

Key Questions

- Do we take enough time for collective reflection and learning?
- How deep is our learning about communities and child protection issues?
- Do we do enough to enable community ownership, power, and action on behalf of vulnerable children?
- How sustainable are our current approaches to strengthening community child protection systems?
- How strong is our evidence base?
- What constructive alternatives are there to dominant, top-down approaches?

Community-Driven Approaches to Child Protection

Workshop Objectives

- Reflect collectively on the limits of expert driven, top-down approaches;
- Identify the advantages of innovative, community owned and driven approaches; and
- Enable learning about and interest in community-owned and driven approaches.



Community-Driven Child Protection and Bottom-Up Child Protection System Strengthening

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Background—Global Review

- Dilemma in 2008—many agencies facilitated community Child Protection Committees, but how effective and sustainable are they?
- Inter-agency effort
- Emergency, transition, longer-term development
- Key findings
 - Weak evidence base
 - Low levels of ownership & sustainability
 - Do no harm challenges—setting up parallel systems
 - 7 effectiveness factors

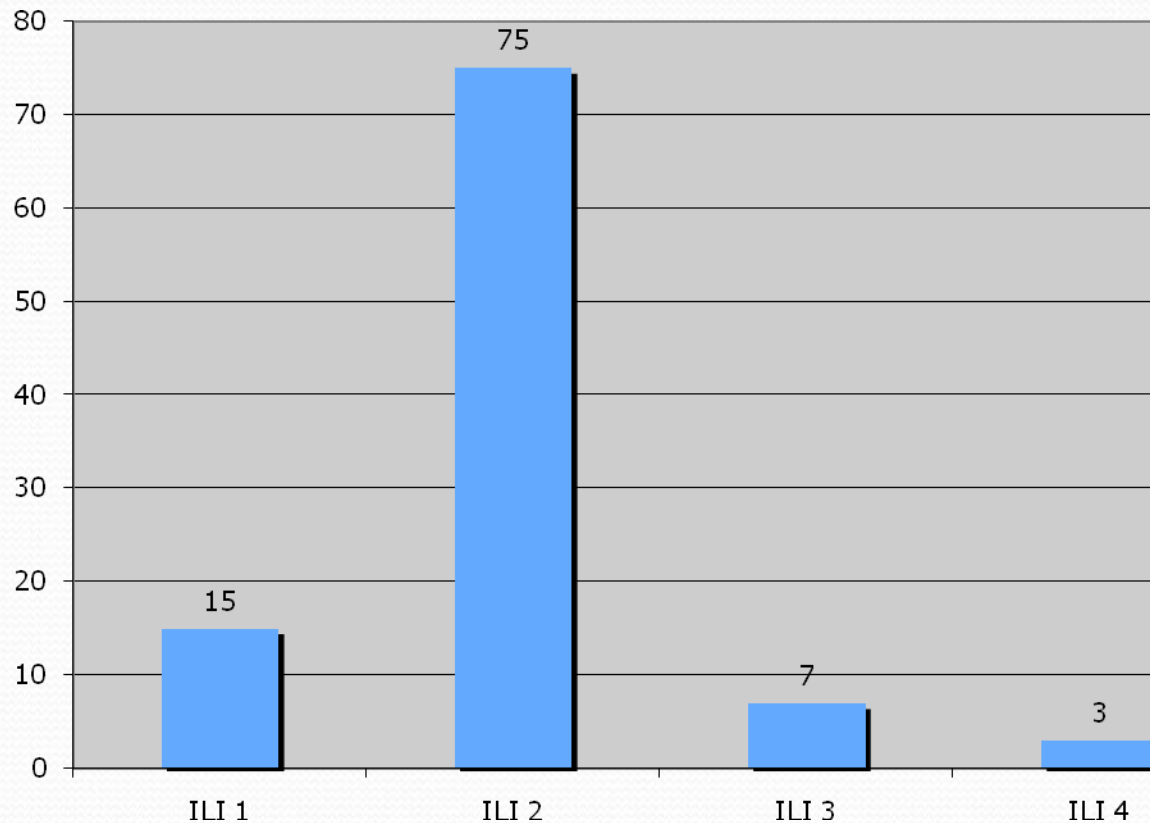
Seven Factors Contributed to the Effectiveness and Sustainability of Community-Based Child Focused Groups

- Community ownership and responsibility
- Incorporating and building on existing resources
- Leaders' support
- Genuine child participation
- Ongoing management of issues of power, diversity, inclusivity
- Resourcing—ongoing training/capacity building, material support
- Linkages—engagement with formal and nonformal, traditional systems

Different Ways Agencies Engage with the Community

- **Category 1:** Direct implementation by agency: The agency is a service provider; community members are beneficiaries.
- **Category 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.
- **Category 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.
- **Category 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.

