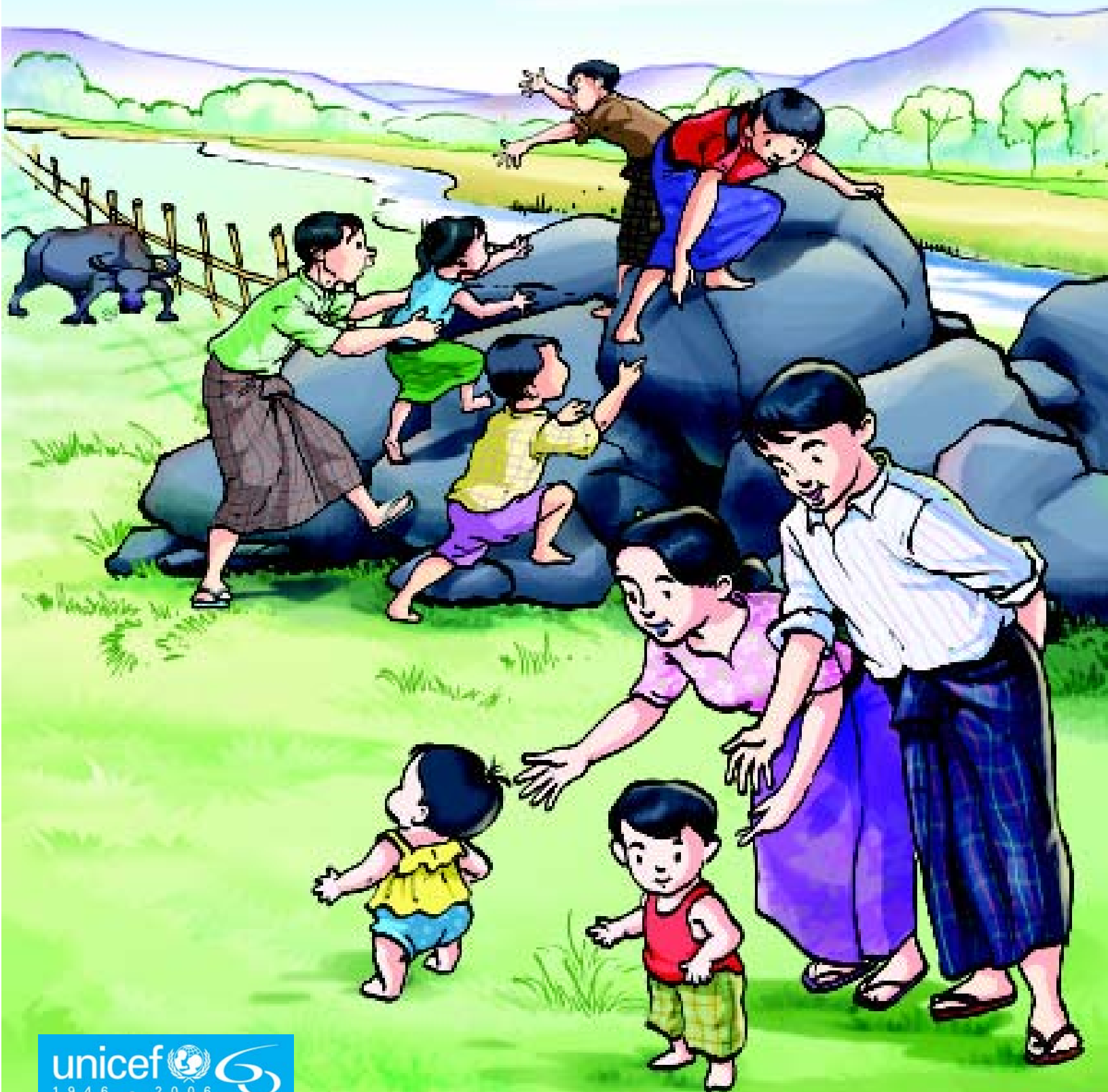




The Journey of Life



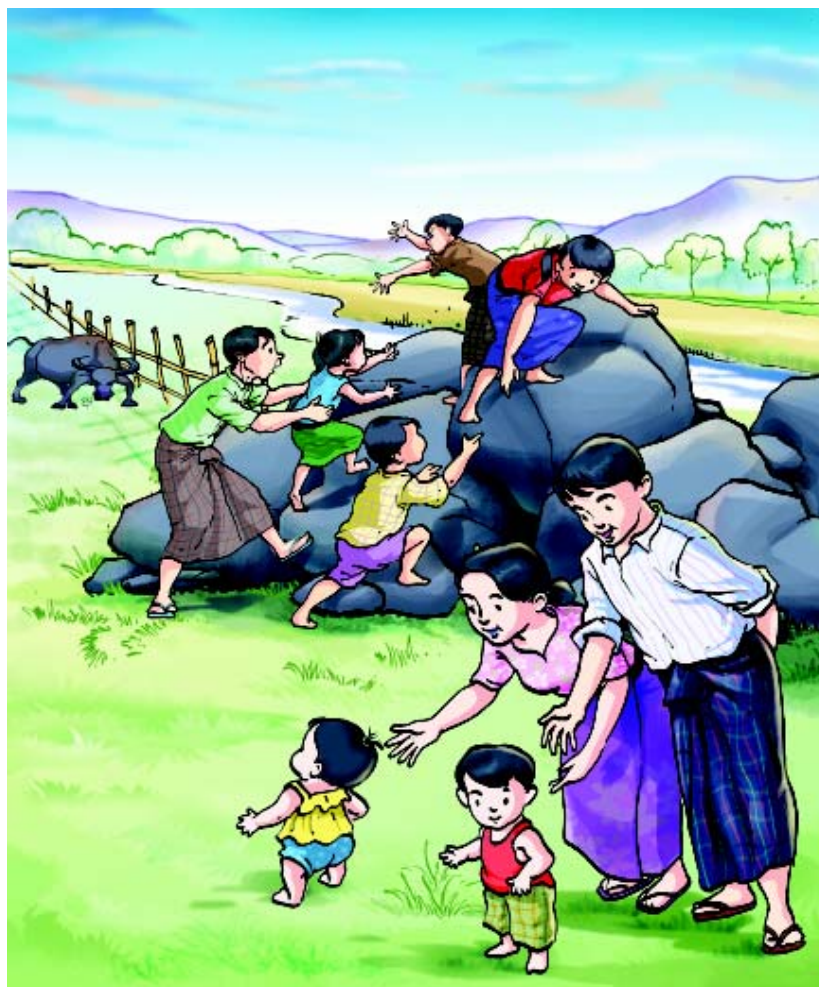
UNICEF MYANMAR, 2006

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The Journey of Life



A Community Workshop To Support Children



The Journey of Life is a workshop designed to raise awareness of the problems and needs of children. It provides guidelines on how the community can find solutions.



