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Theory and Programmatic Guide
Facilitator’s handbook: Life skills Workshops for Youth
Facilitator’s handbook: Parents and Caregivers Meetings

The resource kit is available online from Save the Children’s Resource Centre (http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/)

We would like to thank Danida for their financial contribution to this publication and the Youth Resilience Programme. We would also like to thank young people, parents, caregivers, facilitators and programme staff in Denmark, South Sudan, Iraq, Yemen and Jordan who have assisted us in developing, testing and reviewing the material. Our appreciation likewise goes to the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI) as well as to Save the Children colleagues around the world, whose timely feedback to the material was most welcomed.

The photos used in the resource kit do not portray young people affected by the specific circumstances described in the workshops.

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Foreword

It is with great pleasure that we present the Youth Resilience Programme: Psychosocial support in and out of school. The Youth Resilience Programme has been developed by Save the Children as an independent continuation of the Children’s Resilience Programme¹ and builds upon years of best practice and learning gained during the implementation. The Youth Resilience Programme is also informed by our experiences with psychosocial support and child protection in emergencies more generally and draws on lessons learnt from different child and youth centred organisations, local and international partners and UN agencies. We recognise all the organisations that have kindly allowed us to include their material in the Youth Resilience Programme.

The programme has two fundamental features: the active participation of youth and the development of key life skills to promote positive coping and resilience in youth. The resource kit with all the material needed to design and implement the Youth Resilience Programme is our contribution to ongoing efforts to deliver quality psychosocial programmes for and with young people. We sincerely hope to create lasting change and improves the lives of children, youth and their parents and caregivers.

We acknowledge the tremendous assistance we have received in developing, testing and reviewing this programme, including from youth themselves in Denmark, South Sudan, Iraq, Yemen and Jordan. We hope it will be a useful resource in strengthening youth wellbeing and resilience worldwide.

Jonas Keiding Lindholm, CEO
Save the Children Denmark

Introduction

Over the past twenty years, the increased focus on psychosocial support\(^2\) and response in the aftermath of crisis has led to the development of many innovative psychosocial interventions. Save the Children regularly implements psychosocial support and protection programmes in crisis and post-crisis situations to enhance the wellbeing of children and youth. This resource kit builds upon the Children’s Resilience Programme: psychosocial support in and out of school.\(^3\) Both programmes combine approaches, intervention strategies and expertise developed by Save the Children and other organisations with worldwide experience in engaging and supporting children, youth and their families. The activities have been carefully selected and tested by Save the Children Denmark and partners and essential feedback has been sought from young people, parents, caregivers, facilitators and programme staff as part of this process.

The Youth Resilience Programme builds skills linked to behaviour and social interaction that are essential for sustaining the resilience, protection and wellbeing of youth. This is done through a series of structured life skills workshops, framed within the concept of “I AM”, “I CAN” and “I HAVE.”\(^4\) The workshops are complemented by sessions for parents and caregivers to promote their understanding of the challenges that their children are facing and provide them with skills to support young individuals as they transition from childhood to adulthood. The programme encourages engagement with the entire community to identify ways to improve the environment of young people and especially to improve child protection systems. The Youth Resilience Programme moves away from traditional interventions that generally aim at enhancing emotional control and coping with difficulties, by also focusing extensively on social functioning and interaction, active participation and positive engagement in societies.

The Youth Resilience Programme constitutes a flexible tool that can be used in both humanitarian and development contexts and as part of broader youth programmes in different locations and contexts. It is applicable to young people in all life situations, though it can be particularly useful in situations where youth have experienced various forms of hardship and distressing events, including family violence, poverty, community unrest, natural calamities, technological disasters or conflict emergencies.

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\(^{2}\) Words highlighted in bold are included in the glossary.
\(^{3}\) IFRC Reference Center for Psychosocial Support and Save the Children (2012)
\(^{4}\) Grotberg (1995)
The Youth Resilience Programme resource kit

The Youth Resilience Programme is designed for boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 20 (and their parents and caregivers), but may also benefit individuals above this age. A resource kit has been developed for the Youth Resilience Programme. It comprises three manuals and online annexes. The materials provide guidance and tools for designing and implementing the Youth Resilience Programme, as well as broader youth programming that aims at promoting positive coping and resilience of young persons. The resource kit includes:

- **The Theory and Programmatic Guide** provides an overview of key concepts and the theoretical background of the Youth Resilience Programme. It reviews approaches and methodologies for implementing the programme, including systematic guidance on the participatory process of designing the series of thematic workshops. It also suggests ways of promoting sustainability and community involvement. The guide helps facilitators to establish a fun, safe and inclusive environment that is conducive for building youth resilience and provides guidance in dealing with difficult emotions, which may arise in the course of a workshop.

- **Facilitator’s handbook 1: Life Skills Workshops for Youth** presents the various types of workshops included in the programme. The Youth Resilience Programme has eight workshop themes, and four introductory and two closing workshops. Each theme comprises between two to five thematic workshops focused on various life skills linked to personal and social skills that the facilitator and participants can choose to address in depth. This handbook has detailed instructions for facilitators for each workshop, including the objective of the session, the timing for activities and the materials required.

- **Facilitator’s handbook 2: Parents and Caregivers Meetings** is an essential component of the Youth Resilience Programme. This handbook features seven meetings for parents and caregivers of young people. The meetings aim to inform parents and caregivers about the Youth Resilience Programme, provide them with regular updates on the topics that their children are tackling and any issues that arise during the workshops. The meetings also aim to enhance parents’ and caregivers’ understanding and skills to support their children’s wellbeing and protection. This handbook can be used both for Children’s and Youth Resilience Programmes (but, please note that some adaptation will be needed depending on the age group) or as a stand-alone tool, for example, for training foster parents or for awareness-raising sessions for parents and caregivers.

The Youth Resilience Programme has been developed for practitioners and programme managers with limited experience of working with youth, as well as for those who already work with youth who are seeking to incorporate life skills and psychosocial support into their programmes. With adequate capacity building of staff, careful selection of target group and adaptation of the material to the context, the resource kit can assist child and youth practitioners around the world in implementing programmes that addresses the challenges that young people are and their communities facing, building on internal resources of youth themselves and of their social protective networks.
I. The conceptual framework

The Youth Resilience Programme offers ideas and direction for programmes that target young men and women around the ages of 14 to 20 and their parents and caregivers, though it also may benefit individuals above this age. The aim of the programme is to promote positive coping and resilience among young individuals to sustain their protection, psychosocial wellbeing and healthy development.

The programme is embedded in a systems approach and takes into account the protective social network of young people at family and community level. The programme is based on the principle that children and youth have the ability to overcome difficulties and to learn new competencies to cope with future adversities using their own internal resources and with the care and support of families and communities. This dynamic process is influenced by combinations of different types of skills and knowledge. For example, a girl’s capacity to protect herself from sexual abuse is strong, if she knows about society and her rights and responsibilities and where to access services and if she has a belief in herself and her worth, the skills to communicate and the courage to consult protective services.

To capture the complex interaction of individual and social factors that facilitates resilience, the Youth Resilience Programme is framed around the concept of “I AM”, “I CAN” and “I HAVE.” The heart of the programme is a series of structured workshops, designed to support the dynamic processes between these three dimensions, by strengthening life skills linked to cognitive, emotional and social functioning. The workshops are complemented by a series of meetings with the parents and caregivers. Working simultaneously with youth and their parents and caregivers helps to promote internal and external protective factors and reduce risk factors in young people’s lives at an individual, family and community level.

