



# WAR CHILD HOLLAND: EVIDENCE FROM THE FIELD 2013



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War Child Holland believes no child should be part of war. Ever. Nevertheless, millions of children and young people worldwide grow up in conflict-affected areas. Children and young people's rights to be protected from violence, abuse and neglect, to live a dignified life and be supported in their healthy development are violated on a massive scale.

We empower children and young people to change their own future by protecting them from the effects of war, promoting psychosocial support and stimulating education. We enable them to strengthen their self-confidence and to build positive relationships with their peers, family and wider community. We unleash children's inner strength with our creative and involving approach. We inspire as many people as we can.

War Child Holland is an independent and impartial, international nongovernmental organisation investing in a peaceful future for children affected by armed conflict. Our work is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.



# **WAR CHILD HOLLAND: EVIDENCE FROM THE FIELD 2013**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This booklet is a collection of three submissions by War Child Holland to the Children and War Conference 2013. The submissions include a study on the reintegration of war affected children in five of our field offices, an examination of the detention of children and young people in East Jerusalem, and an assessment of our psychosocial intervention, I DEAL, in South Sudan.

For further information on research conducted by War Child Holland, please contact [advocacy@warchild.nl](mailto:advocacy@warchild.nl)



# RECOVERY AND REINTEGRATION PROGRAMMES FOR CHILDREN AFFECTED BY ARMED CONFLICT: A FIVE-COUNTRY ASSESSMENT

**JULIE MCBRIDE AND EAMONN HANSON\***

This paper provides an exploratory and descriptive analysis of War Child's interventions to support the recovery and (re)integration of children affected by armed conflict in Afghanistan, Colombia, Lebanon, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan. In each country we intervene through psychosocial, education or child protection programmes, each of which is implemented slightly differently depending on a number of factors. These are the type of conflict, the needs of the community, the available resources, and the logistical issues such as accessibility required by the programme. The hypothesis of this paper is that these three categories of recovery and (re)integration interventions can successfully be used to address the specific needs of a community emerging from conflict, and help guide children towards lasting recovery. This paper provides an overview of five of our key programmes, and their successes and challenges.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

War Child Holland has been working to assist the recovery and reintegration of children affected by conflict for almost twenty years. Our activities are summarised by three thematic programme lines: child protection, education, and psychosocial support. These operate complementarily.<sup>1</sup>

This paper will examine five projects in five different countries, representing each of the three thematic programme lines. The first two projects address the psychosocial needs of children, first via the implementation of a psychosocial reintegration programme (I DEAL) in South Sudan, and second through a project that aims to restore cultural identities using traditional practices in Colombia. The third project involves the provision of vocational training to young people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and falls under the education programme line. The final two projects in Afghanistan and Lebanon aim to provide a means for children and young people to further their own protection by participating and engaging on a community level and having their voices heard.

### 1.1 Defining “reintegration”

Child rights forms the core of War Child’s work. In particular, many of our programmes clearly connect to the text of Article 39 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The article makes specific reference to the reintegration of children, and requires State parties to promote recovery and reintegration of child victims of armed conflicts:

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.

<sup>1</sup> For more information on War Child’s programming, ‘Programming Guidelines’ (2013) is available upon request: [advocacy@warchild.nl](mailto:advocacy@warchild.nl)



The term 'reintegration' can be misleading and is employed differently by diverse actors in varying humanitarian and development contexts.<sup>2</sup> The United Nations' standards specify that the reintegration of children:

[I]ncludes family reunification, mobilising and enabling the child's existing care system, medical screening and health care, schooling and/or vocational training, psychosocial support, and social and community-based reintegration. Reintegration programmes need to be sustainable and to take into account children's aspirations.<sup>3</sup>

The potential benefits of a successful reintegration process are well documented: the process is considered a key element of successful post-conflict rebuilding.<sup>4</sup> Reintegration programmes play an essential role in addressing the critical structural issue of cyclical violence<sup>5</sup> by providing children with viable alternatives to provide for themselves outside of armed groups and other sources of abuse.<sup>6</sup> War Child therefore advocates for the essential components of reintegration – increased protection, education and psychosocial support – to be included in post-conflict recovery activities.

In addition, by involving children themselves in the planning and implementation of the programmes that work to help them, organisations can empower children and young people and their communities.<sup>7</sup> Child participation is not only a key tenet of War Child's work both for and with children, but it also prioritises the guiding principles of the CRC. These provide that children are rights bearers themselves, and are entitled to play an active and informed role in the decisions that affect them. Importantly, child participation becomes sustainable when children are involved in reporting violations and developing policies that affect their lives. With child involvement, the chances increase that these protective activities continue even after NGO support has gone.

<sup>2</sup> See for example: Asquith, S. and E. Turner (2008) "Recovery and Reintegration of children from the effects of sexual exploitation and related trafficking" Oak Foundation Report, 7.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS) 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Guyot, J. (2007) "Suffer the children: The psychosocial rehabilitation of child soldiers as a function of peace-building: Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 12.

<sup>5</sup> Adams, K (2012) "from neglect to protect" Paper presented at Wilton Park conference. War Child UK.

<sup>6</sup> Hill, K. and H. Langholz (2003) "Rehabilitation programs for African child soldiers" in Peace Review, Vol. 5, No. 3, pages 279 – 285.

<sup>7</sup> Guyot, J. (2007) "Suffer the children: The psychosocial rehabilitation of child soldiers as a function of peace-building" Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers; Jareg, E. (2005) "Crossing bridges and negotiating rivers – Rehabilitation and reintegration of children associated with armed forces", Save the Children, Norway and Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers.

War Child shares a very similar approach and positioning to Terre des Hommes in terms of reintegration,<sup>8</sup> using a broad definition in line with the CRC's interpretation:

(Re)integration is a process of transitional change to improve a child's protection and potential through economic and social inclusion following any form of violence, abuse or neglect.

In using the term *(re)integration*, we refer to the concept of assisting all children to return to, or begin, a stable and protected life. Many children and young people were never 'integrated' in the first place, given their experiences of conflict, abuse and trauma. 'Reintegration' suggests a return to normalcy, which is often not the case for the most marginalised children. *(Re)integration* is therefore used in this paper as a generic term to include situations of actual 'reintegration', as well as to first-time 'integration'.

The recovery and (re)integration activities that War Child implements are classified into three categories: 1) the provision of psychosocial support; 2) education, and; 3) child protection. Each intervention has a different target outcome in relation to reintegrating children. In order to help determine and shape the kind of recovery intervention that will be implemented in a given context, careful analysis of the children participating, the operating context, phase of the conflict, and the causes of rights violations is first carried out.

This paper provides a descriptive and exploratory analysis of recovery and (re)integration projects that were implemented in five countries during 2011 and 2012.

A detailed theoretical study was completed on the available literature on reintegration and rehabilitation. In addition, each country's field office recounted their successes and challenges through open interviews conducted in Amsterdam in December 2012, as well as through their annual and quarterly reports, evaluations and studies. This study can therefore be viewed as an informal internal evaluation on these interventions and their methodologies.

A qualitative and quantitative survey of field staff was also undertaken in February and March 2013. The survey solicited responses to the question of which factors could be considered the most critical for successful recovery and (re)integration. The results are demonstrated in Figure 1.

The methods used per country case study will be described in the next sections.

<sup>8</sup> See: Terre des Hommes (2009) 'Supporting Child (Re)Integration' 3.

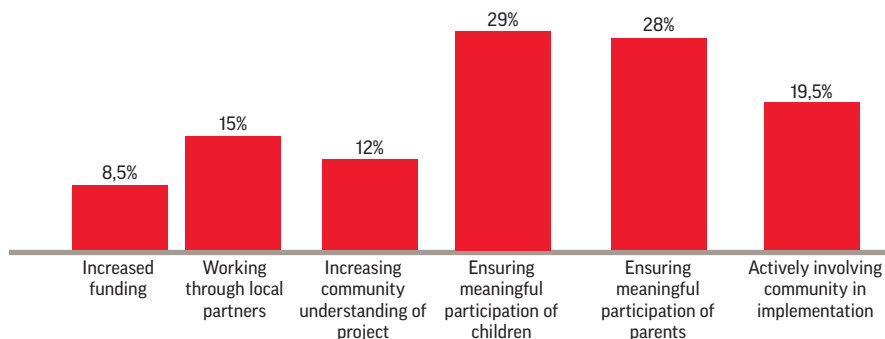


Figure 1. The most critical factors in the post-conflict recovery and (re)integration of children affected by armed conflict according to survey respondents.

## 2. COUNTRY STUDIES

### 2.1 Psychosocial Support

#### 2.2.1 South Sudan: I DEAL

##### 2.2.1.1 Introduction

Communities in South Sudan, such as Torit are dealing with a high illiteracy rate<sup>9</sup>, fledgling government structures, food crises and an acute refugee situation. Providing psychosocial support as an integral component of community (re)integration is of primary importance. The War Child office in South Sudan implements the I DEAL intervention to promote psychosocial (re)integration in many of its projects.

##### 2.1.1.2 Methods

I DEAL is a life skills intervention developed by War Child in 2006. It combines creative activities with games and group discussions to build resilience and improve children and young people's skills to better cope, or 'deal', with their daily lives.<sup>10</sup> Internationally, I DEAL has been implemented for an estimated 100,000 children and young people between eleven and twenty years of age, over the period 2006 to 2012.

<sup>9</sup> CIA World Fact Book – Literacy (2013) The literacy rate of those older than fifteen years is 27%. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/od.html> Accessed 17 April 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Claessens et al (2012) Participatory evaluation of psychosocial interventions for children: a pilot study in Northern Uganda. *Intervention* 10:1:43;

The intervention is made up of six themes addressed in six modules consisting of two to five 90-minute sessions. Each module covers a particular topic beginning with personal identity, and then moving on to examine emotions, relationships with peers and adults, and conflict and peace, before concluding by looking to the future. Each session is built around a specific theme within the module. For example 'Who are my Peers?' is one session in the module 'Peer Relations'. In each session, the group of children or young people engages in a combination of activities, such as drama, visual arts, games and group discussions. Home assignments are integrated into the sessions, stimulating the participants to practice new insights and skills in their daily lives. I DEAL is designed to be led by two facilitators familiar with the methodology, often local community workers who follow a five-day training course on facilitating the intervention. Reflection sessions held with facilitators in Juba in April, May, and November 2012 form the basis of this examination.<sup>11</sup>

### 2.1.1.3 Results

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The activity was in great demand leading to large attendance.</li> <li>• Children achieved personal goals (e.g. building social relationships).</li> <li>• Children came to value the importance of good relationships with parents and also became aware of the responsibilities of parents.</li> <li>• Conversations between children and parents increased attributed to the module on solving conflicts.</li> <li>• Children reported an improvement in peer relations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low attendance by marginalised children that were working (child labour).</li> <li>• Language barriers.</li> <li>• Interruptions by principal or teachers.</li> <li>• Children had difficulties expressing emotions.</li> </ul>

Table 1 demonstrates the social benefits of a psychosocial programme in a community such as Torit, where children lack the essential life-skills associated with conflict resolution. In communities experiencing such a high number of social concerns such as language barriers, alcohol abuse by parents and endemic child labour, implementing psychosocial programmes is extremely challenging.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> War Child Holland (2012) 'Exchange Visit: DEALS Facilitators Uganda and South Sudan, Juba, 29–31 May 2012'. Available upon request: [advocacy@warchild.nl](mailto:advocacy@warchild.nl)

<sup>12</sup> Eiling, E.M. Van Diggele-Hottland, M., Van Yperen, T. & Boer, F. (2013). Effect-Evaluation of a psychosocial support intervention for children in the Republic of South Sudan.