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Section 1: Facilitator's Guide

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

Introduction

To grow from a child into an adult is a journey – the journey of life. Along the way, children face problems. Often they are strong enough to continue their journey without help. But sometimes the problems are too many or too difficult for children. When children are overwhelmed by life's problems, the community can use its strength to support the child.

The Journey of Life is a workshop designed to help parents and community members become more aware of the needs and problems of children who live in difficult circumstances.

This manual is divided into two sections. The first section is a Facilitator's Guide to help you organize the workshop and learn how to use this manual. The second section provides you with the content of the Journey of Life workshop -- it presents the information and activities of the workshop.

The Journey of Life workshop can be held in any setting such as a community hall, or even under a tree. Participants can include a mixed group of adults and youth. Try to have a good gender balance (that is, equal numbers of men and women).



Outline of the Workshop

The Journey of Life workshop provides an opportunity for participants to share ideas and information, ask questions, raise debate and discuss issues, and develop an action plan for their community.

The workshop has eight parts. These are:

- Session 1 Welcome** – welcomes and introduces participants to each other
- Session 2 Introduction to the Journey of Life** -- introduces the Journey of Life concept and our lives as a journey
- Session 3 Meeting Children’s Needs** – shows that it does not cost much to provide for children’s needs
- Session 4 Understanding Children’s Problems** – helps participants understand that children are quite resourceful, but they can be overwhelmed by problems and sometimes need help
- Session 5 Identifying Children Who Need Help** – enables participants to recognise when children are struggling with problems
- Session 6 Building Children’s Strengths** – empowers participants to help children develop their strengths and find solutions to their problems.
- Session 7 Get Involved!** – guides participants to develop a community plan that will support children.
- Session 8 Evaluation and Closing the Workshop.**



Materials Needed

The workshop requires the following extra materials:

- Poster-size pictures to introduce each session and communicate key messages
- Flip chart paper or sheets, marker pens, crayons
- Sticky tape or sticky stuff for putting paper onto the walls, or drawing pins for use on trees
- A notebook and pen for you to make notes
- A sack/bag for the 'strong child' demonstration
- Large stones, bricks, wood or other objects for 'strong child' demonstration
- Gift boxes made of local materials
- Materials for Closing the Workshop activity -- songs, dances, certificates or whatever you feel is appropriate.



USING THE MANUAL



Objectives: Each part of the workshop has **Objectives** that help you to focus your attention on certain issues. (*Note for facilitator:* The Objectives are for your use only, please do not read them out to participants.)



Purpose: Each activity has a section called **Purpose** that provides guidance and key reasons for doing each activity.

Activities:

Each part of the workshop has several **Activities** that help participants learn, contribute to the discussions and stimulate ideas. Activities include:

- Discussions (when participants discuss issues, with your guidance by asking them questions)
- Demonstrations (when you ask a participant/participants to show/explain something to the group)
- Role-plays (where participants will act out a situation), and
- Games (helps to energize participants as they learn and discuss issues).



Steps contain the main points for teaching and discussion. Each Step is numbered and can be used as a guide to carry out an activity.



Tips: **Tips** provide quick information on how to organise the activity, or key points that you need to emphasise.



Lessons learned: This section helps participants summarise what they have learned from each part of the workshop.



Summary of key learning points: These are brief summaries of **key learning points** for each part of the manual. The facilitator can include these points if participants have omitted any of them.



Timing: Facilitators should have a flexible approach to timing, depending on participants. For instance, for parents who work, the workshop might be facilitated as 6-8 separate sessions on Saturday mornings or a time when parents are free. For others, the workshop might be facilitated over 2 - 4 consecutive days. The important thing is to ensure there is sufficient time in each session for all participants to share, discuss, and participate fully.



Script: A **Script** indicates words that the facilitator may use to highlight important issues throughout the workshop. These words appear in quotes



Picture Pack: A **Picture Pack** has been developed for use together with this manual. It contains a series of pictures that are designed to communicate key messages. Some people will better understand messages through the use of pictures, as this does not require a high standard of literacy. The picture that accompanies each part of the workshop is listed at the start of each section.



HOW TO FACILITATE THE JOURNEY OF LIFE WORKSHOP

The following guidelines will help you facilitate the Journey of Life community workshop.

Your role as facilitator

- The facilitator's role is to guide and encourage participants to share ideas, information and experience.
- Participants learn by doing, so if the whole group can participate in the activities and discussions, they will all benefit.

Who can facilitate the workshop?

The workshop is designed in an easy to follow way, and the following people can facilitate if they have attended a training course on facilitating this workshop.

- Participants who have experience in working with communities
- Participants who have experience in working with children
- Those with approximately Grade 7 education and above
- Community members with a talent for facilitating workshops.

Who may attend the workshop?

The workshop is designed to benefit the following groups: parents and guardians, youth and youth leaders, community leaders, members of community-based committees for children, community-based professionals (teachers, nurses, policewomen/men, social workers, health workers), religious leaders, representatives of community institutions (such as children's homes) and local organisations.



Organising the Workshop

Before the workshop

Use the following suggestions to help you organise the Journey of Life workshop:

- Choose a time and place that makes it easy for participants to attend. If you are providing food and drink, make sure that it is organised beforehand.
- Engage community-based co-facilitators if possible because they add value to the discussions through sharing of real life experiences.
- Ensure you have invited influential participants who can improve the lives of children. It is a good idea to have community leaders, caregivers and youth together to talk about "our children".
- Read this manual through before the workshop and practice using the materials, so you become familiar and comfortable with the objectives and activities. You can adapt the activities and discussions to suit the needs of your environment.
- Find out what community members know about caring for children and get to know their experiences. This will increase your understanding of the community environment during the workshop.

