilitation skills

Staff working with children in specific sectorally defined projects develop high levels of expertise and knowledge in certain fields. Specialisation, although important, cannot successfully deal with the wider systemic issues within communities. Additional skills for community development facilitation would be useful for practitioners in child-centered agencies. **Tearfund recommends that all community development practitioners broaden their facilitation skills to include communication techniques with children, and knowledge of how to facilitate their meaningful participation.** They need to understand how to communicate with children, and tread the fine line between friend and adult role model.

### 7.7 Building relationships

Tearfund believes in the importance of relationship building - individual, familial, communal, organizational, and between agencies. Relationships are the fundamental building blocks for trust, understanding, reciprocity, participation, organization and mobilization, networking, sustainable action, and strengthening civil society.

#### *Linking Resources and Expertise*

Tearfund does not assume that partners will be able to address all of the components of the child-sensitive framework, and work at the different levels and approaches. **It is recommended that links and partnerships can be forged with other agencies working in the same geographical area, as well as the government, to enable wider family and community needs and initiatives to be facilitated and supported.**

#### *Networking*

Networking with other agencies and institutions helps to develop working relationships, collaborative ventures and the sharing of information. More importantly, a network of NGOs can have more 'voice' at national and international levels than an NGO working on its own. In the area of advocacy, for example, there are many NGO umbrella organizations at country level that are working to channel and coordinate NGO advocacy issues with a view to stimulating policy change in favour of the poor, or government implementation of CRC articles. Tearfund would encourage partners to find out about these organizations and ally themselves if satisfied that: it is a serious agency, has some results as evidence of this, and holds compatible vision, goals and values. The combined weight of member agencies gives more voice to advocacy causes.

## **Example from the Field**

### **Child Rights**

#### ***Networks and advocacy: raising awareness and mobilising NGOs in Peru***

Grupo de Iniciativa Nacional por los Derechos del Niño (GIN) acts as an umbrella organisation for Peruvian NGOs to represent the concerns of child-oriented NGOs and children at national and international levels. The agency focuses on monitoring the Peruvian government's implementation of the CRC. GIN's watchdog role includes the production of an alternative report on the government's CRC implementation plan in order to encourage accountability and initiate public debate over child rights issues. Among its aims is to catalyse increased democratisation and to promote open government, and it tries to work with the government as a potential partner rather than as a combatant. GIN seeks to use the CRC as a base for action, raising NGOs' awareness of child rights issues and mobilising them to support policy change at national level. The network includes over twenty NGOs and local institutions throughout Peru. Any NGO with an interest in children's issues is welcome to join. GIN Director Doris Portacorero argues that 'an organised NGO network has the power to effect change at a macro level.'

### *Coalitions*

Even if there are existing networks to tap into, it is also useful to build coalitions of like-minded individuals, groups and agencies interested in organising around a specific issue. These coalitions may be improvised to undertake actions that confront issues of mutual interest to the coalition members.

### 7.8 Keeping Informed

Both Tearfund partners and personnel should have access to, and be acquainted with materials, manuals, journals, books, articles and, where possible, information available on the internet, that deal with child/community development practice and research issues.

### ***Towards an Inclusive Community Development Process***

As partners build their capacity in these areas of practice, Tearfund hopes that children are brought into the community development process and debate. However, the focus should not be on the child at the expense of - or ignoring the role of - other members of the community, or on the community at the expense of the child.

## **8.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The importance of children as both present and future actors in the family, community and society provides the most compelling justification for their meaningful inclusion in the work of Tearfund and its partner agencies. Childhood - especially pre-birth to four years - provides a unique opportunity to invest in human beings. All development activities supported by Tearfund either directly or indirectly impact the environment of children. This policy provides a set of ideas and principles that aim to guide Tearfund and its partners in their decision-making and practice in order that children's concerns and needs are better met. The basic principles suggested in this policy are:

- Seeing child development as a set of interrelated spiritual, physical, mental, emotional and social dimensions of change affected by environmental and hereditary factors, which should therefore be approached holistically.

- Moving child-centred interventions towards a more community-based development approach, broadening their impact on children's homes, community and wider socio-political environment.
- Moving community-centred interventions towards a more child-sensitive approach in order to include children within the development process.

Interventions which reflect the principles outlined above should be given priority when evaluating project proposals. For example:

*Child-centred projects*

- Holistic, community-based child development programmes that target the most vulnerable children, and their mothers where possible.
- Community-based Early Childhood Development programmes because of the critical nature of the development process during the 0 to 4 year 'window of opportunity.'

*Community-centred projects*

- Community development projects whose programmes seek to include children and are moving towards a child-sensitive approach.