## 2.1.2 Colombia: Pachamama Farm Project

### 2.1.2.1 Introduction

In Colombia, clashes between the government, paramilitaries, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and the People's Liberation Army (ELN) over the last fifty years have caused political instability and a protracted humanitarian crisis,<sup>13</sup> particularly in the poverty-stricken rural areas. In addition, more than 4 million people already vulnerable to the conflict lost their homes and were displaced by the devastating rains of 2010. The education and training of millions of children and young people was interrupted. More than half of an estimated 3.9–5.3 million internally displaced people in Colombia are under eighteen.<sup>14</sup>

Children in Colombia continue to live in a highly vulnerable environment, and are repeatedly subjected to indiscriminate attacks, sexual violence and unlawful detainment. In Putumayo, recruitment into the numerous armed forces is an ever-present risk. The Pachamama project ('Mother Nature') teaches children from rural indigenous groups about the land and helps them establish a farm.

<sup>13</sup> UNICEF (2012) 'Humanitarian Action for Children – Colombia'. Available at: [http://www.unicef.org/hac2012/hac\\_colombia.php](http://www.unicef.org/hac2012/hac_colombia.php)

<sup>14</sup> Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict (2012) "No One to Trust: Children and Armed Conflict in Colombia". Available at <http://watchlist.org/no-one-to-trust-children-and-armed-conflict-in-colombia/>

### 2.2.1.2 Methods

Teachers and War Child's local partners select particularly vulnerable children to participate in the Pachamama project, while trying to assure a balanced representation of age, gender and school level. The children work on land located at their school and participate in activities such as preparing the soil, recovering ancestral seeds, making a work schedule, sowing, harvesting and sharing knowledge with other children, their parents and elders. Such a project can help children connect with their communities and strengthen their relationship with their rural identity and ancestral traditions and practices. Importantly, the educational benefits add to the social (re)integration process in the community. In addition, the harvested crops are intended for use by the community during outbursts of violence in the area. During such disturbances, local schools become response centres where community members gather until the situation becomes calm.

### 2.2.2.2 Results

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children from communities with a strong cultural tradition benefit from engaging in those traditions during reintegration.</li> <li>• Involving local implementing partners that have essential knowledge of the region and a good relationship with teachers and children benefits the project.</li> <li>• The agricultural harvests are also useful for the community, particularly during periods of instability (when access to food is reduced).</li> <li>• Children learn valuable farming skills that remain in the community and can be shared with their families or other community members.</li> <li>• The tangible outputs provided personal satisfaction when children, leading to enthusiasm and motivation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not all children in the schools could participate.</li> <li>• Not all schools had space or land to make farms.</li> <li>• Seeds could be scarce or hard to locate.</li> <li>• Some parents did not have time to participate.</li> </ul>

Table 2 demonstrates that a community with a strong cultural tradition can benefit from an agricultural project that nurtures this rural identity

## 2.2 Education

### 2.2.1 DRC – Vocational Training

#### 2.2.1.1 Introduction

The Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) status as one of the most resource-rich countries in the world has not led to its prosperity. With sad irony, its wealth has actually hampered its development. Both domestic and foreign armed forces and groups continue to battle for DRC's minerals, predominantly in the eastern provinces.

The unrest, predominately due to the on-going civil war that began in the mid-1990s, has rendered DRC the least developed nation in the world, currently ranked 187th on the Human Development Index. Children, who make up 50% of the population, bear the burden of both the conflict and the country's underdevelopment. Vulnerable young people in DRC face the very real need for vocational training and support to find their place in society, where they can be a cornerstone of recovery and regrowth. Educational development – in particular for those children and young people who have missed out during the war – is the second of the three essential components of War Child's recovery and (re)integration programmes. This component of (re)integration works toward the social recognition and economic development of participants and is often referred to as socio-economic (re)integration.

#### 2.2.1.2. Methods

War Child's project '*Réinsertion Communautaire*' ('Community Reintegration') began in response to a chronic lack of local initiatives for vulnerable young people in the communities of Bukavu and Walungu. It aimed to help young people regain their dignity, and develop socially and economically by giving them a viable alternative to joining armed group or exploitative labour conditions.

An evaluation commissioned by War Child and undertaken by an external consulting and training group, MDF *Afrique Centrale*, in September 2011<sup>15</sup> provides the primary source for this analysis. During the evaluation, sixty-four participants were interviewed in Walungu and thirty-seven in Bukavu (ages fifteen to twenty-seven, 37% male) following their participation in the project.

During the course of the project (2006-2011), participants received training in trades such as making clothes, mechanics, carpentry, welding, and hairdressing, and assistance in setting up micro-enterprises.

<sup>15</sup> MDF Afrique Centrale (2011) "Final Evaluation Report of the War Child Project 'Community Reintegration for Conflict Affected Young People in South Kivu, Eastern DRC'".

In addition, the participants followed literacy and numeracy courses to gain the skills required to effectively and efficiently manage their new micro-enterprises. They also participated in life skills activities, an extension of the I DEAL programme discussed above.

The intended participant group was a combination of young people formerly associated with armed groups (80%) and other vulnerable young people (20%).<sup>16</sup> This mix was proposed in order to avoid stigmatisation. However, despite this intention, former child combatants were ultimately underrepresented amongst the participants; the majority of the children were victims of harmful labour, or had been orphaned or abandoned.



<sup>16</sup> Such as victims of economic exploitation, street children, orphans, young mothers, abandoned or displaced children.



2.2.1.3 Results

Table 3. Education in DRC – Vocational Training	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants regained a sense of dignity.</li> <li>• Participants gained respect from community resulting in increased self-confidence.</li> <li>• Participants gained employment.</li> <li>• Sub-regional security improved.</li> <li>• Participants were able to save money for the future.</li> <li>• Members of the community supported the project</li> <li>• All parties were enthusiastic and willing to improve the project.</li> <li>• Open dialogue with young people was built.</li> <li>• Participants' aptitude for a new profession was rated very good or excellent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk of dependency.</li> <li>• Implementing partners may not be able to continue without monitoring.</li> <li>• Vocational skills need to be linked with markets to avoid saturation.</li> <li>• Literacy is a basic requirement for management of micro-enterprises and small businesses.</li> </ul>

Table 3 shows that the vocational training programme in DRC provided young people with viable alternatives to abuse, violence and exploitation, and reduced their chances of falling into crime or delinquency. The positive results included stable employment, savings, increased self-esteem, and acceptance from the community. On the other hand, when implementing such programmes, care needs to be taken to avoid creating a situation where beneficiaries depend too heavily upon the support of War Child and its partner organisations. There is also a risk of the partner organisations themselves becoming too dependent upon the War Child regarding the implementation of their activities. The study also demonstrated that adequate market research and a minimum level of literacy is required to make such vocational programmes sustainable and successful.

2.3 Child Protection through empowerment and participation

The purpose of War Child’s child protection programming is to ensure that children and young people, including the most vulnerable, grow up in a protective environment where they are free from violence, exploitation, neglect and abuse. Child participation is a key component of successful child protection programming.

By signalling and reporting child rights violations, children raise awareness on child protection issues and protect other children from these violations. Children's own protective behaviour and knowledge will remain in communities even after NGO presence has diminished. Child protection through empowerment and participation is therefore the third component of War Child's recovery and (re)integration model, alongside psychosocial support and education.

### 2.3.1 Afghanistan – Video Project

#### 2.3.1.1. Introduction

Thirty years of conflict have had a devastating impact on its people and left Afghanistan in a state of chronic instability. The economy is weak, the infrastructure practically non-existent and the government is struggling to maintain any semblance of control outside the capital of Kabul. Nearly half of the population lives below the poverty line.<sup>17</sup> Although there are no official figures, 60,000 children, some as young as three years old, are estimated to be working on the streets of Kabul selling merchandise and food, shining shoes or doing manual labour.<sup>18</sup> Often these children are the sole bread-winners in their families, and bear the responsibility of caring for their parents and siblings at the cost of their education and future. Most of these working children, especially girls, do not have access to school, and are often forced into the streets by their parents. The volatile security situation across the country increases their exposure to cross-fire and suicide attacks, as occurred in 2012.<sup>19</sup>

#### 2.3.1.2. Methods

War Child has been working in Afghanistan for almost ten years, primarily through programmes promoting child rights through education. Operating successfully requires working with local community leaders, who attempt to negotiate with the Taliban and other opposition groups on what clinics and schools are kept operational. Working with well-established local partners who can develop strong relationships with community leaders is therefore critical in trying to bring about change. The video project was undertaken in 2012 in cooperation with War Child's partner, Aria TV, a local television station that broadcasts programming exclusively for children and teenagers. The aim of the project was to give street children a voice and raise awareness on the

<sup>17</sup> Oxfam International (2009) 'The Cost of War: Afghan Experiences of Conflict, 1978 – 2009'. Available at: <http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/afghanistan-the-cost-of-war.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Haleem A. (2012) 'Afghanistan marks Universal Children's Day with sad tales'. Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, 21 November 2012. Available at: <http://www.rawa.org/temp/runews/2012/11/21/afghanistan-marks-universal-children-s-day-with-sad-tales.html#ixzz2FaGdQnal>

<sup>19</sup> Najafzada E. (2012) 'Kabul Suicide Bomber Kills Six Afghan Civilians, Wounds Five'. Bloomberg News, 8 September 2012. Available at: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-09-08/kabul-suicide-bombing-kills-six-afghan-civilians-wounds-others.html>

perception of child workers. The participatory process allowed children to reflect on their own lives and experiences. Four children (two boys and two girls) were identified through a group discussion led by Aschiana (a local NGO), and in the streets of Kabul. A camera crew followed each participant over three days. Two of the children worked as street vendors, one in farming, and one in a kiln brick factory. They were asked about how they perceive themselves as working children, what challenges they face, and about their dreams for the future.

The children attended the launch of the film and were given the opportunity to pose questions to child-rights panellists and the Deputy Minister for Labour and Social Affairs, who had been invited to the event to discuss the child labour situation in Afghanistan. The children shared their experiences and asked the Deputy Minister about the lack of education and development opportunities for children forced to work.



## 2.3.1.3. Results

Table 4. Participation Afghanistan – Video Project	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The children's voices were heard in a safe and participatory way.</li> <li>• The children enjoyed telling their stories and explaining to others what they had experienced.</li> <li>• Children were given a platform to talk to the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs and other child-rights experts at the film's launch.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The child involved in kiln brick making could not see the film nor participate in the conference due to his transfer to another kiln factory.</li> </ul>

The Afghanistan video project is an example of how child participation can operate as the central tenet of a protection-focused reintegration project. Participation can be used as a tool for creating protection structures, a necessary prerequisite for successful reintegration. By giving vulnerable children a platform to influence decision-making processes that affect them, they are supported and protected in advocating for change.

## 2.3.2. Lebanon – Performing for Peace

## 2.3.2.1. Introduction

Young people born after Lebanon's civil war have inherited its legacy and continue to reinforce the dynamics that caused the past conflicts.<sup>20</sup> This occurs for many reasons. The young people who worked in our projects expressed their frustration regarding the reticence of their parents and elders to discuss their country's history. Children are not encouraged to develop their own sense of personal identity beyond their community upbringing. To address this issue, War Child currently implements a theatre workshop with young people called Performing for Peace. The workshop gives children and young people the opportunity to "speak out the truth" and advocate for their right to an accurate account of the past, including an updated history book in the secondary school curriculum.