During the workshop

The following points will help you run a successful workshop:

- Allow participants to sit in their most comfortable positions, but try to avoid classroom-style seating with participants in rows and the facilitator at the front. (It might be a good idea to encourage participants to sit in a circle).
- At the beginning of the workshop, tell participants that you want to hear from everyone in the group. Their contribution is important. In the Journey of Life workshop, everybody learns from each other.
- Make sure you encourage shy participants, especially women and girls, to talk and participate, even if they feel nervous.
- As well as encouraging shy participants to speak up, you may need to gently prevent the stronger participants from dominating the workshop.



- Listen to all participants and thank them for their contributions. Acknowledge all comments, even if you think they might not be relevant. You want everyone to feel involved and talk about key issues. Treat everyone as an expert, and **acknowledge that the community knows best about what happens in its area.**
- Lead the workshop with passion, excitement and commitment. Make sure you are enthusiastic about everything you say and do -- and everything participants say and do. This will make the discussions livelier, and encourage full participation.
- Be careful not to impose your beliefs and values on the group. For example, if participants feel that children need regular beating and you disagree, explore the topic carefully. Ask them why they feel that way, and whether there are other ways to discipline children. Ask if they remember being beaten as a child and if it helped them to improve their behaviour. If you tell participants that they are wrong, they will stop listening to you. Instead, you want to lead them to make up their own minds, having considered the views of the other participants.
- If participants request any religious activities (such as saying opening or closing prayers), ask them to lead the process. Do not impose your personal views or opinions on the group.
- Try to use local examples for new ideas so that participants can relate to what you are saying. Also, explain issues in a simple and clear way, adapting suggestions from the manual that participants can relate to and understand.
- One way to get participants to discuss new ideas is to link traditional proverbs and songs to new ways of thinking.
- Respond to the feelings and mood of the group. For example, if they seem tired, introduce a game or energiser³ to change the pace of the workshop.
- If someone asks you a question, allow participants to discuss it first before you respond. For example, ask, "*Well, what do you think about that?*" or "*Does anyone else have something they want to say about this?*"
- It is important to encourage questions and discussion at any time during the workshop as this helps participants to better understand what they have learned. Do not move to the next activity; participants always need time to debate, discuss and review ideas before putting them into practice.



- If someone raises an issue that ties into an activity or discussion later in the workshop, let him or her know that you will address the issue later. Remember to ask for the comments or questions again when you reach the appropriate activity. (You could pencil yourself a reminder in your workshop manual).
- Emphasize that parents, caregivers and the community are all responsible for looking after "our children."
- Gently challenge participants if they feel that children should be silent and not participate in making decisions or running their own lives. For example, ask *"How do you talk to children?"* or *"When you were a child, what sort of decisions did you have to make?"*
- If there are youth participants in the group, ensure they get enough opportunities to contribute to the discussions as well.

Taking notes and making pictures

In this workshop, there will be a mixed group of participants. Some will be able to write and others will not. Although note taking can be useful, encourage participants to listen and participate, rather than take notes. Use pictures and symbols to record ideas, so that the whole group may benefit.

- Ask participants to help you draw or think of pictures for things they have said. This approach adds more fun to the workshop, and moves participants away from the school-like approach that is based on writing.
- If you are using a flip chart, write your notes in large print (using dark colours such as black or dark blue) so that it is easy for participants to understand. You can ask a volunteer from the group to help you with this.
- If possible, give participants copies of the pictures used to introduce the key learning points, as a way for them to remember the ideas from the workshop.



HOW PARTICIPANTS LEARN

Participants learn effectively when:

- They see what they are learning as valuable
- They have clear goals
- The experience of all participants is valued and drawn upon
- New knowledge and skills are connected to what participants already know
- They practice what they learn
- They get direct and frequent feedback
- They share/debate/discuss what they are learning with others
- They feel respected and listened to
- They have a say in how the teaching and learning happens
- Differences in identity and experience are acknowledged and accepted.



Section 2: The Workshop



Workshop Objectives

- To help those who care for children to understand their social, emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual needs
- To help identify children living in difficult circumstances
- To understand that when children have problems, it can change their behaviour
- To help participants understand that children have strengths and if united with adults, they can help build these strengths
- To encourage community groups to develop ways to improve the lives of their children so they can be healthy, happy, and productive adults able to respond to the challenges of life.



SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME



Objectives

- To welcome participants to the workshop
- To help participants get to know each other.





Welcome



You could say "Hello, I'm (name) _____ from
____(organisation)_____ in (town)_____.

Thank you for coming to the Journey of Life workshop today. We will be talking about children and how to help them face the challenges of life. By children, we mean a person up to the age of 18. Children are strong enough to handle many problems, but sometimes the problems become either too big or too many, so they need our help. It does not take much. Many needs of children can be solved without money. The community can use its strength to care for and support children until they learn to cope with the challenges of life."

Activity 1: Getting to know each other



Purpose: To help participants introduce themselves and to get to know each other and their interests.

Meeting each other:

Ask participants to pair up with someone they do not know, and tell each other about themselves. Each pair then introduces each other to the large group.

Getting to know each other:



Buses: "We all take buses to get to places. You take a bus to get to a capital city or a village. Everyone on the bus has something in common; you are all going to the same place. You have something in common with everyone here – we are all here to discuss the Journey of Life. So our bus could be the Journey of Life Bus. Let us pretend we are taking buses according to what we have in common. We will start with a woman's bus and a man's bus – the man's bus is over here and the woman's bus is over there – go to the one that you belong to."



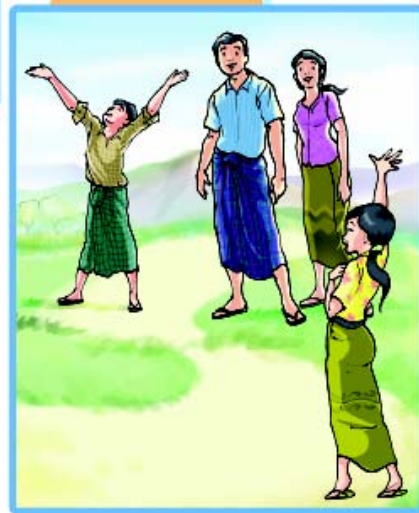
Continue to ask participants to get together in buses as quickly as possible as you call out other ideas for buses. These ideas could include buses according to the colour of clothes participants are wearing, their jobs, or buses according to the number of children they have. Participants can come up with their own ideas for buses.



Tip: This game helps the facilitator to understand the background of participants.



