



War Child Annual Report 2005 Part I



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Preface



For War Child, the past year was once again marked by growth. We were able to provide 675,000 children affected by war with psychosocial support. This is a rise of 13.5% in comparison to the previous years. Many of these children will now be better able to deal with the daily reality of growing up in a war-affected area and can focus on their future again. This should contribute to the creation of more peaceful societies.

We are now active in 13 countries. We have a new partner programme in Colombia, a country where violence is the order of the day. We have expanded our programme in North Uganda because of the many needs in this area, where children are kidnapped to fight as child soldiers, each day. Another new development is our collaboration with Stichting de Vrolijkheid (the National Foundation to Encourage Happiness). This foundation supports the psychosocial well-being of the children of asylum seekers in the Netherlands. These are generally children that also have been affected by conflict.

We are increasingly able to demonstrate the effectiveness of our methods. In this respect War Child is also growing. In 2005, we commissioned assessments of the effectiveness of our activities in Kosovo and other places. One of the -tentative- conclusions was that our workshop activities have a positive effect on the participating children's behaviour and their ability to concentrate. The continuous assessment and improvement of the programmes is of great importance to the organisation's development. In the past year, reviews in Sierra Leone and Sudan have shown, for instance, that the involvement of the children's social environment (friends, parents, teachers, community, government) is crucial in achieving a lasting effect. If parents, teachers, local aid workers, village and town administrators are able to formulate the problems of children and young people themselves, they are also better able to create solutions. This is how they become involved in the long-term care for their children. War Child is clearing the way to enable the support and effort of local populations for children and young people.

We have also progressed in reaching people in the Netherlands. It is evident that we want broad brand recognition, as this has enabled us to increase our budget by 28% to 7.3 million Euros. Hence we were able to expand our worldwide team of local workers from 500 to 600.

The involvement of the Dutch public in issues regarding children affected by war, is also one of our goals. In 2005, we reached more than a million Dutch people through campaigns in schools, at concerts and through the media. Finally, our fundraising budget remained small. It is our aim to direct as many donations as possible directly towards our objective: the healthy psychosocial development of children affected by war. This year we succeeded once again. Just 11% of the obtained funds was spent on fundraising costs. The secret behind this low overhead are the warm and generous organisations, persons and companies who support us with all kinds of practical matters, varying from office furniture to bookkeeping advice, all of which free of charge.

We were able to achieve this growth in 2005, thanks to the enthusiasm, effort and generous donations of all our staff and volunteers, the Friends of War Child, other private donors, business sponsors, all the people who organised an event for War Child, the institutional donors, the Postcode Loterij (a national lottery), our two ambassadors and many artists. They make War Child. Their support remains extremely necessary, due to the large number of children still growing up in war-affected areas, children that deserve a future. It is for them that we need to continue our growth in 2006!



Maarten van Dijk
Chairman of War Child Holland

Summary



Aid programmes

2005 was a year of growth for War Child. New projects were started in Colombia and in the Netherlands, and the programmes in North Uganda and Sudan were expanded. A new office was opened and activities were started in the southern Sudanese town of Juba. Furthermore in Sudan three new Child Centres were built in the town of Malakal and War Child started a new youth project in the Darfur region. War Child also supported fifteen local child support organizations and five schools in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the conflict brings new victims and refugees every day.

Together with the Afghan Ministry of Education, War Child is working at the creation and introduction of a physical education curriculum that will be implemented in all Afghan schools. War Child also worked in 16 rural communities, enabling the communities to build playgrounds and libraries for the children and setting in motion local discussions on children's psychosocial problems and needs and the various ways of solving these.

Unfortunately, War Child had to terminate its collaboration with partner organization Centre for Peacemaking and Community Development (CPCD) in Russia. This organization no longer proved able to effectively and reliably manage its activities. In addition, War Child was forced to transfer the youth project in Darfur, Sudan, to local partners as a result of the rapidly deteriorating security situation in the region with no short-term prospects for improvement.

Developments of methodology

In 2005 War Child worked at improving the quality and effectiveness of its programmes. A planning, monitoring and evaluation system was taken into use, allowing projects to systematically work at their objectives, activities and results and their reporting of these matters. It is important to obtain insight into the programmes' results and effects in order to continuously

improve the methodology. In addition to the regular reviews, effect measurements were done in Kosovo, North Uganda and Sierra Leone. In Kosovo the results showed that the psychosocial creative workshops are having some positive influence on behaviour and ability to concentrate of participating children. These effect studies will also serve to further develop the measurement tools.