This policy upholds Tearfund's funding criteria which exclude support for institutionalised care, such as orphanages. There may be exceptional cases where institutionalised care may be unavoidable, but these instances will be assessed on a case by case basis.

As a learning organisation, Tearfund should encourage its partners to explore and adapt these principles to fit with their context and capacities. An openness to learning from mistakes, documenting the learning and sharing field experiences is the next step in evolving the ideas presented here.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### Advocacy

Tearfund identify four different types of activity which it describes as advocacy:

1. Campaigning - speaking publicly on an issue with a view to changing specific policy.
2. Acting as an advocate - representing a specific person or group to ensure that their point of view is heard/interceding on their behalf.
3. Lobbying - attempting to influence the formulation of policy through private meetings and other direct, private, communications with policy makers.
4. Mediation - to serve as a mediator through which two or more parties are represented to each other in order to bring about agreement.

The purpose of advocacy for Tearfund therefore is:

*to address the underlying causes of poverty by influencing the decisions of governments, organisations, groups and individual whose policies or actions affect the poor.*

### Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances - CEDC

A term coined by UNICEF to describe those children with no family who are said to be so traumatized by disaster, poverty, armed conflict, or with family dissension that they cannot meet their basic needs. Still others live with abusive or neglectful families and need to be protected from them. CEDCs include street children, sexually exploited children and AIDS orphans.

### Civil Society

The notion of civil society has a long history in political thought, but the term usually denotes those relationships and associations that are neither public nor private, the non-political aspects of the social order.<sup>27</sup> Bratton (1990)<sup>28</sup> describes it in terms of three elements:

1. the material base of resources utilized by society
2. the network of associations and groups that conduct human affairs, and
3. the ideological base of values, norms and ideals that legitimise the process of governance.

Mathews<sup>29</sup> suggests that the critical functions of civil society include fostering civic learning, defining political purposes that reflect people's values, providing coherence within diversity, building common ground for thought and action, and stimulating collective responses to the challenges facing society.<sup>30</sup> The church and other community-based groups, people's movements and NGOs contribute to the building of civil society.

### Christian Community-based Development

*See Tearfund's Operating Principles*

### Orphans

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<sup>27</sup>Miller, D. (1987)

<sup>28</sup>Bratton, M. (1989)

<sup>29</sup>Mathews, D. (1990)

<sup>30</sup>in Ewert, D. M. (1996)



The commonly accepted definition of an orphan is a child who has lost both parents through sickness or an accident. In many countries, orphans are children who have lost just one parent, or who have been abandoned.

### **Street Children<sup>31</sup>**

Children living on the street is a term that more accurately describes the commonly used 'street children.' Research shows that children on the streets develop their own family forms and structures bound together by a strong sense of morality and social obligation. Few of these children have absolutely no contact with family or extended family.

Most children living on the streets earn money through wage labour or live by scavenging. Many use drugs - preferring inhalents such as shoe-makers' glue. The children also form groups for mutual support and protection, and often get involved in petty thieving. Children living on the streets are prey to sexual exploitation and to being used by adult criminals.

### **Unaccompanied Minors**

During armed conflicts or natural disasters many children become estranged from their parents. The term unaccompanied minors allows for these children to be distinguished from orphans. These children are often placed with relatives or foster families until their parents can be traced.

### **Working Children**

Sometimes defined as a sub-group of street children, working children carry out work in the streets, but live with their families. Typically they shine shoes, sell sweets and cigarettes, wash car windows, carry merchandise and run errands. Their motive for working is to supplement family income and they are often proud of what they do. Their greatest difficulties are the danger of exploitative employers, lack of labour rights, risk of injury and inability to attend school at the set times.

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<sup>31</sup>Beauniaux, J. (1996)

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX TWO

### Child issues are currently the focus of growing international attention

- The 1990 World Summit on Children affirmed that nations should abide by the principle of "first call for children" - with their survival, protection and development given high priority. This is reiterated in the 1996 UNICEF publication "The State of the World's Children", with the statement that "children should be placed at the heart of development."
- The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) has been signed by many countries in which Tear Fund partners work, and the process of implementation is ongoing with various degrees of NGO participation and activism.
- The 1996 Summit on Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children highlighted the dangers facing many children who through poverty and familial and community breakdown are increasingly vulnerable to adult exploitation.
- Considerable evidence of beneficial long-term impacts on a range of social issues has emerged to support investment in Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes. These include: improved school performance, lower delinquency rates, lower expenditure on welfare and social services, healthier, better educated population that is better trained and more able to keep productive jobs.
- Current practice and research challenges and redefines the concept that development agencies have of children and their contribution to, and role in the development process. The traditional image of the child as a passive recipient of development aid is being replaced by an understanding that children are 'social actors' who play an important and active part in the lives of their families, communities and societies, and who have their own interests, views and priorities that may differ from those of the adults with whom they interact.
- Most child development interventions have traditionally been sectoral, i.e. education, health, nutrition. It has been assumed that more integrated community development interventions that include community mobilization/organization, income generation, agriculture, adult literacy, infrastructural improvements etc. have a beneficial 'trickle down' effect on the children in the community. This assumption is now being challenged. Research into the impact on children of the community development process is showing that development can affect children negatively.