SESSION 2: INTRODUCING THE JOURNEY OF LIFE



Objectives:

- introduce the Journey of Life concept
- To help adults better understand children by describing their own journey of life.



Activity 2: The Journey of Life



Purpose: To introduce the Journey of Life picture and some of the key issues covered during the workshop.



Steps:



"We can think of life as a journey that begins when we are born and continues as we grow and develop. Things can happen to children as they walk along the road of life. Some are good things and some are bad things."



1. The facilitator presents the picture of the Journey of Life (using the Picture Pack) and talks about how life is like a journey, with many choices and important events.
2. The facilitator draws or presents his/her own Journey of Life, highlighting a few important events in their lives.

3. The facilitator then asks each participant to think about his or her life as a journey, and asks participants to draw their own Journey of Life, including two important events that happened during this journey.



"Think of your life as a journey from childhood to adulthood. Draw your life as a journey and show two significant events, good or bad that happened to you".

4. Ask participants to think about what they needed for their journey of life
5. The facilitator makes a list of needs that have been identified.



Summary of key learning points:

- We can think of our lives as a journey that we begin when we are born and continue with as we grow and develop
- There are many experiences and lessons that we learn as we travel on our journey of life. We can draw upon these experiences to help children grow and develop.



SESSION 3: MEETING CHILDREN'S NEEDS



Objectives

- To help participants understand what children need for healthy growth and development – socially, emotionally, physically, spiritually and Intellectually
- To help participants appreciate that some needs of children can be met without money.



✓ What do children need to grow?



"We have identified what we needed in order to grow into healthy adults. Now let us talk about what children need in order to enjoy their childhood, to cope with the difficulties they experience and to grow into strong and responsible adults."



Activity 3: Build a Child



Purpose: To help participants appreciate what children need for their development, and explain that children's needs are children's rights.



Steps:

1. Ask participants to look at the baby maize plant drawing. The facilitator uses the picture of the baby maize plant to illustrate the next point.



2. Say: *"Children are like maize plants. They need to be cared for. If you take good care of your maize, you will have strong plants and a good harvest. It is the same with children, if you look after them, they will grow strong. Our harvest is the next generation of children who will grow up to respond to any challenge as well as help the community."*

3. *"Now we are going to look at what a child needs to grow into a strong adult. Let's draw a picture of a child together. With every need we think of we will draw another part of the child's body."*

4. *"Let's start with the head."*

5. Ask them to call out things children need to grow. Every time participants call out a need, you acknowledge it ("yes, they need food") and ask the participant who identified the need to draw in the next part of the child.

6. Choose volunteers to write down and/or draw a picture representing the needs. (You will use this list in the next activity).



: Make sure that examples of the following needs are mentioned:

- physical/survival needs (food, water, shelter);
- intellectual (education)
- emotional (love)
- social (sense of belonging to a family or community).
- spiritual (a belief in a higher being)
- protection

7. In the group, discuss:

- (a) Are children entitled to these needs?
- (b) Which needs are they entitled to?
- (c) What can children do to make it easier for families and communities to meet their needs?



Help participants understand that children are human beings and that **children's needs are children's rights**. They have rights that should be protected, and that are protected by laws and the Convention on the Rights of the Child

For example, children have the right to be kept safe from harm, the right to receive adult care, the right to live with a family, the right to education, and the right to participation.

Optional Activity:

If the facilitators think it would be useful, you may add a short session or activity on the rights of the child, using the small booklet on children's rights, and/or picture cards about children's rights.

Activity 4: The cost of meeting children's needs



Purpose: To help participants understand that the many needs of children can be met without money.



"Let us look at the list of needs we created in the activity 'Build A Child' and see how we can provide for these needs. For each need, let us look at what it requires – money or people."



Steps



1. Use the list of needs you have just developed to discuss whether people play a major role or money plays a major role in providing for the need.



Tip: Use symbols or stickers to represent money or people. You can ask participants to draw the symbols beside each need, or you can use stickers which you have already prepared.

2. For each need, ask whether it requires money or people. If participants answer “PEOPLE”, they should draw the symbol for people beside that need (or put a sticker beside the need). If participants answer “MONEY”, they should draw the money symbol, or put a sticker representing money. If participants answer “BOTH”, you can draw both symbols.

3. Count the number of needs that can be met by people, and those that can be met by money.



Tip: Usually, this exercise will show that PEOPLE are more important than MONEY in meeting the needs of children. You can point out that some needs require both people and money, but the most important needs (like love, play, trust, protection and a sense of belonging) can be given by families and communities without needing any additional resources.



Lessons Learned:

- *What can we learn from this activity?*
- *Can money on its own meet children’s needs?*
- *What are some children’s needs that can be met without money?*

Use the poster of the two ‘Baby Corns’ to summarise the key learning points from Session 3:

