



Protecting children through village-based Family Support Groups in a post-conflict and refugee setting, Northern Uganda - Case study -

A case study collaboration between the Interagency Learning Initiative (ILI) on community-based child protection mechanisms, the Community Child Protection Exchange, and Children of the World Foundation, Uganda

This case study tells the story of a child protection programme developed by a community-based organisation called Children of the World that works in villages in northern Uganda.

The Children of the World programme was chosen for this set of case studies because of its focus on the importance of a personal psychological process for real sustainable child protection.

It also has a carefully structured community process that works through Family Support Groups set up to reduce conflict at home and in the village and as a support and protection vehicle for children.

Discussions with villagers suggest that the model is a powerful example of a broad peace-building process in a traumatised post-conflict community that is catalysed by the issue of child protection.

Children of the World is now applying the principles and approaches of this model in the Palabek Refugee Settlement, where thousands of refugees from South Sudan have recently been settled.

This case study is part of collection of work undertaken in 2017 to document interesting or promising examples of community-based child protection in Tanzania and Uganda. The examples can provide insight into how different understandings of and approaches to community dynamics in various contexts can help support deeper community engagement in child protection. A synthesis paper which draws out some of the key learning from the case studies is forthcoming (2018).

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“It was 2003 and I was a social work intern who had returned to my hometown of Kitgum. As I left the government office where I was working I passed the children, the ones we called “the night commuters”. They came in every night from surrounding villages to sleep in the safety of the local primary school. The Lord’s Resistance Army was active in the area at that time and had abducted thousands of children into their army. I stood and watched the children straggling into town looking weary and afraid and I thought to myself these are children like any other, they should not have to experience this – they are children of the world – deserving of the good that all children should have. I promised myself that I would return once I qualified to work with these children.” Peter Ogenga, Founder/Director of Children of the World.

Children of the World (COWF) was set up in 2006 as the conflict ended in northern Uganda and the thousands of people who had been displaced returned to their villages. Since then, the small organisation has worked with children, youth and adults in villages around the town of Kitgum offering psychosocial and livelihood support, and skills training. The work undertaken by Peter and his small group of colleagues focuses on helping village communities around Kitgum town to reconstruct the social fabric destroyed by the years of war and displacement.



Children of the World's approach

We start with the family

The work of Children of the World has three focus areas, livelihood development, health and education. Two key principles – the importance of family and the importance of psychosocial wellbeing – inform the basis of all of the work undertaken by COWF.

“We start with the family. We have found the best way to address children's needs is through the household. We look at the household as the protection unit of the child – that is where a child lives.” George Omal, Programme Manager Children of the World

“Peaceful harmony in the family is only possible if people in the family are feeling good psychologically. If there is harmony in the family then the parents will listen to the children, they will send children to school, they will use the health centre. If fathers and mothers are better psychologically they can begin to be free to work on improving livelihoods.” Peter Ogenga

The focus on family and psychological healing makes sense in the context of rebuilding after a political conflict characterised by violence and deep trauma (Finnström, 2008; Eichestad 2009).

Around Kitgum, the family unit was destroyed when children were abducted, brutalised, used as child soldiers, with many returning to their homes after the conflict ended. In addition, the widespread disruption caused when large numbers of the population lived in displacement camps for many years was particularly harmful to family and community bonds.

Approaches are built on the staffs' deep local knowledge of the context

What is especially notable about COWF's approach is that it is very much 'home-grown' without significant outside influence from donors or international organisations. COWF has grown out of the personal and professional experience of the local staff, who all come from the area and have themselves experienced many of the atrocities of the war.

Peter explained COWF's locally informed approach to child protection and how it collaborated with a donor which wanted to run a livelihood and gender-based violence prevention programme in the area.

“We explained to the donor that wanted livelihood work done - we said we must include psychosocial support – it will be unique, not the usual way a livelihood programme is [set up]. We want to go through the families. Peaceful harmony in the family is the way that communities can develop and if we look at family harmony issues then gender violence will be addressed, people will feel free to learn about livelihoods, the children will go back to school because the parents will be able to listen to their children. We were so lucky that the donor allowed us to do the programming this way.”