Outreach and communication

In the Netherlands, War Child worked hard at raising awareness of the plight of children in conflict areas. The organization participated in various events such as the Liberation Day festivals and the “Oorlogskind” (= warchild) exhibition by the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD).

On 21 September, the International Day of Peace, some 200 children and adults formed a living peace sign on the Dam square in Amsterdam to draw attention to peace building and conflict prevention. To raise awareness of this issue, War Child actively participated in the People Building Peace coalition and deployed further activities such as a debate between young people and politicians, internet games and a web special. Attention for peace building was also generated through national and regional television and press. Additionally, the Kidsforwarchild.nl website was launched. This website is specifically aimed at children and improves the provision of information to the youngest target group.

Open and honest communication is one of War Child’s main policies. Accordingly, the organization was pleased to see its efforts rewarded: the 2004 War Child annual report was awarded as one of the top six most transparent reports of the Dutch NGO’s out of 168 submissions.

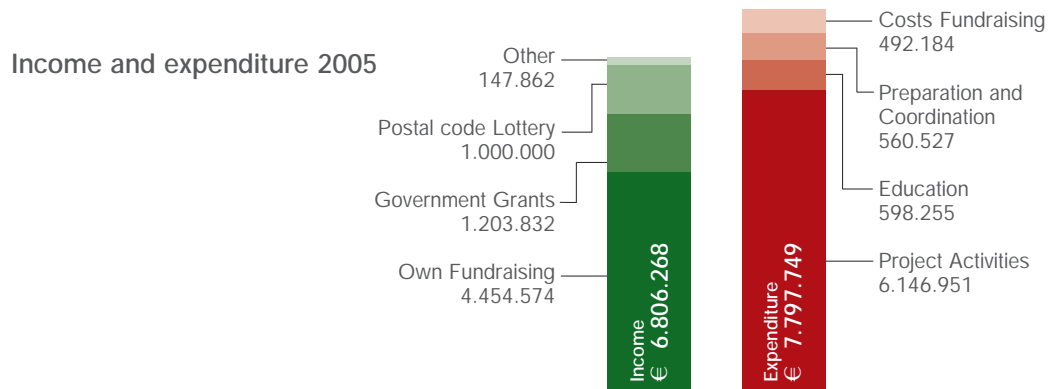
Fundraising

The proceeds of our own fundraising activities worked out as budgeted at 4.5 million euros. In 2005, 65% of this income came from private donors and companies. In 2005, most Friends of War Child (monthly donors) were recruited via the Friends for War Child Concert, the television broadcast of that event and via www.warchild.nl. Some 700 companies contri-

buted to the War Child programmes in 2005 and 687 individuals, schools and associations organised fundraising events for War Child. The proportion of fundraising costs in 2005 was limited to 11%, well below the 25% standard set by the Dutch Central Bureau for Fundraising.

Financial report

The total income of War Child in 2005 amounted to € 6.8 million. Expenditure on the foundation's objective amounted to € 7.3 million. A specification of these costs can be found in the graph Income and expenditure 2005.



War Child set itself the target for 2005 to spend 120% of total income on the foundation's objectives and to thus lower the accrued reserve. In the end, 116% was realized. The proportion of implementation costs (including salaries for head office staff, accommodation and office supplies) with respect to expenditure on aid remained steady at 14% compared to 2004. This percentage is in line with the organization's guidelines.



Risk management

In order to limit financial risks, War Child ensures that income is drawn from various sources and is distributed evenly. War Child also aims to recruit as many structural donors and business partners as possible. War Child reduces the risk of fraud by training staff in areas of finance

and administration and by introducing administrative and financial guidelines and control mechanisms, as well as by regularly auditing its own programmes and partner programmes. To reduce security risks, War Child organised and conducted a three-day security training for international workers in 2005.

Board and management

In 2005, two War Child board members were re-appointed for a third term. The board met six times. 2005 saw the management team expand from three to five members in order to manage the organization's rapid growth and improve the management of the departments.

Personnel and organization

In 2005 War Child worked at improving conditions of employment and occupational health and safety for international staff. As a result, the average duration of employment went up from 0.6 years to 1.25 years. War Child also invested in the development of local staff to qualify for management positions. The number of personnel at head office grew from 27.5 to 32.85 FTE. A works council and a Corporate Social Responsibility workgroup were set up in 2005 and will be further shaping policy in this field.

Outlook

In 2005 War Child wrote a strategic long-term plan for the years 2006 to 2010. War Child has set itself the goal of annually reaching a million children in 18 conflict areas by 2010. The organization has formulated three pointers in order to achieve this:

- Effective programmes in the field of psychosocial support, peace building and lobbying for the rights of children. Measuring effectiveness, the exchange of knowledge and developing "best practices" are of importance to this.
- An effective and efficient organization. Transparent and effective communication is necessary to achieve this.
- Reaching a larger number of children in a greater number of regions. Varied and effective fundraising is essential to this.

Targets and a time paths have been formulated for each pointer.



1 Context, purpose and mission



Introduction

Caroline Okim is fourteen years old and lives in a camp for IDP's (Internally Displaced Persons) in Uganda, where she is taking part in the War Child Programme. Her personal story clearly illustrates the work of War Child. The Ugandan experiences of War Child staff members Wout Visser (Policy Advisor), Elise Griede (Drama Trainer) en Liesbeth Speelman (Content Supervisor) corroborate her story.

1.1 A changing context

The main purpose of War Child is to assure a peaceful future for children. The greatest risk they face, aside from poverty and HIV/Aids, is that of armed conflict . War and its consequences affect millions of children. They are the victims of (sexual) violence, they are forced to flee from homes and are the victims of ill-treatment, exploitation and landmines. Many die too from the indirect consequences of war, such as mal-nourishment and disease.

Reliable data on the causes and consequences of armed conflicts are hard to find, though an attempt is made in the first Human Security Report of the Human Security Centre research institute (www.humansecuritycentre.org) published late in 2005.

The report draws attention to a number of distinctly positive developments in recent decades, such as a reduction both in the number of armed conflicts and in the number of people killed as a result of war. But there are also negative trends such as the changing nature of conflicts and the increased role of children and young people (both as victims and as perpetrators).

Caroline

"My name is Caroline Okim. I'm fourteen years old and I live in the Aloi Rhino Camp, a big IDP camp in



Lira in northern Uganda. I was kidnapped by rebels who imprisoned me and forced me to be a child soldier. For the last six months I've been living with my parents and three brothers again. Before I came to the camp we lived in a village called Anara. There are at least 60,000 people living in this IDP camp. I go to school and I'm in the seventh grade. I like going to school because I want to really become something later. If I finish school I can get a good job and help my parents. I get up at six every day, sweep the hut and tidy up. Then I brush my teeth and wash my feet. I go to school at eight o'clock and from one to two o'clock it's lunch break. Then there are more lessons until around four o'clock when I go home and make the evening meal for the whole family. When everything's finished I wash and have dinner myself. Only then can I do my homework. Then I go straight to bed."



Negative developments

Before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 wars were predominantly fought between countries. But now the majority of armed conflicts are civil wars occurring inside national frontiers. These conflicts result in fewer deaths but have an enormous influence on the daily lives of millions of civilians. The number of displaced persons for example has increased dramatically . In addition conflicts have become more complex and are affected by a range of mutually dependent factors which extend over national boundaries, such as globalisation, arms and drug dealing or for example terrorist networks .

Gross abuse of human rights are the order of the day in armed conflicts. Children and young people are the most vulnerable groups . They are exposed to violence in a number of ways. While children were often seen as the victims of exploitation and violence, their role as participants in violence is increasingly being recognised today. The actual number of children currently actively involved in conflicts is not known. Statistics dating from 1998 are those generally used, when the number of child soldiers was estimated to be around 300.000 .



Positive developments

A positive development is that the causes of violence are being increasingly better charted, which increases the possibilities of breaking through the spiral of violence . Attention is increasingly moving from solving armed conflicts to preventing them. War Child is taking an active part in the discussion on peace building and conflict prevention. An example of this is War Child's participation in the People Building Peace coalition (see part II, page 93) and in the coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers.

We also note that the position and role of children and young people in armed conflicts has become increasingly significant on the international agenda. The importance of special activities for protecting children in areas of conflict has received more recognition in recent years . This has broadened War Child's international sphere of activity.

1.2 War Child's right to exist

What are the implications of this changing context for War Child's work? Sadly the preponderance of civil wars and the ever increasing numbers of civilians involved have intensified the relevance of War Child's peace building and psychosocial programmes. Besides for example food aid, health care, reconstruction programs that support psychosocial well-being are important for creating stability in a region. The sort of help that War Child provides is increasingly being recognised as essential for the well-being of child victims of war. This is evident not only from the reactions of local people in areas where we are active but also from the increase in requests for cooperation which we receive from well-known international organizations and institutions.



“Help is really needed here!”

Liesbeth: "My name is Liesbeth Speelman. My job is to develop the content of War Child's programme in northern Uganda. In this region children are being kidnapped every day by Joseph Kony's rebel army. Help is really needed here! The children kidnapped by the rebels are forced to fight in the rebel army. Some even have to murder their own family or friends so that they dare not try to return home. War Child works not only with these child soldiers but with all children affected by the war, for example children who have to live in a IDP camp and children who have lost a family member. Children who have not been kidnapped suffer greatly too. They live in bad conditions and in fear of rebel attacks. These children too need psychosocial help".

1.3 Purpose, mission and vision

Statutory purpose

War Child's founding statutes specify that the Foundation helps children who are victims of armed conflicts. By investing in their well-being the Foundation aims to establish a basis for a peaceful future. The Foundation aims to:

- contribute to the healing of psychological suffering of war affected children ;
- alleviate children's suffering by providing material assistance in areas affected by war;
- raise consciousness of the plight of children in war-torn areas.

Mission

War Child invests in the peaceful future of children affected by war.

War Child's goal is the empowerment of children in and from war-affected areas, through:

- Psychosocial programs applying the power of creative arts and sports to strengthen the children's psychological and social development and well-being.
- Creative arts and sports programs to reconcile groups of children divided by war, to build a peaceful society.
- Creating public awareness and support on/for the plight of children in war zones.

War Child is an independent humanitarian NGO, assisting children irrespective of their religious, ethnical, or social background.



Living with poverty and danger

Elise: "As a drama trainer I coached the Ugandan War Child team for three months. I taught the twelve local Ugandan staff how to use exercises, games and theatre in helping the children to confront the difficulties they encountered in their daily life. Uncertainty and poverty are what govern daily life in a (post-) conflict zone. War Child is an organization that places emphasis on creating circumstances in which children can also experience joy and pleasure. We help the children to (re-)discover their own positive powers in conditions of such uncertainty."

Vision

War Child's most important goal is a peaceful future for children. In our vision the healthy psychosocial well-being of children and young people is a prerequisite for the creation of a peaceful society. Children stand a better chance of growing up into well-balanced adults, capable of preventing future conflict situations or of solving them, when they grow up in a safe, stable environment where their rights are not abused. War Child thus directs its help towards improving the psychosocial well-being and development of children and bringing together groups of children who have been separated from one another by war, and draws attention to the problems, needs and rights of children in war affected areas.



2. Where War Child helps





Kidnapped

Caroline: " I was kidnapped in July 2003 and came back in October 2003, so I was held for three months by the rebel army. I hardly had anything to eat. Sometimes we had to go on long marches with no water to drink. There was no time to play. I had to fight with them and I killed an old man and a little boy. I've only got horrible memories of my time with the rebels."

Children who have been caught up in an armed conflict have a heavy burden to bear. Their lives are marked by being separated from or losing their parents, destruction of houses and villages, sexual violence and exploitation, and other forms of abuse financial collapse and upsetting of the normal way of life.

2.1 Helping children to better defend themselves

In times of conflict, emergencies and other threatening situations some children are better able to cope with these circumstances than others. Many children will not suffer from nightmares, depressions, attacks of rage or helplessness, and many children will not develop problems in concentration or a lack of trust in others. Self-confident children are capable of using their inner strength and - when present - the support of their social environment to adapt to the changed circumstances. The question is thus how War Child can restore children's self-confidence, so that they can face the problems in their daily lives.



Background

Caroline: "I don't feel safe in this camp. I get threats from the other children and they shut me out because I was a child soldier. I didn't want to be one. I was forced to do it. The other children tease me and call me a murderer. It's awful. The worst thing that happened to me since I'm back was that I was nearly kidnapped again along with my mother. The camp isn't always safe and that scares me. Life here is so tough that sometimes I'd rather not be here."

What War Child does

War Child's programmes are designed to strengthen a number of so-called protective factors that are crucial for children's healthy psychosocial development. In times of war, one or more of these protective factors is frequently absent or diminished, while risk factors are abundant (risk factors like: lack of adult support, no education facilities, unsafe environment, etc.). Strengthening of these protective factors promotes their psychosocial development and well-being.

War Child

Caroline: "The best thing since I've been back is that I'm taking part in the War Child programme. I've already done seven workshops. I like them because they calm my body and my head. I've also made new friends. I've learnt lots of new games which I didn't know before like 'Picking Fruit', 'Pass it on', 'Blind hello' and 'Cuckoo Annemaria'. My parents and other people in the camp think the workshops are a good idea and often come to watch. Things have changed since I started doing them. I don't get bored at home any more because I know these new games. I've gotten to know other ex-child soldiers and I've made new friends. If I had to choose what I like best in my life, it's my school. The War Child workshops make me happy because I like playing. My parents understand me better too."

2.2 Five protective factors

There are many risk and protective factors that can affect children's psychosocial development and well-being. War Child has chosen five protective factors to focus on in its programmes. They are described below together with how War Child is strengthening these factors with regards to children growing up in war-affected areas:

1. Constructive coping mechanisms within the child

Everybody finds ways to psychologically cope with (heavy emotional) experiences. The professional jargon for this is coping skills. People can develop both constructive and negative coping skills. Constructive coping skills can be for example the

sharing of thoughts and emotions with others, seeking emotional support from adults, sports and music making. Negative coping skills can be for example aggressive behaviour or drug and alcohol abuse. Constructive coping skills increase the self-confidence of children and thus promote healthy psychosocial development.

What does War Child do?

Together with a community (volunteers, professionals working with children, parents, the children themselves) War Child tries to create an environment in which children can play in safety. Through the use of creative methods and play War Child helps children to develop positive coping skills and thus increases their self-confidence. These activities also have the aim of preventing children from developing possible negative coping skills, like falling into aggressive or apathetic behaviour, or drug addiction.

Activities

Elise: "My name is Elise Griede. I graduated in psychology and in drama school. In Uganda I worked as a drama trainer with children and the local War Child team. The children quickly learn to adopt a servile approach and keep their heads down. But the feeling that they have the right to simply be, is important to give them a sense of self-confidence and to build on that. When children develop their possibilities they're better able to confront uncertain and difficult situations. Theatre is a good way to do this. A game in which children stand in a circle and give one another all sorts of make belief objects such as a heavy box or a hot potato, this stimulates fantasy, generates a lot of fun, and leads to the next step, where they can pass emotions from one to another instead of an object. They learn to express their emotions in a playful and safe way. Children often tell us that they feel relieved and liberated after these activities. It's very motivating to see their enthusiasm."





2. Adult support

Every child needs the physical, psychological and moral support of adults in order to develop healthily. Children who receive care and attention feel safe and are better able to explore the World and expand their horizons. It is through interaction with their environment that children develop their identity, take on the norms and values of their culture and learn to function in their society.

What does War Child do?

Bringing up children in times of war demands much of parents and carers, who often have numerous problems resulting from the conflict. War Child supports them so that they are better able to provide stability and support for their children. In addition War Child trains teachers, social workers, psychologists, artists, volunteers and active adult members of a community so that they are better able to grasp children's problems and needs.

War Child's starting point is that the responsibility for caring for children lies and remains with the parents, the caregivers and the community in which the children are growing up. War Child supports the principle of supporting local capacity to be responsible for child care in the community, for example by means of discussion with parents, teachers and others who are in close contact with the children so as to encourage the exchange and development of knowledge and help find solutions to problems that may be arising. The projects are based on close cooperation between War Child and all those involved, this of course includes the children themselves.



3. Peer interaction

Interaction with other children is very important for children's psychosocial well-being and development. If children can interact positively with their peers at school or in sport or other playful activities, they learn to cooperate and trust one another, they learn about social norms and values and it helps them to develop their own identities. Children need to be able to share their experiences, ideas and problems with others in order to actively participate in society.



What does War Child do?

In times of war people may flee and their surroundings become unsafe or even destroyed. Normal social life in villages and camps is often disrupted. War Child re-establishes the interaction between children of similar age by or example organizing creative and sport activities, or by setting up clubs for children and youngsters. This provides them with a safe space where they can meet, exchange experiences and participate actively in their communities.

What War Child does for children

Liesbeth: "Play touches a child's character. All these children have grown up much too quickly. We give them the opportunity to be like children again. To do this War Child uses creative means such as the Fun Day, a day full of games and fun designed to let children escape from the daily grind in the refugee camps, where there is nothing for children to do. Children get to know one another during Fun Days, they learn to cooperate and simply have a good time. And it works! I can see it on the children's happy faces. For me, this is the reason to continue doing what I do for War Child".

4. Sense of normalcy and future prospect

Feeling normal, a stable structure and being able to look to the future are important factors in children's development. Daily routine, clearly defined tasks and rituals all contribute to feeling safe. In order to be able to look to the future, it is important for a child to be given the opportunity to learn, to go to school, and to develop.

Wat doet War Child?

Social structures disintegrate in conflict situations. Communities become disrupted and families fall apart. War Child supports educational activities and regularly organises creative and sporting activities for children, facilitates the setting up of meeting places for children and young people and helps communities to restore traditional cultural practices. All of this contributes to giving children a sense of structure, normality and perspectives, thus increasing their ability to confront their daily lives and the future.





The future

Caroline: "One day I would like to become a nurse. I'm worried about the future of my country. It won't get any better here unless the rebel activity stops. Lots of children are still being kidnapped and killed. I hope nobody who flees from his village to the camps will be forgotten. All I want is for the war to stop, so that people can go back home."

5. Safety and peace

A child's development depends on both physical and emotional safety and its vulnerability increases in the presence of risk factors such as a hostile environment or life-threatening situations or when protective factors diminish or disappear.

What does War Child do?

Children's healthy development is impaired by growing up in an environment typified by threats like hate, stress and violence. War Child is not in a position to remove all the physical dangers to which children are subjected, but contributes to the rebuilding of some safety and peace. One possible way of doing this is by working towards the re-establishment of trust between various groups that have been driven apart by war. War Child is active in the field of peace education and conflict resolution so as to help prevent future hostilities, and also works on raising consciousness on topics such as mines and the dangers of alcohol and drugs, for example by through radio programmes. Finally War Child takes responsibility for campaigning for peace through channels such as international networks and by political lobbying.

Result

Liesbeth: "Caroline was very poorly when she first came to our creative workshop. She had spent three months with the rebels and was afraid of being kidnapped again. She was lonely because other children wouldn't play with her and she was constantly haunted by the intrusive memories of the time when she had been kidnapped. Caroline returned to her family. They have been living in a IDP camp for years. She misses the house where she used to live,



and often has to help her parents with household chores, so there's not much time left for having fun. Caroline took part in several workshops run by War Child. She's always keen to take part in the weekly workshops. She has gotten to know other children there and has more girlfriends now. The workshops enable her to forget what happened in the past and to devote more time to play. Since her family and girlfriends have also got to know War Child, they also understand better what Caroline has been through. Now that she can occasionally feel like a child again, she's much happier than she was before. She laughs more often and has a more positive attitude towards the future."

3. Choosing projects



3.1 Where?

War Child carefully selects the countries and regions where it sets up programmes and projects. The choice is made based on environmental analyses and specific organizational criteria.

War Child in Northern Uganda

War Child began its activities in Uganda in October 2004 and now runs weekly Fun Days in 15 camps for large groups of children (up to 3.000!) as well as intensive psychosocial workshops for smaller groups of the most vulnerable children. Alongside these activities, training is given to caregivers, volunteers, parents, young people and local organizations to enable them to take over these activities themselves. In 2005, 40.187 children and youth and 6.789 adults participated in these activities. Another 22.415 children and youth and 40.048 adults were involved in the activities, for example as spectators at one of the Fun Day events. Another 26.924 children and youth were reached through professionals trained by War Child.

War Child first conducts a careful, intensive desk research of the war affected area so as to gain an impression of the impact of the conflict on the population. To do this we may use a number of well-respected indexes (e.g. the Human Development Index and the Human Security Index). These permit us to quantify the type, status and duration of the conflict, the developmental phase in the country or region concerned and the humanitarian aspects of the country concerned, such as the number of victims. Besides these we use a number of sources, like reports from other organizations, first hand impressions from people who worked in an area, etc.

As well as the impact of the conflict, certain choices and priorities of War Child as an organization also play a role in the selection of a new project country. Amongst these are:

- The manner of intervention: will we implement our selves, or will we use partner organizations, or a combination?;

- The programme's focus: psychosocial, peace building or advocacy;
- The presence of other organizations: Are the needs already being met so that War Child's help is less needed?
- The feasibility of cooperating with local partner organizations;
- The degree to which peripheral conditions are met, such as the provision of basic food, shelter and water;
- The security situation;
- Availability of sufficient funds and staff.

After this extensive desk research, which takes place at the Amsterdam head office, a choice is made regarding a new project country or region.

Choosing a new programme location

Wout: "My name is Wout Visser. I led the orientation mission for War Child in Uganda and after the project started I worked as Project Coordinator in Kitgum on the frontier with Sudan.

War Child's primary goal is to break through the spiral of violence and to create the conditions for peace. War Child aims to expand its field of operation each year in the country it's working in. We closely monitor developments in the world and take them into consideration in choosing a new area. Selecting a new programme location is very complex. Right now there are around 35 countries in the World where there are wars or violent internal conflicts. We want to work where our work has the greatest impact, but we have to take many factors

into consideration such as the safety of our staff, meeting basic needs of the target group and the availability of local knowledge and capacity. In spite of the very unpredictable security situation in Northern Uganda, War Child nevertheless decided to start a programme there late 2004. The reason for this is that a terrible war has been going on there for the last twenty years between the rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Ugandan government. The effects of the armed conflict on children are enormous and the living conditions for children in Northern Uganda are among the worst in the World. Due to the war 80% of the population has been living for years in IDP camps where everything is in short supply".





Preparatory phase

Once a project country or region has been selected, an orientation mission takes place in the field. War Child closely examines the local structure in the region, the needs of the children and the communities and any possible partner organizations. If we still have a green light after this orientation, we conduct an investigation to determine what sort of programme is most appropriate.

War Child then examines the risk factors facing children, and in how far the protective factors (see page 20) are present. A programme is then established on the basis of this analysis consisting of different types of activities for the various target groups, such as children, young people, parents, teachers, caregivers, the community, or the local or national authorities. When setting up a programme consideration is also given to the particular phase in which a country is. In an existing conflict situation help is mainly directed towards children and their direct environment, whilst if the country is in the reconstruction phase the programme will also be directed towards children's broader social environment such as social organizations and government structures.

Wout: "It's difficult to give children hope for a better future when the enemy is waiting to strike. But it's vital to help children on their way, to give them space for their experiences, to teach them to accept one another and let them grow up in as healthy a social situation as possible.

War Child's goal is to break through the difficult situation and help children develop into well-balanced adults who can contribute to the peaceful future of their country. During the orientation mission I was able to quantify the situation. I did this by studying the available information and sitting round the table with local and international organizations active in the field. There are numerous aid organizations in Northern Uganda and there was no shortage of knowledge and experience. We were able to make good use of this. War Child has added value in this region thanks to our experience with creative tools and sport for stimulating psychosocial development 'our focus on children and because War Child programmes are set up based on a so-called 'integrated approach'. That means that they are directed to all children affected by war. From the information gained from our mission I drew up a programme

proposal. It's the management team that has the final say whether or not a programme can be implemented. In 2005 we started setting up and implementing the programme".

No emergency relief

The psychosocial help that War Child can provide is only of benefit if the minimum needs of shelter, food and water are fulfilled or can be fulfilled by other organizations. War Child has psychosocial expertise and has developed programmes that are designed to (re)build children's self-confidence and create an environment that stimulates children's healthy psychosocial development. Emergency relief falls outside War Child's mandate and demands other types of expertise.

3.2 How?

Cooperating with a variety of partner organizations

War Child aims to make its help long lasting and for this reason prefers to work in conjunction with local partner organizations. This is how we can build on local expertise and the sustainability of our programmes is better assured. However in

a war-affected area there are often no local aid organizations of any significance. War Child can only work with partners that are officially registered. The partner organization needs to have a good management structure and the financial stability must not depend on one donor alone. If there are reliable local partners, War Child may ask them to make project proposals. The quality of any received proposal is examined (in particular the strategy, aims and psychosocial expertise) as well as the quality of the partner organization (including its management and financial systems). Partners are selected by means of these criteria.



When suitable partner organizations cannot be found to cooperate with, War Child will develop and implement a programme it self. But even then we are on the lookout for local partners with a view to cooperation all the time in order to eventually hand over the programme to them. In our own programmes War Child's international specialists always train local aid

workers so that our contribution endures and the knowledge gained can be passed on when the War Child programme comes to an end.

War Child works through a community-based approach, as much as possible. This means that children, young people and adults within the community are involved in designing, setting up and running the programme. It is essential for the sustainability of the support provided for children that a programme is adapted to the local situation and is owned by the community.