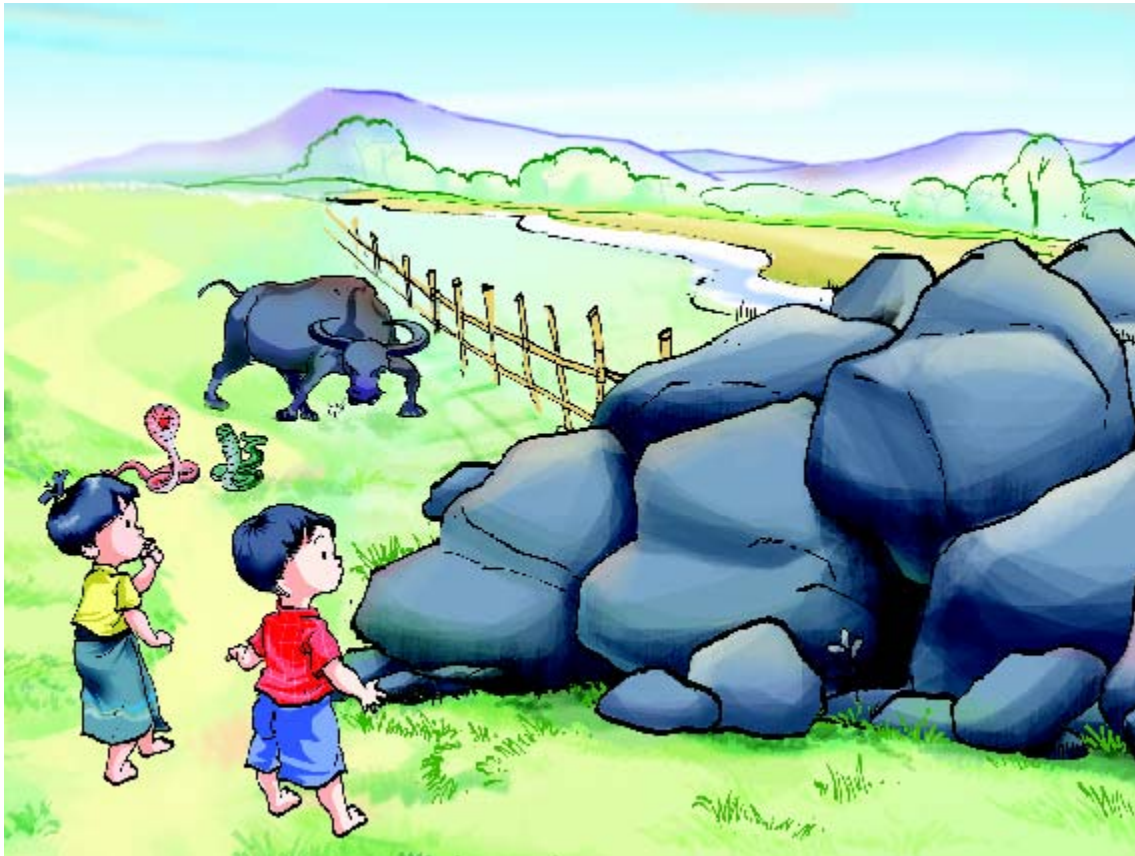


Summary of key learning points:

- Children have different needs that must be met to ensure that they successfully go through the Journey of Life.
- We can use a picture of a maize plant to help us understand that the way we take care of our children and meet their needs will help them to become adults.
- We can satisfy many children's needs without money. Our love, commitment, time, hands, ears and hearts can be used to meet the important needs of children.



SESSION 4: UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN'S PROBLEMS



Objectives

- To identify the different problems that children face on their journey of life
- To understand that some problems are difficult for children to manage on their own
- To think about how children can reduce the problems they experience in life



Activity 5: The Problems of Children



Purpose: To help participants think about the problems that children face as they grow



"We have talked about what a child needs to grow up in order to be healthy, strong and responsible. All children face problems whilst growing up. Now, we are going to look at these".



Steps:

1. Think about the problems you faced as you grew up... When you were little... when you went to school... in your youth... What were some of those problems?
2. What are the problems that children face in your community as they grow up today? Are they the same problems that you faced as a child, or are they different?
3. Identify the **main** problems that children face in your community today.
4. Discuss and rank these problems (the most serious problem is No.1, the next most serious is No. 2, etc)
5. List the "top five" problems that children are facing today on small cards or flipchart paper.
6. Each small group should present their "top 5 " problems to the large group.
7. In the large group, compile and rank all the problems.
8. Write these problems on the boulders on the picture that introduces this session.



Activity 6 Demonstration:

Even the strongest child can be weighed down by problems



Purpose: To show participants that even strong children can become weighed down by too many problems.

Materials Needed

- Bag or sack
- Large stones or bricks collected by participants or provided by facilitator



Steps:

1. Ask each participant to collect or select a stone or brick to represent a problem that children in their community are facing, using the list from Activity 5.
2. Ask participants to write or draw one problem on the stone (use markers or paints).
3. Ask one or two children (or participants pretending they are children) to stand in front of the group with empty sacks. Ask the 'children' to demonstrate their strength by lifting the empty sack and jumping in place as high as they can several times. Comment on how strong these 'children' are.



Tip: If the group is small, use only one 'child'. If the group is large, use two 'children' – one girl, and one boy.

3. Ask each participant to take their stone to one of the 'children', tell the large group what the problem is, and then place their stone into one of the sacks that the 'children' are holding.

(For example, "this stone represents a child losing its mother", or "this stone represents a child dropping out of school because she has to work".)

4. When all the participants have put their stones in the sacks, ask the 'children' to lift the sacks and jump in place again. They will find the sacks are too heavy to lift or carry.



"This sack is heavy with the problems of children. They can not lift their sacks or carry them without help. Even a very strong child who has too many problems will find it difficult to continue on her/his Journey of Life."

5. Ask participants to show how they can help the child, and discuss other ways of helping children with problems.



Tip: Ideas can include lifting the bag, removing some of the stones, supporting the child and carrying the bag to help the child move along the Journey of Life.



Once the participants have shown how they can help the child with his/her problems, summarize by saying that there are many ways to help children with their problems so that they do not become too heavy to bear.



“When families and communities take responsibility for protecting children and helping them with their problems, the child’s load is made lighter or removed, and the child can now continue on the Journey of Life. As long as the child’s load does not become too heavy, the child can take responsibility for itself. However, when the child’s load becomes too heavy with problems, the community needs to help”.



Lessons learned

- What can we learn from this activity?
- How do the problems mentioned affect children on their Journey of Life?
- What problems would you say make children’s lives particularly difficult in your community?
- How can you reduce the load of problems carried by children in your family or community?



Summary of key learning points:

- Children experience different problems as they grow and develop
- Children may be overwhelmed by problems, particularly if they are faced with too many problems at the same time
- If we work together, we can help reduce the load of problems in children’s lives.



SESSION 5: IDENTIFYING CHILDREN WHO NEED HELP



Objectives

- To help participants identify children who are struggling with problems
- To help participants appreciate what happens to children when they cannot cope with problems
- To help participants recognise that when children are overwhelmed by problems, they may take the Road of Danger.



Activity 7: Children with difficult lives



Purpose: To help participants recognize which children are struggling with problems.



"When children have problems, they tend to behave in different ways that may concern those around them. We need to recognize those children who are struggling with problems and provide the necessary support".



Steps:

1. Divide participants into small groups and assign the following questions to each group:
 - a) What kind of children do you know with problems in their lives?
 - b) How do they behave to show us that they are having problems?
 - c) What are the dangers that children could face by behaving in this way?

2. Participants give feedback from their smaller group discussions to the main group

3. Ask one participant to draw up a summary chart of the different vulnerable groups of children in the community.



Tip: Use the sample chart below to ensure that all categories of children are included in your discussion.