This approach to resilience assumes the active engagement of the individual. The right to participation, as recognised in Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), is therefore central to the Youth Resilience Programme. It encourages youth themselves to take the lead in mapping issues within their communities and lives, and in identifying specific skills to be strengthened through the workshops. The programme uses participatory techniques which have been shown to be effective in building resilience of young people and assumes a fun, safe and inclusive environment conducive for this purpose.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The aims of the life skills workshops for youth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The workshops aim to help young people to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Resume normal, routine activities during or in the aftermath of crisis events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have strong personal and social skills to adapt to and cope with adversities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feel good about themselves and confident in their own abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make good and safe life choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be more social and act as role models to other children and young people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trust others and feel comfortable about sharing feelings and thoughts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seek help from others (i.e. peers and adults) when needed and have stronger awareness about who can help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Solve problems without violence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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5 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2007)
6 Herley (2010) p. 295 – 301
7 Grotberg (1995)
Youth and youth programmes

Youth is a transition period between childhood to adulthood, marked by certain rituals or physical changes. It is a stage of social and physical development stretching from puberty to the acceptance of the responsibilities of employment, marriage, family, community engagement etc. Youth therefore is a loose concept, as this transition may happen at different times for boys and girls, in rural or urban areas, and can vary substantially from context to context. International instruments and organisations use different age range to define youth, ranging from as low as 10 years to as high as 35 years, as is the case in the African Youth Charter. An age range of 15-24 years is most commonly used.

The groups targeted in a youth programme will vary, depending on the kinds of programmes being planned. While youth livelihoods programmes will tend to target those who can legally work under the CRC and relevant national legal framework, sexual and reproductive health programmes may wish to reach very young adolescents to address puberty and other changes in adolescence. Education programmes, however, may look at youth in light of the phases of the national education system and compulsory education legislation.

When designing an intervention for youth, programme managers will need to carefully take into account the local context and broader programme objectives in choosing their target group. Effective targeting of youth involves recognition of youth “as a diverse population with unique needs (for example, young women versus young men, in-school versus out of school, married versus unmarried, single youth household heads, child soldiers).” Understanding the particular needs and risks faced by different sub-groups of youth helps the programme to create the right group dynamics and to successfully address the challenges of a particular group, while building on their resources. Gender roles, for example, mean that girls can take on some responsibilities earlier than boys and are seen as youth for a very short period of time, if at all. This often leads to them having less access to, or being entirely excluded from youth programming. Boys, in turn, may from a young age be considered as the family’s breadwinner and charged with lots of responsibilities. It is therefore very important to ensure that the design of youth programming takes into account the realities of young women and men’s lives.

The Youth Resilience Programme is designed to accommodate the development of young men and women between the ages of 14-20, but may also benefit individuals above this age. The activities are designed to be gender sensitive and inclusive to young people in different life circumstances, but some adaptation to the context may still be needed. The level of development of the targeted individuals will determine whether to use the Children’s or Youth Resilience Programme. This includes considering how the group members understand and process information, and how they communicate and relate to others. The life situation of the participants also matters, as the Youth Resilience Programme includes more ‘mature’ activities that benefit young persons as they transition from childhood to adulthood.

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8 Lowicki (2000) p.3
9 Save the Children (2015)
10 Schulte (2011) p.1
12 Sommers (2001)
Why working with youth?

Youth have often been overlooked and underserved in humanitarian and development work. This is in part because they are perceived as less vulnerable and less ‘innocent’ than younger children, particularly in emergencies where younger children are more susceptible to death and disease. Often vulnerable youth, whether on the streets or involved in armed conflict, are perceived by the public more as a threat or risk than as victims in need of support and protection. However, it is important to recognise the challenges and vulnerabilities faced by youth – particularly in times of crisis – as well as the potential of these young people and the benefits of systematically engaging and supporting them. Among the challenges are exploitation, early marriage or pregnancies, threat of HIV and AIDS, the risk of self-destructive behaviour and the responsibility of being the breadwinner of the household. Youth are also more susceptible to political violence, particularly when excluded from development processes. Yet, young people have the need and ability to help others, as well as the critical eye and energy to create social change. For instance, they can actively inform policies and practices to create sustainable changes for children and youth. Helping young people discover their opportunities and determine their own agenda for change can make advocacy efforts very effective. At the same time, efforts are needed at all levels in the society to create an environment conducive for youth to thrive and positively bring forward ideas for changes. This is essential to mitigate the risk for frustration and negative involvement.

That youth are important allies in the recovery and development of their communities is now increasingly recognised by humanitarian and development actors, including governments and donors, who are paying more attention to youth and strengthening their approaches to reach and engage this group. Several organisations, including Save the Children, have documented the risks and needs of youth in emergencies, as well as their potential as a resource to their communities. Some of the strongest programming for youth can be found in the field of health, particularly in reproductive health and prevention of HIV and AIDS. Recently, livelihoods, employment and economic empowerment programmes for youth have increased. Attention is also being paid to youth civic engagement as a promising field of youth programming.

Youth and rights

The involvement of Save the Children in psychosocial interventions strengthens national governments in upholding children’s rights, as laid out in numerous international standards. It is important that programme staff are familiar with these standards and develop the Youth Resilience Programme within this context.

Depending on the definition adopted, ‘youth’ spans the divide between childhood and adulthood. Young people are therefore not clearly covered under one single legal framework that protects them and sets clear standards for working with them. While the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) makes provision for young people under the age of 18, older youth are technically covered by international instruments for adults. However, their specific needs are often overlooked and young people’s access to these frameworks may be inadequate. This is often due to young people’s limited participation in and access to decision-making and legal processes within their communities.

13 Lowicki (2000)
14 Ladegaard (2015)
15 For example, USAID’s Youth in Development Policy, adopted in October 2012, SCI increased focus on youth, EYE (Education being a strategic priority). Moving ahead on education, Education Global Initiative Save the Children.
16 Sommers (2001)
17 Schulte (2011); Sukariuh, (2012)
18 Evans & Prilleltensky (2005)
Article I of the CRC states that a child is “every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable, majority is attained earlier.”\(^{19}\) Thus, the term “child” or “children” in the articles of the Convention can in some cases apply to the group that can be called adolescents. However, under the article, governments have scope to reduce the age of majority when children become adults. This may limit assistance and protection provided to adolescents.

Some articles within the CRC may also disadvantage youth compared to other groups, even though they are applicable, and thereby increases their vulnerability. For example, “the designation of primary education (generally associated with younger children) as a mandatory right and secondary education (generally associated with older children) as a progressive, non-mandatory right” places less burden on the state to provide education to adolescents.\(^{20}\) The CRC does, however, address protection risks and rights that are highly relevant to youth, including economic exploitation (article 32), the illicit use of narcotic drugs (article 33), recruitment into armed groups (article 38) and conflict with the law (articles 37, 40). The Optional Protocols to the CRC provide additional protection to children and adolescents from sexual exploitation and involvement in armed conflict. By ratifying the CRC, governments state their intention to amend and create laws in keeping with the Convention, and the states must consider all actions taken in light of the best interests of the child.

In addition to the CRC, a number of other legal conventions and declarations provide guidance on working with youth (see the box below):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International legal instruments or global commitments underpinning guidance on youth(^{21})</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Forced Labour Convention (1930)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Night Work of Young Persons (Non-Industrial Occupations) Convention (1946)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention (1948)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention (1949)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fourth Geneva Convention (1949) and Additional Protocol II (1977)</td>
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<td>• Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951)</td>
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<td>• Equal Remuneration Convention (1951)</td>
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<td>• Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (1957)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (1958)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Employment Policy Convention (1964)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recommendation on Consent to Marriage—Principle II (1965)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Special Youth Schemes Recommendation (1970)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Convention concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (1973)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Human Resources Development Convention (1975)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Colombo Declaration on Youth (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Amman Youth Declaration (2015)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Whether a state is legally bound by international frameworks, depends on whether it gave its consent by ratification. When running a youth programme, it is therefore vital to look at the legal frameworks to which the state became a party, the state’s obligations in this respect (e.g. obligations concerning labour regulations) and the application of the legal framework and delivering on children’s rights.

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20 Lowicki (2000) p.6
21 Adapted from Sommers (2001) & Schulte (2011)
For Save the Children, children’s rights as articulated in the CRC is the approach underpinning all programmes, including the Youth Resilience Programme. This approach ensures a clear focus on children and adolescents below 18 years as rights holders, and in terms of their roles as social actors and in holding duty bearers accountable. Child rights programming offers a framework for empowering all children below 18 and their supporters to demand compliance with the rights of all children and in upholding the principles of the best interests of the child and of meaningful participation. To this end, young people need to be equipped with life skills and acquire knowledge about rights, possibilities and responsibilities – and this is the focus of the Youth Resilience Programme.

