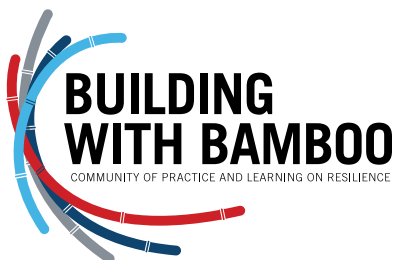




Resilience-based approaches for street-connected children exposed to sexual abuse & sexual exploitation

Final Report, September 2018



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This research report was written by Dr Ruth Edmonds on behalf of the Consortium for Street Children (CSC).

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Acronyms

CSC

Consortium for Street Children

JUCONI

Fundación Junto Con Los Niños

S.A.L.V.E.

Support And Love Via Education

CWISH

Children and Women in Social Service and
Human Rights

Contents

Executive Summary	5
About this Report	9
1. Introduction & Background	10
1.1 Context	11
1.2 Objectives	12
1.3 Concepts	13
1.4 Learning questions	16
1.5 Learning partners	17
2. Approach	18
2.1 Learning and innovation	19
2.2 Local narratives of resilience	21
2.3 Local learning frameworks	22
2.4 Learning activities for data collection	23
2.5 Training resilience champions	24
2.6 Cycles of learning and innovation	25
2.7 Ethics and child safeguarding	29
3. Learning about Resilience Practice Change & Development	30
3.1 Building trusting & meaningful relationships	32
3.2 Emotionally (re)connecting children	38
3.3 Sharing experiences & self-reflections	44
3.4 Developing feelings of “I can”	48
4. Indications of Resilience & Well-being Outcomes	55
4.1 Strengthened relationships	57
4.2 Increased internal strength & self-belief	60
4.3 More positive attitudes & outlook	62
4.4 Increased support seeking behaviour	64
4.5 More expressive & emphatic behaviour	65
4.6 Increased self-control & emotional self-regulation	67
5. Implications	68
5.1 Conditions for using a learning & innovation approach	69
5.2 Principles for resilience-based approaches	71
5.3 Potential opportunities of resilience-based approaches	73
References	75

Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

'Building with Bamboo' led by Consortium for Street Children (CSC), is an international learning project exploring resilience-based approaches to working with street-connected children who are exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The project was the second phase of the Oak Foundation's Bamboo Initiative and focused on piloting the findings from the first research phase. Three action learning projects were implemented successfully with three CSC network members working with street-connected children and child domestic workers in Ecuador, Uganda and Nepal.

OBJECTIVES

The second phase of the Building with Bamboo project explored resilience-based practice in terms of how organisations work and what forms a resilience-informed or resilience-based approach might usefully take. Learning questions included:

- How can the findings about resilience be put into practice as approaches that promote or increase the resilience of children exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation?
- How are these approaches promoting or increasing the resilience of children exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation?
- How does promoting or increasing the resilience of children exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation improve outcomes for them?

LEARNING PARTNERS

Building with Bamboo was implemented in close collaboration with three organisations from within the CSC network:



JUCONI Ecuador, a site where resilience-based approaches were well-established.



S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda, a site where resilience informed - but was not central to - practice.



CWISH, Nepal, a site where resilience-based practice was not currently in use.

APPROACH

CSC designed and executed a bespoke learning and innovation approach which drew on developmental evaluation, ethnographic principles and participatory action research. The approach emphasised dynamic, flexible and iterative programme implementation, using cycles of learning and innovation to drive the adaptation and refinement of learning partners' resilience-based approaches over the project period. This approach to programme development maximises opportunities to learn from challenges and failures as well as successes. It was considered particularly suitable to the unstable, uncertain and chaotic settings in which street-connected children live and where the learning partners work on a day-to-day basis.

Executive Summary

LEARNING

Key learning about resilience practice change and development (see section 3):

What: Build trusting and meaningful relationships towards a transitional attachment in children's lives.

How can this be achieved?

- Be a constant and persistent presence in the child's life.
- Be consistent in the approach staff use with the child.
- Be a real relationship in the child's life.
- Focus on the positives.
- Approach gently.

What: Emotionally (re)connect children.

How can this be achieved?

- Identify who to re-connect a child with.
- Work closely with parents/caregivers on a one-to-one basis.
- Focus on the relationship(s) to work with children and parents/caregivers together.
- Begin the emotional (re)connection in the child's world and on their terms.
- Take time and don't expect quick results.

What: Share experiences and self-reflections.

How can this be achieved?

- Develop children's ability to self-reflect and share these reflections.
- Create opportunities for example setting amongst peer groups.
- Enable practitioners to share their own stories with each other.

What: Develop feelings of "I can."

How Can this be achieved?

- Don't impose, judge or correct.
- Identify the problems that need solving together with the child.
- Encourage the child to start small.
- Create space for the child to play and release stress.
- Facilitate safe and supportive relationships between the child and others who might help them find solutions.
- Equip the child with skills that make them feel more positive about themselves and which they can use to develop solutions.

INDICATIONS

Indications of resilience and well-being outcomes in children's lives when organisations use resilience-based approaches (see section 4):

1. Strengthened relationships

- Children develop deeper and more extensive peer-to-peer networks.
- Children open up and share their thoughts and feelings within their relationships.
- Children develop more trusted and supportive networks with formal/non-formal actors.
- Children show more trust and confidence in organisations and their commitment to supporting them.
- Children seem to increasingly enjoy their relationships.

Executive Summary

2. Increased internal strength and self-belief

- Children develop more impetus to address the challenges they face.
- Children are more able to adapt and cope with challenges.

3. More positive attitudes and outlook

- Children show a brightness and interest in life and feel good in and about themselves.
- Children become more hopeful about their futures.
- Children increasingly value positive feelings.

4. Increased support-seeking behaviour

- Children become more proactive in giving and seeking support.
- Children increasingly value and nurture reciprocal relationships.

5. More expressive and emphatic behaviour

- Children increasingly share their feelings and experiences with others, including their most negative stories.
- Children are more able to relate and respond to others in positive, understanding and supportive ways.

6. Increased self-control and emotional self-regulation

- Children are less overwhelmed and consumed by anger and think before they act.
- Children behave in ways which show they respect and value themselves and others.

IMPLICATIONS

Conditions for organisations wanting to use a learning and innovation approach to become more iterative and responsive in their work with street-connected children (see section 5.1):

1. **Embed learning** and innovation processes to continually reflect on and challenge practice.
2. Create space within the organisation to **'stick with the question'**.
3. Acknowledge and **explore failure** as well as success.
4. Take a **humble approach** to learning and innovation.
5. Be **open to learning** and **flexible to change**.

Practice principles for organisations wanting to work in resilience-based ways with street-connected children (see section 5.2).

1. **Make the relationship the central reference point of the approach** to ensure the presence of essential building blocks, such as trusting and meaningful relationships for children, that are required to maintain resilience over time (Vanistendael and Lecomte, 2000).
2. **Concentrate on listening, but don't be afraid to ask** to understand challenges from the child's perspectives and promote resilience in ways which are most impactful for helping children overcome them.
3. **Know when to engage directly and when and how to work through others** to facilitate relationships between children and other formal/non-formal actors who are in a better position to support them and develop their resilience.

Executive Summary

4. Build in time to work at the child's pace to spend as long as it takes to work with a child and understand their multiple, complex and changing challenges and needs.

5. Actively promote practitioners' understanding of resilience and equip them with the right skills and abilities to work in resilience-based ways so they are able to promote resilience in the children they work with.

6. Be flexible and unafraid to change direction to follow the child's lead, turn a practice 'on its head' and be experimental.

Potential opportunities for organisations wanting to use resilience-based approaches (see section 5.3):

- 1. Changing mindsets** of and about street-connected children.
2. Creating more **transformative outcomes** for children.
- 3. Creating lasting emotional connections** for children.
- 4. Changing the role of organisational support** to facilitate other forms of **support for children from formal/non-formal actors**.
- 5. Encouraging a more preventative approach** to mitigating adversity.

About this Report

WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS REPORT

1. Introduction & background

This section describes the project context, objectives, concepts, learning questions and learning partners.

2. Approach

This section sets out the learning and innovation methodology in terms of how we designed and executed 'cycles of learning and innovation' to continually iterate resilience-based practice at three learning partner sites.

3. Learning about resilience-based practice change & development

This section presents a series of key themes which describe the 'what' and 'how' of working in resilience-based ways, illustrated by quotes and practice case studies, including embedded videos which help to bring these practices to life.

4. Indications of resilience and well-being outcomes

This section presents a series of key themes about what happens when organisations work in resilience-based ways. This section draws heavily on quotes and stories from our work with children, families and communities to bring their experiences forward.

5. Implications

This section presents some conditions for organisations wanting to use a learning and innovation approach to practice change and development, some resilience practice principles for working in resilience-based ways and potential opportunities for organisations wanting to use a resilience-based approach.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS REPORT?

This report has been written for practitioners, academics, policy-makers and grant-making institutions. The learnings provide useful information for organisations which might be thinking about designing, implementing, funding or evaluating resilience-based work with street-connected children exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS REPORT?

- Learn about working in resilience-based ways and how to develop practice which promotes resilience in street-connected children.
- Learn about what happens when organisations work in resilience-based ways and the potential of a resilience-based approach.
- Learn how to develop an iterative approach to practice change and development in order to become more responsive to children's needs.



1. Introduction & Background

Context, objectives, concepts, learning questions & learning partners

1.1 Context

BUILDING WITH BAMBOO IS AN INTERNATIONAL LEARNING PROJECT EXPLORING RESILIENCE-BASED APPROACHES TO WORKING WITH STREET-CONNECTED CHILDREN WHO ARE EXPOSED TO SEXUAL ABUSE AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION.

The project was the second phase of the Oak Foundation's Bamboo initiative and focuses on implementation. It builds on Building with Bamboo's first research phase, which sought to understand resilience in children exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation ([see](#)).

This second phase of Building with Bamboo piloted the research findings by implementing action learning projects with three local partner organisations working with street-connected children and child domestic workers in Ecuador, Uganda and Nepal. We explored these learning partners' experience of adapting and innovating resilience-based approaches to promote resilience and well-being outcomes in children who are street-connected and exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, among many other adversities.

1.2 Objectives

THE OVERARCHING OBJECTIVE OF THE SECOND PHASE OF BUILDING WITH BAMBOO WAS TO EXPLORE THE INITIAL RESEARCH IN PRACTICE AND UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENS AS A RESULT OF THIS PRACTICE CHANGE IN THE CONTEXT OF CHILDREN'S LIVES.