Another characteristic of the way COWF works is the respect they have for the people they work with. They understand, again probably as a result of the empathy of shared experience, that the villagers have many needs and expectations.

“Most of them, when they see Children of the World, they say, “Ah NGOs have come, we want this and this” but it is a very good thing for communities to start with wanting. That

is a good thing. So we say okay you want this? How will you achieve it? That is how beautiful things will happen.” Peter Ogenga

The first thing COWF undertakes when it arrives in a community - after asking for permission and entry through official stakeholders such as District and village elders - is to run participatory meetings. At these meetings they ask adults and young people, who are divided into different age groups, to identify what they want to see change, then look at the barriers to attaining these things. A ranking exercise allows them to see what the adults in the village see as the major barriers to achieving progress.

COWF runs a concurrent process of assessment with the children in the village. The process features a high level of facilitation skill and shows the extent to which the organisation has thought through the approach it uses with children.

“Usually our entry point is games, so we play to build a social relationship - and songs. Then we sit them all down and ask them to draw. They all draw, from 3 years to 17 years – sometimes in two groups of younger and older.

We ask them to draw two things, what they want to be in future and what they think could interfere with them getting what they want. Then we talk about the drawings. For children, when you ask some they get scared so you need to appreciate (admire) the drawing and she will have a smile and you will all smile and you talk to one another and that is opening up – it allows open communication. It creates a family kind of rapport. Whatever they mention we take it as it is and when you are close to them they will tell you exactly what is done to them.

Some parents cannot identify the problems children have and some problems are caused by parents (like beating and making them work instead of going to school) so parents will not tell you these things - they may not tell the truth. We get more truth from the children.”
Nixon Ocira and Moses Otto, COWF community fieldworkers

The staff at COWF then analyse the information gathered from the adults and children:
“We come up with a report and this report helps us in designing an intervention, for instance if the children told us that girls drop out of school because of early marriage then we know we must do some activity with that. If the women tell us that there is conflict at harvest time because the men take the money from selling products to drink then we know we must do something about that. If the children say they go to bed hungry then we know we must do something about livelihood. We plan our programme in response to the needs of children and adults.” George Omal, Programme Manager



"I want to be a nurse and help mothers with new babies"



"If my father says I must marry a man and have to stop school that will stop me."

Both pictures are by Girl, 13, Apyeta South (this girl's story is told on page 12).

At this stage focused livelihood, health and education programmes are introduced but alongside this COWF staff set up Family Support Groups - a structure which the organisation has recognised as crucial when working on family and psychological wellbeing. Children of the World staff use a large community meeting to describe what a family support group will do and what kind of people should be on it. Adults and young people are elected or volunteer.

These groups are large, with some support groups having as many as 40 members. The group is deliberately large as it is this group that becomes a catalyst for change or the "influencers of minds" (Peter Ogenga), therefore, the more people the better. Children of the World staff also make sure that the group is broadly representative - young and old people, men and women are included.

Learning about the Family Support Groups



Listening to the story of the Apyeta North Family Support Group

In order to learn more about how these particular community-based structures had been set up, we met with members of two Family Support Groups. As we introduced ourselves and explained why we were there we drew a simple picture of each member of the group – identifying them by their clothing. Then we asked, “*What steps did you follow to make this group?*”

Working together, they then drew the process of group formation. This allowed us to understand the process, look at who had initiated it, who led it and who was involved from the village. The description below is based on this discussion.



Mama Sunday draws how the Family Support Group was made

The Family Support Group is also given training by the COWF community fieldworkers. Firstly the Family Support Group is trained on issues relating to children such as children's needs and rights, child protection, and how to refer violations of child rights. Secondly the Family Support Group is given training so they can communicate and mediate in family and village conflicts. Thirdly, and crucially for COWF, a psychosocial experience built around a process called *Journey of Life* is included.