Determinants of Ownership— Approach to Community Engagement



Factors That Promote or Limit Community Ownership

- Promote

- A sense of collective responsibility
- Patient cultivation
- Skill in facilitation
- Identity
- Mobilization of community resources

- Limit

- Early introduction of large sums of money
- Agency oriented engagement with community
- Didactic, top-down approaches
- Failure to build on local ideas and resources

ILI in West Africa and East Africa

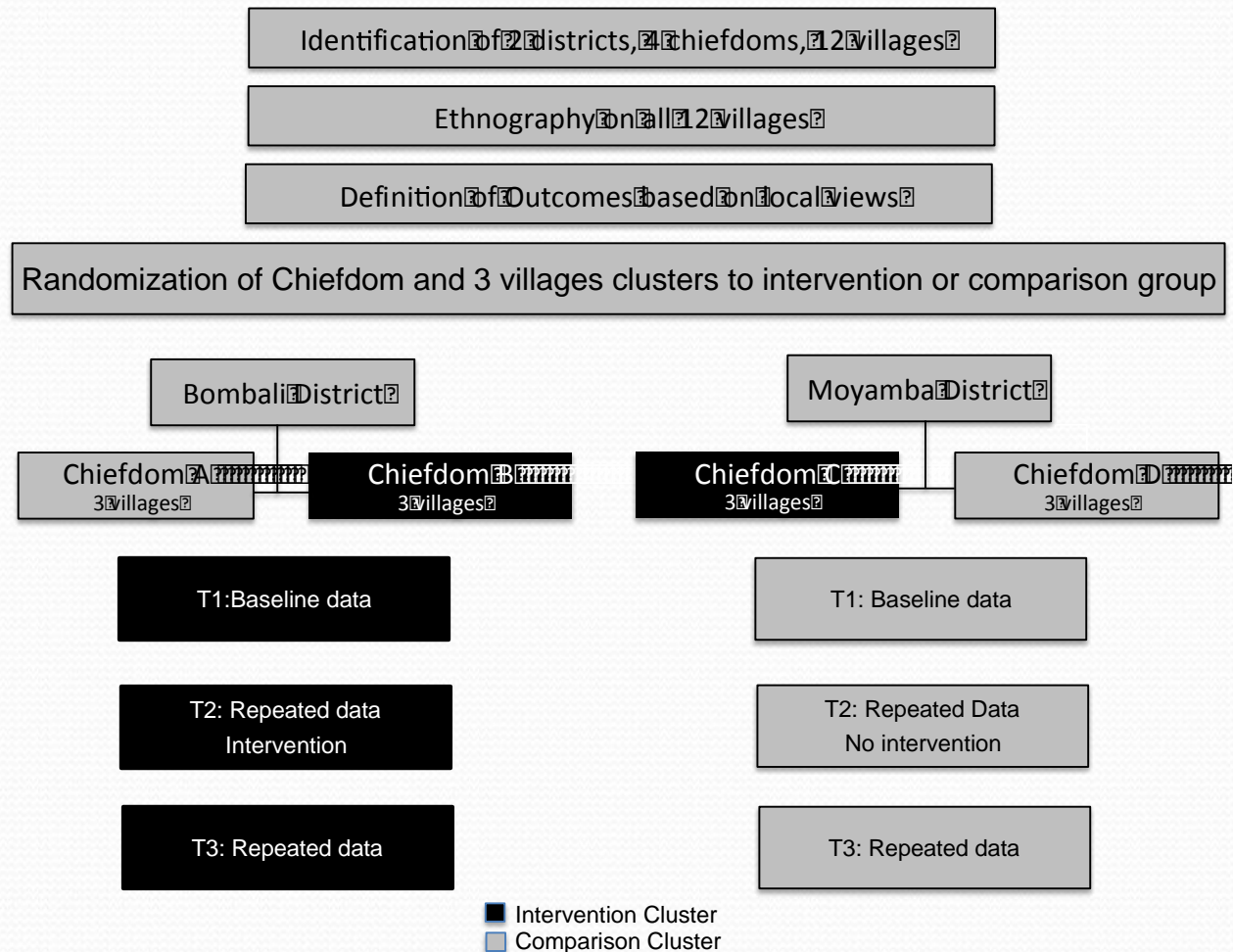
- Question: Can Community-Based Child Protection Mechanisms be made more effective through community driven action and linkage with district level aspects of the formal system?
- Build upon what is already there—ethnography
- Community-driven approach—community selects issue and addresses it through linking intervention
- Public health approach to evaluation: Population-based measures of number of cases and also risk factors and protective factors
- Use of learning and approach to strengthen practice and policy

