

Analyzing the Impact and Effectiveness of Community-Level Interventions in Safeguarding Children in Low- and Middle-Income Countries

Adv. Preeti Singh

LLB, LLM

ps696383@gmail.com

Abstract: This systematic review covers low- and middle-income community-level child protection literature. The study provides implementing agencies with the finest research and practical methods to support community-level processes, practices, structures, and resources. Many database searches were done using particular terms to locate community-level child protection methods in low- and middle-income countries. The search yielded 1,745 grey literature and 1,549 published works. Following predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, 204 grey literature and 38 published publications were screened. The review suggests several strategies for implementing agencies, including (1) ensuring community-level ownership to increase sustainability, (2) considering different socio-ecological levels when implementing community-level interventions, (3) being inclusive, and (4) carefully negotiating potential tension between traditional mechanisms and rights-based frameworks. This evaluation also highlights a practice-research gap in community-level initiatives and humanitarian situations. Further study on child, family, and community outcomes is needed to extend the data. Community-level solutions' applicability and effectiveness in humanitarian situations should also be studied to guide sector implementation.

Keywords: Child protection, Community-level interventions, Low- and middle-income countries, Systematic review.

REFERENCES

- [1]. The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action. (2018). *Setting the global research agenda for child protection in humanitarian contexts- briefing note*.
- [2]. The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action. (2019a). *Community based child protection in humanitarian action: Definitions and terminology*.
- [3]. The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action. (2019b). *Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action*. Retrieved from https://alliancecpa.org/en/system/tdf/library/attachments/cpms_2019_final_en.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=35094
- [4]. The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action. (2020). *A Reflective Field Guide: Community-Level Approaches to Child Protection in Humanitarian Action*. Retrieved from <https://alliancecpa.org/en/child-protection-online-library/reflective-field-guide-community-level-approaches-child-protection>
- [5]. Barakat, S., & Milton, S. (2020). Localisation across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 15(2), 147–163. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1542316620922805>
- [6]. Ben-David, B., & Nel, N. (2013). Applying BronfenBrenner's ecological model to identify the negative influences facing children with physical disabilities in rural areas in Kwa-Zulu Natal. *Africa Education Review*, 10(3), 410–430. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18146627.2013.853538>
- [7]. Benham, N. (2008). *Engaging communities for children's well-Being*. Interagency Learning Initiative.
- [8]. Brear, M. R., Shabangu, P. N., Hammarberg, K., Fisher, J., & Keleher, H. (2018). Community-based care of children affected by AIDS in Swaziland: A gender-aware analysis. *Primary Health Care Research and Development*, 20, 20. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1463423618000774>