The Journey of Life

The Journey of Life is a community workshop process. REPSSI (the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative) - working mostly in Africa - has trained many organisations to use this process in their work. It takes groups of adults through a personal reflection on their own journey of life using the simple metaphor of a road that we all travel along. Sometimes our way is easy, but often we come across difficulties that are like rocks in our path or dangers, which are like lions. After reflecting on their own journey the adults spend time reflecting on how they could help vulnerable children in their communities to overcome the rocks and avoid the dangers. It is important that the process has two parts – the personal reflection about their own life allows many adults to talk about and even deal with many of their own past traumas. They are then asked to empathise with and even plan action to help children in their own communities. The Journey of Life is a REPSSI initiative (and developed by Dr Jonathan Brakarsh and the Community Information and Inspiration Team, a group of REPSSI partners and friends). www.repssi.org

The COWF staff use the large posters produced with the Journey of Life manual to guide the workshops and discussions. They hold interactive discussions with the Family Support Group over many weeks, allowing time for people to tell their own stories and to assimilate the ideas into their personal explanatory frameworks. In the first weeks the focus is on the journey that the group members have taken and only after everyone has told their own stories do they move on to looking at how the group can support children on their journeys.

The Journey of Life is a tool for dealing with some past traumas

From the discussions held with members of the group it seems that the Journey of Life provided a tool for them to deal with some of the trauma of their past. Reflecting on the process in the light of trauma intervention theory it seems to do this in three ways:

1. By providing a set structure and a safe, easily understood metaphor it allows much of the horror to be contained emotionally so they can talk about it (Johnson 1987);
2. By emphasising how people have 'overcome' their problems and survived it allows people to emerge from a narrative of victim to one of resilience (Tolfree, 1996; White 2005; Chan 2009);
3. It provides people with an analytic tool that gives them a sense of control over their lives, an important aspect of helping people cope with past trauma (Buk, 2009).

"It allows them to understand that any kind of happening can happen in life – we expect lots of things in life but when they tell their stories of the journey they see they coped with things and they see they have resilience.

Researcher: *Isn't it too painful sometimes for people to remember these things?*

*"It is painful and we are not pushing people to talk, they choose what to say, but it allows them to see that it is possible to overcome difficult situations – they **did** climb over those big stones."* Moses Otto

"That Journey of Life shows you about how you cope in life and it can cause awareness that it is possible that you know what to do in case of difficulties – that you can overcome things – you did in the past and you can now." Nixon Ocira

Researcher: *"If you think about Journey of Life for you as a person, not for the village but for you as a person – was it this important, this important or thiiiis important [I use a simple hand gesture to show a rating scale, the final one has arms wide open].*

"Veeery important" [They laugh and all stretch out their arms].

"Veeery!"

Researcher: *Why?* [I point to a young woman of about 20 sitting with her young husband].

"Because it has paved the way for me to walk when there are difficulties."

Family Support Group, Apyeta South Village

"For my side initially when these people [Children of the World] came in [to our village] things were not easy, so they introduced Journey of Life and we realised Journey of Life is like a step to move ahead. In life there are many challenges and conditions that may not be to your interest but I realised that even if you are undergoing any problem you should not lose hope and there is no permanent condition in life. It may not be in your interest and may not be easy but still you have to 'cope up' with the issue you are undergoing. So even though I had many problems I still joined a savings group [as part of the livelihood programme] and still saved and tried to overcome the conditions that made life difficult."

Older man, Apyeta South village

"I am just remembering the Journey of Life. We were talking about walking in our journey of life and the road is not flat and there are stones along the way and you have to climb up some of them. That road is not straight and it goes around but you can do it." Woman,
Apyeta North village

Immediately after working through the Journey of Life process COWF facilitators introduce a tool that the organisation has developed called Power of Vision, *"Journey of Life takes you back and Power of Vision takes you forward"* - Peter Ogenga. Using drawing, the participants in the training all draw a small picture of them "now" and then think about what they want to achieve. The metaphor of a road and obstacles is continued.

"We say, "you are here you want to achieve this and in the way there are obstacles – how can you get there?" It is an analytic tool we are giving to people so they have the power to think and plan. We have seen people able to build a house and buy goats. Initially, they thought they would never be able to achieve this, but this man for example, has built a four-room house and he now rents it." Peter Ogenga

The Power of Vision takes us forward

What was observed when talking to villagers about the Power of Vision is that the action they take as a result of the exercise is part of the healing process, as it gives people "proof" that they do have some control over their lives. The sense of celebration and pride was palpable when we discussed what people had achieved.