The second phase of Building with Bamboo was about exploring resilience-based practice by learning about how organisations can work in resilience-based ways and what forms a resilience-informed or resilience-based approach might usefully take. As such, we have focused on learning about and from organisation staff as well as children and, importantly, the relationships between them.

Consequently, this report emphasises both:

- **Learning** about resilience-based practice in terms of what it means to work in a resilience-informed or resilience-based way
- **Indications** about what happens in the context of children's lives when organisations work like this.

The learning and indications offer viable ways forward for researchers, policy-makers and funding bodies to introduce and use resilience approaches to improve outcomes for children in street situations and related difficult environments.

However, it is important to recognise that promoting or strengthening resilience in children is not a simple or quick process. We focused on understanding resilience practice change and development and short-term indications of changes in children's lives. We are therefore not able to conclusively say children are now more resilient in terms of a sustained ability to respond to adverse situations in the future. The project also did not envisage or provide a set of resilience indicators to measure long-term impact. These would, however, be useful next steps for follow up work to explore these indications of positive change even further.

1.3 Concepts

THE SECTION BELOW INTRODUCES THE KEY CONCEPTS IN THE PROJECT: 'RESILIENCE', 'RESILIENCE-BASED APPROACHES', 'STREET-CONNECTED CHILDREN' AND 'SEXUAL ABUSE AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION'.

1. What do we mean by 'resilience'?

The concept of resilience is gaining international currency and is fast becoming a focus for programme and policy development and funding. This includes a growing number of programmes directed towards street-connected children and other vulnerable children in related difficult situations. Building with Bamboo acknowledges that the concept of resilience is impossible to universally define. However, we recognise the following key elements:

- A resilient child is one who copes better with adversity than he or she might be expected to.
- Resilience may be present in individual or group contexts.
- Resilience should be seen as a process in interaction with the environment, not an inherent quality in the child, and must be viewed in the wider context of children's lives.

Building with Bamboo recognises that resilience is described and talked about in different ways dependent on culture and language. For example, Ungar (2004) argues that definitions of resilience are socially constructed, and normative values about

what constitute universal positive outcomes for children reflect hegemonic cultural values of Western societies, where the majority of studies on resilience have been conducted. Given this, in order to operationalise the concept in the context of the different learning partners, we developed local narratives about resilience. These local narratives sought to identify locally relevant and meaningful components of resilience in each of these learning sites. They narratives were important for recognising resilience when it showed up and, thus, understanding how learning partner practices contributed to resilience and well-being outcomes (see section 2.2).

2. What do we mean by 'resilience-based approaches'?

Essentially, a resilience-based approach is one which focuses on strengths and which recognises children's agency to negotiate adversity and develop coping strategies in the context of appropriate support. A resilience-based approach to working with children exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation is one which:

- Acknowledges, values, promotes and reinforces the child's own strengths and resourcefulness in the face of risk.
- Sees children as active agents in their lives, not passive victims.
- Recognises the strategies that are deployed by children in the face of adversity.
- Can be promoted at individual, group and community levels, including by working with formal/non-formal actors – those in the community who support a child's ability to be resilient.
- Attends to the 'building blocks' that are

1.3 Concepts

needed in a child's life to strengthen resilience and acknowledges that there is a sequence in terms of how resilience can be promoted (see Vanistendael & Lecomte, 2000; Ungar, 2004).

However, resilience is not a catch-all solution to adversity in a child's life. Resilience-based approaches recognise that some factors in a child's life, such as poverty, may be overwhelming for them. They also recognise the vital role that formal actors must play in the realisation of a child's right to live free from exploitation and abuse (for example politicians, the police, teachers, faith and community leaders). Resilience-based approaches, therefore, acknowledge these overwhelming barriers and consider the ways that formal structures work with and against a child's ability to develop resilience.

3. What do we mean by 'street-connected' children?

Building with Bamboo considers a child to be any person under the age of 18 years. Children who have strong connections to the streets are known as 'street children', 'children in street situations' or 'street-connected children', and by other names. The children who were the focus for our project, therefore, were children for whom the street is a central reference point, playing an important role in their everyday lives, their development and their identities.

We know that the connections that a child makes on the street can be a source of strength, of family and of resources. However, spending time in public spaces also exposes them to a set of challenges, not only

entrenched poverty, stigma, discrimination and hunger, but also exposure to abuse, exploitation and violence.

It is important not to shy away from the resilience factors in a street-connected child's life that may appear risky, morally ambiguous, go against our ideas of childhood and how a child should behave, or which challenge our notions of protection for children and our views about how to realise children's rights in the context of their complex realities.

A child who lives in circumstances of constant adversity, such as those who rely on the street for their survival, is likely to have different priorities for their well-being and different ways of coping with traumatic events which occur within the context of this adversity. Consequently, in order to work effectively in a resilience-based way, organisations need to embrace these realities and work with them, not against them, nor to simply 'correct' them.

Resilience will never 'cure' or erase the deeply entrenched material inequalities and systemic injustices which have led children to take to the streets as a means of survival – and kept them there. Resilience-based approaches to street-connected children, therefore, must not use resilience as a means to dismiss or play down the huge challenges that children face on the street or to shy away from overwhelming obstacles in their lives. However, they do force us to think about how organisations work with street-connected children in ways which truly engage with their realities, rather than using the concept of resilience as another way of promoting practices which are simply not 'in step' with street-connected children's lives.

1.3 Concepts

4. What do we mean by street-connected children who are exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation?

Building with Bamboo considers all street-connected children to be exposed to or at risk of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. Children who are 'exposed' includes those who have not previously been subjected to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation but are at risk, as well as survivors who have previously experienced abuse.

In this project, we focused on a range of different kinds of street connections which had different implications for exposure to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. For example,

some children live and work on the streets either as part of peer groups or with family. Some work in supportive environments such as markets or have trusted adults in their lives who help to protect them against sexual abuse and exploitation. Children living on the street without such protection who are impacted by the need to survive, to generate income and be part of a group or to receive affection will be more at risk. Others work on the streets during the day and return to a family home at night where they might also be exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. We also involved child domestic workers who spent time on the streets but were primarily exposed to sexual abuse and exploitation within the homes they worked in.

1.4 Learning questions

THIS PROJECT WAS GUIDED BY THREE LEARNING QUESTIONS:

1. How can the findings about resilience be put into practice as approaches that promote or increase the resilience of children exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation? *In other words, learning about the process of adapting and innovating resilience-informed or resilience-based approaches.*
2. How are these approaches promoting or increasing the resilience of children exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation? *In other words, learning about the ways in which such approaches are helping children to become more resilient.*
3. How does promoting or increasing the resilience of children exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation improve outcomes for them? *In other words, learning about how increased resilience influences children's well-being and experiences of adversity.*

1.5 Learning partners

BUILDING WITH BAMBOO WAS IMPLEMENTED IN CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH THREE LEARNING PARTNERS FROM WITHIN THE CSC NETWORK.

Learning partners spanned three different levels of resilience-based approaches, including:

JUCONI, Ecuador

A site where resilience-based approaches were well-established.

S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

A site where resilience informed – but was not central to – practice.

CWISH, Nepal

A site where resilience-based practice was not currently in use.

The aim of the learning pilots was to enrich existing practice by promoting resilience among street-connected children who are exposed to sexual abuse and/or sexual exploitation, and to explore how this influences outcomes for children.

LEARNING PARTNERS' PROFILES:

JUCONI Ecuador

JUCONI Ecuador delivers personalised interventions to support vulnerable children and their families to learn from their experiences, develop self-esteem and build healthy relationships.

JUCONI Ecuador's Resilience Champion is Martha Espinoza.

S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

S.A.L.V.E. aims to reduce the number of young people living on the streets through counselling, care and learning. They also support children on the streets to resettle into their families and to re-enter education.

S.A.L.V.E. International's Resilience Champion is Alfred Ochaya.

CWISH, Nepal

CWISH work with child domestic workers, offering rehabilitation, legal advice, counselling and family reintegration support. They also facilitate child domestic workers' attendance at school and access to safe spaces services.

CWISH's Resilience Champion is Krishna P. Subedi.



2. Approach

Overview, preparation, methodology, ethics & safeguarding

2.1 Learning & innovation

WE DESIGNED AND EXECUTED A BESPOKE LEARNING AND INNOVATION APPROACH WHICH DREW ON DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION, ETHNOGRAPHIC PRINCIPLES AND PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH APPROACHES.

The approach emphasised a dynamic, flexible and iterative attitude towards programme implementation, using cycles of learning and innovation to continually learn and feed this learning into the adaptation and refinement of learning partners' resilience-based approaches over the project period. This kind of approach to programme development is not common, but is highly effective in maximising opportunities to learn from challenges and failures as well as successes. It was particularly suitable to the unstable, uncertain and chaotic settings in which the learning partners work on a day-to-day basis - street-connected children's needs are complex, they fluctuate and are influenced by a variety of factors and, therefore, require flexible, agile, adaptable and responsive approaches.

Fundamentally, this approach enabled organisations to evolve and improve their resilience-based approaches over time, focusing on understanding the innovation processes rather than impact processes and incorporating the perspectives of programme practitioners as well as children, families and communities. It therefore addressed some of the limitations of more traditional approaches:

- It was more concerned with learning and innovation than impact. Traditional approaches are primarily concerned with modes of implementation and the measurement of impact (see Edmonds & Cook, 2014). This project prioritised learning by providing learning partners with the space and scope to explore their experiences and try out new ideas.
- It followed a “best process” as opposed to a “best practice” approach. Traditional approaches tend to favour a “best practice” approach in which a menu of options for programme approach and delivery are considered and either chosen or rejected based on a needs assessment (Edmonds and Cook, 2014; Miller and Rudnick, 2012). Following Miller et al. (2010) and Rudnick et al.'s (2016) “best process” approach, this project sought to situate programme approaches and activities in local socio-cultural contexts. The project also sought to evolve these approaches specifically in response to local learning in order to address children's needs from a local perspective rather than an external one (e.g. the ideas programme funders and implementers might have about what is needed rather than what children, community members and staff think is needed) (see also Edmonds and Cook, 2014; Rudnick et al., forthcoming).
- It enabled more dynamic programme implementation so that the design and modes of operation could shift and change in response to children's needs. Traditional approaches are typically less dynamic and

2.1 Learning & innovation

flexible in their approach to programme development and implementation. They emphasise the delivery of typically pre-determined programme models with pre-defined indicators for measuring outcomes and impact. This project took a wholly flexible approach to programme implementation, with the learning driving programme adaptation and innovation so that it could continually respond to this learning and challenge the nature and direction of resilience-based practice at each learning partner (see Miller and Rudnick, 2014).