Recovery from distressing events comes at a cost

Practitioners have long noticed the resilience and capacity of young people to overcome difficult circumstances and readjust. Following a crisis, most young people do not require additional psychosocial support beyond the care and support offered by their families and community. They have the capacity to rebound from crisis and adapt to the new situation. Yet, exposure to violence or disaster, loss of or separation from loved ones, deterioration in living conditions, lack of access to services, neglect, stigmatisation and discrimination can all have both immediate and long-term consequences for an individual’s development. Young people’s psychological development, as well as their future roles in social life may be impacted. In other words, recovery from distressing single incidents or long-term exposure to neglect or violence can come at a cost. Care should be taken when speaking about individuals as “traumatized,” as well as “resilient.” In all circumstances, young people will react differently according to their culture, situation, age, gender and personality.

New research reminds us not to ignore the potential impact of critical events and conditions on young people’s development. This reinforces the importance of working with youth and their social networks to support positive adaptation and coping. Psychosocial support plays an essential role, providing a systematic way of supporting children’s development and their ability to recover from the impact of crises on their psychological, social, physical and emotional wellbeing.

To be effective, interventions needs to recognise psychosocial development and wellbeing as a complex process in which children and youth learn cognitive, emotional and social skills such as trusting others, communicating their needs and developing distinct identities. A resilience-enhancing intervention also needs to take a systemic approach, where young persons’ needs and rights are addressed at multiple levels and reference is made to the legal framework, referral systems, service providers and safety nets.

Resilience and wellbeing of young individuals

Resilience in the face of adversity is an on-going process that influences and is influenced by the development of the young person. This process is also dependent on a complex range of internal and external factors, including culture, situation, age and personality. Promoting resilience is an essential element of youth programming to sustain individuals’ psychosocial wellbeing, healthy development and positive engagement in societies. To this end, resilience should not be seen as equivalent to wellbeing or robustness of personalities, nor is it an outcome in itself.

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22 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) (2007)
23 Layne, Beck, Rimmansch, Southwick, Moreno & Hobfoll (2009)
24 Chichetti & Rogosch (1997)
25 Layne, Beck, Rimmansch, Southwick, Moreno & Hobfoll (2009)
Resilience can be defined as “the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural and physical resources that sustain their wellbeing and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided and experienced in culturally meaningful ways.” Understood this way, resilience requires individuals to have the capacity to find resources that bolster wellbeing, while also emphasising that it is up to families, communities and governments to provide these resources in ways that individuals value.

A number of researchers have identified the following factors to be associated with resilience in young people:

- Good communication, problem-solving and cognitive abilities
- Positive self-image
- Talents and skills
- Ability to self-regulate
- Ability to seek help from others
- Stable, nurturing environments
- Strong cultural identity
- Social connectedness
- Meaningful participation
- Protective environment
- Access to quality basic services.

Researches refer to different types of resources that support an individual in coping positively with adversities. Four basic categories include psychological, social, cultural and physical resources. Another definition details seven interconnected resources, including (i) access to material, (ii) social justice, (iii) power & control, (iv) identity, (v) relationships, (vi) cultural adherence and (vii) cohesion. Another framing – ‘the conservation of resources theory’ – refers to “those resources that are key to survival and wellbeing (e.g., shelter, attachment to significant others, self-esteem), or that are linked to the process of creating and maintaining key resources (e.g., money, credit)”.

In this regard, it should be highlighted that children, youth and their families often show an incredible ability to positively cope with life circumstances even though they have access to very few external resources (e.g. in times of displacement due to conflict or disaster).

The Youth Resilience Programme recognises the ability of young individuals to actively learn, create and use various resources and that a combination of resources is necessary for a young person to positively cope and adapt to adversities (“I AM”, “I CAN” and “I HAVE”). The programme seeks to strengthen life skills linked to behaviour and social interaction by applying multiple types of activities that have been proven useful in building such skills:

- Creative activities that are based on repetition, movement and rhythm.
- Opportunities to verbalise (story-telling, testimonies).
- Group work enhancing social connectedness and peer support.
- Life skills to deal with everyday emotions, social relations and practical skills.
- Working on close relationships.
- Working on the environment to lessen risk factors and enhance protective factors.

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26 Ungar (2008)
27 This definition is seen as complementary to the definition commonly used by Save the Children: “Resilience is the ability of individuals (including children) households and countries to resist, to adapt to manage change by maintaining or transforming living standards in the face of shocks or stresses, without compromising their long term prospects”. Ungar’s definition is used for this manual as it pays further attention to the process of adaptation and management of change, by including the reasoning around the ability to navigate and negotiate. It is also used as it emphasis the dynamic relationship between the individual and the resources around him or her.
28 Cloitre, Morin & Linares (2005)
29 Ungar, M. (n/a)
31 Malchiodi (2008); Ungar (2011)
Life skills-based education

Life skills-based education “uses a combination of participatory learning experiences that aims to develop knowledge, attitudes and especially skills needed to take positive actions on social and health issues and conditions.” It can include skills in many different areas:

- Livelihood or vocational skills
- Practical skills (including health, safety, housekeeping, job seeking etc.)
- Physical skills (including motor skills)
- Skills related to behaviour and interaction (including negotiation skills, problem-solving skills, communication skills).

It can also include knowledge and experience in various areas, such as numeracy, literacy, knowledge about society, law, resources, where and how to access services and the ability to seek out such services when needed, as well as individuals’ rights and responsibilities.

The Youth Resilience Programme includes workshops on skills offered in life skills-based education that deal with emotional and interpersonal capacities. However, as part of integrated programming, other forms of life skills should also be worked on in the programme, such as sexual and reproductive health or vocational training. These different types of skills reinforce each other.

Youth resilience within a developmental framework

Resilience of young individuals should be seen within a developmental framework for multiple reasons:

- Children and youth think, communicate and understand their world differently depending on their level of development.
- The stage of development influences the young individual’s adaptation to challenges and, for instance, what role the immediate social environment plays in these processes.
- Risk and protective factors are different at different stages of development.

A young person’s resilience is influenced by a multitude of different areas, which include personal, physical, emotional and cognitive development. It is about gaining a complex set of skills to interact with other people in wider society, as well as the ability to manage emotions and relate to others, which is at the core of making positive and healthy life choices and taking responsibility in the long term. Children and youth will, however, not be in a position to access services, obtain a livelihood or claim any position in society without solid knowledge, education and vocational skills. Knowledge is indispensable for a young individual’s capacity to protect him or herself. The ability of a person to deal with challenges depends on a range of skills acquired at different developmental stages, including livelihood or vocational skills, practical skills such as health and safety, and physical skills and knowledge.

Efforts to build youth resilience should aim to develop and strengthen young people’s development from many angles, supporting youth to reach their full potential within the framework of their possibilities and resources. Livelihood and vocational skills are essential for a self-sufficient and financially secure future for any young person growing into adulthood. Life skills such as building up self-esteem, managing emotions, promoting a positive self-image, negotiation skills, problem-solving, critical thinking and decision-making determine whether a young person’s knowledge and experiences are put to use in a constructive way for the individual and society. These life skills also influence to what extent a young person is able to assimilate the content from school-based and vocational programmes.

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UNICEF (2002), p.1
Protective and Risk factors

As young people grow, there may be positive aspects of their lives that help in their development and negative aspects that hinder this process. These positive and negative variables are known as protective factors and risk factors. Their presence or absence and the combination of these factors influence the psychosocial wellbeing and resilience of young people.

Protective factors include, for example, supportive relationships with family members, strong interpersonal skills, physical and psychological safety in the community and educational opportunities. Risk factors include, for example, domestic and school violence, family conflict, limited parental involvement in the young individual’s life and early substance abuse.

Ultimately, all child- and youth-centred programmes should seek to promote internal and external protective factors and reduce risk factors in young people’s lives at an individual, family and community level.