Researcher: *"So put up your hands if you achieved something through Power of Vision?"*
[Almost everyone in the group of about 20 puts up their hands].

Researcher: *"That's amazing! What did you do?"*

"I bought a goat."

"I paid school fees for my children."

"I paid fees and bought a goat."

"I built a big grass-roof house and a cow and a sheep."

"I bought 10 beehives."

"I constructed a four-room house in the trading centre and I now rent it. And I also bought beehives."

"I bought chickens and goats and built a big grass-roof house, bigger than any of the others here and I pay for my kids for school fees."

Researcher: *"And you did it on your own?"*

"On our own – we just got training from Children of the World." Men and women, aged 18 to 82, Apyeta South village



Drawing Power of Vision

It is important to note that many of the people we talked to in the discussion group we ran in this village were not members of the Family Support group, they had been taken through the Power of Vision process by members of the group after they had received training in the tool from COWF facilitators. The traditional leader of this village had also worked with the Family Support group on the Journey of Life and Power of Vision.

"Despite my eyes having disturbed me [due to a degenerative eye disease] I erected this big grass-roofed house and I have made a dam and bought some beehives. And all the animals you see here, goats and chickens are because of Power of Vision, many people in the village have done something." - Village leader



Apyeta South Family Support Group. The village leader is on the far left.

Child protection

The second part of the Journey of Life process focuses on helping adults to see that children go through a journey of life and they also may face difficulties and dangers and it is our responsibility as adults to help them. It was clear from the discussions we held in the villages that people had internalised this idea, again with the help of the metaphor of the journey. The elderly woman below extended the metaphor to include the motorbikes used by everyone to reach the village.

“Here [in our village] children are really very important because you have to walk with them and help them and tell them, “When I am not here you must walk very carefully and watch where you put your feet”. When you are climbing up and up you have to have more energy to climb and you have to help the children. Sometimes when the youth learn to ride piki piki [motorbike] we must tell them there are stones or they will be falling!” Apyeta North village

The quote below illustrates how the metaphor is translated into action.

“We help children, giving them good advice like also in the village the Family Support Group will be an open eye to observe the children who are growing who are not going to school we talk to them and if the problem is with parents we also involve them. If [the problem] is child-making [caused by the child] we talk to child if it is parent-making [caused by the parent] we talk to parents.” Woman, Apyeta South village

The Family Support Group members are trained to recognise problems that children may have in the village. The groups we met described how they took action for children. Their first point of call is the village leader, and after getting his advice, they often deal with an issue themselves through the parents. The leaders in both villages we visited were enthusiastic about the support group describing how it had helped them to do their job and helped them to mediate with families. The leaders and members pointed out how important the training in communication and mediation was in this regard.

“Now after the Family Support Group was formed any kind of case with children in the community we don’t wait, we take action and go to the local leaders and we handle this family and rectify what is causing the problems.” Man, Apyeta South village

“Before we did have the idea that children need to be helped but after this Journey of Life that idea has increased and now we have capacity to handle. Before we knew that a child must be going to school but now we know how to go and talk to a family about this – now we know how to mediate in the village.” Woman, Apyeta South village

We explored with the members of the Family Support Groups if certain families felt they were interfering in family affairs and they said that at first the families did not trust them but over time they had learned that the Family Support Group members were a source of advice and were more open to them.

Family Support Groups can link children to formal services

Family Support Group members also become the link between children and formal services. As illustrated by the quote above, the community leader is usually the first point of referral but there are other institutional services that the group uses. For instance, a government mandated Child Protection Committee also operates in the area, and this group includes a few of the members of the Family Support Group as well as service providers such as social workers. The members of the Family Support Groups seemed knowledgeable about referral pathways.