- It emphasised local accountability. Traditional approaches to programme evaluation, typically using the ‘needs assessment’ approach as described above, favour accountability towards programme funders and local level implementers in terms of measuring ‘success’ (Edmonds, 2016b, 2017, Rudnick et al., forthcoming). By contrast, this project emphasised local accountability in terms of programme delivery being continually responsive to local learning – focusing on how children, staff and community members understand ‘success’ rather than external notions of programme success.”

To put this into practice, we used a series of three ‘learning and innovation cycles’. The methodology for these cycles was based around going through successive phases of learning, analysing and innovating.

To prepare for these cycles:

WE DEVELOPED LOCAL NARRATIVES OF ‘RESILIENCE’ AND ‘WELL-BEING’ TO SITUATE CONCEPTS IN LOCAL SOCIO-CULTURAL SETTINGS

WE DEVELOPED LOCAL LEARNING FRAMEWORKS TO GUIDE LEARNING AROUND LOCAL COMPONENTS OF RESILIENCE AND WELL-BEING

WE DESIGNED LEARNING ACTIVITIES TO BE USED WITH CHILDREN, STAFF AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

WE TRAINED THE RESILIENCE CHAMPIONS TO LEAD THE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

2.2 Local narratives of resilience

WE DEVELOPED LOCAL NARRATIVES OF 'RESILIENCE' TO SITUATE THE CONCEPT IN THE PARTICULAR LOCAL SOCIO-CULTURAL SETTINGS WE WERE WORKING IN.

As section 1.3 above has observed, the concept of resilience is a theoretical one not a locally grounded one. It is not possible to recognise resilience as a concept that applies to all cultural contexts because people's behaviour and practice in relation to the concept of resilience will differ from one cultural context to another. Consequently, it was important to situate the concept of resilience in the different local contexts to ensure that activities - and any learning about them - would be rooted in relevant socio-cultural understandings about what resilience is and how it can be recognised in these given locations (see Edmonds, 2016b; Leighter et al., 2013).

To do this, we drew on methodologies from the Ethnography of Communication (see Carbaugh, 2007) to rapidly generate locally grounded narratives of resilience. In-depth interviews were conducted with each Resilience Champion to explore, in detail, all the local terms which could be used to talk about resilience. This involved identifying the local terms connected with the concept,

and understanding how these terms manifest through people's practices and what forms and meanings they attach to these. In practice, this involved asking, for each local term, things like: "what is it?", "how would one recognise it?", "what kind of things would such a person do/not do and say/not say?" The interview material was subsequently analysed using 'discourse analysis' drawn from the theoretical orientations of the Ethnography of Communication (see Carbaugh, 2007) to treat communication as a socially situated practice. This work generated an understanding of how key local concepts relevant to resilience are recognised in cultural life in the three locations through the production of a 'local narrative of resilience' for each learning site. These local narratives were then further developed and refined at the end of the project based on the learning. Summaries can be found in the Building with Bamboo Country Specific Reports (see [Uganda](#), [Nepal](#) and [Ecuador](#) reports).

This is not to say that there isn't, cross-culturally, a recognisable concept of resilience. In fact, the ability of learning partners from very different socio-cultural settings to work together and understand each other suggests that there is a commonality in the concept. However, in order to recognise the concept when it 'showed up' in the particular places, it was necessary to first identify what forms, practices and meanings are associated with it in each place.

2.3 Local learning frameworks

WE DEVELOPED LOCAL LEARNING FRAMEWORKS, BASED ON THE LOCAL NARRATIVES OF RESILIENCE, AND USED THEM TO GUIDE OUR LEARNING AROUND RELEVANT COMPONENTS OF RESILIENCE IN EACH SITE.

Local learning frameworks, developed around the learning questions and the local narratives, were developed with each Resilience Champion. Each one identified the core components of resilience to be explored through the learning and innovation approach, mapped out against the learning questions.

2.4 Learning activities for data collection

WE DESIGNED LEARNING ACTIVITIES TO GATHER DATA ABOUT RESILIENCE-BASED APPROACHES AND OUTCOMES WITH STAFF, CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

Learning activities to collect data were carefully designed so that they could be used easily by Resilience Champions (and other members of staff) who were not, first and foremost, researchers and who had other pressing demands on their time. Therefore, they needed to:

- Play to their strengths and skills as practitioners who are used to working with children and listening to their stories.
- Align with their other tasks to pilot a set of resilience-based programme activities as part of Building with Bamboo.

Consequently, we designed learning activities which all centred around the idea of storytelling and could be delivered flexibly around other activities by, for example, taking advantage of an opportune moment for a chat with a member of staff or fitting in with a project activity conducted with children.

Learning activities to gather data included:

- Resilience story games with children: conducted with street-connected children who were exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation and who were engaged with learning partner programme activities.

The story game was based around a deck of cards which was developed, bespoke, in each learning site. Each card captured (in both pictures and words) a different local component of resilience as identified in the local learning framework. During the activity, children were encouraged to choose a card and tell a story about it from their own experiences over the past few months, i.e. during the time in which they had been involved in resilience-based programme activities with the organisation.

- Diary entries with staff: developed by Resilience Champions themselves as well as gathered by them from a wider group of staff through short (semi) structured conversations. Conversations lasted anywhere between 5–30 minutes and were held regularly with staff, either during pre-arranged one-to-one sessions or as part of staff meetings.
- Short stories with staff: conducted with individual staff members as well as groups of staff and focussed around specific experiences in relation to working in a resilience-based way.

Learning activities were guided by instruction tools and writing-up templates. As Resilience Champions became more familiar with the activities, they began to adapt them so they fitted better with programme activities and organisation systems. Some of these learning activities have been embedded into the way the organisations operate as part of on-going practice change and development.

2.5 Training resilience champions

RESILIENCE CHAMPIONS WERE TRAINED IN THE LEARNING ACTIVITIES SO THEY COULD USE AND ADAPT THEM WITHIN THEIR OWN CONTEXTS.

Resilience Champions were involved in an initial research capacity training workshop which ran over the course of three days and:

- Provided basic research skills training (linking to their existing skills and strengths as front-line practitioners).
- Introduced them to the learning activities (data collection tools) and gave them a chance to try these out and adapt them for their own contexts.
- Covered research ethics and child safeguarding principles and practices to be followed.

This formal training was followed by more informal and on-going remote mentoring sessions which were held regularly and as needed during each learning and innovation cycle with individual Resilience Champions.

Feedback and reflection sessions, focusing on Resilience Champions' experiences and reflections on using the learning activities, were also held at the end of each cycle. They were used to overhaul the learning activity tools so that we could nuance them according to the contexts and around new lines of enquiry.

2.6 Cycles of learning and innovation

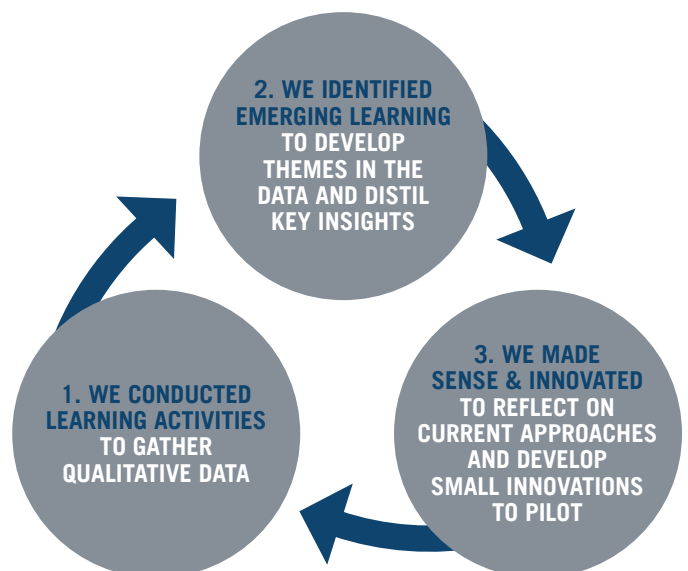
THREE LEARNING AND INNOVATION CYCLES WERE CARRIED OUT OVER THE COURSE OF A YEAR.

The idea of using three learning and innovation cycles as part of the approach was based in our thinking about learning as a driving part of programme adaptation and evolution, rather than a parallel activity to measure outcomes and impact. The cyclical model responded to our need for flexibility through the project journey. This flexibility enabled us to understand programme processes in light of changes in children's lives and emphasise an iterative approach over time which highlighted internal perspectives and supported internal decision-making at learning partner sites.

Learning and innovation cycles typically lasted between three to five months and were based around three core phases which varied in length:

- **Learn**
Learning activities with children, staff and community members to gather data about resilience-based approach implementation and experiences (usually six to eight weeks)
- **Analyse**
Analytic techniques to make sense of the data gathered (usually two to three weeks)
- **Innovate**
Refine resilience-based approaches and try them out (usually two to three weeks)

These phases are outlined in more detail in sections 2.6.1, 2.6.2 & 2.6.3.



2.6.1 Learn

THE FIRST PHASE OF EACH LEARNING AND INNOVATION CYCLE WAS A 'LEARN' PHASE DURING WHICH RESILIENCE CHAMPIONS GATHERED DATA ABOUT EXPERIENCES IN RELATION TO RESILIENCE-BASED APPROACHES FROM A RANGE OF PERSPECTIVES.

During the 'learn' phase, Resilience Champions used the learning activities to gather stories and reflections about experiences in relation to how the resilience-based approaches at each site were evolving and how they are promoting resilience and well-being, as recognised in local ways, from staff, children, family and community perspectives.

The specific number of activities carried out across the three sites depended on time and opportunity but during each 'learn' phase, Resilience Champions typically conducted:

- Between six to ten diary entries with staff, including a combination of both one-to-one and group diaries.
- Between six to ten stories activities with individual staff members, some of whom had also been involved in diary entry activities.
- Between four to six card games with pairs of children, including a mixture of boys and girls, yielding between two to six stories on each occasion.

2.6.2 Analyse

THE SECOND PHASE OF EACH LEARNING AND INNOVATION CYCLE WAS AN 'ANALYSE' PHASE DURING WHICH RESILIENCE CHAMPIONS WORKED TOGETHER TO UNDERSTAND THEIR DATA AND GENERATE KEY LEARNING.

The 'analyse' phase drew on specific analytic techniques to make sense of the data and make it ready for use in the 'innovate' phase. The learning activities yielded a range of data sets including diary entries, notes and story write-ups, including a selection of the most significant stories as chosen by children.