<sup>20</sup> Deep Fried Cheddar Production Company (2012) "Development of a Documentary on the War Child Holland 'Performing for Peace'".

### 2.3.2.2. Methods

Performance for Peace is a methodology developed by War Child to support young people in their efforts to bring about awareness-raising and policy change through theatre. It has been implemented in a number of different countries, including Sierra Leone and Colombia, and has developed into a comprehensive development and peace-building tool.<sup>21</sup>

Young people (aged thirteen and older) meet with a professional theatre group for a five-hour workshop. They brainstorm ideas for a play based on a discussion on peace and reconciliation. During the subsequent months, the theatre group creates a highly interactive play using the suggestions and recommendations given by the young people during the workshop and again after seeing the initial production, which increases their sense of ownership over the project. The play then tours the country, reaching a public composed of the young people's friends and family and local decision makers such as such as mayors or religious leaders. The young people are involved in finding locations for the plays, in publicising the performances and issuing invitations. The performances of the 2012 play, entitled '*Mashrah Watani*', or 'Perform Autopsy', focused on the right to speak out and the right to get a true history of the past. The play portrayed a man who decides not to remember the history of Lebanon. Traumatized by his memories, he insists that remembering is useless and might even be counter-productive.



<sup>21</sup> War Child Country Office in Beirut (2012) "Focus Lebanon: Yalla! Esma'a! Performing for Peace Through the Lense".

After the performance, the audience is invited to discuss the play and make commitments to the young people to address the concerns and questions raised in the performance. The commitments are then formulated into a text documenting what the youth hope to achieve. In the 2012 performances, it was the audience that frequently raised the issue of the need for an accurate and updated history book and not the young people themselves. But it was the young people who later followed up on the points raised by the play and the audiences and urged their local decision makers to sign commitment letters.

A selection process was carried out to ensure the participation of young people from Christian, Sunni and Shiaa villages, as well as from the Druze community. There were eighteen performances between October and December 2012. In 2013 a total of twenty-seven performances will take place.

### 2.3.2.3. Results:

<b>Table 5. Participation Lebanon – Performing for Peace</b>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people feel empowered and are given a platform to discuss policy change (including topics that are considered taboo).</li> <li>• High attendance including policy makers, school teachers, parents and other youth.</li> <li>• Increased demand for youth clubs to be set up in villages, which demonstrates a strengthening of community links and trust.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficult convincing youth that Performing for Peace is not just a tool for publicity or awareness raising, but advocacy aimed at policy change.</li> <li>• Security concerns at various locations, increasing the occurrence of security incidents (e.g. road blocks).</li> <li>• Frequent travelling lead to high transport costs.</li> <li>• Sometimes cynical or aggressive audiences lead to a confrontational atmosphere at times. The young people were sometimes frustrated by what some people said.</li> </ul>

Table 5 shows that drama can be used as a powerful tool for young people in recovery and (re)integration in communities affected by armed conflict. After initial resistance to the tool, its core advantage – giving children and young people a platform – was clearly demonstrated. As is usual with advocacy, target groups can sometimes respond with cynical or aggressive comments, and the risks of each performance must be carefully assessed before implementation.

### 3. DISCUSSION

This paper we set out to test the following hypothesis: War Child's psychosocial support, education and child protection recovery and (re)integration interventions can successfully be used to address the specific needs of a community emerging from conflict, and help guide children towards lasting recovery. Successes and failures vary depending on contextual (cultural, traditional and political) circumstances. Our findings are not a systematic check of each of these intervention methods against the varying contexts, but a qualitative and explorative assessment of the challenges and obstacles faced in the implementation of these projects.

#### 3.1 Psychosocial Support

In very poor and fragile countries or regions, where the basic rights of children to safety and security are regularly infringed, there is a need for psychosocial (re)integration interventions. Once a child's basic requirements for survival (including food, water and shelter) have been met, their psychosocial well-being (including their sense of belonging and sense of protection and safety) must be addressed.<sup>22</sup>

In South Sudan and Colombia, two different types of projects work toward the same goal: to promote the psychological recovery and social (re)integration of children affected by conflict. The I DEAL intervention in South Sudan involves the development of life skills, while the Pachamama project in Colombia uses an approach that promotes traditional and cultural practices. Indeed, it has been argued that interventions work best when conducted in conjunction with local cultural norms, adapting them to conform to the perceptions of local children.<sup>23</sup> Such practices are often mainstreamed into (re) integration programmes.<sup>24</sup> This has been the approach of I DEAL in South Sudan: to use the established methodology of life-skills development, but to translate the games and activities into the local context by using traditional dance and stories. Upon completion of I DEAL in South Sudan, children realised marked improvements in their social skills, primarily due to the module on solving conflicts. We conclude that in communities with destroyed or weakened social structures, I DEAL can be used as a tool for psychological recovery and social (re)integration, particularly when implemented using cultural and traditional practices.

<sup>22</sup> Abraham Maslow (1943) "A Theory of Human Motivation".

<sup>23</sup> Wessels M. (2007) "Trauma, culture, and community: Getting beyond dichotomies" 5, "[E]ffective programming requires flexibility, cultural sensitivity, a willingness to build upon but also add to indigenous psychosocial supports...". See also: Singer, P.W. (2005) "Children at War", (Pantheon Books) "DDR programmes must incorporate modern expertise with local culture in its planning and implementation". See also: Abola C (2011) "Let's DEAL with it" and "Child protection and Education" Programmes implemented in Gulu, Amuru, Lira, Kitgum and Pader Districts in Northern Uganda. War Child Holland, End of Programme Evaluation.

<sup>24</sup> Awodola, Bosede (2009) "Comparative International Experience with Reintegration Programmes for Child Soldiers: The Liberian Experience" 4 (1) Peace and Conflict Review, 5.

Although we did not conduct a systematic comparison with interventions that are not based on cultural and traditional practices, War Child staff is generally in agreement that that cultural and traditional practices are key tools in successful programming. For example, the Pachamama project in Colombia recognises the community's strong farming culture and centuries-old traditions. Through witnessing the visible and tangible rewards that their hard work produces, the children reap substantial psychological benefits, while also remaining strongly connected with the traditional practices and beliefs of their ancestors.<sup>25</sup>

### 3.2 Vocational Education

In countries emerging from conflicts and attempting to break the cycle of violence that entraps young people, social (re)integration is aided by the provision of education or training, which provides a means of income.

Our findings support the hypothesis of Casteli et al,<sup>26</sup> that psychological recovery and social and economic (re)integration of children and young people is a prerequisite for a return to normalcy, and should always be regarded as a key priority in post-conflict reconstruction.<sup>27</sup> Emergency humanitarian interventions should already include components of education to prepare for successful (re)integration in later phases of recovery. Vocational training for young people is also critical for improving the economy of a community, and reducing the risks of falling into crime or delinquency.

Finally, the participation of the community in identifying the young people to participate should be a key element of (re)integration projects. The success of projects such as these depends heavily on a good working relationship with local communities, and it is of paramount importance to involve the community in each step of the project. For example, identifying viable vocations and selecting trainers or facilitators, organising exchange sessions with parents and community members about children's progress, and raising awareness amongst caregivers on their responsibility to support child (re)integration processes. In addition, the participants in the DRC project reported a significant increase in self-esteem from the increased respect that members of the community afforded them thanks to their new, active roles in their communities.

### 3.3 Child Protection through empowerment and participation.

In countries that may be developing well economically but in which young people are isolated or excluded, child protection interventions programmes that actively encourage participation and empowerment have proven to be effective and sustainable.

<sup>25</sup> Eiling et al (2013).

<sup>26</sup> Castelli, L., E. Locatelli and M. Canavera (2005) "Psycho-social support for war affected children in northern Uganda: Lessons learned" Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers.

<sup>27</sup> UNICEF (2005) "The disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of children associated with the fighting forces: Lessons learned in Sierra Leone 1998–2002".



Such interventions help young people to become active and engaged citizens working towards a peaceful future without further child rights violations. The established Western developmental psychological theories predict that participation and empowerment will support children and young people to reach the highest level of self-actualisation, specifically through creatively identifying with others and increasing tolerance. The main challenges remain the applicability of such theories to non-Western environments like Afghanistan. Supporting children and young people to become active agents of change is an important milestone in achieving sustainable development.

In Lebanon, we saw that some groups of children and youth were socially excluded and demoralised, but with a strong desire to make a change. It therefore made sense to implement Performing for Peace, the essence of which is to empower young people and provide them with a platform to discuss policy change on topics that may be considered taboo. This involves giving them the opportunity to explain their views to peers and elders, and to have those views taken seriously by the public.<sup>28</sup> The plays represented an important opportunity for young people to discuss the lack of a definitive and modern Lebanese history book and the “need to find the courage to pursue the truth about the past to create a peaceful future”.<sup>29</sup> Using drama as an advocacy tool was new for the young people in Lebanon, and it took some time before they gained a clear understanding of the aims and benefits of the project.<sup>30</sup> In Lebanon, working towards policy change, or even behaviour change, can be challenging given the political rigidity and lack of willingness to change. Children and young people are strongly influenced by this context, and any project aimed at policy change encounters resistance and a general lack of confidence that such objectives can be achieved.

In sum, in determining which recovery and (re)integration projects are suitable, War Child takes the country contexts into account. (Re)integration projects can therefore be very context-specific, and operate very differently depending on cultural norms and practices. Performing for Peace, for example, may work best in countries that already have an established tradition of inclusion and drama as a means of cultural expression. When the project was implemented in Colombia, some scenes included boys and girls salsa dancing together, which would not be possible in conservative or religious communities.

There are also obstacles that consistently apply to (re)integration programmes around

<sup>28</sup> War Child Holland in Lebanon (2012) “Performing for Peace: A War Child Methodology”.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> In conversation with a member of the War Child Holland in Lebanon team, Amsterdam, November 2012.

<sup>31</sup> Lode, K. (ed.), B. L. Oneshiphore, and A. B. Musafiri (2007) “Réinsertion des enfants soldat: Un expérience du Congo” (Centre for Intercultural Communication). “This report underlines the importance of community-based reintegration programmes that secure a good dialogue between the project leadership and community members.”

the world, most notably the question of working with local partners. The available literature on the topic of (re)integration underlines the importance of working together with local NGOs, organisations and communities, given their unparalleled insight and position within local communities.<sup>31</sup> In Lebanon, for example, working with local partners who are experienced in dealing with sensitive issues and themselves representative of Lebanese society, is the only feasible way to conduct a discussion on the country's history.

However, working with local partners is not a guarantee of success, and may slow down progress in some cases. In the external evaluation of the DRC vocational training project, the fear was expressed that the local partners may "plunge into dependency" with regards to the implementation of their activities. In Colombia, working with local partners may make a contribution towards strengthening local civil society, but, as noted by the War Child's country office, it does not always guarantee the best results, particularly in terms of time and cost efficiency

This paper has explored the three main components of War Child's approach to recovery and (re)integration: psychosocial support, education and child protection (via empowerment and participation). These are not the only such components, but are among the more widely developed and reported in our intervention programs. This explorative paper serves as a basis for future research into the field of recovery and (re)integration.

<sup>31</sup> Lode, K. (ed.), B. L. Oneshiphore, and A. B. Musafiri (2007) "Réinsertion des enfants soldat: Un expérience du Congo" (Centre for Intercultural Communication). "This report underlines the importance of community-based reintegration programmes that secure a good dialogue between the project leadership and community members."