I AM, I CAN and I HAVE

The Youth Resilience Programme acknowledges the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) definition of life skills as “abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.” While it seeks to build skills linked to three broad categories of life skills identified by WHO: (i) Decision-making and critical thinking; (ii) Communication and interpersonal skills and (iii) Coping and self-management skills, the Youth Resilience Programme also focuses extensively on the identity of the young person and to his or her social protective environment. This means that the programme builds the range of life skills referred to by WHO, but also seeks to strengthen areas such as self-awareness and self-esteem. The programme also strives to influence the availability and accessibility of supportive social networks, including peer-networks, friends and community support.

The Youth Resilience Programme is framed around the concept of “I AM”, “I CAN” and “I HAVE” in order to capture the complex interaction of personal and social factors that facilitate resilience. The life skills and personal resources featured in this programme are arranged according to these three dimensions:

- I AM (i.e. inner strengths)
- I CAN (i.e. interpersonal and problem solving skills)
- I HAVE (i.e. social and interpersonal support).

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34 Grotberg (1995)
For a young person to show resilient behaviour, he or she needs to have a combination of skills and resources across the three dimensions. For example, if a person has high self-esteem (“I AM”), but lacks anyone who he or she can turn to for support, or awareness about such support (“I HAVE”) and does not have a very strong capacity to solve problems (“I CAN”), he or she may not cope very well with difficulties in life. This approach is in line with other research, showing that resilience is the product of a number of protective factors. It is important address the three dimensions simultaneously as part of a holistic approach to youth resilience. It is also important to recognise that the dimensions complement each other. For a young person to show resilient behaviour, he or she must not be “100% on all dimensions.” Rather it means having the right balance of personal and social skills and a protective network for each individual, which can then be used in relation to the adversities faced by that individual. Resilience is a facilitated and dynamic process that changes over time and can have different profiles over a lifetime. The resilience outcomes for youth will therefore vary with the situations that the young person faces.

The following section will elaborate more on the concept of “I AM”, “I CAN” and “I HAVE” and present some of the most important life skills and qualities that are addressed through the Youth Resilience programme workshops. The reader is encouraged to keep the close interlinkages between the three dimensions in mind when reading this chapter. All skills and personal resources are mutually reinforcing each other and a particular skill or resource may belong to more than one dimension.

**I AM (inner strength)**
This dimension is focused on a young person’s perception of him or herself and their inner motivations and beliefs. For example, I AM…

- … a person that others can like and love.
- … respectful of myself and others.
- … glad to do nice things for others and show my concern.
- … willing to be responsible for what I do.
- … optimistic that things will be alright.

This dimension is fundamental to psychosocial wellbeing and youth development. Personal resources and qualities, such as self-esteem, empower young people to positively explore life and make healthy choices. In times of crisis, individual and communal hope for the future and the belief that “I/we can do this” is often what gives the energy to keep on going.

Some examples of skills and resources under this dimension of resilience are:

- **A positive attitude to life** not only adds to the quality of life, it also stimulates problem-solving, creative thinking, positive relationships to other people and psychosocial wellbeing. Circumstances, such as early childhood psychological trauma, neglect and stress caused by poverty and forced migration, can undermine a child or young person’s ability to feel optimistic. Any life skills programme should aim at including activities that enhance happiness and joyfulness. Such activities reduce stress hormones (such as cortisol), increase the level of hormones linked to pleasure (such as serotonin and dopamine) and give those participating a feeling of being important to others.

- **Empathy** is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person, even in an unfamiliar situation. Empathy is the foundation for tolerance and nurturing behaviour. Empathy is a personal skill, but is developed through social relations that are characterised by love, care and understanding. It is predominately a skill that is based on a safe and secure early childhood with positive attachments to other people, but it can also be learned later in life.

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Garbarino et al. (2002)
**Self-awareness** includes culture, a sense of identity and knowing one’s strengths and weaknesses. This helps a person to make the right choices, set boundaries, ask for help and know where he/she can contribute to a positive change.

**Self-esteem** includes being aware of the good in oneself, feeling valuable and loved exactly as you are. This skill is greatly influenced by relationships with other people. Self-esteem is not the same as self-confidence, as confidence can be a mask or a role that compensates for low self-esteem. Self-confidence is related to a person’s actions (such as being good at something and receiving praise for this), whereas self-esteem is related to a sense of personal worth as a human being (feeling loved and valued regardless of actions). Most children and young people who have high self-esteem can learn self-confidence. Building self-esteem among young people is crucial for their self-protection, decision-making and assertiveness.

In programmes such as the Youth Resilience Programme, it is crucial to treat everyone with the same level of respect in order to build the participants’ self-esteem. For children or young people with low self-esteem, it is very important to make them valued for who they are and not simply for their actions within the group.

**I CAN (interpersonal and problem-solving skills)**

This is a broad dimension that involves practical skills, capacities and knowledge – including knowing and managing oneself and relationships with others. For example; I CAN...

- …figure out when it is a good time to talk to someone or to take action.
- …find ways to solve problems I face.
- …talk to others about things that frighten or bother me.
- …find someone to help me when I need it.
- …control myself when I feel like doing something that is not right or dangerous.
- …deal with my reactions to emotions.
- …solve conflicts in a non-violent manner.

There are numerous life skills linked to this dimension. Many of them are linked to the three types of life skills defined by WHO. Interpersonal skills are strongly interconnected and reinforce other life skills such as self-esteem and self-confidence. For example, if a person has a strong belief in him or herself, but does not have the ability to communicate diplomatically with other people or read social codes, this young person may end up in a conflict. Conversely, positive communication with other people is likely to promote social cohesion and boost a person’s belief in his or her values and capacities.

Some examples of life skills under the category of “I CAN” are:

**Advocacy skills** empower youth to speak up for themselves, and involve building youth’s skills and confidence to address society’s norms and attitudes relating to youth. The Youth Resilience Programme builds skills linked to communication, self-confidence and empathy, which are prerequisites for boosting the influence and options for self-expression for young people.

**Assertiveness skills** include active, non-aggressive problem-solving and negotiation. Assertiveness is closely related to the capacity to take initiative. Assertiveness is a skill that also requires cultural and contextual sensitivity as well as an ability to read and adapt to social norms. A child or a young person will be assertive in different ways depending on the situation and environment (peers, caregivers, workplace, etc.).
**Communication skills** promote the capacity to express oneself, both verbally and non-verbally, in ways that are appropriate to the culture and situation. This includes being able to relate to a wide range of people and express needs, opinions and motives in an assertive manner. It also includes understanding “social codes,” i.e. developing a sensitivity to social norms specific to the context. Communication skills requires an understanding of other people’s motives and position, which is closely connected to empathy. Communication is the foundation for most activities in youth groups, including youth mobilisation, social skills, leadership, networking, sharing of knowledge, advocacy and monitoring and evaluation. Good communication skills are vital to effectively negotiate resources in the workplace, at home and in the community to promote positive coping.

**Coping with emotions** (including coping with stress) involves recognising emotions in oneself and others, being aware of how emotions influence behaviour and being able to respond to emotions appropriately. Examples are anger management, dealing with grief, anxiety and fear, and coping skills for dealing with loss, abuse and trauma. Coping with emotions also means adjusting reactions to situations and contexts. The open display of emotions is seen very differently across cultures, and skills in this area are closely connected to interpersonal skills.

**Creative thinking** contributes to decision-making as well as problem-solving by enabling the individual to explore the available alternatives and various consequences of his or her actions or decisions. It includes the ability to think of new solutions from different angles. It also involves combining experience and knowledge in new ways. The foundations for this cognitive capacity are laid in the early childhood, but it can also be learned and stimulated at a later stage. All life skills programmes should include components that stimulate the creative thinking process to enable children and youth to take control of problem-solving.

**Critical thinking** is the process of identifying relevant information or knowledge (e.g. through observation, experience or communication) and synthesising it to guide a belief or an action. Critical thinking is intimately linked to the ability to analyse and understand attitudes, values and social norms. It is an important component in children and young people’s ability to protect themselves from potential exploitation and from peer pressure.