We drew on 'grounded thematic analysis' to ensure interpretations remained rooted in local explanation, rather than our own frameworks for making sense of the world. Grounded thematic analysis is a favoured analytic tool for in-depth qualitative data and ensures that the central focus for analysis is on local values, interpretations and meanings. It involves searching for themes in the data that emerge

as important to the description of phenomena and are meaningful by virtue of being both recognisable and holding some degree of importance to the community in which the data was generated (Schutz 1967).

Resilience Champions were fully involved in the analysis process, receiving training and mentoring support to help them go through the following stages during each cycle:

- Organise and categorise their data by conducting a thorough reading and re-reading of their data sets, then coding them and developing code logs.
- Find themes in their data by reviewing code logs, identifying connections between the codes and creating thematic maps.
- Interpret the themes by attaching meanings to them which drew directly from the meanings that the actions, conversations and observations had for the participants themselves.
- Develop a set of key learning statements in terms of insights which are particularly interesting, surprising and relevant in relation to resilience-based practice and outcomes.

2.6.3 Innovate

THE THIRD PHASE OF EACH LEARNING AND INNOVATION CYCLE WAS AN 'INNOVATE' PHASE DURING WHICH RESILIENCE CHAMPIONS USED KEY INSIGHTS TO REFLECT ON THEIR RESILIENCE-BASED APPROACHES AND INNOVATE TOGETHER.

During the 'innovate' phase, Resilience Champions used the learning to reflect on their resilience-based approaches and help them adapt and innovate these approaches in response to the learning. This involved the following stages:

- Exploring how learning both supported and challenged their approaches and identifying key challenges it posed to their approaches.
- Taking these key challenges and developing 'How Might We...' (HMW) questions to address them. A HMW question begins with the phrase "How Might We..." and is followed by a question which has been developed in response to a particular challenge that the learning throws up for our practice, for example, "How Might We... help staff understand resilience better."
- Choosing a particular HMW question to work with and coming up with a range of 'quick ideas' they could potentially try out to address the chosen question.

- Working up one of the ideas into a concept for action through the use of a combination of written and visual design-based 'ideation' activities, such as storyboards, to help them think through actual implementation of the idea in terms of inputs (activities), outputs and outcomes.
- Conducting a SWOT analysis of the idea to identify the potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with it.
- Developing a visual action plan to support the actual implementation of the idea during the next cycle.

All these activities were conducted collaboratively during cross-site visits between the learning partners. Resilience Champions supported innovation at every learning site by helping each other to reflect on learning in the specific contexts and developing ideas for addressing this learning in terms of new directions for each partner. 'Innovate' phase activities were supported by tools and templates which Resilience Champions used to move through the various stages and arrive at the action plans for trying out concepts.

Innovation at the learning sites was not simply confined to the 'innovate' phase. Learning partners were adapting and innovating throughout the learning and innovation cycles. In this way, programme delivery was never 'static'.

2.7 Ethics and safeguarding

ETHICS AND SAFEGUARDING WERE KEY CONCERNS THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT.

Our learning and innovation approach was informed and driven by the following research ethics principles:

1. Activities should be relevant and lead to clear benefits in people's lives.
2. Activities should be undertaken to a high standard, ensuring findings can reliably be used for their intended purpose, and methodologies should be appropriate to the project objectives, with no gathering of information other than that which is relevant to the project.
3. Activities must avoid harm to any participants, stakeholders and researchers, and we should take steps to protect these individuals during the course of all activities.
4. Activities should be inclusive, especially where marginalised groups are concerned, and participants should be supported to take part in meaningful ways.
5. Activities should be respectful of and informed by cultural sensitivities.
6. Participation should be voluntary, free from any coercion and always based on informed consent.
7. Researchers should ensure the confidentiality of personal information, privacy and anonymity of participants. In all project outputs, we changed the names of children to protect their identities and did not provide information about their locations.



3. Learning

Resilience-based practice change & development

3. Learning about resilience-based practice change & development

Resilience-based practice change &
development

KEY THEME 1

3.1 Building trusting & meaningful relationships

Learning about practices that build trusting and meaningful relationships towards a transitional attachment.

What is it?

PRACTICES WHICH BUILD TRUSTING AND MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS TOWARDS A TRANSITIONAL ATTACHMENT IN CHILDREN'S LIVES.

Building a trusting and meaningful relationship in a child's life is a crucial part of a staff member becoming a 'transitional attachment' for them, as they work with the child towards:

- Emotionally (and physically) reconnecting with a more permanent parent or other caregiver.
- Sharing experiences and self-reflections which are helpful and healing.
- Developing confidence and self-belief in their ability to change their situation for the better.

Consequently, practices which build trusting and meaningful relationships with street-connected children who have been sexually abused and sexually exploited essentially lay the foundations for other aspects of a resilience-based approach (see below). In this way, building trusting and meaningful relationships is an essential building block in a resilience-based approach (see also Vanistendael and Lecomte, 2000).

Alma (a mother we worked with) was angry and used to beat her children in a horrible way, but she started to learn how to exercise self-control and reduce her anger. She said: "I can't tolerate this anger inside me." We started working with her – found a comfortable place to meet with some nice food – but when she came she didn't like any of it. When the keyworker said something nice about her, Alma said: "you are lying." Alma destroyed everything good that the staff member tried to do but at the same time she wanted to be there.

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador

How can I do it?

1. BE A CONSTANT AND PERSISTENT PRESENCE IN THE CHILD'S LIFE

Being a constant and persistent presence in the child's life during the relationship-building process is important for developing a trusting and meaningful relationship with them. The following elements were useful for doing this:

- Ensuring staff always turn up when they have said they will.
- Ensuring staff members turn up even if they are not wanted, the situation is difficult, they are pushed away or the child (or parent/caregiver) feels they should give up on them.

Kato, 15yrs, and his mother only started to trust JUCONI when they saw they were still there, through everything. The boy's mother had been abandoned in a rubbish tip when she was a baby and wanted to do the same with her own children. She was extremely violent with her children. JUCONI were constantly there and the family started to trust them. When Kato saw the work that JUCONI were doing with his mother and how it changed her, he said: "I want to be a baby again, and be in my mother's arms."

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador

Kibirije, 15yrs, was always fighting and never wanted to share how he was feeling. He described himself as "impossible" but we never gave up on him. Now he is developing an ability to share his feelings and control his anger.

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

Donald, 18yrs, came to us from a very poor situation at home and had a difficult time on the street but we kept saying to him: "Donald, we still love you, we are still here for you." We are the people who believed in him and that helped him to feel brighter about his future.

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

How can I do it?

2. BE CONSISTENT IN THE APPROACH STAFF USE WITH A CHILD

Taking a consistent approach is important for building trust with a child, especially in the case of street-connected children. The following elements were found helpful for doing this:

- Keeping a consistent staff member for the child from first contact right through the intervention, as far as is possible.
- Keeping a consistent approach in terms of the particular ways that staff members engage with the child.



Practice case study:

Organising staff to ensure a consistent approach, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda.

Kintu, 17yrs, had lots of complicated issues at home and indeed he returned to the street often whenever he was resettled at home. When there was consistency of the same staff visiting him at home, he settled and never came back to the street.

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

Alex, 14yrs, spent a lot of time on the street because his parents were not providing for him at home. S.A.L.V.E. have worked closely with the family, visiting again and again until all the issues between Alex and his parents were resolved, enabling him to settle properly back at home.

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

How can I do it?

3. BE A REAL RELATIONSHIP IN THE CHILD'S LIFE

It is important to develop a genuine relationship with the child which is based on their own terms, not those of the organisation or staff member. The following elements were found useful for doing this:

- Being available to listen to children on their terms (e.g. at times, spaces and at a pace which suits them) and really open to receiving their thoughts and emotions. This requires considerable attention to staff members' abilities to deal with such thoughts and emotions.
- Showing interest in the child and letting them know that staff members are thinking of them even if they are not always with the child.
- Making the child feel important and special to somebody by taking a genuine interest in them and their daily experiences.

A maths teacher in a public school in Katmandu attended CWISH training. Before, the children were fearful of speaking with him, but after he learnt new skills [using drawing activities to encourage children to open up in their own words, taking a gentle approach, learning to listen], they now open up to him and he informs CWISH if there is a problem that needs addressing.

Krishna, CWISH, Nepal

How can I do it?

4. FOCUS ON THE POSITIVES

Focusing on the positives is an important first step in building trusting and meaningful relationships. The following elements were found useful for doing this:

- Giving real and evidenced positive feedback, not something that is untrue or something we are wondering or guessing about the child.
- Giving positive feedback in small doses, especially (a) at the beginning of the relationship; (b) with especially vulnerable children who simply cannot tolerate hearing positive things about themselves; and (c) to ensure that staff members do not suppress or bury the negative experiences that children need to share by only having positive conversations with them.
- Helping staff members understand the importance of focusing on positives by getting them to explore and reflect on their own positive experiences and relationships.
- Creating a positive environment in which the child feels completely safe, comfortable and protected, for example by providing access to information and giving them the sense that there is always someone they can turn to for help, comfort and encouragement. For example, at CWISH, child domestic workers describe their staff as 'surakshya kawach' or 'safety armour'.
- Actively challenging the child's negative self-perceptions, for example by getting them to share these with staff and peers and then challenging them together.

A positive approach is something we encourage with staff, teachers and employers. We ask them to reflect on positive moments in their own childhoods to help them understand how important positive experiences and reactions are, and to think about how they use words and gestures towards child domestic workers. As a result, they become more sensitive in their responses to children who are then more inclined to open up to them.

Krishna, CWISH, Nepal

If positive feedback was a medicine for increasing resilience, we need to give it in small doses to gradually build a child's tolerance for learning and internalising positive perceptions of themselves.

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador

How can I do it?

5. APPROACH GENTLY

Approaching gently is important in the relationship-building process because very vulnerable children (and parents/caregivers) often don't know how to tolerate or cope with both the presence of a positive relationship in their lives and receiving positive feedback through this. Consequently, a gentle approach can lay important foundations for the development of a trusting relationship that can - in turn - influence resilience outcomes. The following elements were found useful for doing this:

- Staff members sharing something light-hearted about themselves to encourage children to open up to them.
- Using non-verbal tools, such as drawing and story-telling, to create a positive environment in which children (and parents/caregivers) feel comfortable sharing their stories.
- Using touch (where appropriate) to show empathy with children and parents/caregivers.
- Listening more than asking, being a good listener and really paying attention to what a child is saying (rather than being preoccupied with our own perceptions about the child) to develop real understanding from the child's (or parent/caregiver's) perspective.