Researcher: *“What would you do if a child were raped?”*

“In case of that kind of scenario we link up with other service providers so in case of rape for example we link the child to the health facility so examination is done correctly and victim gets PEP on time.” Woman, Apyeta South village

When collecting information for this case study we also spoke to children from both Apyeta North and South in their local school. As part of the learning, the children were asked to draw their villages on a large map and identify where children sometimes have problems. This extract from a discussion shows that the children know the Family Support Groups and also tells the story of how a group intervened in a child’s life.



Children draw their village

"This is our home but in our home there is some other mother and fathers who force girls to early marriage. The other families the fathers most of the time they come from the trading centre and they are drunk and they start fighting the mothers and they can even hurt the children too."

Researcher: *"Who can these children go to if they need help?"*

"Some of the children can go to the cultural leader in the village."

"We can tell our mothers"

"The Family Support Group"

"You can go to them"

"We know them"

Researcher: *"Have you ever had a problem and gone to someone from the Family Support Group to get help?"*

"The last day school was closing and I went home with my results and I did not perform well. I showed my father and he was not very pleased and he said he would have to go and look for a man as he would not keep paying my school fees and allowing me to study so I felt bad and told my mother and when my mother wanted to talk to my father it almost became a quarrel. My mother is one of member of the Family Support Group so I invited the other members and they talked to my father and my father apologised and allowed me to continue at school." Girl, 13, during a discussion of girls and boys 13-15 years, Apyeta North and South villages

Adults now think differently about children

The story above illustrates how the Family Support Group intervened in a particular situation. However what also stands out from discussions with the adults is the extent to which attitudes to children appear to have changed in the village, and that this could be linked to the general reduction of violence in the community. It seems that the Family Support Groups have been able to influence adults to think differently about children.

"The relationship between us and our children is different now. In the past for example, when we harvested we did not prioritise the issue of children but having got knowledge we involve children after the sale of crops. Children's needs are the priority now such as school fees and school materials – we look at the child as key and value them."

Researcher: *"Is that only the people in the Family Support Group?"*

"No, all the families, because we talk to them and advise them." Man, Apyeta North village.

Beyond child protection to peace building

Family support helps build community and build peace in post-conflict situations

Stark, Landis, Thomson and Potts (2016) talk about how important it is in a post-conflict situation to support families in similar ways to COWF's approach. Falb et al. further elaborate that providing support to families is particularly important since the strain of conflict often shifts power dynamics and roles within families, and can make caregivers and other sources of support less able to respond effectively to [survivors'] needs (Falb et al, 2013). (p. 223).

Recent work by psychologists (Hamber et al, 2015) looking for a way to widen and deepen the definition of psychosocial support beyond that of counselling to overcome trauma suggests that psychosocial practices can even foster changes in social context. They suggest that one of the domains in which this can happen is that of peace building.

Hamber et al (2015) use a definition of peacebuilding whereby it is understood as a process that changes intercommunity relations - namely, "people-to-people relationship building work" (p. 12) - and also institutions through "changing institutions of justice or building new democratic or participative social or community structures" (p. 11) - to prevent violence in the future.

Both these areas resonate with the work of COWF. The role of the Family Support Groups supported by COWF goes beyond a simple definition of psychosocial support and into the action of peacebuilding. In the quote below, these local people linked increased attempts to mediate and resolve land conflicts with the creation of the Family Support Groups.

"It [the Family Support Group] has led to a reduction in conflict within the community. It has led to love among the community members – understanding. It has helped on issues of land conflict. Land conflict was common here and these people are mediating on this and it has gone down." Woman, Apyeta South village

Family Support Groups are important structures in community life

A member of the Family Support Group in Apyeta South sang a song for us about the group. The song emphasises the contribution the group has made to village harmony. The repeated request for the name of the chairperson of the group is part of the traditional song form and symbolises the important role that the group plays in the life of the village. Many informants reported that people are always asking for help now.