Children with difficult lives include:

- children living on their own • refugees • children caring for sick parents • orphans
- abused children • children living in extreme poverty • children with violent parents
- married children • commercial sex workers • child-headed households • children on the streets • children in institutions • children who are forced into marriages • children with parents living overseas • children who abuse drugs and alcohol • children with disabilities • children in child labour.



Activity 8 Role-play: Children's Problems are Everyone's Problems



Purpose: This role-play helps participants to understand how children's problems may affect the child, the family and the community.



Steps:

1. Take an example of a child with a problem that was identified in Activity 7.
2. Ask participants to form three groups as follows:
 - a) Group 1 should show how the child is affected by the problem he/she is experiencing in life
 - b) Group 2 should show how the family is affected by the problem that the child in the family is experiencing

c) Group 3 should show how the community is affected by the problem that the child is experiencing.

3. Each group presents their role-play.



Lessons learned

- What lessons have we learned from the different role-plays?
- Who is affected by the children's problems?
- If the children's problems are not addressed over time, what happens as the child grows older?
- What are the consequences for the child, the family, and the community if problems are not addressed?



Tip: Ask participants to think about children who may behave in less expected or unusual ways, for example, "the invisible child" who may withdraw or isolate him/herself.



Activity 9: The Road of Danger



Purpose: To encourage participants to think about what happens to children when they cannot cope with problems.



"Sometimes in our lives, when we cannot cope with our problems, we go in a direction that may lead to danger. This we call the Road of Danger. Being on this road can lead to us hurting ourselves and those around us."



Steps:

1. Using the Road of Danger picture, help participants to appreciate that some children who are trapped by problems get off the Main Road and take the Road of Danger. The Road of Danger represents the desperate things that children do when they feel hopeless about their future.

2. Discuss the following:

- What can drive children to take the Road of Danger?
- What happens to children who take the Road of Danger?
- Where does the Road of Danger lead?
- What will happen to children who have taken the Road of Danger when they are older?
- Do you think children on the Road of Danger can get back onto the Main Road? How? Can they do it on their own?
- Do you know of any stories of children who have come back from the Road of Danger?



Summary of key learning points

- Some children face greater challenges from birth, and others face their challenges later in life
- When children take the Road of Danger, their personal development, families and communities are also affected
- Children who show "dangerous behaviour" for example, stealing, alcohol and drugs, may in fact be showing that they need help and support
- It is important to acknowledge that children can return onto the Main Road from the Road of Danger.



SESSION 6: BUILDING CHILDREN'S STRENGTHS



Objectives:

- To recognise why children who face difficulties do not always go on the Road of Danger
- To understand that children have inner strengths that help them to manage most Problems
- To understand the type of 'gifts' that families and communities can give to children to help build their inner strength.



Activity 10: Characteristics of a strong child



Purpose: To enable participants to understand that children have inner strengths that help them to manage most problems



Steps:



"Not all children facing problems take the Road of Danger. Children have strengths that can help them overcome their problems. Let us think about these strengths."

1. Ask the group if they can remember children who have managed to remain strong despite the challenges they face.



Tip: "Strong" does not mean physical strength, but refers to inner strength and the ability to cope with problems. Let ideas come from the participants first.

2. Ask the group to brainstorm (ideas coming out quickly) about the characteristics of a strong child.

3. Write down the responses on a piece of flip chart paper and present the summary to the group.



Tip: Make sure that your list includes the ideas below.

Characteristics of a strong child

- Can ask for help
- Is positive and has hope for the future
- Can set goals
- Puts effort into work



- Plays well with other children
- Looks clean and can take pride in his/her appearance
- Can deal with challenges and frustrations
- Takes responsibility and cares for siblings and family members
- Is confident
- Has good relationships with friends and adults
- Puts ideas into action
- Despite tragedies and difficulties, can continue with routines of life (going to school, playing with friends, etc).

Activity 11: Building the inner strength of children



Purpose: To help participants develop practical ways to build children's inner strength



Steps:

1. Ask participants to think about how they can help children to become Strong.
2. Divide participants into small groups. Each group should discuss the following questions and report back to the main group.

- Are children born strong or weak?
- What makes a child strong?
- What makes a child weak?
- Can we as families and communities help children to become strong?

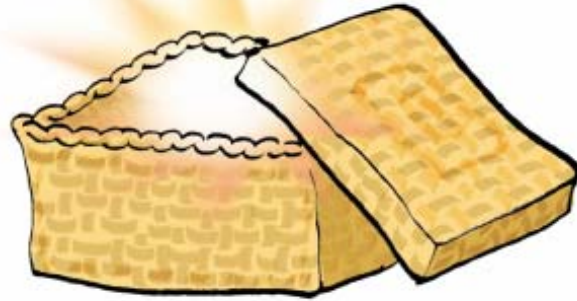
3. After the feedback session, state that:



"We can help strengthen a child's ability to handle problems. We can either help children to be strong when they face problems, or better still, protect children before they experience problems. Let us now think about what we can do as families and communities to help strengthen children and protect them"



Activity 12: The Gift Box



Purpose: To help participants think about the gifts they can give children to help them become strong.



Tip: Have two "gift boxes" ready for this exercise. These can be made from a cardboard box, a bamboo box, or any other type of locally made containers.

Participants need two pieces of paper, or two coloured cards and a pen.



Steps:

1. Ask participants to think of a 'gift' that their parents or guardians gave them as a child – something that helped them to grow strong.



"Now that we understand that families and communities can make children strong, think about the gifts that you received as a child that made you strong – qualities such as courage, or trust, or determination."



Tip:

Remind participants that there are gifts besides money, food and clothing that parents and communities can give children. The emphasis should be on emotional, social and spiritual gifts. Examples are: love, acceptance, trust, respect, protection, feelings of belonging, encouragement, appreciation, attention, guidance, approval, and parent-to-child communication.

Remind participants of the five obligations of parents, according to Buddhist teaching: to show the right way, to give education to the child, to give money or land for investment, to make arrangements for marriage, and to protect the child from doing evil.

2. Ask participants to write the most precious gift they received from their parents or guardians on one of the cards, and put the card into the first gift box. As each person puts their card into the box, they should tell the other participants what gift they received as a child.
3. Next, ask each participant to use the second card to write a 'gift' that they can give to children in their community.
4. Participants then put the second 'gift' into the second gift box, saying out loud to the other participants the gift that they will give to children in their community.
5. Each participant should then draw a picture of their gift on a community map.