- Not shying away from asking direct questions (especially in situations of exposure to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation where children might not reveal this unless they are asked directly) but going about this in gentle ways.
- Working with children in their own safe spaces which are known and trusted by them. This often means getting out of the organisation's space.

Roberto, 10yrs, seemed very independent and clever and he didn't go to school until very recently. He used to be on the street, either working or begging. It was difficult to engage with him because he said he didn't need help because he could cope with anything. At the same time, he asked us to keep visiting him. We began to see how he could not tolerate any joke, criticism, disappointment or even someone staring at him. All these things made him angry.

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador

KEY THEME 2

3.2 Emotionally reconnecting children

Learning about practices that emotionally reconnect children towards a positive attachment in their lives.

What is it?

PRACTICES WHICH EMOTIONALLY (AS WELL AS PHYSICALLY) RECONNECT CHILDREN WITH AN ADULT TOWARDS A MORE PERMANENT POSITIVE ATTACHMENT IN THEIR LIVES.

Many approaches with street-connected children exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation involve physically reconnecting a child with a parent or caregiver. However, practices which work to emotionally reconnect with a significant adult are equally, if not more, important. Such practices are essentially concerned with facilitating a positive attachment between the child and another person who is not the staff member but is in a position to become a more permanent attachment in the child's life, such as a parent or caregiver or, sometimes, a formal or non-formal actor.

Working towards developing this positive attachment for the child is a vital part of developing their resilience as well as a foundation for other resilience-based practices outlined in this report (see sections 3.3 and 3.4). Where organisations cannot facilitate a

positive attachment, children can ultimately end up feeling alone and this can persist into later life. This is because, whilst they may gain a sense of relief, comfort and assurance from sharing their stories with peers and staff, this is usually a temporary relief rather than a sustained feeling which translates into an enhanced ability to cope with adverse situations.

Developing a positive attachment between the child and the adult is key. This kind of attachment is the most healing thing a child can experience.

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador

Sharing stories and listening to others may not help for 'healing the soul' and, though it does seem to help children 'in the moment', it may not impact on their future loneliness. They can end up feeling relieved but still very much alone.

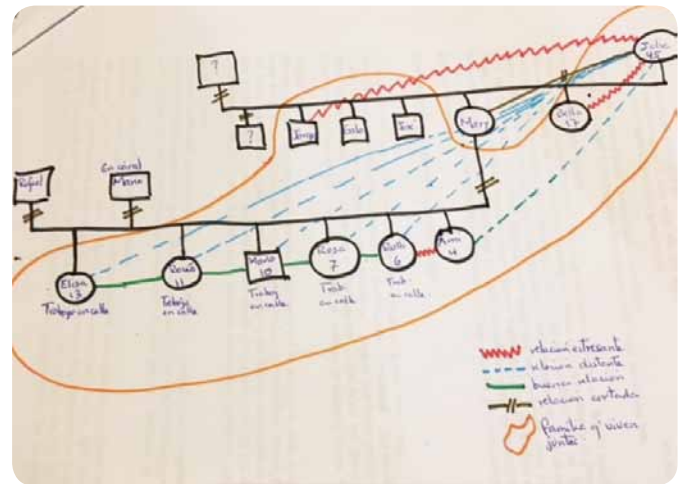
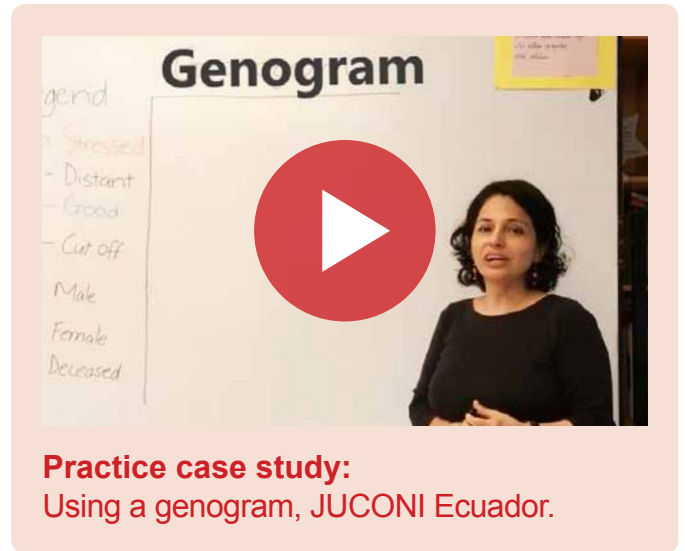
Martha, JUCONI Ecuador

How can I do it?

1. IDENTIFY WHO TO RECONNECT A CHILD WITH

Identifying the right person in the child’s life with whom they can begin to (re)build a positive attachment is important, especially because this might not be the most obvious person such as a parent/caregiver at home. Rather, it may be an auntie, uncle, neighbour or other adult friend. The following elements were found useful for doing this:

- Taking the child’s perspective on significant relationships as the most important starting point.
- Using specific tools which map children’s significant relationships. For example, JUCONI Ecuador and S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda have been using a ‘genogram tool’ in which they explore, together with individual children, the different kinds of relationships that feature in their life. They then use this understanding to guide them in helping the child develop positive attachments.



How can I do it?

2. WORK CLOSELY WITH PARENTS/CAREGIVERS ON A ONE-TO-ONE BASIS

Working closely with parents is important for building the resilience of children and of the family as a whole. In many situations working with street-connected children exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, organisations find that the parents/caregivers are also highly vulnerable. In some cases they are less resilient than their children, exhibiting the same patterns of behaviour as their children, and require one-to-one intervention themselves. We found the following elements useful for doing this:

- Modelling positive behaviour with parents/caregivers during the time we spend with them (rather than a more direct 'correct' or advise approach).
- Improving communication and conducting regular follow up visits with parents/caregivers on a one-to-one basis rather than contact always being focused around working alongside the child.



Practice case study:
Modelling positive behaviour, JUCONI Ecuador.

We model behaviour and allow children and family members to develop their own solutions and strategies.

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador

How can I do it?

3. FOCUS ON THE RELATIONSHIP(S) TO WORK WITH CHILDREN AND PARENTS/CAREGIVERS TOGETHER

Facilitating a positive attachment also involves working with children and their parents/ caregivers together. In other words, it is important to treat the intervention as one with the family (in the broadest sense of the word) rather than just the child if organisations are to emotionally reconnect children towards a more permanent and positive attachment in their lives. We found the following elements useful for doing this:

- Balancing time with children and parents, both individually and together.
- Giving attention to the (re)building positive relationships within the family or the network of relationships that are significant for the child.
- Using bespoke activities and tools which focused on relationship-building. For example, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda developed a 'likes and dislikes' activity in which staff supported parents/caregivers and children to make separate lists about what they liked and didn't like about each other, and then used these as the basis for a fuller conversation together.

Working with the family as a whole unit is important to ensure parents have enough resilience capacity to raise their children to be resilient individuals.

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador

How can I do it?

4. BEGIN THE EMOTIONAL (RE)CONNECTION WITHIN THE CHILD'S WORLD AND ON THEIR TERMS

Practices which emotionally reconnect children towards a positive attachment in their lives work best when they are based on the child's terms and in their space. The following elements were found useful for doing this:

- Bringing parents/caregivers to street-connected children, rather than the other way around. For example, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda have found this to be a powerful way of beginning an emotional (re)connection between the child and a parent/caregiver because it provides a basis for understanding between them, which actively acknowledges the realities of street life and the child's time and presence there. This way of working changes the usual practice of re-uniting street-connected children with parents/caregivers in the home environment by asking parents/caregivers to step into the child's world rather than the other way around.
- Assessing the extent of parents/caregivers' love and responsibility for the child and increasing parents/caregivers' understanding of situations their children have been living in to help them (re)connect in more open and transparent ways.

Children often fear going home, so parents visiting them instead helps to prevent this fear and builds the relationship more positively. It also tests the parents to see their love and responsibility for the child.

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda



Practice case study:

Bringing parents to the drop-in centre.

S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda.

How can I do it?

5. TAKE TIME AND DON'T EXPECT QUICK RESULTS

Spending enough time to emotionally (re)connect children towards a positive attachment is difficult to achieve in practice. This is partly because organisations are working with unpredictable and short-term funding. Additionally, engaging effectively over a sustained period of time in very complex and entrenched situations with children who are exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation is both extremely challenging and emotionally stressful for staff. The process of working to address issues at home with a parent/caregiver, giving serious attention to family work and working to support the (re)building of a significant relationship in the child's life until all the problems are properly solved takes significant time. The following elements were found helpful for doing this:

- Carefully structuring the way staff interact with a child and their family or network of significant relationships to enable sustained engagement for as long as it takes. For example, JUCONI Ecuador will occasionally work with a family for over four to six years in really difficult cases.
- Ensuring staff are fully supported to deal with the challenges of working on mentally and emotionally challenging long-term cases.

We have realised that we can't expect quick results. Instead, we need to take time with children and parents together and support them until all the problems are properly resolved. We go back and back and back.

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

It takes time to develop a good connection between children and their parents – to start with the parents can't tolerate what their children want to say to them but gradually they can relate to each other and the parents begin to be able to listen to what their children want to say to them, even if this is negative.

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador

3.3 Sharing experiences & self-reflections

Learning about practices that encourage the sharing of experiences and self-reflections that are helpful and healing.

What is it?

PRACTICES WHICH ENCOURAGE THE SHARING OF EXPERIENCES AND SELF-REFLECTIONS BETWEEN CHILDREN, THEIR PEERS AND STAFF TO HELP DEVELOP IMPORTANT EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS WHICH ARE SUPPORTIVE, HELPFUL AND HEALING.

Involving children in activities in which they share their experiences and self-reflections (both one-to-one and in groups) helps them to develop emotional connections with their peers and staff which are:

- Supportive in terms of helping children feel that they are not alone in their problems, or that there may be positive elements about their lives that they have not hitherto realised or appreciated.
- Helpful in terms of promoting learning about coping strategies or ideas and impetus to overcome challenges.
- Healing in terms of helping children come to terms with experiences of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, as well as other challenges they face.

However, it is important to remember that

enabling children to share experiences and self-reflections involves:

- Staff spending time with children to get to a point where children are able to open up with them about their worst experiences, especially where these concern sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.
- Working one-to-one and in groups to ensure children are able to share their experiences in contexts which are most appropriate. For example, one-to-one contexts are necessary for children to share experiences of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation as this is not easily disclosed and discussed in groups.