**Decision-making** is the process whereby the individual deals constructively with decisions that influence his or her own life. Decision-making requires a complex set of information-gathering skills, analytical skills and a capacity to evaluate the consequences of actions for self and others. To make the “right decision,” one needs the skills to determine alternative solutions to dilemmas, self-confidence and skills to analyse the influence of values, attitudes and motivation of self and others.

**Interpersonal skills** help a person relate in positive ways to the social environment, through verbal and non-verbal communication. It means keeping good relations with family members and other important sources of social support. It may also mean being able to end relationships constructively. Active listening, managing emotions, and giving and receiving feedback in a constructive manner are all forms parts of interpersonal skills. Making friends and maintaining positive social relationships are other crucial part of this skill. The capacity to be flexible and to make good choices is important, as is the ability to form attachments with others in healthy ways.

**Leadership** is the ability to mobilise other people, organise and take forward the common interest of a group of peers or others. Leadership skills are different from dominating or bullying others. It is the ability to plan and oversee a range of different individuals and topics and to take them forward. This requires well-developed social skills, knowing oneself, empathy, assertiveness and non-violent conflict resolution skills. Leadership skills can be learnt and are important, for example, in relation to work, both as manager or as member of a team. With an awareness about good leadership qualities, a young person will be in a position to influence their own group leaders and hold them accountable.
**Negotiation** is the ability to reach an agreement by peaceful means, without compromising on basic values. This skill needs empathy, assertiveness and knowledge about rights and responsibilities.

**Networking skills** are important for young people to create space to influence their lives and that of their peers, families, communities and country. From a small, organised group, youth may create networks with other like-minded groups, civil society organisations and institutions, which may be helpful in reaching government representatives and other duty bearers. Networking skills are closely linked to communication skills, assertiveness and interpersonal skills.

**Non-violent conflict resolution** is the capacity to solve conflicts without resorting to fighting or other violent, abusive means. It requires the management of emotions such as fear, anger and stress, and also demands a high level of assertiveness and social skills. Creative thinking is also important for this skill, for instance in finding creative alternatives to solve conflicts.

**Peer resistance** involves the ability to resist peer pressure, especially if it is not constructive or even dangerous to the young person. It could be pressure to join a gang, drink alcohol, have (unsafe) sex against one’s will, etc. Peer resistance can be quite difficult, especially for a young person, because the peer group is so important. Peer pressure is not necessarily physical pressure, but the risk of losing face, being excluded or losing benefits in the group. Critical thinking is essential for this skill as well as self-esteem.

**Problem solving** is the ability to solve both everyday issues and larger problems that occur. This enables the individual to deal constructively with problems in his or her life. This skill includes the ability to analyse a situation, consider different options and ask for help.

**Stress management** is the ability to identify stressors (these can be different for different individuals) and knowing ways to cope with stress in a constructive manner, such as asking for help. Stress management skills are linked to several other skills, including managing emotions, self-awareness, assertiveness, cognitive capacities and social skills. For example, awareness of personal boundaries and knowledge about oneself are necessary to know when to say no, if a problem or task has become too big to handle. The ability to prevent and cope with stress is also connected to time management, positive thinking and relaxation techniques.
Team-building skills include the ability to express respect for the contribution and different styles of other people. It also includes assessing one’s own abilities and match them to the needs of the group.

Trust is important to social relationships, but needs to be combined with a solid capacity for critical thinking to avoid naivety and vulnerability.

I HAVE (social and interpersonal support)
This dimension is focused on the protective networks or systems that play an essential role in providing protection and supporting young people to develop to their full potential.

For example, “I HAVE…”

* …people around me I trust and who love me no matter what.
* …people who set limits for me so I know when to stop before there is danger or trouble.
* …people who show me how to do things right by the way they do things.
* …people who want me to learn to do things on my own.
* …people who help me when I am sick, in danger or need to learn.
* …a stable and nurturing environment.
* …a strong sense of cultural belonging and meaningfulness.

The process of resilience depends on the availability of social support and on a young person’s capacity to manage such support. Skills like communication, empathy, problem-solving and managing emotions are essential for a network to be truly available and supportive. In other words, many of the personal resources and life skills presented under the dimensions of ”I AM” and ”I CAN” strongly influences this domain of resilience.

Within the context of the Youth Resilience Programme, Save the Children defines the “I HAVE” dimension more broadly than the availability of supportive social networks at family and community level. Access to services, a fully functioning and dependable national and community-based child protection system, child- and youth-friendly health services, an education system and a job market are essential components of the “I HAVE” dimension. A wider community engagement strategy is therefore important in bringing some of these components together, thereby creating a more effective programme.

Holistic approach to youth resilience

The Youth Resilience Programme is most efficient when it is part of a broader youth programme that also addresses other areas of life and functioning, such as vocational and technical skills building, health and socio-economic development.

Without such skills, children and youth will not be in a strong position to access services, obtain a livelihood or claim a position in society. Knowledge is also crucial to a young person’s capacity to protect him or herself. The example given earlier demonstrates this point: A girl’s capacity to protect herself from sexual abuse is stronger if she knows about society, rights and responsibilities and where to access services and if she has a belief in herself and her worth, skills to communicate and courage to consult the protective services. Another example is when a young individual’s ability to apply the knowledge and skills gained from a disaster risk reduction programme is enhanced, by constructively deal with distressing emotions, believe in him or herself and and negotiate support from the social environment. (Please see chapter two ‘Programming guidance’ for case studies from Sri Lanka, China, Kenya, Macedonia, Uganda and Haiti on integrated youth programming.)

A well-balanced, empowered personal development process is never based on knowledge alone. All life skills programmes should be based on a holistic approach to youth development and adapted to the local context.
Evidence also suggests that multi-layered approaches, which address the individual as well as their environment, are most effective in building youth resilience. The resilience of a young person is inextricably linked to their interaction with the household, community and society. In this interactive process, stronger family, community, services and governance structures protect and support youth. In turn, young people can become positive contributors to their societies. They benefit from structure, stability, identification with a larger group and opportunities to receive from and give back to the community. It is therefore crucial that the Youth Resilience Programme is embedded in a systems approach, recognising the wide range of mechanisms at individual, family, community and societal level that support young people’s development, wellbeing and protection. Adequate referral systems to basic services and specialised mental health services are necessary to ensure that adequate responsive measures are taken for youth in need of more support. State institutions and mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of children’s rights are necessary to make these rights a reality.

As resilience interventions often include very vulnerable young people, great care and high ethical standards need to be applied. Any abused, exploited or otherwise vulnerable child should be referred to the relevant part of the child protection system. Life skills education cannot substitute the necessary skilled case management and the care, protection and follow-up by services mandated to undertake these tasks.

Some youth programmes will require more attention to psychosocial issues, for example, programmes for youth who are suffering from psychological distress. This may be the case in conflict or disaster-affected contexts. In such situations, the workshops in this resource kit can be combined with skills building for parents, caregivers and facilitators in psychological first aid and/or stress management training.

Youth participation

The right of youth to express views freely and have them taken into account is one of the guiding principles of the CRC and recognised in Article 12. It is also an important standard in humanitarian and development work, acknowledging the potential of children and youth to enrich decision-making processes and be agents of change. The right to participation is a fundamental component of the Youth Resilience Programme in several ways. For example, at the very start of the programme the participants themselves are encouraged to take the lead in mapping issues within their communities and lives and in identifying specific skills to be strengthened through the workshops.

The active engagement of youth is needed in learning life skills so that they are able to navigate their way to psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources and negotiate these resources to be provided in a culturally meaningful way. The Youth Resilience Programme considers each young individual as an active subject rather than a passive object. Psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources cannot be negotiated meaningfully unless the person is actively participating in the process. Meaningful participation also helps children and youth to develop personal and social skills: self-esteem, self-efficacy, communication, negotiation, problem-solving and decision-making. Participation therefore supports the process of positive coping and empowers young people to protect themselves. Participation, if done meaningfully and ethically, can empower survivors of violence “to break the silence, state their problems to society and propose disciplinary measures for the aggressors.”