# HITTING THE COMMUNITY AT ITS HEART: ARREST AND DETENTION AS A NEW POWERFUL METHOD OF CONFLICT IN SILWAN, EAST JERUSALEM

**FRANCESCA BOMBI\***

This paper describes the arrest and detention of Palestinian children in the Silwan neighbourhood of East Jerusalem.

While the prolonged Israeli-Palestinian conflict has a wide range of severe implications for children, the neighbourhood of Silwan has been a site for the development of an untraditional method of warfare, namely the regular arrest and detention of children on suspicion of stone throwing, classified as 'incitement to violence'.

In 2011 and 2012 the community-based organisation Madaa documented the arrest of 284 children. They constituted the majority of arrests in the area in 2011 and half of the arrests in 2012.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the arrested children reported being mistreated by Israeli authorities during the arrest and detention process, including being arrested in the middle of the night, physical and verbal abuse, being interrogated in the absence of parents, being forced to sign confessions in Hebrew that they did not understand, and being sentenced to house arrest without the possibility of attending school. Furthermore, as many organisations have pointed out, officers committing these violations appear to act in complete impunity. The present paper contends that the practice of arrest and detention of Palestinian children in East Jerusalem cannot be justified by security concerns, violates the safeguards established by international human rights law and humanitarian law and has a negative impact on the children, their families and their community.

<sup>1</sup> Information received by Madaa – the total number of persons documented as arrested was 322 in 2011 and 187 in 2012. At the time of writing the total number of children arrested and detained in East Jerusalem is unknown.

\* **Francesca Bombi** is a legal professional specialised in Human Rights Law, Refugee Law and Children's Rights and is currently working as the Child Rights Monitoring Coordinator for War Child Holland. The analysis of children's testimonies is based on a report by Madaa Creative Center in Silwan, East Jerusalem. The report was compiled by Dr. Shari Gschaider-Kassahun, Clinical Psychologist and Development Advisor and Sahar Baidoun, Women and Children Coordinator at the Madaa Creative Center. For More information on arrest and detention of children in East Jerusalem, and direct testimonies from the children of Silwan see <http://www.warchildholland.org/project/child-right-awareness>

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## NOTE ON THE LAW APPLICABLE IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY:

As the Occupying Power, Israel is responsible for protecting the rights and ensuring the basic needs and welfare of the Palestinian civilian population under its control as per Articles 27 and 55 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. In addition, pursuant to international human rights treaties<sup>2</sup> ratified by Israel and which apply in occupied territory, Israel is bound to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the full range of the social, economic, cultural, civil and political human rights of all persons within its jurisdiction. The treaty bodies of the United Nations that monitor the implementation of the applicable human rights treaties have consistently concluded that the treaties to which Israel is a party are applicable with regard to acts carried out by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory.<sup>3</sup> This was confirmed by the International Court of Justice in 2004.<sup>4</sup>

## EAST JERUSALEM AND SILWAN: THE CONTEXT

In 1967, Israel occupied the West Bank and unilaterally annexed 70.5 square kilometres of the occupied area to its territory. This annexed territory was subsequently integrated into the Jerusalem municipality and is now referred to as East Jerusalem. This annexation contravenes international law and was not recognised by the UN Security Council or UN member states.<sup>5</sup>

East Jerusalem continues to form part of the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) and its

<sup>2</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol thereto on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

<sup>3</sup> For a compilation of selected conclusions and recommendations made by human rights mechanisms, see [www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies)

<sup>4</sup> Advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory* of 9 July 2004 (see A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1)

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 478, adopted on 20 August 1980, is one of seven UNSC resolutions condemning Israel's attempted annexation of East Jerusalem: Resolutions 252 (1968) of 21 May 1968, 267 (1969) of 3 July 1969, 271 (1969) of 15 September 1969, 298 (1971) of 25 September 1971 and 465 (1980) of 1 March 1980, available at <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/udc.htm>

Palestinian residents remain protected by international humanitarian law.<sup>6</sup>

However, in practice the 284,000 Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem fall under the Israeli system as Israeli law is applied in full to the annexed area. Palestinians living in East Jerusalem have the status of “Jerusalem residents” and hold Israeli identity cards, but not citizenship. The Israeli Municipality collects taxes from the Palestinian residents and governs their neighbourhoods; Israeli police and Israeli Courts enforce law and order. In addition, 200,000 Israelis currently reside in East Jerusalem in settlements that have been constructed in violation of international law. Settlement activity and restrictive housing and zoning policies that result in eviction and demolition, have placed several hundred Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem at risk of forced displacement. The East Jerusalem neighbourhoods of Silwan, Sheikh Jarrah, and the Old City have been particularly affected.<sup>7</sup>

Lying just outside the Old City near the Wailing Wall and the Al Aqsa Mosque, Silwan is in an extremely sensitive location. The City of David archaeological site, currently managed by Elad, one of the main organisations promoting Jewish settlement in the area, is being developed at the entrance to Silwan.<sup>8</sup>

Private security guards, funded by the Housing and Construction Ministry to protect Jewish residents from Arab residents, constitute a major source of tension in the neighbourhood.<sup>9</sup> According to an Israeli human rights organisation, the past two years have seen a significant escalation in clashes in Palestinian neighbourhoods, with a marked increase in the use of violence by security guards against local residents, including the use of live ammunition.<sup>10</sup>

It is within this context of evictions and house demolitions, and the presence of settlers, private guards, police and security forces that the phenomenon of the arrest and detention of Palestinian children has to be placed. According to a representative of the community who monitored numerous incidents of children arrested in Silwan, this phenomenon is a direct consequence of the increasing presence of settlers and the subsequent presence of armed personnel (private or public) to protect them.<sup>11</sup>

In fact, Palestinian children were not arrested in Silwan before Israeli settlers started residing in the neighbourhood.

<sup>6</sup> OCHA Special Focus, *The Planning Crisis in East Jerusalem: Understanding the Phenomenon of “Illegal” Construction*, April 2009 available at <http://www.ochaopt.org> see, among others, Security Council resolutions 252, 267, 471, 476 and 478

<sup>7</sup> OCHA, *East Jerusalem: Key Humanitarian Concerns*, December 2011, available at <http://www.ochaopt.org/reports.aspx?id=103>

<sup>8</sup> Betselem, *Caution: Children Ahead, The Illegal Behavior of the Police toward Minors in Silwan suspected of Stone Throwing*, December 2010, available at [http://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/201012\\_caution\\_children\\_ahed](http://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/201012_caution_children_ahed)

<sup>9</sup> Idem

<sup>10</sup> On 31 October 2011, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) and Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem petitioned the High Court of Justice demanding an end to the deployment of private security guards employed through the Ministry of Housing and Construction to protect Jewish residential compounds in East Jerusalem. *Petition: Deployment of Private Security Guards in East Jerusalem Is Unlawful* <http://www.acri.org.il/en/2011/10/31/petition-deployment-of-private-security-guards-in-e-jerusalem-is-unlawful/>

<sup>11</sup> Personal communication to the author. Identity protected for security reasons.

## ARREST AND DETENTION OF CHILDREN IN WEST BANK: THE BIGGER PICTURE

Several Palestinian and Israeli human rights organisations, UN agencies and international NGOs have documented the widespread practice of the arrest and detention of Palestinian children by Israeli authorities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.<sup>12</sup>

A different legal system applies to Palestinian children arrested and detained in East Jerusalem than in the rest of the West Bank. In the West Bank, children are subject to military law, imposed by Israel on the occupied Palestinian territory in June 1967 through a military order that gives the Israeli Area Commander full legislative, executive and judicial authority.<sup>13</sup>

East Jerusalem is considered part of the West Bank according to UN resolutions.<sup>14</sup> However, Israel applies Amendment 14 of its law, "Trial, Punishment and Modes of Treatment, 5731 - 1971" (hereafter: the Youth Law), to Palestinian children arrested in East Jerusalem.<sup>15</sup> The amendment is intended to incorporate juvenile justice standards in international law into Israeli legislation, and emphasises the rehabilitation of juveniles and their rights.<sup>16</sup>

In this context, children arrested and detained in East Jerusalem enjoy, in theory, stronger guarantees and rights than children arrested and detained in the rest of the West Bank. However, this difference remains theoretical as, in practice, Palestinian children in East Jerusalem suffer from human rights violations very similar to those faced by Palestinian children arrested in the rest of the West Bank. This paper will illustrate these violations.

- <sup>12</sup> UNICEF, *Children in Israeli military detention: observations and recommendations*, February 2013 available at [http://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF\\_oPt\\_Children\\_in\\_Israeli\\_Military\\_Detention\\_Observations\\_and\\_Recommendations\\_-\\_6\\_March\\_2013.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF_oPt_Children_in_Israeli_Military_Detention_Observations_and_Recommendations_-_6_March_2013.pdf)  
DCI-Palestine, *Bound, Blindfolded and Convicted: Children held in military detention*, April 2012 – Available at: <http://is.gd/cFBSgP>; UNICEF CAAC *Children Affected by Armed Conflict Bulletin*, July 2012 – Available at: [http://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF\\_oPt\\_-\\_CAAC\\_bulletin\\_-\\_July\\_2012.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF_oPt_-_CAAC_bulletin_-_July_2012.pdf); Betselem, *No MINOR MATTER Violation of the Rights of Palestinian Minors Arrested by Israel on Suspicion of Stone Throwing*, July 2011, available at [http://www.btselem.org/download/201107\\_no\\_minor\\_matter\\_eng.pdf](http://www.btselem.org/download/201107_no_minor_matter_eng.pdf); Children in Military Custody, June 2012, A report written by a delegation of British lawyers on the treatment of Palestinian children under Israeli military law, available at [http://www.childreninmilitarycustody.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Children\\_in\\_Military\\_Custody\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](http://www.childreninmilitarycustody.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Children_in_Military_Custody_Full_Report.pdf); ACRI *Violations of the Youth Law by the Police in East Jerusalem*, March 2011 – Available at <http://www.acri.org.il/en/2011/06/01/police-violations-of-rights-of-minors-in-east-jerusalem/>; Madaa *Arrest and detention of children in Silwan: what we know and why we need to act* information leaflet distributed on occasion of the safe summer event, July 2012 on file with War Child Holland
- <sup>13</sup> According to the legal framework of occupation under international law, a local population under occupation should continue to be bound by its own penal laws and tried in its own courts. However, under security provisions, local laws can be suspended by the occupying power and replaced with military orders enforced by military courts. Hague Regulations (1907), article 43; and Fourth Geneva Convention (1949), articles 64 and 66. UNICEF oPt, *Children in Israeli military detention: observations and recommendations*, February 2013 available at [http://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF\\_oPt\\_Children\\_in\\_Israeli\\_Military\\_Detention\\_Observations\\_and\\_Recommendations\\_-\\_6\\_March\\_2013.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF_oPt_Children_in_Israeli_Military_Detention_Observations_and_Recommendations_-_6_March_2013.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> See above, footnote 6

<sup>15</sup> The law was enacted on 30 July 2008 and took effect one year later

<sup>16</sup> Betselem *Caution: Children Ahead: The Illegal Behavior of the Police toward Minors in Silwan suspected of Stone Throwing*, see footnote 8

## ARREST AND DETENTION OF CHILDREN IN SILWAN: WHAT CHILDREN SAY



Madaa has been documenting cases of child arrest and detention in Silwan since 2010 and conducted in-depth interviews with 30 children who were arrested and detained in Silwan in 2011 and 2012. The findings from the interviews shed light on the reality of violations faced by the children.<sup>17</sup>

### 1. Overarching principle: the best interest of the child

#### *What the law says:*

in all actions undertaken by courts of law, administrative or other authorities, the best interest of the child is a primary consideration.<sup>18</sup>

#### *What children report:*

all of the findings from the interviews detailed below reveal a widespread and systematic violation of the principle of the best interest of the child from the moment of arrest, throughout the investigation, and during detention.