As a result of these developments, several major international NGOs are increasing their focus on children and their role in the development process in a similar way to the focus on gender triggered by the women's movement in the 1980s. Current research is looking at the economic and social contribution children make to households and to the economy; the ability of children to participate in the development planning and evaluation; the role of NGOs in advocating for child rights; the development of child-sensitive indicators that may more clearly define the impact on children of adult-centred community development programmes.

## APPENDIX TWO

### Different Models for Child Development Interventions

The figure below enables a rough distinction to be made between the different approaches referred to in this document.

	CHILD-CENTRED		COMMUNITY-CENTRED	CHILD & COMMUNITY-CENTRED
	Child Welfare	Child Development	Integrated Community Development	Child-Focused Community Dev.
<b>Focus</b>	Individuals	Individuals/Families	Communities	Individuals/Families Communities
<b>Philosophy</b>	Service provision. Children are to be protected and provided for.	Service provision with some parental contribution, social mobilisation. Start with the child. Investing in the child is an investment in the future. Focus on improvement for the individual.	Community define needs and actively participate in the resolution of problems. Community empowerment enables them to act to solve their own problems. Root causes are addressed.	Children are social actors, and should participate in all aspects of project development. Children, however, are powerless, and so their needs, rights and interests need to be addressed through practice and policy.
<b>Assumptions</b>	Families unable to care for their children. Agency/government knows best.	Families need help to care for their children because of socio-economic difficulties. Certain populations of children e.g. street children/child prostitutes need to be 'repaired' or 'rescued'.	Communities are able to resolve their own problems. Benefits of process 'trickle down' to all members of community, including children	Children contribute towards, and are affected by the community development process, and should be listened to. Development projects can have unforeseen and unnoticed negative impacts on children
<b>Examples</b>	Government/ Religious charity/ Institutions (Orphanages etc)/ Bilateral/ Multi-lateral aid agencies	Individual child-centred sponsorship agencies/ interventions that are sectoral or aimed at specific populations	Integrated rural community development agencies/ Community-centred child sponsorship agencies	Emerging group of originally child-centred NGOs

## Specific types of Child Development interventions

The figure below presents the different types of agency intervention characteristic of child-centred and community-centred approaches. (For definitions of street children, UAMs etc. see the glossary of terms.)

<b>Types of Intervention</b>	<b>Projects</b>	<b>Agency</b>
<b>Sectoral</b>  CHILD-CENTRED	<u>Education</u> : Pre-School/Primary/Secondary/Supplementary/Vocational/Religious instruction & ministry <u>Health</u> : Primary Health; Immunization; Child-to-Child Health Education; Curative medicine; ORS <u>Nutrition</u> : Feeding programmes; gardens; vitamin supplements <u>Advocacy</u> : Child Rights/Political and Economic policy change in favour of children	Government/Individual Child Sponsorship/Religious Missions/ Local Churches/Child-Focused Development /Disaster Relief
<b>Specific Populations</b>  CHILD-CENTRED	0 - 4 yrs: ECD stimulation; Day-Care Centres Disabled/Street Kids/Working Children/Child Prostitutes/Orphans/UAM/CEDC	Government/Individual Child Sponsorship/Religious Missions/ Local Churches/Child-focused Development/Disaster Relief
<b>Integrated Programmes</b>  COMMUNITY-CENTRED	<u>Community development Progs</u> : Income Generation/Credit/Agriculture/Education/Literacy Water/Sanitation etc..	Community development agencies/Community-centred child sponsorship agencies/ Child-focused development

Key: ECD = Early Childhood Development; UAM = Unaccompanied Minors;  
CEDC = Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances

# A suggested framework for understanding participation

-----Continuum of Participation-----  
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Manipulation	Decoration	Tokenism		Inform	Consult	Active involvement	Assuming responsibility
			Needs assessment				
			Design				
			Planning				
			Implement- ation				
			Monitoring				
			Evaluation and impact assessment				

(Adapted from: INTRAC Participatory Approaches Learning Study (PALS) and Hart's Children's Ladder of Participation (UNICEF 1992))