Engaging youth brings benefits to the individual young people themselves and to the programmes and communities in which they are involved. Youth can provide different and important perspectives on the issues in the community, especially on their own needs and

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37 Heneley (2010)
38 Save the Children (2013)
priorities. Involving youth from the early stages of programming helps to ensure that the planning and design are relevant to the needs and rights of young men and women. Youth are also important partners in implementing programmes, in reaching other young people and mobilising their communities. For example, a peer-to-peer approach implemented through existing youth clubs and networks such as football teams or cultural organisations may work as an entry point to the wider youth community. As active citizens, youth can contribute to their communities and support reconstruction and longer-term programming.

It is crucial that young people are engaged throughout the programme cycle – during planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. Facilitators should also consider how to enable youth to apply what they have learned in their communities. This could be done by establishing youth committees or clubs, and by organising awareness-raising campaigns or other activities relevant to youth.

**Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The right to express views freely and have them duly taken into account, as recognised by the Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, is fundamental in realising youths’ right to health and development. States parties need to ensure that young persons are given a genuine chance to express their views freely on all matters affecting them, especially within the family, in school and in their communities. For youth to be able to safely and properly exercise this right, public authorities, parents and caregivers and other adults working with or for children need to create an environment based on trust, information-sharing, the capacity to listen and sound guidance that is conducive to adolescents’ meaningful participation, including decision-making processes.

Save the Children staff and partners apply nine basic requirements when planning and monitoring children’s and young people’s participation. Participation should be: (1) transparent and informative, (2) voluntary, (3) respectful, (4) relevant, (5) child-friendly, (6) inclusive, (7) supported by training for adults, (8) safe and sensitive to risk, and (9) accountable.

**Empowerment of youth**

Many youth programmes focus on strengthening empowerment, including social, economic and civic empowerment. Empowerment in this context is linked to the knowledge and skills that young people need to make informed choices and transform these into desired actions.

Social empowerment is the process of increasing young people’s knowledge about their rights, potentials and responsibilities, their ability to access and use information, analyse their situation, make informed choices and communicate and interact with others. This is linked to the building of individual life skills such as decision-making and critical thinking; communication and interpersonal skills; and coping and self-management skills. Social empowerment is also about increasing young people’s knowledge about their society; basic knowledge on health and protection issues, for example sexual and reproductive health; and gender issues.

The Youth Resilience Programme is a useful resource for youth empowerment programmes. The programme features the importance of the immediate social network (particularly parents and caregivers) and embeds the systems approach – both important elements in building ‘an enabling environment.’ Youth empowerment programmes identify an enabling environment in terms of the formal and informal structures needed to protect and support youth to become active economic, social and political citizens. It includes laws and rules, public service delivery, civil society organisations and the market as well as cultural practices, value systems and norms and behaviour in the family and community. These elements are crucial for whether young people’s civic empowerment and engagement in society ultimately will lead to positive development and sustainable change.

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41 For example, Ladegaard (2015).
42 Save the Children in partnership with the MasterCard Foundation (2015) part one, pp. 8-9.
43 Save the Children in partnership with the MasterCard Foundation (2015) part one, pp. 8-9.
2. Programming guidance

Psychosocial support may be needed where a single crisis event has severely affected the community and its young people. It may also be needed to mitigate the impact of a chronic crisis. This could be ongoing armed conflict or a pandemic such as HIV, or prevalence of violence and abuse that have had a gradual negative impact on the wellbeing of young individuals. This chapter provides guidance on designing and implementing the Youth Resilience Programme as a form of structured family and community-oriented psychosocial support. The chapter covers multiple aspects, including standards and approaches for youth programming, ways of reaching vulnerable youth and community mobilisation.

Planning of the youth resilience programme

A preliminary assessment allows for an in-depth understanding of existing community dynamics, as well as what the desired and actual changes might look like over time. It will indicate if young people in a particular community will benefit from this type of programme and if they are interested in participating in the Youth Resilience Programme. An assessment should take a strengths-based approach and allow for active youth participation when seeking information about capacities and needs. Understanding how youth and their communities help themselves is important in designing a resilience-strengthening programme. It is important to map the resources within the community, which the programme can build upon. In assessing the situation and vulnerabilities of youth within a community, engaging youth in the assessments will help to understand:

- If this type of programme is culturally appropriate.
- If it is relevant to other activities in the community.
- Whether there is interest and commitment from relevant authorities, community members and groups, parents, caregivers and young people themselves.
- If the basic preconditions are in place (e.g. local protection and psychosocial support mechanisms, qualified facilitators and a possibility for youth to attend).

The Programme Manager’s Handbook of the Children’s Resilience Programme provides more guidance on the pre-planning and planning phase, which is also applicable to the Youth Resilience Programme. This includes guidance on doing an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) in relation to the programme goal as well as assessment guidelines. The handbook also includes an overview of different types of assessments, an outline of important types and sources of information and other programmatic considerations, including project documentation and budget considerations.

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44 IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support and Save the Children (2012)
Guiding standards and approaches

The following standards and approaches should be respected when designing and implementing the Youth Resilience Programme or other life-skills oriented programmes:

**Child and youth-centred:** Programmes should take as a starting point the needs and priorities of youth and be designed according to their lives and realities. This increases relevance and accessibility of the programme.

**Community participation:** Community participation enables the needs and resources of parents, caregivers and other community members to be identified. This is essential in building youth resilience, protective mechanisms and psychosocial support. Any youth programme should strive to ensure active community participation in all phases of the programme. This allows for a better definition of needs, resources and solutions and promotes a sense of ownership and empowerment.

**Do no harm:** Programming which seeks to ‘do no harm’ strives to identify and prevent unintended negative impacts of humanitarian and development interventions. The principle should be applied throughout the programme cycle.

**Evidence-based practice:** Recent research confirms that psychosocial support in and out of schools can positively impact the wellbeing of children and youths. However, programme evaluations are often poorly designed and do not provide for rigorous basis for improving practice. The evidence base can only be developed and best practice be established if programming includes well-designed baseline and evaluation processes.

**Gender-sensitive:** Programmes should be designed to address the needs of males and females alike, taking account of different psychosocial needs. Attention must be paid to ensuring equal opportunities for participation for both boys and girls.

**Holistic:** Programmes that are most successful in achieving their objectives are those that take the multiple factors that impact young people’s lives and development into account and seek to address them.

**Inclusive:** It is important to ensure that youth programmes are inclusive and accessible to all youth, including the most vulnerable. Efforts must be put into understanding particular needs and risks faced by different groups of youth to guide programme design and implementation.

**Partnership-based:** Youth, communities, local organisations, businesses and government structures can all be important partners in youth programming. They can also increase capacity and commitment to youth development in the community beyond the duration of a project.

**Positive parenting:** Positive parenting, also referred to as positive discipline, is a non-violent approach in managing children’s and young people’s behaviour that is adhered to and promoted in the Youth Resilience Programme. It is based on evidence that suggests that positive discipline enables adults to manage conflict, deviance and other disciplinary issues with youth in a way that supports the young person’s development. It helps to create nurturing and healthy relationships between youth and their caregivers.

**Rights and needs-based:** The Youth Resilience Programme should be centred on helping young people to develop their capacity to claim their rights. It should simultaneously link up with efforts to support those who have obligations to respect, protect and fulfil rights, by helping them develop their capacities to do so. At the same time, the programme should be designed to take young people’s needs into account. This is very context-specific and is elaborated in the four first workshops.
Youth participation: A central element of the Youth Resilience Programme is the aim of engaging youth in the process of building resilience. In line with the Article 12 of the CRC, programmes should ensure that youth and their communities are consulted and involved in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project. This increases relevance, accountability, ownership, sustainability and impact of the intervention.