Case of Sierra Leone

- Brutal, decade long war
- Many Child Welfare Committees established
- 2007—Child Rights Act mandated CWC in each village
- Implementation focused on training committee members and on didactic child rights education
- Top-down approach
- Ethnographic research in Bombali and Moyamba Districts
- Trained national researchers lived and worked in local communities, collecting data on the actual functioning of the child protection system



Multi-Phase Action Research In Sierra Leone



A Different Approach

- Inter-agency approach with strong, early collaboration with Government and CP Com
- Outsiders as learners, facilitators, documentors
- Respectful listening and learning--ethnography
- Feeding information back and inviting reflection
- Reflection and mobilization as basis for community-driven action (community selects the issue to address, develops an intervention, implements the intervention, evaluates it)
- Bottom-up approach—intervention requirement was linkage of and collaboration between the community and the formal system
- Problematizing ‘community’

Ethnographic Research: Local Views of Harms to Children

‘Most serious’ harms

- Out of school children
- Teen pregnancy out of wedlock
- Heavy work
- Maltreatment of children not living with their biological parents

Additional harms

- Child beating
- Cruelty
- Incest, rape, and sexual abuse
- Neglect and bad parenting
- Witchcraft
- Abduction & ritual murder
- Child rights

Community-Driven Intervention

- Six communities—three each in one Chiefdom of Bombali and Moyamba District, respectively
- External, Sierra Leonean facilitators lived and worked in the villages
- Inclusive planning and action: teenage girls, teenage boys, women, men, elders
- Priority issue to address: teenage pregnancy
- Chose to address it through family planning, sexual and reproductive health education, and life skills
- Peer Educators and whole community approach
- Linkage with District Medical Officer and District Social Welfare Office
- Population based measures of children's risk and well-being outcomes

Key Elements of the Intervention

- Collective dialogue, awareness raising and negotiation
- Collective decision-making, empowerment, and responsibility
- Linkage of community with health services
- Peer education
- Use of culturally relevant media—song, drama
- Child leadership and messaging—‘5920’
- Inclusion and outreach—sub-groups, home visits
- Parent-child discussions
- Role modeling
- Legitimation by authority

Promising Findings

- Increased access to and use of contraceptives
- Increased intent of girls and their close friends to ask partners to use condoms
- Stronger linkage of communities with the formal health system at district level
- Reduced school dropout
- Girls say 'No' more often to unwanted sex
- Parents and children discuss sex, pregnancy, and pregnancy prevention in a constructive manner
- Spin off effects—addressing early marriage
- Strong community ownership and motivation to continue the work without external support

Implications for Practitioners

- Use elicitive, respectful methods in assessment
- Learn about what communities already do to protection children, even if they do not call it 'child protection'
- Start where communities are—rethink leading with child rights and outsider categories & tools
- Encourage collective reflection, planning, and action regarding children's issues
- Rethink our role—from 'expert' to co-learner and facilitator about effective community action
- Create space for community action
- Avoid 'facipulation'
- Where community practice contradicts the African Charter, facilitate a process of internally guided social change
- Model and enable critical, reflective practice—Do No Harm

Wider Impact

- Influenced the development of the new national Child and Family Welfare Policy
 - family and community mechanisms at center
 - no new structures
- Workshops with practitioner agencies
- New mode of work by the national technical committee for rolling out the new approach: community-driven platform & scaling up
- Ongoing support from the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs