Working with Children in Emergency Situations, and the Potential of incorporating Economic Strengthening Programming

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Presentation Outline

- Defining Emergency situations
- Effect of conflicts/war on children.
- Poverty and children: What can be done about poverty in children?
- Incorporating Economic Strengthening Programming
- What ICCHAD has done for poor children
- Lessons learnt
- Challenges
- Recommendations
- References
Emergency Situations

**Definition:** A situation that poses an immediate risk to health, life, property and environment

**Man-Made Causes**
- Conflict and wars
- Environmental degradation

**Natural Causes**
- Disease and Epidemics
- Fires
- Weather Changes
General Effects of War on Children

- Death & orphanhood
- Injury & Disability
- Psychological stress/suffering
- Rape, prostitution, forced marriages and teenage parenthood
- Child soldiers
- Loss of peer and identity
- Loss of education

Dead children on a street in Mogadishu, Somalia 2010
Programs and Services for Children Under Emergency

Normally are quick impact projects (QIPs) – intended to meet immediate needs of the children:

- Nutrition
- Child Protection
- Water & Sanitation
- HIV/AIDS awareness
- Immunization
- Education
- Shelter

Red cross official registering Sudanese children in Northern Uganda

International centre for Child Health and Asset Development
Facts on Child Poverty

- 43% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa lives below US$ 1 a day
- Poverty on children is associated with less schooling and lower educational attainment, future productive capacity and standard of living
- The main causes of child poverty are HIV/AIDS pandemic, armed conflicts and population pressure (large families) and more so in Africa
- Poorer countries are more likely to engage in civil war, and countries that experience civil war tend to remain poor.

Ndianabho Baptist with his big family-Uganda.
Potential of Incorporating Economic Strengthening for Children/Families in Emergency

- Economic strengthening encompasses interventions to reduce family economic vulnerability, empower them to provide essential needs for children and avoid relying on external handouts. This includes 3 complementary approaches:

  - **Household Economic Strengthening:** Interventions that target the family as the beneficiary, i.e. savings, credit, income-generating activities (IGAs) and jobs.

  - **Social Protection:** Interventions targeting the family. Governments prioritize sustainable interventions on longer-term outcomes such as behavior change or human capital outcomes.

  - **Economic Approaches:** Interventions targeting entities other than families e.g. youth livelihoods, school financing and CBO financing.
What can be done to reduce child poverty?

Children in emergency-conflict areas.

- Provide food, medicine & shelter.
- Respect rights of children.
- Provide free education.
- Stop child abductions, rape & forced marriages.
- Trace and reunite children with their families.
- In stable refuge camps/IDPs vocational training be adopted for economic empowerment.

International Centre for Child Health and Asset Development
ICHAD – working with poor children

- Cultivating a saving culture among poor families and children.
- Supporting children to open bank accounts and matching their savings—the first of its kind in Uganda—“miracle project”
- Training children and guardians in choosing, starting and managing IGA projects for socio-economic development
- Improving access to education through provision of scholastics, lunch, text books, mentorship, school visits.
- Improving school attendance, retention and performance
- Mentoring children has enabled children to develop career goals—children inspired to reflect on the future with HOPE.
Feedback from Children about ICCHAD

- We had lost hope in education but we are now in school.
- We acquired skills on how to identify, plan and manage IGAs.
- Mentorship taught us how to develop career goals, generate income, manage HIV issues, relate with peers, negotiate and develop life and self esteem skills.
- Children engaged in IGAs at home, develop good morals.
- Participants excelling in school- better grades, regular attendance/ school retention
- We gained hope in the future as IGA generate income for basic needs such as fees, scholastics, lunch and food.
Lessons Learnt

- Poverty deprives children of happiness, love, peace, inspiration - breeds anger, violence and behavioral disorders.

- Children involved in emergency situations need a comprehensive rehabilitation program, economic strengthening and psychosocial support.

- Most countries do not develop comprehensive programs targeting children in and post emergencies.- skilling youth through vocational training and social rehabilitation are essential to avoid re-emergency of conflicts again.
Recommendations

- More research on how to support children in emergency situations be done to inform policy and programming initiatives.

- Need for research collaborations to enrich research outcomes on children in emergencies.

- Needs of children, with specific emphasis on girl child, should always be on top agenda of all conflict meetings and peace agreements.
Challenges

- Specific needs of children not adequately taken care of during and after emergency situations.

- The girl child goes through difficult situations i.e. rape, forced marriages to combatants, unplanned pregnancies.

- Lack of social support systems compounds problems for children.
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Thank you!

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