Starting a new project

Wout: "After completing the orientation mission in Uganda, I began to work as a Project Coordinator in a place called Kitgum on the border with Sudan. In the preliminary phase we began with small-scale projects such as Fun Days and creative activities for big groups of children who had fled to prevent them from being kidnapped by the rebel army. These low-threshold activities enabled children and those around them to get to know War Child. It also enabled us to train new local staff at the same time. The aim is to make War

Child's programmes as sustainable as possible. That sometimes means that programmes start to run independently under the auspices of a newly formed local organization, or that local community implement the programme themselves. War Child can then withdraw from the area. That enables us to start new projects somewhere else and expand our field of activity. In the fifteen IDP camps in Uganda where War Child currently operates we are training parents, teachers, local caregivers and volunteers so that they can continue the activities once War Child has moved on".

3.3 For how long?

Long-term help is important in order to improve the psychosocial well-being of children affected by war, therefore War Child programmes normally last for many years. War Child develops strategic long-term plans for each programme country. These form the basis for specific programme and project plans.



War Child strives to make itself superfluous by strengthening the local capacity for child support. Such capacity depends on contextual developments, like socio-political developments in the country concerned, the increase or decrease in psychosocial problems of children and youth and the availability of time and money. When a programme starts up it is always uncertain just how long War Child will be there. We do constantly keep all people concerned up to date on our support strategy.

War Child normally departs when the programme goals have been achieved. Depending on the specific conditions in a programme the most important criteria affecting War Child's departure are:

- The capacity of children and young people to grow up healthily and in that sense their ability to contribute to peaceful coexistence;
- The capacity of local authorities, aid organizations and adults to take responsibility at local level for looking after the needs of children and assuring their rights.

There may also be external, unexpected reasons for terminating a project: worsening of the security situation, lack of cooperation of a (local) authority or a reduction of War Child's added value for the target group.

3.4 General considerations that form the basis for a War Child programme

The design of War Child's programmes is based on theories of child development, best practices in psychosocial programmes, the international Convention on the Rights of the Child, other juridical and humanitarian considerations and War Child's own experience.

General considerations

1. Each child in the World is equally important. War Child therefore supports all children regardless of their religious, ethnic or social background.

2. **The international Convention on the Rights of the Child** of the United Nations and the Facultative Protocol of the United Nations regarding the involvement of children in armed conflicts are the foremost terms of reference for War Child's work.
3. **Participation** by the beneficiary groups, including children and young people, guarantees that programmes are tuned to their own particular experience, needs, priorities and means.
4. **Protective factors** are important for children's psycho-social development and well-being.
 - **Constructive coping mechanisms within the child**
 - **Adult support**
 - **Peer interaction**
 - **Sense of normalcy and future prospect**
 - **Safety and peace**
5. **Professionalism.** Our programmes are based on the social sciences, creative and sports professions (theatre, drawing, music, sports, play) and on best practices in humanitarian aid programmes.
6. **Building up local capacity.** Building up and strengthening local capacity makes it possible to fulfil the rights of children to receive psychosocial support. Children and young people gain the most from programmes that have a lasting impact.
7. **Cultural diversity.** Values and customs in child rearing practices and ideas on their development and psychosocial problems are largely culturally determined, and need therefore to be taken into consideration when we design and implement programmes.
8. **Providing information, advice and raising consciousness (advocacy).** More attention is paid to children's and young people's needs and rights in a political and social climate where these needs and rights are understood and respected.

1 The State of the World's Children 2006, Unicef.

2 UNHCR: <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/basics>

3 Conflict Barometer 2004. Heidelberg Institute on International Conflict Research, 2004. http://www.hiik.de/en/ConflictBarometer_2004.pdf

4 Human Security Report 2005, p 102. <http://www.humansecurityreport.info/HSR2005/Part3.pdf>

5 Coalition against the use of Child Soldiers: <http://www.child-soldiers.org/childsoldiers/some-facts>

UNICEF: <http://www.unicef.org/protection/childsoldiers.pdf>

6 World Report on Violence and Health. WHO, 2002

7 The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children. Machel, UN, 1996; Review of the 1996 Machel study. UN, 2001; Children and Armed Conflict. Report of the Secretary General. UN A/59/695-S/2005/72; en SC Resolution 1593 (2004).

Colophon

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