It is especially important that the sharing of experiences and self-reflections happens in the context of trusting and meaningful relationships. If this is absent, children can end up feeling relieved and comforted by the experience of sharing but still very much alone.

Alisa, 12yrs, began to realise that the situation of other child domestic workers was often worse than her own situation and they were more vulnerable than her. She was able to reflect on some of the positive things in her life. This helped Alisa feel more positive and develop a better relationship with her employer.

Krishna, CWISH, Nepal

How can I do it?

1. DEVELOP CHILDREN'S ABILITY TO SELF-REFLECT AND SHARE THESE REFLECTIONS

Developing children's ability to self-reflect and share these reflections involves a combination of working closely with them one-to-one and in group settings. It takes time for children to build the confidence they need to share their stories with each other. The following elements were found useful for doing this:

- Taking time to develop trusting relationships so children feel comfortable opening up. In most cases, children involved in JUCONI Ecuador, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda and CWISH programme activities did not open up about their thoughts and feelings immediately and only did so gradually as they became more comfortable in the group and developed more trusting relationships with the individuals and organisations involved.
- Attaching great importance to children's access to one-to-one sharing and reflection opportunities with staff, as there are some experiences, such as those relating to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, which they may never be able to share in group settings.
- Creating opportunities for peer-to-peer and staff-child sharing about experiences and self-reflections improves organisations' understanding about the difficulties and challenges children face. Staff are able to understand a child's capacity, or lack of capacity, in these situations so that they can find ways to provide better support for them.

In a way, the story exercises have been hard for children. They have heard a lot of strong and negative stories and felt a lot of difficult things. But it is important. Children have to deal with lots of these hard things in their lives and this gives us an insight into how they feel and shows us that helping them build resilience is about supporting them to deal with the overwhelming, all-consuming negative aspects of their lives.

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador

How can I do it?

2. CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXAMPLE-SETTING AMONGST PEER GROUPS

Example-setting is a powerful way for children to demonstrate to others in similar situations how they can overcome the challenges they face and what they can ultimately achieve. The following elements were found useful for doing this:

- Creating regular opportunities for children to come together and share their stories and experiences in relaxed ways. Examples of this include fun activities such as sports or drama.
- Helping children feel comfortable about sharing their stories in a safe and protected space.
- Encouraging children to find comfort and solidarity in their shared experiences.
- Providing children with opportunities to discuss and share their strategies for coping with challenges with each other and helping them actively learn about safe coping strategies from each other so they can apply these in their own lives.

Creating such opportunities for example-setting is an important step in developing the kind of self-confidence and self-belief necessary for children to move beyond a position of coping and survival to one which is more concerned with actively transforming a negative situation into one which is positive.

Donald, 14yrs, got involved in some of our activities at S.A.L.V.E., and when he saw other children who had been in difficult situations just like him but had been able to escape these challenges, it gave him hope.

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

There is power in sharing stories.

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

How can I do it?

3. ENABLE PRACTITIONERS TO SHARE THEIR OWN STORIES WITH EACH OTHER

Working closely with children who are street-connected and exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation is very challenging for practitioners. Enabling staff to share their own stories and reflections on their practice, their cases and their own feelings is important to help build more effective support for the children they work with. The following elements were found useful for doing this:

- Using (semi-) structured group and one-to-one conversation-based activities to draw from our suite of learning activities and enable regular staff reflection on practice change and development. For example, JUCONI Ecuador used semi-structured practice reflection activities at weekly staff meetings, and semi-structured one-to-one conversation activities a few times a week, which lasted around 5 minutes each.
- Group journey mapping activities with groups of staff to explore the trajectory of programme implementation, focusing on documenting what they were doing, how they felt about it and what they could change.
- Keeping personal diaries about practice with a template to facilitate diary entries.

These activities provided regular space for staff to off-load the daily challenges, stresses and pressures they faced in their work; problem-solve with the support of other staff; gain the encouragement they needed to continue; and develop the confidence they needed to change direction.

When working in these ways, we found that it was important to retain the focus on working with children and meeting their needs. The objective of such practices and approaches is, therefore, not to specifically promote the resilience of staff, but to help staff develop their own understanding of resilience and the associated skills, abilities, characteristics and attributes they need to work in ways that effectively promote children's resilience.

Daniel, a staff member from S.A.L.V.E., had a very challenging case, but felt that the regular opportunities to reflect on the approach he was using helped him to think through what to do next and gave him the impetus to keep supporting the child despite many problems.

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

We are organisations for the children, not the team. If staff need the same attention as children, they won't be doing the work with children that is needed to build their resilience.

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador

KEY THEME 4

3.4 Developing feelings of “I can”

Learning about practices that build children’s confidence in their ability to actively transform their lives.

What is it?

PRACTICES WHICH DEVELOP CHILDREN’S FEELINGS OF “I CAN” ENABLE CHILDREN TO MOVE BEYOND ‘SURVIVAL’ TO A POSITION FROM WHICH THEY CAN BEGIN TO TRANSFORM THEIR LIVES.

Many street-connected children affected by sexual abuse and sexual exploitation are able, with various degrees of success, to develop coping strategies to survive the adversities they face in their daily lives. For example, they may develop strategies to avoid or minimise unwanted sexual attention or protect themselves from sexual advances. These ‘survival strategies’ are aimed at mitigating or managing an adverse situation, rather than actually changing it through a more sustained problem-solving approach.

By contrast, resilience-based approaches that work to build children’s confidence and, importantly, create emotional space for problem-solving, give children the internal power to change their realities by enabling them to arrive at solutions which are more transformative, and can ultimately turn a

negative situation around. Examples include a child developing the capacity to reach out for help, or taking a perpetrator of sexual abuse or exploitation to court.

It is important that these practices are undertaken in the context of a trusting and meaningful relationship, either with a staff member or another individual who is important in the child’s life. In order for the child to feel truly comfortable sharing their own ideas and contributing to problem-solving efforts, they need to feel they can do this with someone they can trust and who makes them feel important, special and listened to.

Children need to feel “I can” before they can solve problems... Problem-solving comes a bit later, after they can say “I can do it!”

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador

Believing “I can” is the first step.

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

How can I do it?

1. DON'T IMPOSE, JUDGE OR CORRECT

Despite best intentions, it can be difficult for practitioners to refrain from imposing their own ideas and judgements on children. Taking an approach which emphasises modelling behaviour, rather than imposing, judging or correcting (as described in the sections above), is important. The following elements were found useful for doing this:

- Develop relationships with children (and their parents/caregivers) which can be used to work more closely with them to build their confidence in themselves and their ability to overcome challenges and adversities.
- Promote the kinds of values, attitudes and behaviours which are helpful for coping with and overcoming adversity, for example by demonstrating to parents/caregivers alternative ways of dealing with stressful situations, rather than resorting to violence.
- Give children (and their parents/caregivers) the mental and emotional space to emerge with their own solutions and strategies for coping with and overcoming challenges. Allowing for their own space is a more empowering process which children will be more invested in.

We don't tell people how to be resilient or say "this is wrong".

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador

How can I do it?

2. IDENTIFY THE PROBLEMS THAT NEED SOLVING TOGETHER WITH THE CHILD

Practitioners working with street-connected children exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation are faced with children who experience an often overwhelming array of challenges in their daily lives. These challenges often seemingly place these children in direct opposition to normative ideals of childhood. In such situations, it can be easy to make assumptions about the nature of the problems a child faces and to arrive at conclusions about which aspects of their lives are actually problematic. In some cases, staff may do this without being truly conscious of it, for example by initiating conversations about particular problems they have observed in a child's life and prompting the discussion to follow a particular direction. This is especially the case where inevitable power imbalances between children and adult staff are accentuated.

It is important, therefore, to ensure that problem identification begins with understanding the child's own perspectives on the problems they face, and develops through a truly collaborative approach to explore the problem and have a conversation about the challenges. The following elements were found useful for doing this:

- Drawing and mapping activities in which children are encouraged to visually depict challenges in their lives and, from there, discuss these with a staff member.
- Taking a 'listening' more than an 'asking' approach when initially spending time with children. With this approach, rather than asking about pre-determined problems, staff listen to what children share with them as the relationship develops and take their lead on the particular challenges they are affected by. It was, however, important that staff still asked questions - otherwise, children could find it difficult to disclose experiences of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

For some children, the street is the refuge – their response to adversity.

Staff member, JUCONI Ecuador

How can I do it?

3. ENCOURAGE THE CHILD TO START SMALL

Given the challenging nature of the problems facing street-connected children, it is easy for children – and staff – to become overwhelmed. Therefore, it is important to encourage children to start by focusing on the small problems. The following elements were found useful for doing this:

- Encouraging the child to focus on both the small problems and the small ways in which they might address them. For example S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda developed an “I am, I can, I have” circle activity with street-connected children. As part of this activity, children stand in a circle and share their thoughts by finishing each of the sentences – “I can, I am, I have” – with positive things about themselves.
- Only building up to bigger problems and solutions when the child has developed more confidence and shows an interest and ability to problem-solve in a more transformational way.



Practice case study:
 “I am, I can, I have” circle, S.A.L.V.E.
 International, Uganda

How can I do it?

4. CREATE SPACE FOR THE CHILD TO PLAY AND RELEASE STRESS

Feeling stressed and overwhelmed are known barriers to developing solutions. Street-connected children exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation often face relentless and multiple challenges and employ ‘survival strategies’ which help them cope with immediate problems and dangers, but do less to change the situation in the longer term.

Creating time and space for children to play and to develop playful relationships, for example with staff, family members and peers, helps children create emotional space for problem-solving. Playing, even for a short time, relaxes children, helping them to manage and release stress and creating happy memories to draw on when times are hard. As a result, children feel less overwhelmed and have more emotional capacity for problem-solving in a bigger, more sustained way. Consequently, the following elements were found useful for doing this:

- Group sports activities.
- Creative activities such as music, dance, art and drama.
- Cooking a meal together.
- Family visits to the park.

Children can come up with better solutions when they are not overwhelmed.

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador

Sports help street-connected children to rise up and become stronger to face challenges. It teaches them to work in a team to win!

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador

How can I do it?

5. FACILITATE SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE CHILD AND OTHERS WHO MIGHT HELP THEM FIND SOLUTIONS

In many cases, the people best placed to help children find ways through their problems are not organisation staff but other formal and non-formal actors in the child’s life. Examples of these include a teacher, a neighbour, a market stall holder or shopkeeper. These people might be in a position to:

- Support a child by helping them to work through the problem or find a way around it. This is because they either have an existing special relationship with the child or there is a clear potential for such a relationship to develop.
- Actually provide the material, emotional or other types of support a child needs to change the situation.