- [9]. Center on International Cooperation. (2019). *The triple nexus in practice: Toward a new way of working in protracted and repeated crises*. Center on International Cooperation.
- [10]. Charter for Change. (2019). Localisation of humanitarian aid, 4. Retrieved from <http://reliefweb.int/report/world/charter-change-localisation-humanitarian-aid>
- [11]. Child, J. C., Naker, D., Horton, J., Walakira, E. J., & Devries, K. M. (2014). Responding to abuse: Children's experiences of child protection in a central district, Uganda. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 38(10), 1647–1658. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2014.06.009>
- [12]. Child Resilience Alliance. (2018). Guide and Toolkit for supporting a community-led approach to child protection. Retrieved from <https://communityledcp.org/>
- [13]. CHS Alliance. (2018). Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability. CHS Alliance, Group URD and the Sphere Project. <https://doi.org/10.18356/4a4b59ce-en>
- [14]. Cook, P., Mack, E., & Manrique, M. (2017). Protecting young children from violence in Colombia: Linking caregiver empathy with community child rights indicators as a pathway for peace in Medellin's Comuna 13. *Peace and Conflict*, 23(1), 38–45. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pac0000194>
- [15]. Corboz, J., Siddiq, W., Hemat, O., Chirwa, E. D., Jewkes, R., & Phan, H. P. (2019). What works to prevent violence against children in Afghanistan? Findings of an interrupted time series evaluation of a school-based peace education and community social norms change intervention in Afghanistan. *PLoS ONE*, 14(8), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0220614>
- [16]. Daro, D., & Dodge, K. A. (2009). Creating community responsibility for child protection: Possibilities and challenges. *The Future of Children*, 19(2), 67–93. <https://doi.org/10.1353/foc.0.0030>
- [17]. De Lange, N., & Mitchell, C. (2014). Building a future without gender violence: Rural teachers and youth in Rural Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa, leading community dialogue. *Gender and Education*, 26(5), 584–599. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2014.942257>
- [18]. Eyber, C., Kachale, B., Shields, T., & Ager, A. (2018). The role and experience of local faith leaders in promoting child protection: A case study from Malawi. *Intervention*, 16(1), 31. <https://doi.org/10.1097/wtf.0000000000000156>
- [19]. Gilbert, R., Widom, C. S., Browne, K., Fergusson, D., Webb, E., & Janson, S. (2009). Burden and consequences of child maltreatment in high-income countries. *The Lancet*, 373(9657), 68–81. <https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-67360861706-7>
- [20]. Grand Bargain Participation Revolution work stream. (2017). *Agreed, practical definition of the meaning of "participation" within the context of this workstream*.
- [21]. Hutchinson, A. J., O'Leary, P., Squire, J., & Hope, K. (2015). Child protection in Islamic contexts: Identifying cultural and religious appropriate mechanisms and processes using a roundtable methodology. *Child Abuse Review*, 24(6), 395–408. <https://doi.org/10.1002/car.2304>
- [22]. Ikupu, A., & Glover, A. (2004). Early childhood care and education in a changing world: Building on village life in Papua New Guinea. *Early Child Development and Care*, 174(4), 415–424. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0300443032000153453>
- [23]. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). (2015). Guideline: The Implementation of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle. Humanitarian Programme Cycle Steering Group, July.
- [24]. Kaga, M., & Nakache, D. (2021). Protection and the humanitarian-development nexus: A literature review. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, (1). <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3750190>
- [25]. Khan, K., Kunz, R., Kleijnen, J., & Antes, G. (2003). Five steps to conducting a systematic review. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 96(3), 118–121. <https://doi.org/10.1177/014107680309600304>
- [26]. Kidman, R., & Heymann, S. J. (2009). The extent of community and public support available to families caring for orphans in Malawi. *AIDS Care - Psychological and Socio-Medical Aspects of AIDS/HIV*, 21(4), 439–447. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540120802298152>
- [27]. Kisanga, F., Nystrom, L., Hogan, N., & Emmelin, M. (2011). Child sexual abuse: Community concerns in urban Tanzania. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 20(2), 196–217. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2011.555356>