'Gifts' that parents and communities can give to children

- Providing a caring community environment: giving children love, acceptance, guidance, and protection
- Creating a child-friendly space for play and recreation
- Giving free tuition to children
- Assisting more vulnerable children and families
- Developing sports teams for children
- Story-telling
- Participation -- giving children a voice in their families and communities
- Religious and moral teachings
- Training children in skills – farming, cooking, wood carving, traditional crafts
- Using posters and activities (art, music, drama competitions) to raise awareness about children's rights
- Making sure that children with disabilities are included in all activities
- Giving equal value to the development of boys and girls.



Summary of key learning points

- Children have the inner strength to solve many problems on their own
- The “gifts” that people give to children help to build their inner strength
- Sometimes it takes committed and passionate individuals to bring about change in the lives of children who face difficulties
- No matter how strong children are, we need to remember that they are children
- Not all children with problems take the Road of Danger. We can learn important lessons from children who have managed to remain strong, regardless of the problems that they may face in life.



SESSION 7: GET INVOLVED!



Objectives

- To help communities develop Circles of Support that can protect children and help children before, during and after difficulties arise
- To help the community sustain itself so caregivers do not burn out
- To develop a community plan that will support children in the community.



Why get involved?



“Sometimes caregivers feel burdened by the responsibilities involved in providing care and support to children and other vulnerable people in the community. However, there are various community responses that, if collectively carried out, can provide support to children in the community and which can relieve the burden of individual caregivers. Communities can work together to come up with solutions to identified problems.”

Activity 13 Discussion: Community support





Purpose: To find out what support services exist for children in the community



"We are stronger when we work together to support children in our communities. The burdens on each of us become less. Children also become strong when they have different people providing support. All those who provide help and support to children form Circles of Support."

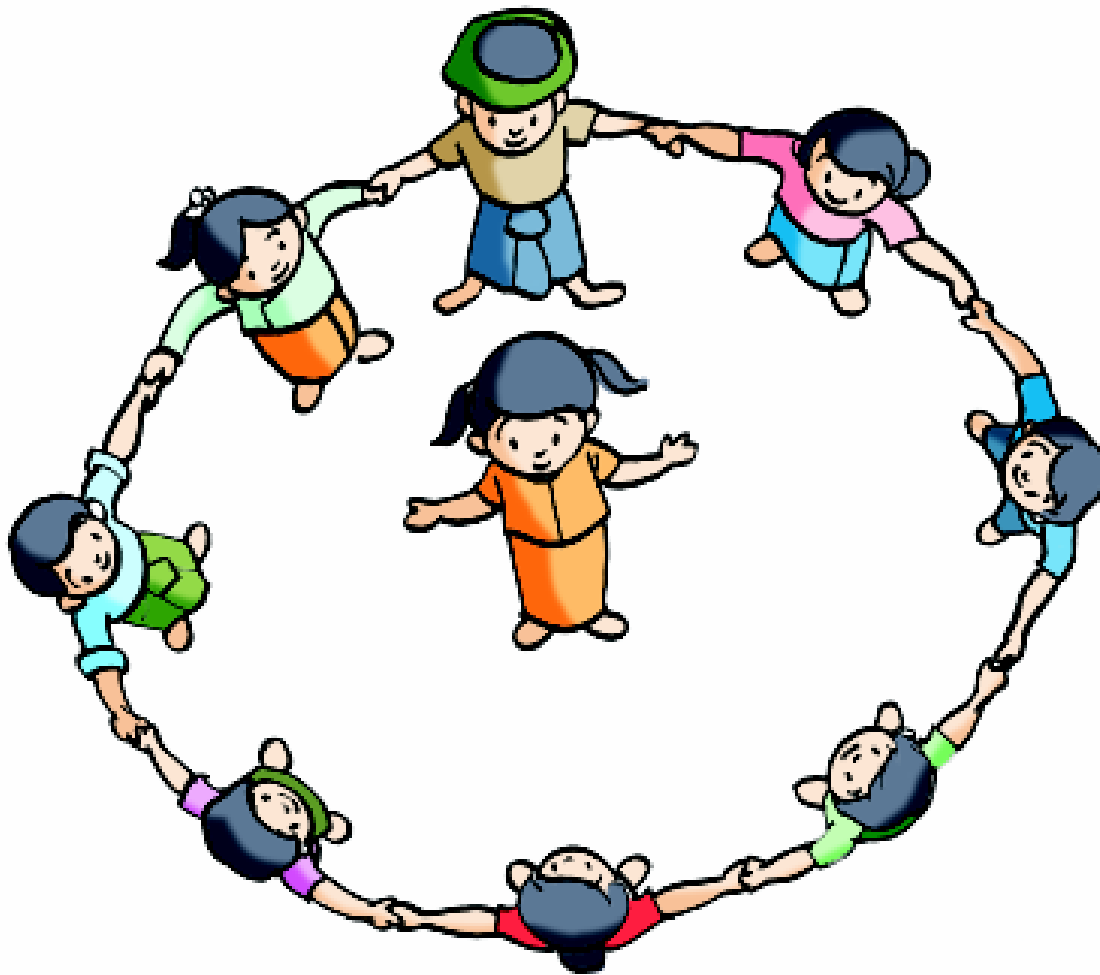


Steps:

1. Divide participants into small groups.
2. In each small group, participants should identify people in the community who help children and families with specific problems, such as:
 - If a child wants to go to learn how to read and write, who can help?
 - If a poor family cannot feed the children so that children have to beg, who can help?
 - If a father has died, who can help the mother and children?
 - If both parents die, who can help?
 - If a child wants to go to school but has to care for younger children, who can help?
 - If a child is sexually abused, who can help?
 - If a child is wandering aimlessly on the street, who can help?
 - If a child is addicted to drugs, who can help?
 - If a child is working and doing a task that is unsafe, who can help?
3. Each group should present their ideas to the large group.



Activity 14 Game: Circles of Support



Purpose: To show how Circles of Support help protect children.



Steps:

1. Ask a participant to stand in the middle to represent a girl (or use a girl participant if you have one in your group).