In such cases, practitioner organisations can play key roles in fostering these relationships. The following elements were found useful for doing this:

- Identifying who these people might be, together with children, and facilitating the development of a relationship.
- Providing direct training and mentoring support for such individuals to help them take on a supportive role. For example, CWISH trained teachers to develop their understanding of the challenges facing child domestic workers and equipped them with skills so they could better support these children in their classes.

- Working to influence other organisations and institutions at managerial and administrative levels: for example, schools and health centres could be supported to help create systems and structures that promote safe and supportive relationships for children and encourage positive attitude change towards street-connected children and child domestic workers.
- Creating opportunities to bring such people into regular contact with children where relationship building can be encouraged. For example, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda have run community events to bring a range of formal and non-formal actors together with street-connected children to promote understanding and build support networks. S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda have also facilitated radio programmes featuring street-connected children to raise awareness about the issues they face and the importance of building community resilience.

Our work with teachers is more important than we first realised because the child domestic workers have easy access to teachers and, if the relationship is good, they can easily share their experiences, for example of punishment and torture, with the teacher.

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador

How can I do it?

6. EQUIP THE CHILD WITH SKILLS THAT MAKE THEM FEEL MORE POSITIVE ABOUT THEMSELVES AND WHICH THEY CAN USE TO DEVELOP SOLUTIONS

Equipping children with skills, such as sports, drama and music skills, is powerful, as this can make them feel more positive about themselves and develops their confidence in their own abilities. We found the following elements useful for doing this:

- Bringing children together for regular workshops and activities through which they learned new things and developed their problem-solving skills and abilities to work as a team. For example, we have observed how children’s confidence in themselves grows when they participate in drama, music or art activities, especially when these activities are against a background of trusting and meaningful relationships with staff.
- Exposing children to new experiences and opportunities to inspire them and make them feel that new and different opportunities are available to them. Children can then use these skills to change their situation and overcome challenges – for example, by finding new ways to earn money to support themselves.

Importantly, we found that it was not the activities themselves which created children’s feeling of “I can” but rather the approach behind the activities – for example, using a positive relationship building approach.

Joseph, 17yrs, now feels more confident in his ability to overcome challenges in his life. His mother visited him at the drop-in centre and wanted to go back home with him but Joseph had a bad relationship with his father and this is what had forced him onto the street in the first place. During one of the counselling sessions he told his mother: “mum, I know you love me but I can’t go home. I can overcome the hard life on the street. I can still be successful though I am on the street.”

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda



4. Indications

Resilience & well-being outcomes

4. Indications of resilience & well-being outcomes

Indications of resilience & well-being outcomes in children's lives when organisations use resilience-based approaches.

KEY THEME 1

4.1 Strengthened relationships

Children seem to develop stronger relationships with staff, parents/caregivers, peers and formal/non-formal actors.

What happens?

1. CHILDREN DEVELOP DEEPER AND MORE EXTENSIVE PEER-TO-PEER NETWORKS

Children grow and deepen their peer-to-peer networks, especially in response to:

- Being brought into contact with other children in similar situations, sometimes for the first time.
- Having opportunities to talk and share with other children in similar situations and reflect on the role and value of supportive peer networks.
- Having access to trusted and safe spaces in which to share feelings.
- Becoming more proactive in seeking support from their peers and those around them.



One child domestic worker asked her teacher to find another house that her friend could work at because she knew her friend's employer is not kind-hearted and punishes her friend.

Krishna, CWISH, Nepal

What happens?

2. CHILDREN OPEN UP AND SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

Children increasingly open up to staff, parents/ caregivers and peers about their thoughts, feelings and self-reflections, especially when given opportunities to self-reflect and share. This helps them develop deeper insights into their relationships which can prompt helpful changes in the way they relate one to another.



One mother we are working with was raped by her step-father. She does not want the same thing to happen to her daughter so she is always reflecting on how she can protect her. She said: "I didn't care about the rape because the most painful thing for me was that my mother never believed me or protected me. I respect my mother but I can never be attached to her in the way my daughter is attached to me because of that."

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador



The step-father of Clara's, 10yrs, would hit her mother and her mother would defend him. [Through our help] Clara was able to explain to her mother that she didn't like the situation and it was only when her mother accepted what she said that their relationship began to improve.

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador



Linda, 16yrs, didn't have a good relationship with her mother. Her mother was rude to her and was always shouting at her. We recently spent more time working with the family and gradually the mother has realised the effects of her actions on her daughter and has been trying to change her behaviour. Linda is now living back at home and has been much happier.

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

What happens?

3. CHILDREN DEVELOP MORE TRUSTED AND SUPPORTIVE NETWORKS WITH FORMAL/NON-FORMAL ACTORS

Children develop more trusted and supportive networks with formal/non-formal actors who are in a good position, sometimes better than organisations themselves, to provide them with the material and emotional support they need to move forward and change a negative situation.



Ishmail, 13yrs, lost his father to AIDS and he felt very bad and ended up on the street. His friends encouraged him to go back to school and his teachers were very supportive, sometimes describing themselves as his “parents”.

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

5. CHILDREN SEEM TO INCREASINGLY ENJOY THEIR RELATIONSHIPS

Children convey an increasing sense of enjoyment in their relationships, including with employers and especially with parents/caregivers, rather than these being fraught with conflict, anger and challenges.



A mother we worked with said she didn't know why her children went to the street because she thought she was a good mother but we saw that she was very stressed and violent with her children. She beat them to discipline them and make them respectful, so the children preferred to be on the streets. After working with the children and the mother together, the children now want to spend time with her – they do trips to the beach together and sing happy birthday.

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador

4. CHILDREN SHOW MORE TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN ORGANISATIONS

Children begin to have more trust and confidence in the organisation and its staff. They open up to staff and start to believe in the commitment staff show in supporting them.

KEY THEME 2

4.2 Increased internal strength & self-belief

Children seem to develop increased internal strength and self-belief in their ability to overcome challenges.

What happens?

1. CHILDREN DEVELOP GREATER IMPETUS TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES THEY FACE

Children develop the impetus to address the challenges they face. They demonstrate this by:

- Showing a greater desire for their situations to improve and becoming increasingly interested, concerned and vocal about positive change in their lives.
- Contributing more to the process of developing solutions.
- Becoming more proactive in making positive changes in their lives.
- More readily taking advantage of the opportunities they are given to change their situation for the better, for example by using information or services to create change.



Rita, 13yrs, was sexually abused by her father and got information from CWISH about her rights and reported the abuse to the police. She used the information to force a positive outcome for herself which resulted in her being moved to a safe house and her father being prosecuted.

Krishna, CWISH, Nepal



When we [spend time with children and parents together] children themselves begin to contribute more to the process, for example by sharing their own ideas and solutions to the problems they are experiencing with parents and pointing us in the direction of what they think they need in order for those problems to be addressed.

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda



We know that children are developing talents, skills and learning through their involvement in our programmes, but this seems to be relevant to the development of resilience in the way that it promotes feelings of “I can” in terms of enabling children to feel that other opportunities are available to use these talents, skills and learning in productive ways.

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

What happens?

2. CHILDREN ARE MORE ABLE TO ADAPT AND COPE WITH CHALLENGES

Children are more able to adapt and deal with challenges, to make a situation more comfortable or more bearable, or to actively change it for the better, including where their ideas are in direct opposition to what parents/ caregivers want for them.



Binsa, 14yrs, was not allowed to join in an art class at school because her employer would not allow her to. Her teacher and a staff member advised her to talk to her employer about it. The girl asked her employer and said that she would do more work in the morning and evening if the employer would provide her the opportunity to join in the art class. The employer allowed her to join.

Krishna, CWISH, Nepal



Pabitra, 15yrs, worked hard and accomplished almost all the work – cleanliness, washing clothes – in the employer’s house before asking permission to have a couple of days off to visit her own house.

Krishna, CWISH, Nepal

KEY THEME 3

4.3 More positive attitudes & outlook

Children seem to develop a more positive attitude and outlook on life which can be protective in times of adversity.

What happens?

1. CHILDREN SHOW A BRIGHTNESS AND INTEREST IN LIFE AND FEEL GOOD IN AND ABOUT THEMSELVES

Children show a brightness and interest in life and feel good in and about themselves in terms of being more relaxed, comfortable, stress-free, self-assured, listened to and confident that “no bad condition is permanent”.



After participating in our activities, child domestic workers come to have a brightness on their face. This comes from sharing their pain and problems with other child domestic workers, knowing that they are not alone, that they can share about their situation with other child domestic workers, be open about their experiences and become stronger.

Krishna, CWISH, Nepal



We have recognised that children we work with are increasingly interested in playing sports – it is fun, they laugh and they are happy!

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

2. CHILDREN BECOME MORE HOPEFUL ABOUT THEIR FUTURES

Children are more hopeful about their futures when they discuss them with staff, parents/ caregivers and peers.



Masawa, 18yrs, explained that sports are very important to him and make him feel happy. He says that “even though I am on the streets, I still get to play sports.”

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

What happens?

3. CHILDREN INCREASINGLY VALUE POSITIVE FEELINGS

As children begin to feel more positive, they start to value these feelings and want to experience them more and more, rather than being unable to tolerate them.



...they value the feelings of well-being that it gives them. They see these feelings – happiness and relaxation – as positive feelings.

**Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International,
Uganda**

KEY THEME 4

4.4 Increased support-seeking behaviour

Children appear to become more proactive in seeking support.

What happens?

1. CHILDREN BECOME MORE PROACTIVE IN GIVING AND RECEIVING SUPPORT

Children become more ready to explore opportunities for support and to reach out to people who might help them, including formal/non-formal actors as well as organisations.



The children we work with are increasingly able to talk to their parents and say “this is happening to me” and they are more confident that the response from parents is not going to simply be anger.

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador

2. CHILDREN INCREASINGLY VALUE AND NURTURE RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIPS

Children increasingly recognise the value of the reciprocal relationships they have with their peers and non-formal actors in street (and other) situations, taking care to nurture and look after these.



Anthony, 15yrs, said “...it is a good practice that we share the little that we get while on the street. Not every day is a good day. Some days are bad and it’s difficult to get what we need to eat. We share with some of our colleagues and it prevents hunger.”

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

KEY THEME 5

4.5 More expressive & emphatic behaviour

Children appear to grow in confidence to express themselves and develop abilities to understand, relate and respond to others.

What happens?