<sup>17</sup> This information is based on a report by Madaa. The report analyzes the findings of 30 interviews with children from Silwan. The interviews were conducted between 2011 and 2012. Madaa Creative Center *The impact of child arrest and detention*, 2012, on file with War Child Holland, also available at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/122619827/THE-IMPACT-OF-CHILD-ARREST-AND-DETENTION>

<sup>18</sup> *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)* article 3

## 2. Arrest and detention as a measure of last resort

### *What the law says:*

Israel has the obligation to ensure that children are deprived of their liberty as a measure of last resort only and for the shortest appropriate period of time.<sup>19</sup>

### *What children report:*

While the number of children arrested and detained throughout East Jerusalem was not known at the time of writing, the arrest of 284 children was documented by Madaa in 2011 and 2012 in Silwan alone. Children constituted the majority of arrests in the neighbourhood in 2011 and half of the arrests in 2012.<sup>20</sup> There is evidence that other East Jerusalem neighbourhoods (Essawiye, and A Tur in particular) also experience a high number of child arrests. In the month of February 2013 alone, a total of 50 children were reportedly arrested by Israeli authorities in East Jerusalem.<sup>21</sup>

One organisation providing legal aid to Palestinian children in East Jerusalem reports following an average of 300 cases of child arrests a year, with children representing 70 percent of all arrests for offences such as throwing stones and participating in demonstrations.<sup>22</sup> According to data supplied by the Israeli police to Israeli organisations, in 2010 more than 1,200 Palestinian minors from East Jerusalem were investigated on suspicion of participating in stone-throwing.<sup>23</sup>

These numbers, particularly when considering that cases documented do not represent the totality of children arrested and detained, clearly demonstrate that the arrest and detention of children does not constitute a measure of last resort as required under international human rights law. On the contrary, arrest and detention appear to be the primary means of addressing offenses committed by children.

<sup>19</sup> Para 2, *United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty*, Resolution 45/113, 14 December 1990, available at [www.un.org/documents/ga/res/45/a45r113.htm](http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/45/a45r113.htm). *Convention on the Rights of the Child* article 37(b)

<sup>20</sup> Information received by Madaa – the total number of persons documented as arrested was 322 in 2011 and 187 in 2012. The majority of children interviewed by Madaa were arrested on accusation of 'throwing stones (77%) or 'Molotov' (30%). Other children interviewed by Madaa were arrested on accusation of 'threatening Israeli settlers' (6%) or 'resisting arrest' (3%). We consider important not to enter into the debate of the seriousness of these offences and on the actual culpability of the children – which can be easily manipulated into a debate on one or the other side perspective - but to focus on what are the guarantees that in any human rights compliant system should be preserved, regardless of the offences committed.

<sup>21</sup> Madaa, February 2013 Report, on file with War Child Holland.

<sup>22</sup> Information received by the Prisoners' Club, Jerusalem Branch, in a meeting with War Child in March 2013.

<sup>23</sup> ACRI, *Police violations of rights of minors in East Jerusalem*, June 2011  
<http://www.acri.org.il/en/2011/06/01/police-violations-of-rights-of-minors-in-east-jerusalem/>



### 3. Minimum age of criminal responsibility

*What the law says:*

According to international law the State should establish a minimum age below which children shall be presumed not to have the capacity to infringe the penal law. The minimum age according to the Youth Law is 12, meaning that children below the age of 12 cannot be held criminally responsible and must not be detained.

*What children report:*

Madaa has interviewed children ranging from 7 to 17 years old. This means that children as young as 7 years old have been arrested. In recent months, a 5-year-old child was arrested. In practice, there appears to be no age limit for the arrest of children: even very young children run the risk of being arrested.

### 4. Right to be treated with humanity, taking into account the needs of the children and proportionality to the circumstances.

*What the law says:*

Every child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, and in a manner which takes into account the needs of persons of his or her age.<sup>24</sup> The juvenile justice system shall emphasise the well-being of the juvenile and shall ensure that any reaction to juvenile offenders shall always be in proportion to the circumstances of both the offenders and the offence. The response to young offenders should be based not only on consideration of the gravity of the offence, but also of personal circumstances. The individual circumstances of the offender (for example social status, family situation, the harm caused by the offence or other factors affecting personal circumstances) should influence the proportionality of the reactions.<sup>25</sup>

*What children report:*

Children are arrested either in their homes (51 percent) or on the street (49 percent). Thirty-nine percent of children interviewed by Madaa were arrested in the very early hours of the morning between 4 a.m. and 5 a.m. Other children were arrested in the afternoon after school (29 percent) or in other times of the day (32 percent). Children reported that incidents of arrests at night or in the early morning, in which police or Border Police officers and Israel Security Agency agents come to children's homes to arrest them, were particularly traumatic.

<sup>24</sup> CRC article 37

<sup>25</sup> United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice ("The Beijing Rules"), Para. 5.1. Resolution 40/33, 29 November 1985, available at [www2.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/beijingrules.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/beijingrules.pdf).

Children in East Jerusalem are arrested either by undercover forces, the Border Police, or the Special and/or Intelligence Forces. The undercover forces often operate disguised as Palestinians, sometimes even cross-dressing as Palestinian women. Moreover arresting officers cover their faces in black masks to hide their identity, making it virtually impossible to file complaints if force is used during arrest. Further, 13 percent of the children interviewed were subjected to a full body search. The children were not told why they had to strip naked or why the search had to include their private parts.

## 5. Limited use of restraint or force

*What the law says:*

Restraint or force can be used only when the child poses an imminent threat of injury to him or herself or others, and only when all other means of control have been exhausted.<sup>26</sup>

*What children report:*

55 percent of the children reported having had their hands and legs cuffed, 45 percent only their hands cuffed and 14 percent of the children reported having their head and face covered after they were arrested. In these cases, the shirts of the children were pulled over their heads so that they would be unable to see what was happening around them and would lose their orientation.

## 6. Notification and reasons for arrest

*What the law says:*

the child has the right to be informed promptly and directly of the charges against him or her, and, if appropriate, through his or her parents or legal guardians, and to have legal or other appropriate assistance in the preparation and presentation of his or her defence.<sup>27</sup>

*What children report:*

90 percent of the children interviewed by Madaa received no summons.

<sup>26</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 10 (2007), Children's rights in Juvenile Justice 25 April 2007, CRC/C/GC/10, Para 89, available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/CRC.C.GC.10.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights article 9, CRC Article 40, Beijing Rules Rule 10.1

## 7. Access to legal representation and parents

*What the law says:*

Children must have the right to maintain contact with their families through correspondence and visits.<sup>28</sup>

*What children report:*

Not one single child interviewed by Madaa was allowed to receive a visit from family members or to make a phone call while in detention. Furthermore, the vast majority of the children interviewed by Madaa (90 percent) had an initial investigation without the presence of their parents.

## 8. Right to be brought before a judge and to challenge the legality of the detention

*What the law says:*

Deprivation of liberty shall be accompanied by the right to challenge its legality before a regularly constituted judicial body affording all judicial guarantees generally recognised as indispensable.<sup>29</sup> Detention before trial shall be avoided to the extent possible and limited to exceptional circumstances.<sup>30</sup>

*What children report:*

Roughly 60 percent of children were taken for interrogation for one day. The remaining 40 percent were kept in prison without charge for periods ranging from 24 hours to over a month.

## 9. Prohibition of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

*What the law says:*

No child should be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.<sup>31</sup>

What children report: 77 percent of the children indicated that they were physically abused, including being punched at the time of arrest or during interrogation.

<sup>28</sup> CRC, Article 37(c); Geneva Convention III Article 71; Geneva Convention IV, Article 116; Additional Protocol II, Article 5(2).

<sup>29</sup> CRC article 37 and article 40

<sup>30</sup> United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty, Resolution 45/113, 14 December 1990, available at [www.un.org/documents/ga/res/45/a45r113.htm](http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/45/a45r113.htm)

<sup>31</sup> CRC article 37, ICCPR article 7



**14 years old:** They made me lay back on the floor with my hands tied tightly behind my back. Masoud (pseudonym of investigator) put a chair on my chin and sat on it. He then said, "Talk and admit what you and the others did!" I was crying.

**13 years old:** When they took me out of the car, one of the police men punched me in my belly. It hurt a lot. I felt like puking.

**16 years old:** They wanted to undress and search me. I refused. They took out an electric shock gadget and pressed it against my body several times till I gave in and took my clothes off.

**13 years old:** I was given four times tablets after I was beaten and before a court hearing. I was told its painkillers. One time an officer put a spray on my cheek where my face was scratched to stop the blood.

Eighty-three percent of the children indicated they suffered from verbal abuse – they were personally insulted or their mothers, sisters, or the Prophet Mohammed, were cursed.

**14 years old:** Do you know why we call this investigation room number 4? That is because when we are finished with you, you Arabs crawl out of here like babies on your fours.

Furthermore, the cells where the children were detained were described as extremely dirty, wet, and smelly, with a toilet overflowing with human excrement.

## 10. Privilege against self-incrimination

*What the law says:*

Children should not be compelled to give testimony or to confess or acknowledge guilt. This means that torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment in order to extract an admission or a confession constitutes a grave violation of the rights of the child. No such admission or confession can be admissible as evidence.<sup>32</sup> The term “compelled” should be interpreted in a broad manner and not be limited to physical force or other clear violations of human rights. The age of the child, the child’s development, the length of the interrogation, the child’s lack of understanding, the fear of unknown consequences or of a suggested possibility of imprisonment may lead him/her to a confession that is not true.

*What children report:*

87 percent of the children indicated that they were psychologically abused during arrest and/or detention, including threats and humiliation, denial of food and/or water, denial of access to the restroom, and sleep deprivation. When children refused to answer questions, they were threatened with being put on an electric chair and/or being subjected to a lie detector test. Threats were also made against their families.

**16 years old:** They made me look at my father waiting outside through a surveillance camera saying: We know your father is unemployed and has no money. Why don’t you confess and make his life much easier.

**10 years old:** They told me that if I do not tell them who the boys were in the pictures they will take me away from my family and put me in a special home.

<sup>32</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 10 (2007), Children’s rights in Juvenile Justice 25 April 2007, CRC/C/GC/10, Para 56 -57, available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/CRC.C.GC.10.pdf>  
CRC article 40, ICCPR article 14, CAT article 15, Geneva Convention IV, article 31.

**14 years old:** The investigator held up a knife next to my cheeks and said that it is very easy to cut all kind of things with this knife, not only paper. I was told if I do not confess they will put me on an electric chair.

Some of the boys (3 percent) were kept in solitary confinement. One of the boys, for example, was taken to a prison close to Tel Aviv where he was kept for eleven days in solitary confinement.

Thirteen percent of children were asked by the investigators to become collaborators and pass on information to the police at the end of the interrogation. They were offered benefits and favours for doing so, including the promise that all charges against them would be dropped.