- [28]. Kostelny, K., Wessells, M., & Ondoro, K. (2020). Enabling full participation: A community-led approach to child protection. In N. Balvin & D. Christie (Eds.), *Children and peace. Peace psychology book series* (pp. 291–305). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-22176-8_18
- [29]. Krueger, A., Thompstone, G., & Crispin, V. (2014). Learning from child protection systems mapping and analysis in west africa: Research and policy implications. *Global Policy*, 5(1), 47–55. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12047>
- [30]. Lackovich Van Gorp, A. (2017). Unearthing local forms of child protection: Positive deviance and abduction in Ethiopia. *Action Research*, 15(1), 39–52. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476750316679240>
- [31]. Larson, B. A., Wambua, N., Masila, J., Wangai, S., Rohr, J., Brooks, M., & Bryant, M. (2013). Exploring impacts of multi-year, community-based care programs for orphans and vulnerable children: A case study from Kenya. *AIDS Care - Psychological and Socio-Medical Aspects of AIDS/HIV*, 25(SUPPL.1), 40–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540121.2012.729807>
- [32]. Lei, J., Cai, T., Brown, L., & Lu, W. (2019). A pilot project using a community approach to support child protection services in China. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 104(March), 104414. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.104414>
- [33]. McKay, S., Veale, A., Worthen, M., & Wessells, M. (2011). Building meaningful participation in reintegration among war-affected young mothers in Liberia, Sierra Leone and northern Uganda. *Intervention*, 9(2), 108–124. <https://doi.org/10.1097/wtf.0b013e328348dfe7>
- [34]. Muriuki, A. M., DiPrete Brown, L., Ayele, R. A., Shiferaw Kebede, D., Blackett-Dibinga, K., Hammink, M. E., & Hadaro Hando, F. (2013). Strengthening community-based care for vulnerable children in Ethiopia: A mixed-method evaluation of program reach and community capacity development. *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies*, 8(2), 135–148. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450128.2012.733440>
- [35]. Muriuki, A. M., & Moss, T. (2016). The impact of para-professional social workers and community health care workers in Côte d'Ivoire: Contributions to the protection and social support of vulnerable children in a resource poor country. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 67, 230–237. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.06.018>
- [36]. Murove, T., Forbes, B., Keanc, S., Wamimbi, R., & Germanne, S. (2010). A discussion of perceptions of community facilitators from Swaziland, Kenya, Mozambique and Ghana: Cultural practices and child protection. *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies*, 5(SUPPL. 1), 55–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450121003668327>
- [37]. Norman, R. E., Byambaa, M., De, R., Butchart, A., Scott, J., Vos, T., & Tomlinson, M. (2012). The long-term health consequences of child physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *PLoS Medicine*, 9(11), e1001349. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1001349>
- [38]. OCHA. (2019). *Sustaining the Ambition, delivering change: Agenda for Humanity annual synthesis report*. Retrieved from https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/system/files/asr/2019/Dec/AfHSSynthesis_Report_2019_full.pdf
- [39]. O'Leary, P., Hutchinson, A., & Squire, J. (2015). Community-based child protection with Palestinian refugees in South Lebanon: Engendering hope and safety. *International Social Work*, 58(5), 717–731. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872815584427>
- [40]. Petersen, I., Bhana, A., & McKay, M. (2005). Sexual violence and youth in South Africa: The need for community-based prevention interventions. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 29(11), 1233–1248. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2005.02.012>
- [41]. Pinheiro, P. S. (2006). *World report on violence against children*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/eb053694>
- Rathnayake, N., De Silva Weliange, S., & Guruge, G. N. D. (2021). Effectiveness of a health promotion intervention to address determinants of child neglect in a disadvantaged community in Sri Lanka. *Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition*, 40(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41043-021-00267-6>
- [42]. Reid, S. D., Reddock, R., & Nickenig, T. (2014). Breaking the silence of child sexual abuse in the Caribbean: A community-based action research intervention model. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 23(3), 256–277. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2014.888118>