1. CHILDREN INCREASINGLY SHARE THEIR FEELINGS AND EXPERIENCES WITH OTHERS, INCLUDING THEIR MOST NEGATIVE STORIES

Children (and parents/caregivers) are increasingly able to both share their feelings and experiences with others and be available to listen to others around them. This makes it possible for children to reveal, understand, hear and give space for even the most negative stories.



Ditya, 14yrs, said to our staff member: "no other person asked me about my family. When you asked me, I cried. I was never asked before."

Krishna, CWISH, Nepal



The children we work with are increasingly able to talk to their parents and say "this is happening to me", and they are more confident that the response from parents is not going to simply be anger."

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador



Miriam, 17yrs, grew in confidence and self-belief after being part of S.A.L.V.E.'s music activities. When she joined the group she was too shy to speak, but after some time she was able to speak up and even express her feelings to staff and her parents.

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

What happens?

2. CHILDREN ARE MORE ABLE TO RELATE AND RESPOND TO OTHERS IN POSITIVE, UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTIVE WAYS

Children become more able to relate and respond to those around them, including parents, caregivers, employers and their peers, in more positive, understanding and supportive ways, prompting the development of relationships with others which are protective in times of adversity.



Through reflecting and sharing about their experiences, both positive and negative, parents and children gradually learn to relate and respond to each other in better ways. These [also] seems to promote the resilience of the whole family unit.

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador



Sushila, 13 yrs, has a skin condition on her face and was bullied and teased by her peers in class. Through the opportunities CWISH provided for the children in the class to share their experiences and feelings with each other, her peers came to understand her situation better. Sushila also became stronger in her ability to protest the teasing and to seek the help and support of her peers, including those who had teased her. Gradually, they became more empathetic, encouraging and even protective of Sushila.

Krishna, CWISH, Nepal

KEY THEME 6

4.6 Increased self-control & emotional self-regulation

Children seem increasingly able to exercise self-control and emotional self-restraint in times of adversity.

What happens?

1. CHILDREN ARE LESS OVERWHELMED AND CONSUMED BY ANGER AND THINK BEFORE THEY ACT

Children are less overwhelmed and less consumed by anger. They develop ways to better manage their feelings and regulate destructive negative emotions which, in turn, helps them better relate and respond to others, thinking before they act and considering the potential consequences of their actions for those around them.



Monica, 10yrs, used to say: “if they are looking for a fight, I will be here!” Now, she says: “I will wait and try not to be very angry and when I am feeling that way, I will go to the teacher.”

Martha, JUCONI Ecuador



Tom, 14yrs, explained how his friend annoyed him and he thought about using anger to retaliate – he wanted to cut his friend with a panga. After thinking through what might happen if he did this, he was able to control himself and didn't attack his friend.

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

2. CHILDREN BEHAVE IN WAYS WHICH SHOW THEY RESPECT AND VALUE THEMSELVES AND OTHERS

Children are more able to respond to challenging situations with self-respect and respect for others, for example by being honest and truthful with others, looking after themselves and others and considering others' situations and feelings.



We have recognised that child domestic workers we work with are becoming more honest and respectful towards their employers and sincere with their work which is making the employers treat them well and with respect. This is helping child domestic workers have 'garima' – a life of dignity.

Krishna, CWISH, Nepal



5. Implications

Conditions, principles & opportunities

5.1 Conditions for using a learning & innovation approach

Conditions for organisations wanting to use a learning and innovation approach to work in more iterative and responsive ways with street-connected children.

Conditions for using a learning & innovation approach

THE LEARNING AND INNOVATION APPROACH (PRESENTED IN SECTION 2) POINTS TO A NUMBER OF CONDITIONS THAT ORGANISATIONS WORKING WITH STREET-CONNECTED CHILDREN SHOULD FULFIL IN ORDER TO BE MORE ITERATIVE AND RESPONSIVE IN THEIR WORK. THESE INCLUDE:

1. Embedding learning and innovation processes to continually reflect on and challenge practice

The learning and innovation approach used in this project has shown how powerful learning and innovation activities can be when led by staff within organisations. They encourage staff to own the process of developing responsive practice change and development. Embedding learning and innovation processes within organisation systems and structures is important so that learning and innovation is a continual process that is owned by staff and organisations themselves.

2. Creating space within the organisation to ‘stick with the question’

The learning and innovation approach used in the project has shown that questioning are important driving forces for the development of more responsive programmes. Working in more iterative, flexible and responsive ways means that organisations need to be comfortable with the idea of ‘sticking with the question’ rather than constantly seeking answers and solutions.

3. Acknowledging and exploring failure as well as success

The learning and innovation approach used in this project attached equal importance to exploring failure as well as success, following developmental evaluation (Gamble, 2008). This can be difficult because it goes against usual expectations for organisations to demonstrate success and positive change. However, it is ultimately very helpful for driving practice change and development forward in positive and responsive ways.

Conditions for using a learning & innovation approach

4. Being open to learning and flexible to change

The learning and innovation approach was open and flexible, with learning driving change so that practice could continually respond to learning and the way it challenged the nature and direction of practice. A willingness to be open to learning - even where this seems to this challenge or contradict what an organisation is doing - is key, as is the internal flexibility to change direction and try something new.

5. Taking a humble approach to learning and innovation

The learning and innovation approach used in this project was, above all, a humble one. It encouraged organisations to explore what they didn't know as well as what they did, and to share their ideas about this openly with each other. This can be difficult for organisations that are often under pressure to prove their approach or show that they know what to do and how to respond to a problem. Being humble in the face of gaps in learning - or learning that changes thinking or contradicts pre-conceived ideas - is important for working in iterative and responsive ways.

5.2 Principles for resilience-based approaches

Practice principles for organisations wanting to use, fund and evaluate resilience-based approaches with street-connected children.

Principles for resilience-based approaches

THE LEARNING ABOUT RESILIENCE-BASED PRACTICE (PRESENTED IN SECTION 3) POINTS TO A NUMBER OF OVERARCHING PRACTICE PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE RESILIENCE-BASED APPROACHES AMONGST ORGANISATIONS WORKING WITH STREET-CONNECTED CHILDREN. THESE INCLUDE:

1. Make the relationship the central reference point of the approach

The relationship a staff member builds with the child is absolutely key to everything else that follows for the promotion of resilience in the child. Promoting or strengthening resilience does not happen in response to specific activities like sports or music. It develops through the positive relationship-building approach – the essential building blocks which are pre-existing conditions required to maintain resilience over time (Vanistendael and Lecomte, 2000). It is, therefore, vital to

create appropriate time, space and expertise within resilience-based approaches to make relationship building a central element.

2. Concentrate on listening, but don't be afraid to ask

Taking a listening approach can be challenging when staff are faced with street-connected children who often live chaotic lives and face a multitude of challenges. Being available to listen is what ultimately leads to understanding these challenges from the child's perspectives and, in turn, promoting resilience in ways which are most impactful in helping children overcome them. At the same time, it is important to balance listening with asking. This is because some children, especially those with experiences of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, may never open up about these experiences unless they are asked directly.

3. Know when to engage directly and when and how to work through others

Organisations themselves are not always best placed to promote resilience and can actually be more effective when they facilitate relationships between children and other formal/non-formal actors who are in a better position to support them and develop their

Principles for resilience-based approaches

resilience. Consequently, organisations need to shift their perceptions away from themselves, consider who is actually best placed to form a transitional attachment with a child and then work to facilitate these relationships for the child. For example, the best placed individuals could be organisation staff or other formal/non-formal actors such as teachers and community members. Moreover, the process of emotional (re)connection between a child and somebody who can be a more permanent attachment in their lives means taking an ecological approach and working with all the significant people around the child, or those who feature in their ecological world.

4. Build in time to work at the child's pace

Building resilience in street-connected children who are exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation takes time – in some cases, a very long time. It is important to work at the child's own pace when using resilience-based practices.

5. Actively promote practitioners' understanding of resilience and skills and abilities to work in resilience-based ways.

To effectively promote resilience in street-connected children, it is important to attend to building practitioners' understanding of resilience and equip them with the right skills and abilities so that they are able to promote resilience in the children they work with. This is especially important given that

practitioners working with street-connected children exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation are frequently working in very challenging and volatile situations in which children are very vulnerable and have multiple and complex needs.

6. Be flexible and unafraid to change direction.

Working in a resilience-based way with street-connected children, whose lives are often chaotic and fluctuating, sometimes requires a change of direction. This can include changing direction in ways which seem to be in opposition to organisations' ideas about the direction of an intervention with a child. Being open to the direction a child wants to take, turning a practice 'on its head' and being experimental is all important, provided that the way an organisation works is grounded in the key building blocks of a resilience-based approach. Especially important here is the need to build trusting and meaningful relationships in the child's life.

5.3 Potential opportunities of resilience-based approaches

Potential opportunities for organisations wanting to use, fund or evaluate resilience-based approaches with street-connected children.

Potential opportunities of resilience-based approaches

THE INDICATIONS ABOUT RESILIENCE AND WELL-BEING OUTCOMES (PRESENTED IN SECTION 4) POINT TO A NUMBER OF POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES OF RESILIENCE-BASED APPROACHES. THESE INCLUDE:

1. Changing mindsets of and about street-connected children

Resilience-based approaches can change the way children understand their situations and experiences, and encourage more positive self-reflection. This comes about as children are supported to release stress and find space to reflect. Resilience-based approaches also encourage others to view street-connected children in more positive ways, for example family and community members.

2. Creating more transformative outcomes for children

Resilience-based approaches can help children solve problems in bigger and more transformative ways, enabling them to go beyond 'coping' and 'surviving' and to turn a negative situation around.

3. Creating lasting emotional connections for children

Resilience-based approaches have the potential to emotionally (re)connect children within protective family, peer and community networks, which can support and sustain them in the long term.

4. Changing the role of organisational support to facilitate other forms of support for children from formal/non-formal actors

Resilience-based approaches encourage organisations to move away from seeing themselves as the only central element in a street-connected child's world. Instead, they can focus on the world around children, in terms of peer groups, family, community and the wider systems and structures around the child, following an ecological model (for example, see Ungar, 2014). As such, organisations are encouraged to think carefully about their role and to facilitate other positive relationships and more permanent attachments in the child's life. This role reinforces the importance of having activities with children that are embedded within a resilience approach, rather than viewing the activities as the end in themselves.

Potential opportunities of resilience-based approaches

5. Encouraging a more preventative approach to mitigating adversity

Resilience-based approaches encourage a preventative approach to mitigating adversity by helping children to be less overwhelmed by their problems and emotions. These approaches enable children to move beyond coping and towards transforming situations in ways that can both prevent future adversity and develop children's resilience for responding to adversity.

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