#### **ARREST AND DETENTION IN SILWAN: IMPACT ON CHILDREN, THEIR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY**

The majority of children interviewed by Madaa experienced indications of psychosocial distress after they were released.<sup>33</sup> These include **nightmares/insomnia** (80 percent), **anxiety** (90 percent), **withdrawal** (47 percent), **increase in aggressiveness** (40 percent), **drop in school performance** (40 percent), **weight loss** (27 percent), and **bedwetting** (23 percent).

Furthermore, 48 percent of the children interviewed were released into house arrest. In 23 percent of the cases, children were placed in open-ended house arrest, meaning that the children and their families did not know when the child would again be able to engage in school-related activities and leave the house. Seventy percent of children were in house arrest for about a month, a high percentage was not permitted to attend school. This practice has severe consequences for the child's education: 40 percent of the children interviewed performed poorly in school after they were allowed to return, and some were asked to repeat a grade by their teachers and eventually dropped out (3 percent).

House arrest also places a high burden on the family, as family members are made responsible for constantly supervising the child. In the case that a child is eventually convicted of a crime, the time already spent in house arrest is usually not taken into consideration when the final prison sentence is issued.

<sup>33</sup> 47% of parents paid fines to have their children released (from 500 NIS (100 €) up to 18.000 NIS (3.700 €)); 75% signed bail papers against the potential future arrest of their child or violation of the terms of house arrest (1000 NIS (200 €)/max signed 30.000 NIS (6.200 €)).

## CONCLUSION

Findings from Madaa’s field work supports the conclusion that Palestinian children in conflict with the law in East Jerusalem are not treated in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Beijing Rules, or related standards on juvenile justice and fair trials.

The primary responsibility to respect such standards and obligations – no matter the offence perpetrated by a child – lies with the State of Israel, who has ratified the relevant Human Rights Conventions and therefore committed to respect the standards they enshrine.

Secondly, the international community has the responsibility to demand increased accountability from the State of Israel to ensure that the rights of children in conflict with the law are respected and that security concerns are not used to justify the violation of children’s rights.







# OUTCOME EVALUATION OF WAR CHILD'S PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT INTERVENTION I DEAL IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

**ELLEN M. EILING, MARIANNE VAN DIGGELE-HOLTAND, TOM VAN YPEREN, AND FRITS BOER\***

War Child Holland, in collaboration with the University of Amsterdam, the Dutch Youth Institute, and HealthNet-TPO, conducted an outcome evaluation of War Child Holland's psychosocial support intervention 'I DEAL'<sup>1</sup> in the Republic of South Sudan. The main objectives of this research were to assess the alignment of I DEAL with local perceptions of psychosocial well-being, and to explore the outcomes of the intervention and factors influencing its effectiveness. The research aims to further strengthen War Child's psychosocial support to children affected by armed conflict and to address international research priorities<sup>2</sup> for psychosocial support interventions.

<sup>1</sup> The I DEAL methodology can be found on the WCH open-source platform [www.warchildlearning.org](http://www.warchildlearning.org).

<sup>2</sup> Tol, W.A., Patel, V., Tomlinson, M., Baingana, F., Galappatti, A. et al. (2011). Research Priorities for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Humanitarian Settings. *PLoS Med*, 8(9).

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## INTRODUCTION

An estimated 1 billion children and young people under the age of 18 live in areas affected by armed conflict. Exposure to the disruption, loss and violence associated with armed conflict and its aftermath negatively affects the psychological and social well-being of children<sup>2,3,4</sup>. It is essential to support children's reintegration into their communities, and to stimulate community cohesion and self-help structures<sup>5,6</sup>.

Structured psychosocial support activities can reinstate a sense of normalcy and foster emotional and social reintegration<sup>7</sup>. War Child Holland defines social reintegration as a process of transitional change to improve a child's protection and potential through economic and social inclusion, following any form of violence, abuse or neglect<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> UNICEF (2009). Guide to the evaluation of psychosocial programming in emergencies.

<sup>2</sup> Jordans, M.J.D., Komproe, I.H., Tol, W.A., Kohrt, B.A., Luitel, N.P., Macy, R.D., de Jong, J.T.V.M. (2010). Evaluation of a classroom-based psychosocial intervention in conflict-affected Nepal: a cluster randomized controlled trial. *J Child Psychol Psychiatry*, 51: 818–26.

<sup>3</sup> Tol, W.A., Barbui, C., Galappatti, A., Silove, D., Betancourt, T.S., Souza, R., Golaz, A., & van Ommeren, M. (2011). Mental health and psychosocial support in humanitarian settings: linking practice and research. *Lancet*, 378: 1581-91.

<sup>4</sup> Norris, F.H., Friedman, M.J., Watson, P.J., Byrne, C.M., Diaz, E., & Kaniasty, K. (2002). 60,000 disaster victims speak: part I. an empirical review of the empirical literature, 1981–2001. *Psychiatry*, 65: 207–239

<sup>5</sup> Ventevogel, P., Jordans, M.J.D., Reis, R., & de Jong, J.T.V.M. (2013). Madness or sadness? Local concepts of mental illness in four conflict-affected African Communities. *Conflict and Health*, 7:3.

<sup>6</sup> Scholte, W.F. (2013). Mental health in war-affected populations. Dissertation.

<sup>7</sup> See 1.

<sup>8</sup> McBride, J. & Hanson, E. (2013). Recovery and reintegration programmes for children affected by armed conflict: A five-country study.

Despite existing evidence in Western countries<sup>9</sup>, there is an urgent need for a stronger evidence-base on the effectiveness of psychosocial interventions for children affected by armed conflict<sup>10</sup>. In 2012, War Child Holland, in collaboration with the University of Amsterdam, the Dutch Youth Institute, and HealthNet-TPO, conducted an effect evaluation of War Child Holland's psychosocial support intervention 'I DEAL' in the Republic of South Sudan. A process evaluation was also conducted to include recipients' perspectives on the intervention and identify other factors affecting the intervention's effectiveness.

### War Child Holland's psychosocial support intervention I DEAL<sup>11</sup>

I DEAL supports children (11-15 years) to cope with the aftermath of armed conflict by strengthening social and emotional coping skills, which are key factors for psychosocial well-being and resilience. Previous evaluations have shown positive short-term outcomes<sup>12,13,14</sup> mitigating reactions to violence, such as aggression and disturbed relations with adults and peers. In the longer-term, I DEAL also aims to prevent social isolation and the loss of a positive life perspective. As part of an integrated programme, I DEAL is implemented in combination with education and child protection interventions. The intervention consists of a series of sessions that combine creative and participatory techniques that stimulate the active learning<sup>15</sup>, such as role play, drawing, games and group discussions. Themes being addressed are identity, dealing with emotions, peer relations, relationships with adults, conflict and peace, and the future. The intervention consists of 17 to 19 sessions of 1.5 hours each, implemented over a period of 4 to 6 months, depending on local circumstances. The groups consist of 25 participants maximum and are facilitated by community workers (hereafter facilitators). Participants actively contribute to the intervention by defining or deciding on the issues to be addressed, and through monitoring and evaluation exercises<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Flament, M.F., Nguyen, H., Furino, C., Schachter, H., MacLean, C., Wasserman, D., Sartorius, N., Remschmidt, H. (2007). Evidence-based primary prevention programmes for the promotion of mental health in children and adolescents: A systematic worldwide review. In H. Remschmidt, B. Nurcombe, M.L. Belfer, N. Sartorius & A. Okasha (Eds.). *The Mental Health of Children and Adolescents: An Area of Global Neglect*. (pp. 65-136) West Sussex, England: Wiley & Sons.

<sup>10</sup> Tol, W.A., Patel, V., Tomlinson, M., Baingana, F., Galappatti, A., Panter-Brick, C., Silove, D., Sondorp, E., Wessells, M., van Ommeren, M. (2011). Research Priorities for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Humanitarian Settings. *PLoS Med*, 8(9).

<sup>11</sup> The I DEAL methodology can be found on the WCH open-source platform [www.warchildlearning.org](http://www.warchildlearning.org).

<sup>12</sup> Claessens, L.F., De Graaff, D.C., Jordans, M.J.D., Boer, F., & Van Yperen, T.A. (2012). Participatory evaluation of psychosocial interventions for children: a pilot study in Northern Uganda. *Intervention*, 10(1): 43–58.

<sup>13</sup> De Graaff, D.C. (2006). Effect-study Creative Workshop Cycle World Child Kosovo War Child Research Paper, War Child Holland, Amsterdam.

<sup>14</sup> Abola, C. (2011). "Let's DEAL with it" and "Child protection and Education" Programmes implemented in Gulu, Amuru, Lira, Kitgum and Pader Districts in Northern Uganda. End of program evaluation War Child Holland, Amsterdam.

<sup>15</sup> Kalksma - van Lith, B. (2007). Psychosocial interventions for children in war-affected areas: the state of the art. *Intervention*. 5(1): 3-17.

<sup>16</sup> See 12.

This evaluation is based on international research priorities for psychosocial support interventions<sup>17</sup>: effectiveness of school-based psychosocial support, local perceptions of psychosocial problems, and the extent to which current interventions address these needs.

This paper addresses the following questions:

1. Does I DEAL address participants' perceptions of well-being?
2. What are the outcomes of I DEAL regarding
  - a. the achievement of participants' personal goal
  - b. social coping skills
  - c. emotional coping skills
3. What factors influence the intervention's outcomes?

## METHODS



<sup>17</sup> See 10.

## Design

The evaluation followed a mixed-method, non-randomized pre- and post-test design, combining qualitative and quantitative data to analyse appreciation and outcomes. The research included a convenience sample as it was intervention-driven, and did not include a control group based on ethical considerations. The research is in line with international standards<sup>18,19</sup>. Informed consent was given by respondents verbally, using creative and child-friendly methods. Confidentiality was ensured to all respondents.

To ensure data quality, local researchers received training and conducted the interviews in local languages. Researchers invested time in child-friendly approaches and games to build trust and the head teacher introduced the research purpose.

## Sample

The evaluation took place in Eastern Equatoria State where a total of 11 groups participated in I DEAL, including 152 boys and 105 girls. Teachers selected children from grades 3 and 4, in some cases they included girls from another grade to improve gender balance. Consequently, the age of participants ranged from 8 to 16 years old. Out of the eleven groups, five groups (from different villages) were selected to participate in the research. The selection of the research groups was based on the security and accessibility of area, and starting dates of the intervention.

The five groups included a total of 122 children: 73 boys and 49 girls. Total drop-out of the intervention was 32 percent, resulting in a smaller research sample at post-test. See Table 1 for an overview of the sample sizes used for final analysis per research instrument.

For each method, selection of respondents was based on presence during data-collection, and diversity in age and gender. Each of the 122 children participated in at least one of the research methods. From each location, at least one teacher from grade 3 or 4 was interviewed. It was aimed to include parents from each location through snowball sampling. Due to practical constraints, this resulted in a sample of 11 parents from two locations.

<sup>18</sup> See 1.

<sup>19</sup> Inter-agency Standing Committee (2007). IASC guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings Geneva, IASC.