Reaching vulnerable youth

The Youth Resilience Programme is designed for all youth, including the most vulnerable. There is no one definition or set of categories for vulnerable youth globally. Vulnerability refers to the susceptibility of individuals and groups to the effects of difficult conditions. It is contextual and reflects individual traits as they interact with social systems and power structures. Young people may be marginalised due to gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, health status, sexual orientation and disability. “A combination of vulnerabilities and the effect of an often volatile context all contribute to people being vulnerable for different reasons and in different ways.”

Understanding the diversity of young men and women is important in targeting vulnerable youth and developing programming strategies that are inclusive and accessible. Careful assessment at the start of a project, detailed information on population groups and continuous monitoring and evaluation can ensure that targeting strategies and programme design are relevant and appropriate. Programme design also needs to include ways of addressing potential barriers that prevent vulnerable groups from accessing programmes. Measures can include:

- Childcare and flexible training hours for young mothers.
- Compensation (e.g. non-food items) to support youth attending training, as their income may be essential to their family’s survival and wellbeing.
- Recognition that young women may have less opportunity than young men due to domestic obligations, safety concerns or cultural restrictions on women’s mobility. Close collaboration with parents, caregivers and community leaders is important to address such issues.
- Adults accompanying youth to the venue to address safety concerns.

Considerations of gender norms is an essential part of programme planning. Young women may have less opportunity than young men to participate but it may also be the other way around. These limitations need to be taken seriously in order to ensure young women and men’s participation.

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45 Sphere Project (2011) p.54
46 Sommers (2001)
A number of different methods can be used to mobilise young men and women and what works for one context can be very different from another. The cultural dimension has to be taken into consideration when planning how to successfully communicate and share knowledge with young people. Some examples of youth-friendly communication tools are:

- Adverts
- Banners
- Billboards
- Booklets
- Cartoons
- Collages
- Competitions
- Festivals, public holidays etc.
- Door-to-door visits
- Drawings
- Face-to-face meetings
- Leaflets
- Media, including press releases, press conferences and interviews
- Meetings, seminars and conferences
- Mobile phones
- Newsletters
- Newspapers
- Photos
- Puppet shows
- Radio broadcasts
- Signboards
- Songs and music
- Speeches
- Stickers
- Theatre
- Video and documentary production
- Wall newspapers and magazines
- Web pages, Facebook and other online resources and networks.

Involving parents and caregivers

Research has shown that the presence of at least one unconditionally supportive parent or caregiver is an important protective, enabling factor. Their own wellbeing and ways of coping are also closely linked to that of their children. Parent and caregiver engagement and support in youth programmes help build their children's resilience, facilitate young people's access to supportive services, empower them and help strengthen their capacities. For example, working on an individual’s empowerment does not only depend on gaining life skills, livelihoods opportunities and education. An environment is needed in which the individual can be heard and supported in engaging in the social, political and economic fields around him or her.

Parent and caregiver involvement is also necessary in terms of giving consent for participation. Youth below 18 years old are legally under the guardianship of their parents or caregivers. Young people above this age from traditional societies may also need permission from their parents or caregivers to engage in programmes.

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47 Ladegaard (2015)
48 Being ‘unconditionally supportive’ does not mean accepting all behaviours (for example, criminal activity). However, it means the adult is always there to love and support the young person through the good and the difficult times.
49 NCH (2007) p. 9
Youth programmes may engage and support parents and caregivers in various ways in order to positively impact young people's development and resilience. Examples include:

- Informing parents and caregivers about the benefits of the programme to their children and to the family in general.
- Seeking parents and caregivers’ consent and active engagement in the programme.
- Integrating the youth programme into other interventions, such as positive parenting training, psychosocial support activities and livelihoods support.
- Organise discussion groups with parents and caregivers on gender, violence against women and delaying marriage.

A first step in building parent and caregiver networks is seeking the cooperation of the most positive and empathetic community members. These caregivers can help to gradually influence those who are more difficult to reach. In some contexts, this has proven to be an effective way of mobilising men and fathers into child and youth programming.50

**Community mobilisation**

Communities are essential partners in youth programming for multiple reasons:

- Community leaders and members hold important knowledge on the situation and needs of youth and the risk and protective factors that they face. They are important resources in identifying and reaching out to youth, providing services, providing space for youth engagement and deepening impact of protection, empowerment and social change initiatives.

- Community leaders’ and members’ input can enhance their commitment to ensure that programme objectives are achieved. They are essential to the sustainability of a programme.

- Community services and governance structures play an important role in the protection of children and youth. The engagement of communities is central to the “I HAVE” dimension of resilience and support young persons’ development and wellbeing.

Active and meaningful engagement by the community is essential to all child and youth programmes. Some of the activities that communities can play an important role in include:

- Prevention of family separations.
- Establishing or re-establishing educational activities.
- Identifying and addressing issues related to child abuse or exploitation.
- Engaging adolescents in particular in meaningful and constructive activities.
- Ensuring that children and adolescents have an opportunity to express their own opinions and objectives.
- Monitoring the care and protection of children and adolescents.

Working with communities takes time, patience and diplomacy. In very traditional communities, the balance of taking cultural norms and tradition into account on the one hand and advocating for children’s and youths’ rights on the other can be very delicate. The development of inclusive mechanisms from the onset can be an effective way of reaching out to more reluctant community members. Most community members respond positively when they are assigned with important tasks, are listened to and feel respected.

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50 Hallands Centerparti and Centerkvinnor with financial support from Forum Syd/Sida, Sweden (2004-2013)
In addition to arranging parents’ and caregivers’ sessions, there are a number of ways to involve the community in youth programmes, such as:

- Conduct regular coordination meetings with community leaders and other informal and formal child protection structures.
- Arrange visits to educational facilities with the group of participants.
- Invite child rights committees to participate in some of the workshops or meetings.
- Make arrangements with local businesses or educational facilities to sponsor further activities for parents and caregivers.
- Collaborate around child protection concerns in the community, such as school dropout, for instance, with parents and teacher associations.

Engaging communities throughout the programme cycle requires:

- **A good analysis** of the power and decision-making dynamics within a community, particularly in relation to youth. This is important in deciding the level and mechanisms for community engagement.
- **Identification of key players** such as decision makers, opinion leaders, possible allies and opponents and other youth leaders. Programme managers need to be open-minded in identifying potential partners and look for unconventional allies, while paying due attention to humanitarian principles, such as independence.
- **Mechanisms** that are transparent and inclusive in order to build trust and legitimacy with the community. These can include consultative meetings or interviews at the various stages of the project cycle. Mechanisms can also include engaging community members as participants and resources or more formal and long-term community-based mechanisms, such as child rights committees or child protection committees or networks.

Here are some examples of successful community engagement in youth programmes from East Timor and Ethiopia:

**Save the Children: Child and Youth Development Programme, East Timor**

Save the Children partnered with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the Christian Children’s Fund (CCF) to develop community-based youth resource centres to respond to the needs of disaffected and disenfranchised youth in East Timor. Training, materials and small seed grants were provided to the youth centres. With 80 per cent of all buildings destroyed in the 1999 violence, the programme also supported the rehabilitation of public buildings being used as youth clubs and community centres. Members of the community gathered in a committee to represent the welfare of youth and children and to generate income for the upkeep and activities in the centres.

Save the Children trained community volunteers in community mobilisation and youth volunteers in working with the committee, as well as in designing activities for children, adolescents, and youth. Once the centres were renovated, the youth centres provided small seed grants to local groups for a variety of activities: football tournaments, a carpentry workshop, a youth centre coffee shop and the celebration of Human Rights Day.

The involvement of the local community and local NGOs was important in meeting youth needs and in providing a voice for youth disaffected by the post-independence political transition process. The model of the youth centre committee deciding on how funds are allocated enhanced meaningful participation at all levels.

*Source: Sommers, 2001, p. 25*
Save the Children: Protect Girls and Women from Harmful Practices, Amhara, Ethiopia

Save the Children’s project in Northern Ethiopia works to prevent early marriages, female genital mutilation and other harmful practices. The project has created strong and well-functioning structures for child protection in all intervention communities. These structures consist of:

- In- and out-of-school child protection clubs
- Child affairs committees (represented by key community people, e.g. older persons and religious leaders, ex-HTP (Harmful Traditional Practices) practitioners, local authorities, school administration, teachers and students)
- Community volunteers/community facilitators (a team of key community people who have been trained as volunteers and function as mediators between the children, their families and the community).