Iye! Iye!
These trainings
Iye!
These trainings have given knowledge in our homes Apyeta South
Truly, we got the knowledge!
We share all ideas together, we budget together.
Truly, we got the knowledge!
We share all ideas together and this pleases both men and women.
The skills help us!
We place all our money on the table and we budget together between husband and wife.
Truly, we got the knowledge!
Who is the Chairperson?
He's Nyero Richard.
Truly, we got the knowledge!
Family Support is here. Call them to help us.
They come to reconcile and protect us.
Family Support is here. Call them to save us.
They come to reconcile.
Who is the Chairperson?
He's Nyero Richard.
Truly, we got the knowledge!
Who is the Chairperson?
He's called Nyero Richard.
Truly, we got the knowledge!
Our homes have become violent. Call them to help us.
They come to reconcile.
Who is the Chairperson?
He's Nyero Richard.
Truly, these people trained us.
Who is the Chairperson?
He's called Nyero Richard.
Truly, we got the knowledge!
These trainings have given knowledge in our homes Apyeta South
Truly, we got the knowledge!

(An English translation from Acholi of a song about Family Support Groups)

Note that the reference to budgeting is important as villagers explained that after the harvest when crops have been sold there was a lot of violence in the homes as men took money for alcohol and left little for the family. The budgeting together is a symbol of family harmony.

What is also significant about the song is the emphasis on reconciliation in the family and the community and the peace building actions of the Family Support Groups. Children are in fact not mentioned but we know that this group in Apyeta South does much work to protect children.

Community-led versus agency-led?

One of the things we wanted to find out was the extent to which the work is owned and undertaken by the communities or by COWF. The Family Support Groups were initiated by a COWF, it also ran the training, which we see from the song is important. In addition, the community fieldworkers make regular visits to support the group. However, there is

also a sense that the groups are very much owned by the villagers themselves. Fieldworkers Moses and Nixon are seen as resources who can give advice and are called on when the group needs help, but they do not manage the groups. The language used by community members when discussing the groups - illustrated by many of the quotes used in this case study - suggest a strong sense of ownership.

A process of social change needs time

What is also notable about COWF's approach is the generous timeframe given to allowing a social process to take place.

"The people in the villages have never worked with NGOs, they have never planned a project or run a group. They have never thought about their lives in a group. So it all takes time. The Journey of Life and Power of Vision process can take as long as six months to one year - it is not an easy thing for someone to understand this all of a sudden." Peter Ogenga

Extending work into Palabek Refugee Settlement, Uganda

A settlement camp lacking in social cohesion

In 2017, in response to renewed conflict in South Sudan thousands of refugees crossed into Uganda. In April of 2017 a refugee settlement was established in the Palabek area, close to the villages where COWF works – in fact some of the land of the village of Apyeta South has been incorporated into the settlement.

Once families have been registered at the settlement they are assigned land, build small houses and begin to farm the land. The settlement is divided into blocks, and land assignment is made according to the date families arrive so each block has a range of people from different ethnic groups living there and each block has a leader assigned by the settlement management. This mostly means there is very limited social cohesion.

COWF has received a small grant to undertake some livelihood and child protection work in the settlement. At the time of writing, COWF had begun to visit selected blocks, identifying vulnerable families and beginning the process of setting up Family Support Groups. COWF field workers Nixon and Moses have been learning about the settlement getting to know the block leaders:

“We know that these block communities are not related even as a village but we will work to have meetings and slowly set up a Family Support Group. Then we will use Journey of Life and Power of Vision – just as in the returning communities we worked with before, they also were traumatised and were not living as a village for a long time – so we have experience with this. The blocks have many different groups – some are even enemies with each other in South Sudan, so harmony in the village will be very important. Our approach can work here too, it will just take some time.”

Consulting children in the settlement camps

The staff has also begun child consultation work with children. In this photo Nixon and Eunice Agape from Children of the World work to find out what Sudanese children in the settlement wish for their future and what they think will stand in their way.



Nixon and Eunice listen to a child talking about her drawing – they are working in the waiting area of the health clinic at the reception centre. This little girl would have arrived at the camp in the last few days.