Table 1. Overview of sample per research instrument

	Research tool	Specifications	Female N / Male N	Total N
Baseline	Well-being Exercise	5 groups of ± 8	15 / 26	41
	Personal Goals	children	44 / 66	110
Midterm	Observations Sessions	4 sessions	-	4
Post test	Observations Sessions	4 sessions	-	4
	Personal Goals	children	30 / 44	74
	Personal Goal Interview	children	2 / 10	12
	Evaluation Interview	children	26 / 36	62
	FGD Participants	5 groups of ± 11	-	56
	Interview parents	2 locations	8 / 3	11
	Interview teachers	5 locations	1 / 5	6
	Interview facilitators		1 / 2	3
	Group discussion facilitators*	1 group of 5	3 / 2	5
Interview WCH project staff		1 / 2	3	

\* two researchers had been facilitators in the past and gave input as well

## RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

### Local perceptions of well-being

The participatory research tool Well-being Exercise<sup>20</sup>, was used to compare the content of I DEAL with local perceptions of well-being, as well as its relevance and cultural fit. During group exercises, children's local perceptions of well-being were explored by reflecting on what determines the well-being of a child in their community and behaviours they associated with peers who are 'doing well'.

<sup>20</sup> Stark, L., M. Wessells, D. King, D. Lamin, & Lilley, S. (2012). A grounded approach to the definition of population-based, child protection and well-being outcome areas London: Interagency Learning Initiative on Community-Based Child Protection Mechanisms and Child Protection Systems.

## Personal Goal

Children set personal goals at the beginning of an I DEAL cycle to include child-led, participatory indicators of success in the intervention. Furthermore, this helps focus the intervention on the needs specified by the children themselves and facilitates their participation in monitoring and evaluation. Progress towards reaching personal goals was measured on a visual-analogue line of 10 cm, a continuous line without numbers, using a smiling and a sad face<sup>21</sup> to indicate the positive and negative ends, respectively. In clinical settings, similar types of 'Goal Attainment Scoring' have shown positive therapeutic value in encouraging the patients to reach their goals<sup>22</sup>. There is growing evidence that this way of measuring has greater sensitivity over standard measures, potentially avoiding floor and ceiling effects<sup>23</sup>.

## Evaluation Interviews

Based on a tested tool<sup>25</sup>, interviews were held at the end of the intervention to assess children's satisfaction. Using closed and open-ended questions, the tool measured motivation to participate, reasons for missing one or more sessions, and children's perceptions of the benefits of the intervention.

To explore outcomes children were asked: "Has there been any change (positive/negative) after finishing I DEAL for you personally?" To answer, they could choose from: a) deterioration, b) no change, c) some improvement or d) much improvement. One open question was then asked to obtain an explanation of the answer choice.

## Group discussions

A group discussion was held in each location to evaluate the modules. During a group exercise, each child used a sticker to indicate the module they liked most (green), the one they liked least (red) and module from which they learned the most (orange). In addition, children were asked if they had any tips or suggestions (time, setting, themes, and facilitation).

<sup>21</sup> Baker, R. & Hall, J. (1994). A Review of the Applications of the REHAB Assessment System. *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy*, 22: 211-231.

<sup>22</sup> Durrant, C., Clarke, I., Tolland, A. & Wilson, H. (2007). Designing a CBT Service for an Acute In-patient Setting: A pilot evaluation study. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 14: 117-125.

<sup>23</sup> Turner-Stokes, L., Hurn, J., Kneebone, I., Cropley, M. (2006). Goal setting as an outcome measure: A systematic review. *Clinical Rehabilitation*, 20(9): 756-72.

<sup>24</sup> Goodman, R. (1997). The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire: a research note. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 38: 581-586.

<sup>25</sup> Monitoring and Evaluation Package - version II <http://www.healthnettpo.org/nl/1313/tools.html>

### Interviews with teachers, facilitators, project staff and parents

To triangulate the findings, interviews with teachers, facilitators, project staff and parents were held using structured topic lists including closed and open-ended questions. Respondents were, for example, asked if they had observed any changes in children's behaviour in the past six months, and what they thought had caused these changes. To put the findings in context, they were also asked how the children were doing in general and if there were any events that may have affected their well-being in the last 6 months. Interviews were also held with facilitators and War Child staff regarding the quality of implementation and other factors that could have influenced the intervention.

### Analysis

Quantitative data were entered and analysed using Excel and SPSS 20. T-tests were used to assess progress towards achieving the personal goals.

Qualitative data were analysed combining grounded theory and content analysis. The combination of inductive and deductive analysis was chosen to allow for new insights provided by the data, while keeping general themes derived from existing theory in mind. First, intensive case level analysis was done, followed by extensive analysis combining and comparing types of informants, topics and crosscutting themes to discover patterns emerging from the data<sup>26,27</sup>. Coding was done by two researchers individually to increase the objectivity of data analysis. Consensus was reached where needed.

## RESULTS

### 1. Participants' perceptions of well-being

Participants' perspectives on what determines a child's well-being can be summarised in five main categories (in order of frequency): material welfare, access to education, good relations with peers and adults, religious beliefs and a safe environment.

The responses regarding behaviour associated with well-being can be categorised under the following headings: peer relations, relationships with adults, general conduct, emotional well-being and future goals (Table 2). Participants strongly associated being friendly and not fighting, listening well to adults, and being respectful with well-being.

<sup>26</sup> Russell Bernard, H. (2002). *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* Oxford, Altamira Press.

<sup>27</sup> Silverman, D. (2011). *Interpreting Qualitative Data* London, SAGE.



**Table 2. Behaviour associated with well-being by participants**

Category	Behaviour of child that is doing well	N	Behaviour of child that is not doing well	N
<b>Behaviour towards parents/ caregivers</b>	Listens/ does what is told	10	Disobedient	8
	Respectful	5	Lack of respect	8
	Helps at home	3	Doesn't help at home	3
	Loving relationship	3	Runs away / wanders	3
	Other*	3	Does not accept punishment	2
<b>Behaviour towards peers</b>	Friendly to others	7	Lonely and isolated (no friends)	5
	Sharing / helping others	5	Bullying	2
	Playing peacefully	4	Influences others negatively	1
	Playing with friends	3		
General Conduct	No fighting	8	Fighting	8
	No stealing or being greedy	3	Rude and insulting	4
	Humble / graceful	2	Greedy / doesn't share	3
	Other**	2	Steals and makes trouble	2
	Prays a lot	1	Not loved / beaten by others	2
			Doesn't go to church	1
Emotional well-being	Always happy	6	Short tempered / restless	3
	No worries	1	Unhappy	1
Future goals	Tries to achieve good results in school / become intelligent	4	Doesn't go to school	6
			Lazy	4
	Hard working	1	Doesn't care for himself	1

\* accepts punishments/appreciates gifts/does not go out of home without permission

\*\* not using bad words/visiting people

## 2. Outcomes of I DEAL

### *Personal goals of participants*

A total of 110 personal goals were formulated in the five research locations. Most children (45 percent) formulated goals to improve their pro-social behaviour including 'sharing', 'helping', 'being forgiving' and 'having respect for others'. Other children (34 percent) stated goals relating to relationships with others: improve friendships or make more friends, 'socialise' and 'play together' with peers. Nearly one-fifth of children (19 percent) wanted to improve on 'working hard' and being 'disciplined'. Half of them mentioned this in relation to their parents or home environment. Two percent of the children's personal goals combined discipline and pro-social behaviour. One child wanted to improve self-esteem and become more courageous, which could be categorised as 'emotional well-being' and does not fit into the other categories.

Before I DEAL, the average score was 3.0 (SD=1.757, N=74) in relation to achieving their personal goal. Post-test scores (N=74) were significantly higher ( $t(73) = 16.26, p = 0.00$ ), resulting in an average score of 6.9 (SD=1.914). None of the children scored themselves lower after having participated in I DEAL. Boys showed slightly more improvement than girls, with their average improvement rates 4.2 and 3.5 respectively. These differences were not statistically significant, however ( $t(72) = -1.548, p = 0.126$ ). Box 1 provides examples of the variety of goals and progress towards achieving them.



**A 13 year-old girl's personal goal stated:** "I would like to improve on playing with my friends". She indicated that she progressed from 4 to 6 on the visual scale (0-10), and explained: "I was afraid of playing with peers but now at least I talk and play with them."

**A 10 year-old girl stated:** "I would like to improve on hard work with parents at home." She indicated that she progressed from 1 to 2 on her personal goal. "I used to avoid work at home but now I can fetch water and wash utensils." She explained that seeing good examples from peers helped her during the sessions.

**A 9 year-old boy's personal goal stated:** "I would like to try to be more forgiving when someone has done something wrong." After I DEAL he moved from 3 to 7: "I no longer fight in revenge, but I control my temper and take time to decide. For example, someone slapped me and I did not react. But after a day, I asked him and he asked for forgiveness from him and I did. [But] when someone has seriously hurt me it takes time to forgive."

During evaluation interviews (N=62), 48 percent of the respondents stated that they noticed significant personal improvement, while 30 percent noticed some improvement. The main types of improvement are listed in Table 3.

None of the participants reported negative changes, although 14 children (22 percent) did not report any changes during their interviews. Two of them also showed very little progress towards their personal goals and indicated that they did not like the games and they thought that I DEAL was too difficult. Four children dropped out of the intervention, and therefore missed a significant amount of sessions. The other eight did report positive improvement regarding their personal goals.

### *Social coping skills*

Most children reported changes regarding social skills and relationships during the interviews. The following changes are described in more detail below: reduced conduct problems, improved pro-social behaviour, relationship with peers, and relationship with adults.

Thirty-nine percent (n=24) of children interviewed reported that they fight less and are less aggressive after having participated in I DEAL. As one 11 year-old boy stated:

**"I have noticed some changes in me, for example, I used to fight a lot but since I was taught about dealing with emotions, I could forgive and control my emotions."**

Also, two children said they used to steal, but no longer do so. A teacher from the same school confirmed that some children stopped stealing. Teachers in three locations and a facilitator confirmed a decrease in fighting, bullying and other aggressive behaviour. One parent mentioned that her child fights less with friends.

Eleven percent (n=7) described more general improvement in sharing, helping and respecting others (pro-social behaviour). A 13 year-old girl explained:

**"Before I was not listening to people but now I am good at listening to people and respecting everybody."**

This was also observed by four teachers, who stated that some children started helping others their classmates with their schoolwork lessons and were showing more respect for others. According to three teachers in two locations, girls and young children in particular displayed improvement in their general behaviour after I DEAL. One facilitator mentioned that participants became better at sharing during I DEAL.

One-third (n=20) of the children indicated that they strengthened their friendships and improved their social skills, learning how to make friends and 'play well' together. Some made new friends during I DEAL, others reported to have strengthened existing friendships. This change is also described by two teachers who observed children working together well, helping each other, becoming more united as a group and more sociable.

Children's relationship with adults also improved in many cases. Nineteen percent (N=12) of the children interviewed reported improvement in their relationship with adults. The type of changes children described in relationships with parents related mostly to respect and obedience, are represented in these two quotes:

**"Whatever my parent tells me to do I always do in time."**

**"I always apologise to my parents for the bad things I do to them."**

Eleven participants and seven parents described these types of changes. Only one 14-year-old boy described a different form of improvement in his relationship with his parents. He said, "I can go for advice to my parents now." Teachers also report that children were more obedient, with girls in particular showing more respect towards teachers after the intervention. See Table 3 for an overview of changes reported in interviews.

