

# Video Worksheet 1: Introduction to Community-Led Child Protection Approaches

[Watch video here](#)

The terms 'community-based' and 'community-led' are often used interchangeably, but there is in fact a world of difference between these two approaches.

**Community-led: The community holds the power to take decisions and lead actions** - A community-led approach to child protection is driven by the community. Here, it is the community who holds the power and owns the process, not NGOs or outside experts. It is also the community who makes the decisions about which harms to children should be addressed and how to address them. The starting point for this approach is the deep concern that local people have for their children. Any action taken is seen as a means of fulfilling this collective responsibility towards children. Because the community uses its own resources and motivation to help children, this approach is much less dependent on NGOs or other external actors. As a result, it is more sustainable and strengthens prevention strategies.

**Community-based: The NGO holds the power and makes the decisions** - Community-based approaches to child protection are project-oriented and are driven primarily by NGOs or other outside actors. These outsiders identify key child protection issues and then tell the community which interventions are needed. For example, a 'child protection expert' from an NGO might identify 'violence against children' as a key issue and then invite the community to help implement an intervention. The work that follows occurs inside the community space, and some community members may even become directly involved - for example, as community mobilisers. But it is the NGO which chooses which issue to address and which intervention to use, and it is the NGO which will evaluate the results of the intervention. In

this approach, the community holds little power, takes low levels of ownership over the work, and typically sees the work as 'an NGO project'. Since the work is dependent on the NGO, this kind of intervention typically does not last after the external funding ends, and has weak prevention.

**Learn more**

**What do community-led approaches look like?** A community-led approach to protecting children is highly participatory, recognising that communities have long taken action to protect vulnerable children. Done properly, a community-led process is far more effective and sustainable than expert-driven, top-down approaches. [Read more here](#). Community-led approaches can take many forms, but all of them feature community dialogue, and decision-making. Outsiders can be valuable facilitators, co-learners, and capacity builders in this process. [Read more here](#).

**How can you tell a community-led approach from a community-based approach?** Globally, child protection work is still often directed by outsiders and features little genuine engagement with the community concerned. This community-based way of working is very different from a community-led approach. Download and [read a useful list](#) summarising the key differences between community-based and community-led approaches.

How practitioners first enter into and engage with a community can set mutual expectations about the respective roles of the outsiders and the community, and about who is in the drivers seat. [Read more here](#).

**Discussion and self-reflection**

1. Is this a community-led approach? Note or discuss what influenced your answer.
2. What kind of approaches do you/your organisation typically use?



**TASKS:**  
THE NGO HELPS THE COMMUNITY ESTABLISH A CHILD PROTECTION GROUP

**JAN:** CREATE COMMUNITY CHILD PROTECTION GROUP

**FEB:** CONSULT COMMUNITY

**MARCH:** AGREE ON A PLAN OF ACTION

**APRIL-AUG:** IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

**SEPT:** GROUP MEMBERS REPORT BACK ON THEIR ACTIVITIES

**IS THIS A COMMUNITY LED APPROACH ?**

Image: childprotectionforum.org