“Many of the children drew the war as the biggest obstacle they face, many also told us they want to be soldiers to get revenge, especially the boys. The girls mostly said they wanted to stay in school and often drew working hard at home and being forced to marry early as an obstacle. So this tells us already that we need to do lots of work to help them cope with their anger from the trauma and to help families protect girls from early marriage and work that stops them going to school.” Eunice Agape, community fieldworker and intern

The COWF Staff are slowly building a relationship in the block communities helping particularly vulnerable families. They worked with the block leader to make sure one family of five children aged 17 to 2 years - who saw both parents killed on the way to Uganda - found a sympathetic guardian in the camp. They spend a lot of time visiting the children to help them cope with some of their trauma. The oldest girl is now in secondary school in the camp.

“Over time this kind of work will be done by the Family Support Group but this will take time to set up so we just be an example of how to relate to children for now.”
Eunice Agape, community fieldworker and intern



Nixon and Eunice visit the family now living with their guardian

Reflections and conclusions

Different levels of community engagement in child protection

We have used the Interagency Learning Initiative typology of community ownership adapted from Benham (2008) and described in detail in Wessells (2009) as a reference when trying to understand levels of community ownership.

Four different means of engaging with communities and the resulting level of community engagement for each.

Category	Description	Ownership level
1	Direct implementation by agency: The agency is a service provider; community members are beneficiaries.	Low
2	Community involvement in agency initiative: The agency is a promoter of its own initiative, a planner and a trainer, and community members are volunteers and beneficiaries	Low to moderate
3	Community owned and managed activities mobilized by external agency: The agency is a catalyst, capacity builder, a facilitator of linkages, and a funder after community ownership has developed. The community members are analysts, planners, implementers, assessors, and also beneficiaries.	Moderate to high
4	Community owned and managed activities initiated from within the community: The agency is a capacity builder and funder, and community members are analysts, planners, implementers, assessors, and also beneficiaries.	High

The work of COWF aligns with Category 2 of the typology: *“the agency is a promoter of its own initiative, a planner and trainer, and community members are volunteers and beneficiaries”* but is moving towards Category 3: *“The agency is catalyst, capacity builder, a facilitator of linkages, and a funder after community ownership has developed. The community members are analysts, planners, implementers, assessors, and also beneficiaries”*.

We should acknowledge here that high levels of community internal resources are required for initiatives to operate in category 3 and 4. In this particular case, the context is a recovering, post-conflict community, and COWF have used a highly participatory process to build families and the social cohesion as the foundations of a community-led process. It appears as if an emerging sense of community and community actions - which are a result of the careful psychosocial work of the project - has been enabled because individuals within the community have some sense of power over their personal internal lives and over the family structure. In the next steps of this process COWF may be able to move towards facilitating greater community ownership of the child protection work.

There are also issues which we could not explore in the writing of this case study. For example, in understanding levels of community ownership, we did not spend enough time with the Family Support Groups and the rest of the community to get an idea of how more marginalised members of the community are involved. We also did not get a full picture of how supportive everyone in the community is of the Family Support Groups - for instance it may be something which people go along with because the leaders and power elite support it.

Further lessons to be learned

The particular post-conflict context in which COWF works has been addressed by developing an approach which uses a carefully thought-through psychological process and broad family support to bring about child protection. The focus on the psychological process appears to allow for some measure of recovery after conflict which includes allowing people to take action for their own and other children. Also of interest, is how the process of recovery is reflected in the way the simple metaphors of the Journey of Life are seemingly now embedded in the community narrative. Further impact research into this model would demonstrate more clearly if and how this type of work is

sustainable and leads to a real and long term reduction of harms to children in the community, as well as any possibilities for scaling up. It may also lead to a better understanding of effective psychosocial approaches and processes to support post - conflict and other emergency contexts.

COWF's more recent work in the Palabek settlement could also be further documented with a focus on how its approaches can help build social cohesion in these types of settlements, and how this might lead to deeper community engagement in child protection.

Additionally, one aspect of COWF's approach around Kitgum which stands out is the juxtaposition of the simplicity of the tools used - in this case the Journey of Life and the Power of Vision - with the high level of skill and local knowledge of the staff. This level of skill appears to be mainly derived from regular reflection on practice by staff as well as the empathy and shared experiences with the villagers. It is potentially a powerful example of why it is so important to acknowledge what "ordinary" people can bring to child protection processes.

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