**Table 3. General changes reported in interviews with participants**

Type of change	%	N	Girls N	Boys N
Less fighting and less aggressive	39	24	10	14
Improved friendships and social skills	32	20	8	12
Improved relation with parents and other adults	19	12	4	8
Improved on sharing / helping / respecting others	11	7	4	3
Less worries and better control over own emotions	6	4	3	1
No more stealing	3	2	1	1
<b>Participant described one type of change</b>	39	4	10	14
<b>Participant described more than one type of change</b>	39	3	10	14
<b>Participant could not mention any relevant changes</b>	22	8	5	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>37</b>

*Emotional coping skills*

Only four children (N=62) reported that they worried less than before or could control their fears better. One boy implicitly cited emotional coping skills as his reason for participating in I DEAL:

**11 year old boy:** "I wanted to participate in I DEAL because of playing games like boom-chika. They make me stronger and physically fit in the mind as well as making me learn to let go of other problems like the memories of bad things like death, poverty, lack of food."

One of the teachers commented that I DEAL reduces children's problems because "playing makes them no longer think of it."

Two facilitators observed that children became more confident and active during I DEAL sessions over time. Teachers (n=4) also reported that children in I DEAL had become more courageous in class and participated more. However, both a facilitator and a teacher mentioned that improved self-confidence sometimes resulted in defiant and disruptive behaviour from a few children. The facilitator stated:

**"...some children can also become more stubborn, they start making fun of it [the activity], because when you learn to express yourself you get this freedom, you're free at heart and free in your mind."**

A few teachers noted that some pupils remained very shy, hardly participating in class. Children themselves did not mention an increase in confidence specifically, with the exception of two participants who referred to this in their personal goal.



#### *Academic performance*

All teachers interviewed reported positive changes in their pupil's academic performance after participating in I DEAL. "Some children started studying together in groups, even without being told," explained one teacher. According to another teacher, pupils performed better because they were more attentive, and some became more confident and participatory in class. "It has also empowered some children to actively participate in the class, they have now realised their right to talk in public or class". One teacher stated that pupils who had participated in I DEAL showed improved memory.

**Teacher:** "I DEAL children are performing better than those who did not participate. In the way they behave, for example they have learned about respecting one another and their parents and teachers. Such improvement has made their learning not to be interrupted through psychological issues."

*Causality*

Five out of six teachers and four parents answered that they thought I DEAL caused the changes they observed in children.

**“I DEAL games help children to positively interact and share ideas on their learning in class and outside issues such as how they are supposed to behave at home to their parents. This cements their friendship further,” explained a female teacher.**

Another teacher said: “Children told me that I DEAL has caused some changes in them such as learning to be respectful to parents, teachers and their friends.” Four other parents attributed the changes to I DEAL in combination with lessons in school. Advice from teachers, parents, other NGO interventions (gardening project) and positive peer influence were also possible causes mentioned less frequently.

To confirm that outcomes resulted from I DEAL, other interventions and external factors affecting participants' well-being were also explored. There were no other psychosocial support activities in the research locations. UNICEF provided scholastic materials in three locations, and in one location a gardening project was taking place during the same period of I DEAL.

### 3. Factors influencing intervention outcomes

In order to identify factors influencing the outcomes, a process evaluation was conducted to assess: appreciation of the intervention, attendance, the quality of implementation, characteristics of facilitators, and contextual factors (security, illnesses, and accessibility of locations). As appreciation and attendance may have had more direct influence on the individual outcomes, these are described below.

*Appreciation*

Participants generally liked the I DEAL sessions, especially the module addressing social relationships with peers. The module on solving conflicts, which they liked least, they also considered the most useful, along with the module on dealing with emotions. None of the participants thought that certain modules or sessions should be removed. Participants provided suggestions on how to improve certain exercises, and recommended including local games in the sessions. Most children felt good during the group sessions and enjoyed participating. As one of the researchers described:

**“The general mood is very positive, everyone is participating, including both facilitators, and there were a lot of smiles and giggles.”**

However, at times, some children didn't like the games or felt embarrassed:

**9 year old girl: “For me, I did not want to participate because I do not want to**



**be embarrassed by friends, for example, during the introduction I do not speak Arabic language very well. (...) sometimes I feel bad to be in the group when I am embarrassed."**

**11 year old girl: "I did not feel good most of the time, because the games are hard to understand."**

A significant positive relationship was found between the level of enjoyment in I DEAL and changes reported by participants in the interviews (Kendall's  $\tau=0.269$ ,  $p=0.025$ ). Children who enjoyed I DEAL less (16 percent) reported less improvement at the end of the intervention.

### *Participation*

Of the 122 participating children, 24 percent attended all 19 sessions, 38 percent missed 1-3 sessions, and 6 percent missed 4-7 sessions. The main reasons for missing a session were illness and domestic chores such as work in the garden or cleaning. 32 percent of the children completely dropped out, of which 75 percent (29 children) dropped out during the last module, predominantly in the two locations that postponed the last sessions to after the Christmas holidays. Sometimes sessions were cancelled or postponed due to national holidays or festivities, or because community meetings were held in the same location. In a few locations children missed sessions for security reasons related to inter-communal conflict. One teacher indicated that some parents did not support their children's participation because they perceived the sessions as playtime.



## DISCUSSION

Behaviours mentioned in relation to well-being in interviews were 'working hard' and 'being disciplined'. These are clearly values held by children, and potentially essential factors for improving relationships with parents and other adults in the context of South Sudan. That only few children explicitly cited coping with emotions as a difficulty or change might be caused by cultural or linguistic factors.

Some respondents did not mention any general changes during the interviews, while they did report on changes related to their personal goals. This may indicate that it was too difficult to respond to an open question that asked for reflection on 'general changes due to their participation in I DEAL'.

Facilitators conducted the facilitation and documentation of personal goals during the group sessions, risking socially desirable scores. However, results indicate that children were realistic in scoring their progress and did not score too high at the start or the end. It was expected that one researcher who was already known by many respondents as an I DEAL facilitator would receive more socially desirable answers regarding appreciation of the intervention and the facilitation. In reality, respondents seemed more open and critical in the interviews and group discussions conducted by this researcher.

As not every child experiences behavioural, social or emotional problems as a result of being exposed to conflict, this raises questions regarding the selection of children to participate in the intervention. As not every child experiences behavioural, social or emotional problems as a result of being exposed to violence, it could be argued that selection of participants is needed, based on psychosocial distress screening<sup>29</sup>. War Child Holland, however, aims to enhance social integration by including all children in a given class or school in I DEAL, because screening and selecting certain children to participate could cause stigmatisation of those selected or jealousy amongst those excluded.

<sup>29</sup> Jordans, M.J.D., Komproe, I.H., Tol, W.A. & de Jong, J.T.V.M. (2008). Screening for psychosocial distress amongst war affected children: Crosscultural construct validity of the CPDS. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 50(4): 514-523.

## Limitations

Due to its intervention-driven nature, this research used a convenience sample. Based on practical and ethical considerations, a control group was not included. Therefore, conclusions regarding attribution of outcomes have to be drawn with care. However, the interviews provide strong qualitative evidence as the sample size was substantial and responses from children were triangulated with those of parents, teachers and facilitators.

Demographic information regarding psychosocial well-being and socioeconomic status was not analysed, therefore conclusions about representativeness cannot be drawn. The drop-out rates for personal goal measurements were 33 percent, which may have biased the results.

## CONCLUSION

Contributing to three international research priorities<sup>30</sup>, this study demonstrates that I DEAL positively affects children's social coping skills and potentially improves children's emotional coping skills and classroom performance. Research findings provide insights regarding children's own perceptions of well-being, and how children, their parents and teachers, evaluate the intervention. Conclusions about the intervention's effectiveness have to be drawn with care due to the study's limitations.

### Does I DEAL address participants' perceptions of well-being?

The content of I DEAL is consistent with local perceptions of determinants of well-being; having positive social relationships with peers and adults, through being respectful, friendly, preventing conflicts, and being able to cope with negative emotions.

The factors that children associated with well-being that I DEAL does not directly address are religious behaviours as a form of support, well-disciplined behaviour, education, safety and material welfare. Safety, disciplined behaviour and education are addressed indirectly in I DEAL through strengthening participants' abilities to seek social support from peers and adults, being respectful, and coping with emotions. Other War Child Holland programme components address safe environments and access to education. Material welfare and religion are currently not addressed in War Child's work.

<sup>30</sup> See 10.

### What are the outcomes of I DEAL?

I DEAL aims to strengthen social and emotional coping skills and confidence. In line with previous evaluations<sup>31</sup>, the main changes reported by children after participating in I DEAL were related to social coping skills. The majority of children reported experiencing positive changes after I DEAL, as well as having improved on their personal goal. The main changes reported by children as well as by facilitators, teachers and parents were decreased fighting and improved relationships with peers and parents.

The reported decrease in fighting suggests improvement in the ability to cope with the emotions leading to aggressive behaviour. Integrating personal-goal setting into the intervention allowed all children to participate in the evaluation and provided insight both in the goals participants set for themselves and in the progress they made towards achieving them.

Furthermore, in line with studies in western settings<sup>32,33,34</sup> and earlier findings from War Child Holland in Uganda<sup>35</sup>, psychosocial support seems to have positively affected pupil's academic performance. This may be explained by the social and emotional coping skills gained during I DEAL, that have been shown to positively affect performance<sup>36,37</sup>.

### What factors influenced the intervention's outcomes?

The findings indicate a positive correlation between enjoyment of the sessions and outcomes: participants who enjoyed I DEAL less than others reported less improvement. The content of I DEAL was highly appreciated by the participants.

Delays in implementation, drop-out of children, the quality of implementation and venue, number of trained facilitators, means of transport and weather conditions may have affected the outcomes of the intervention.

<sup>31</sup> See 12-14.

<sup>32</sup> Parker, J. D. A., Cregue, R.E., Barnhart, D.L., Harris, J., Majeski, S.A., Wood, L.M., Bond, B.J., & Hogan, M.J. (2004). Academic achievement in high school: Does emotional intelligence matter? *Personality and Individual Differences* 37: 1321-1330.

<sup>33</sup> Gavala, J.R. & Flett, R. (2005). Influential factors moderating academic enjoyment/motivation and psychological well-being for Maori university students at Massey University. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 34: 52-57.

<sup>34</sup> Van der Merwe, N. (2005). The Relationship between psychosocial well-being and academic performance of university students Mini-dissertation North-West University, Potchefstroom.

<sup>35</sup> See 12-14.

<sup>36</sup> Lam L.T. & Kirby, S.L. (2002). Is Emotional Intelligence an Advantage? An exploration of the impact of Emotional Intelligence on individual performance. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 142(1): 133-143.

<sup>37</sup> Zins J.E., R.P. Weissberg, M.C. Wang & H.J. Walberg (2004) *Building academic success on social and emotional learning: What does the research say?* Teachers College Press, New York.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings from this study should be used to further improve the effectiveness of the psychosocial support intervention and inform further research. The results point towards the following recommendations:

- To ensure relevance for the cultural context and existing needs, psychosocial support interventions need to be built on a thorough needs assessment, and should be developed in collaboration with the community, and other organizations. This can also prevent interruptions or delay due to conflicts with school and community activities.
- To effectively promote children's psychosocial wellbeing and healthy development, psychosocial interventions should be combined with other interventions addressing material wellbeing, health, education, protection and using local resources and coping mechanisms.
- To foster consistent participation and sustainability, community support for psychosocial support for children needs to be increased, particularly by parents.
- Because enjoyment of a psychosocial support intervention is essential for its effectiveness, local games should be included and facilitators should ensure voluntary participation and make children feel comfortable during the sessions.

### Further research

- Additional research is needed on the relation between specific exercises and modules and I DEAL outcomes and to draw conclusions about attribution.
- More research is needed to explore the outcomes of I DEAL on academic performance and to explore the long-term outcomes of I DEAL on children's psychosocial wellbeing.