- [43]. Robinson, M., & Hanmer, S. (2014). Engaging religious communities to protect children from Abuse, Neglect, and exploitation. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 38(4), 600–611. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2014.03.018>
- [44]. Roby, J. L., & Shaw, S. A. (2018). Evaluation of a community-based orphan care program in Uganda. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 89(1), 119–128. <https://doi.org/10.1606/1044-3894.3716>
- [45]. Roche, S., & Flynn, C. (2021). Local child protection in the Philippines: A case study of actors, processes and key risks for children. *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies*, 8(3), 367–383. <https://doi.org/10.1002/app5.332>
- [46]. Rubenstein, B. L., & Stark, L. (2017). The impact of humanitarian emergencies on the prevalence of violence against children: An evidence-based ecological framework. *Psychology, Health and Medicine*, 22(sup1), 58–66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13548506.2016.1271949>
- [47]. Schmalenbach, C., Christian Aid, C. A. R. E., Tearfund, A., & Oxfam, C. A. F. O. D. (2019). *Pathways to Localisation: A framework towards locally led humanitarian response in partnership-based action*. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/pathways-localisation-framework-towards-locally-led-humanitarian-response-partnership>
- [48]. Seymour, S. C. (2013). It takes a village to raise a child”: Attachment theory and multiple child care in Alor, Indonesia, and in North India. In N. Quinn & J. Mageo (Eds.), *Attachment reconsidered* (pp. 115–139). Palgrave Macmillan US.
- [49]. Shadowen, N. L., Guerra, N. G., Reyes Rodas, G., & Serrano-Berthet, R. (2017). Community readiness for youth violence prevention: A comparative study in the US and Bolivia. *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies*, 12(2), 117–129. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450128.2017.1286423>
- [50]. Shang, X. (2002). Looking for a better way to care for children: Cooperation between the State and Civil Society in China. *Social Service Review*, 76(2), 203–228. <https://doi.org/10.1086/339671> Silverman, W. K., & La Greca, A. M. (2002). Children experiencing disasters: Definitions, reactions, and predictors of outcomes. In *Helping children cope with disasters and terrorism* (pp. 11–33). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10454-001>
- [51]. Skovdal, M., Mwasiaji, W., Morrison, J., & Tomkins, A. (2008). Community-based capital cash transfer to support orphans in Western Kenya: A consumer perspective. *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies*, 3(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450120701843778>
- [52]. Sphere Association. (2018). *The Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response* (4th ed.). www.spherestandards.org/handbook
- [53]. Stark, L., Bancroft, C., Cholid, S., Sustikarini, A., & Meliala, A. (2012). A qualitative study of community-based child protection mechanisms in Aceh, Indonesia. *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies*, 7(3), 228–236. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450128.2012.663947>
- [54]. Stark, L., & Landis, D. (2016). Violence against children in humanitarian settings: A literature review of population-based approaches. *Social Science and Medicine*, 152, 125–137. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2016.01.052>
- [55]. Stefanovics, E. A., Filho, M. V. M., Rosenheck, R. A., & Scivoletto, S. (2013). Functional outcomes of maltreated children and adolescents in a community-based rehabilitation program in Brazil: Six-month improvement and baseline predictors. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 38(7), 1231–1237. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2013.10.025>
- [56]. Stuer, F., Ogojo Okello, F., Wube, M., & Steinitz, L. Y. (2012). From burial societies to mutual aid organizations: The role of idirs-traditional burial societies in Ethiopia-in ensuring community-level care and protection of vulnerable children. *Journal of HIV/AIDS and Social Services*, 11(1), 57–76. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15381501.2012.652543>
- [57]. Thompson, H. (2015). *A matter of life and death: Child protection programming’s essential role in ensuring child wellbeing and survival during and after emergencies*. CPWG, The Child Protection Working Group.

- [58]. Thompson, L., Tupe, L., Wadley, D., & Flanagan, K. (2019). Mobilizing cultural supports against the commercial sexual exploitation of (female) children (CSEC) in Solomon Islands community development. *Community Development*, 50(3), 315–331. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330.2019.1599031>
- [59]. Thurman, T. R., Snider, L. A., Boris, N. W., Kalisa, E., Nyirazinyoye, L., & Brown, L. (2008). Barriers to the community support of orphans and vulnerable youth in Rwanda. *Social Science and Medicine*, 66(7), 1557–1567. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2007.12.001>
- [60]. UNDP. (2019). Human development reports. Retrieved from <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>
- [61]. United Nations. (1996). Impact of Armed Conflict on Children: Report of the expert of the Secretary-General, Ms. Graça Machel, submitted pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 48/157, *UN document A/51/306*, New York.
- [62]. Vindevogel, S., Wessells, M., De Schryver, M., Broekaert, E., & Derluyn, I. (2012). Informal and formal supports for former child soldiers in Northern Uganda. *Scientific World Journal*, 2012 (December), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1100/2012/825028>
- [63]. Wessells, M. (2009). *What are we learning about protecting children in the community? An inter-agency review of evidence on community-based child protection mechanisms*. Save the Children. Wessells, M. G. (2015). Bottom-up approaches to strengthening child protection systems: Placing children, families, and communities at the center. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 43(2015), 8–21. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.04.006>
- [64]. Wessells, M. G. (2016). Strengths-based community action as a source of resilience for children affected by armed conflict. *Global Mental Health*, 3, 3. <https://doi.org/10.1017/gmh.2015.23>
- [65]. Wessells, M. G., & Kostelny, K. (2013). Child friendly spaces: Toward a grounded,