2. Ask eight participants to stand in a circle around the child to represent different people in the child's life who support children. For example, 'You are the school teacher, you are a family relative, you are the religious leader, you are a neighbour, you are the nurse.'
3. Tell participants in the circle that they are the **Circles of Support** around the child. The child has a problem – her mother, her last surviving parent has died – and this problem is leading her to try to break through the Circles of Support, and get lost on the Road of Danger. Make sure the adults are holding hands and in a wide enough circle to allow space between them. Tell them they have to allow the child some room to run about inside the circle. The adults should prevent the child from breaking out by holding hands. Once everyone understands what he/she is supposed to do, let the child try to break out. The adults will keep the child safely supported.
4. Stop the game after a few minutes. Explain that things have changed now that the girl has become pregnant. The religious leader is refusing to support the child, so ask the religious leader to move out of the circle. The teacher does not want a pregnant child in her class in case the other children get ideas, so he/she is also refusing to help. Ask the teacher to leave the circle. One of the girl's relatives thinks the girl is irresponsible and must have encouraged the man to sleep with her, so he also refuses to help and leaves the circle. Leave the gaps open. Tell participants that they cannot make the circle any smaller. They may not hold hands or touch each other, but they must still try to prevent the child from breaking out.
5. Now continue the game. The girl tries to break out of the circle, with participants attempting to block her. Because of the gaps in the circle, the girl will usually succeed in breaking out of the Circles of Support. After a few minutes, stop the game and explain that when a support system is weak, absent or harmful, the child may do destructive things with his/her life.



Lessons learned

- What lessons did you learn from this activity?
- How can we become a more caring community to support children facing problems?
- How can we support ourselves in the work we do?
- How do communities work collectively to solve children's problems?



Tip: Children can become part of the Circle of Support for each other.



Activity 15: Developing a Community Plan



Purpose: To guide participants into thinking through practical ways in which they can develop a community plan to facilitate support and care for children.



"It is important for communities to work and plan collectively so that they can identify what they want to do, who should be involved, the time it will take, and resources required."



Steps:

1. Ask participants:

- What are you doing already as a community to provide support and care for children?
- How can you improve what you are doing to provide protection and support for children?



Tip: Record all activities that communities are already doing on a map of the community.

2. In smaller groups, ask participants to develop a plan they would like to carry out in their community (after the workshop). The plans should contain one activity they plan to do for children. This activity should be **achievable**, and should rely only on community resources, participation, and commitment. The community plan should include the activity they plan to do, who will conduct the activity, how it will be carried out, and a timetable.



Tip: Make sure that each small group is limited to one activity.

3. Ask the smaller groups to report back their community plans to the main group. Be encouraging and support their suggestions.

4. Ask one of the participants to compile a summary of the activities, using the community map and/or a summary chart.



"It is up to you to decide how you wish to go forward with the plans you have developed today. You can also decide if you want to meet again with your group to plan further about how to start the community activities for children."



Examples of community activities that meet the needs of children

Intellectual Needs

- Setting up homework clubs (parents and community volunteers helping with homework)
- Helping children remain in school

Social needs

- Encouraging and supporting activities outside of school (for example, sports, art, music)
- Spending time with orphans and children with difficult lives - or helping them to cope with various daily chores
- Forming support and play groups for children (children' clubs, youth clubs, drop-in centres)
- Training community aunts and uncles on educating children on how to socialise and prevent HIV infection.

Physical needs

- Establishing communal gardens
- Income generation activities for community guardians, caregivers or older children
- Collecting or making clothing for children
- Teaching orphans how to look after themselves, and their brothers and sisters (cooking, cleaning and child care)

Emotional needs

- Raising community awareness to support the emotional needs of children
- Forming support groups for guardians (especially children heading households)
- Memory Books

Spiritual needs

- Praying with children
- Inviting children to participate in religious activities (youth groups, meditation, etc).
- Religious teachings with messages of hope for the future
- Encouraging religious groups to participate in activities that support children

Protection needs

- Awareness-raising campaigns and activities
- Training on children's rights
- Identifying and taking action against places that exploit children



Activity 16 Game: River Crossing



Purpose: A fun activity that challenges participants to work together and provides an opportunity to solve a problem collectively. This activity game uses the image of a river to help participants to focus on the idea of working together to solve problems.



Steps:

1. Divide participants into two groups, and give each group three pieces of paper, sacks or stones.



2. Use scraps of paper or draw on the ground to make a wide river that they need to cross. Explain that each group has to cross the river, using only three pieces of paper (sacks or stones) as 'stepping stones'.

3. Ask participants to cross the river. Leave them to struggle for a while.

4. Then ask for other ideas, for example: *"What are some other ways that you can cross the river?"* Take a few minutes to discuss. Let participants try out their new ideas. If participants have not thought of any ideas, the facilitator then explains:



"If you share the stepping stones with the other team, will that help?"

Make sure that the imaginary river can be crossed using all 6 pieces of paper (sacks or stones).

5. Once the two groups have joined together using all the 'stepping stones' to cross over the river, ask them what they have learned from the game. They should have learned that working together means you can cross impossible obstacles and therefore achieve much more.



Summary of key learning points

- A community is made up of individuals and groups with a common purpose, values and shared problems
- Collective action is important if communities are to effectively deal with their problems, for example, the increasing number of orphans
- Children feel stronger when they are loved and cared for by their communities
- Members of communities can support each other through difficult times.



SESSION 8: Evaluation and Closing the Workshop



Purpose: To help you evaluate the workshop and find out whether it was useful, enjoyable and understandable.

Activity 17: Evaluation



Steps:

1. Ask participants:
 - What did you learn from the workshop?
 - How did it change the way you feel about children?



Tip: Decide whether you want participants to say what they think or whether they will draw or write their responses. If you think it is easier for them to say what they think, make sure you or someone else can record comments and observations.



Closing the Workshop



Purpose: To briefly review the Journey of Life, thank participants and close the workshop



Activity 18: Closing Ceremony

Give a brief summary of the workshop.



You could say: *"I am happy that you joined us in exploring the Journey of Life. We have talked about what children need to grow and prosper during their journey of life, what makes it difficult for them to move forward, what strengths children have to help themselves, and what we can do to help them. We have also talked about helping each other so that we can support children in our community."*



Steps:

1. Thank participants for coming, for their time, and their participation. Congratulate them on making their community plans, and wish them well in their plans to protect and support children in their communities.
2. Close the workshop in whatever manner you feel appropriate –singing a song, having children dance, handing out certificates, or facilitating an appropriate cultural event.

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