These groups meet on a frequent basis and discuss issues of child protection (including harmful practices). They also raise awareness in communities about such issues, intervene in concrete cases of early marriage, female genital mutilation and other harmful practices, and bring issues of concern forward to the appropriate government structures (for example, police and justice department, key law enforcement bodies and local authorities). Because of the active community engagement component, the project has managed to significantly reduce the number of early marriages, cases of female genital mutilation and other harmful practices against children, which in turn has had a positive effect on the girls’ education, income generation opportunities and health.

Source: Save the Children, Ethiopia

Partnerships

Goals for children can be better achieved and legitimacy earned by collaborating and interacting with organisations and stakeholders. Other organisations may represent diverse constituencies or have skills, knowledge or resources to bring to the table. Successful partnerships increase the impact and sustainability of programmes and strengthen local capacity.

Partnership can be defined as “a long-term relationship between two or more organisations/institutions with a mutually agreed set of principles and accountabilities, working towards defined objectives that facilitate lasting change for children.” This may include relations with a wide range of stakeholders. Some examples of partnerships for the Youth Resilience Programme have been civil society organisations (e.g. community-based organisations, youth clubs), local and national government and social services, including education.

Youth safeguarding and protection

Save the Children recognises that the abuse and exploitation of children and youth happens in all countries and societies across the world. Abuse of children and youth is never acceptable and a commitment to children’s rights in general means a commitment to safeguard the children and youth with whom Save the Children is in contact. Save the Children’s Child Safeguarding Policy: Rules for Keeping Children Safe outlines a clear set of behaviours when dealing with children and youth, which is binding for all Save the Children staff and volunteers. These rules describe the positive approach to work with children and youth, but also contain details of conduct that is deemed inappropriate and unacceptable.

51 Save the Children International (2015)
52 Save the Children (2012)
53 This introduction is adapted from A youth participation best practice toolkit Save the Children in partnership with the MasterCard Foundation (2015), part one, p. 71.
Save the Children’s Child Safeguarding Policy: Rules for Keeping Children Safe

Save the Children promises:

• To take children seriously when they tell us about abuse, and to get help for them. If the abuser is a Save the Children person, we will make sure the abuse stops.
• To make sure children are always safe when we take them away from their communities. And we will get written permission from parents.
• When we take videos or photos, or write stories about children, the videos, photos and stories will be respectful. They will not be sexy, make children feel ashamed, or put children at risk.
• When we have private information about a child, we will keep it safe, so that the wrong people cannot find out the information, including the child’s identity or location.

Save the Children promises not to:

• Hit, flog, pinch or administer any other physical abuse on children.
• Shame or humiliate children, shout at them, use bad language or emotionally abuse children in any other way.
• Give advice that makes children feel bad or do bad things, or get into trouble.
• Have sex or any sexual activity with children including no sexy talking, looking, or touching.
• Ask for anything in exchange for our assistance. We won’t ask you for money, or for sexual favours, or ask you to work for us. Everything we do and give is for free.
• Show favouritism or discriminate against any child or group of children.
• Sleep in the same bed with a child with whom we are working.
• Sleep in the same room as a child with whom we are working, unless it is absolutely necessary for the child’s safety, and we must first get permission from our bosses.
• Spend too much time alone with a child or children (with whom we are working), including in cars, in rooms, or at the children’s own homes. We are also not allowed to let children (with whom we are working) to come and stay with us at our houses.
• Get involved in any compromise settlement with parents, abusers, or authorities when a child is abused.

Referrals

Facilitators of the Youth Resilience Programme should be alert and respond promptly to the protection needs of young people. Referral systems that can inform, assess and refer youth to relevant services are necessary for delivering integrated support to youth. Protection mechanisms, including referral pathways, must be put in place before the workshops begin, if they are not already available.

Setting up such a system requires developing partnerships, linking with national systems and establishing standard operating procedures and information management systems. It also necessitates staff capacity and resources to ensure that minimum standards of quality are maintained. Having multiple programmes within one location where youth feel welcome can make it easier for them to access services. This is particularly important for youth needing access to services such as psychosocial support and sexual and reproductive health. Well-functioning systems of referrals and case management, based on the best interest of the child, also require that young people are appropriately informed and involved throughout the process.

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54 Save the Children (2012)
Young people who may need referrals to additional support include individuals who:

- Show signs of, or raise suspicion of physical, sexual or emotional abuse and/or maltreatment.
- Indicate a need for individual psychosocial support or psychological counselling.
- Are living with mental health disorders and need clinical psychological or psychiatric treatment.
- Need medical attention for physical ailments or illnesses.
- Have learning difficulties and would benefit from educational assistance.

Parents or caregivers or other community members may also need additional support, such as counselling or physical or mental health treatment. Programme staff, including facilitators, should be properly trained in where and how to make such referrals for adults.
Integrated youth programming

Developmental, livelihood, health and protection needs are interlinked and programmes that can address the multiple factors that affect youth are generally the most successful ones. Programmes that want to have a real and sustainable impact on the lives of young people need to ensure a holistic package of services, whether through direct provision or referral to other agencies and service providers in the community. Integrating life skills into existing programming involves identifying and leveraging resources in the community, building partnerships and strengthening the capacity of main stakeholders and the content of the programmes. Some of the strategies for integrating life skills programming include:

- Identification of existing resources within the community that programmes can draw on, refer to and complement. Life skills sessions can be offered as supplemental sessions to a livelihood or education programme and run by an external facilitator if needed. For example, EMERGE, a Sri Lankan NGO, partnered with a nation-wide family planning organisation and integrated sexual health into their life skills programming. “This helped make the material we were covering more ‘real’... and enabled our young people to think through the support systems that were in place for their lives moving forward.” Complimenting sexual and reproductive health programmes with the Youth Resilience programme can be useful for addressing sensitive topics, as trust has already been established in the group and the positive group dynamics can be built upon.

- Another strategy is to advance the capacity of existing staff, where possible, to deliver life skills education. This strategy may prove motivating to staff and increase their capacity in other areas of their work. Sustainability may also be enhanced as the organisation retains the knowledge from the project beyond its completion. Danish Red Cross and Save the Children Denmark’s “The Children’s Resilience Programme” emphasises engaging teachers as facilitators, especially when delivering the programme in a school setting. Teachers learn participatory teaching skills and positive disciplining techniques, as well as a multitude of activities that they can use in their classrooms. Positive relationships between children and their teachers are also built.

- Regardless of which approach is used, programme planners must ensure that the life skills content reinforces and support the broader programme objectives, and contributes to the change that is envisioned in young people’s lives.

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56 International Youth Foundation (2011), p.2
57 IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support and Save the Children (2012)
Integration of life skills into existing youth programming can be an effective way of building resilience and psychosocial wellbeing among youth. Here are some examples of successful case studies of integrated programming in a range of settings.

**China: Education**

In Xinjiang, China, the Save the Children supported programme “From Child to Citizen” includes life skills sessions for children in and out of school. Through structured activities, children gain skills in creative thinking, problem-solving, planning and conflict resolution as part of the school and out-of-school curriculum.

**Kenya: Reproductive health**

In Nairobi, Kenya, the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) is a large-scale, community-based, mixed-sex organisation in one of the city’s largest and poorest slums. For over two decades, MYSA has found new ways to promote sports, environmental improvement and community development, and to convey information about sexual and reproductive health. MYSA’s girls programme addresses traditional gender stereotypes and promotes positive interactions between boys and girls. Before each game, players and supporters hear talks about HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancy and other reproductive health issues. MYSA builds self-esteem and directs the skills of young people into improving themselves and their communities. Its programmes have changed the lives of thousands of boys and girls. Young people who have been involved in MYSA have become youth leaders and role models for others. Some have gone on to professional sports, graduated from universities, and become local leaders.\(^\text{58}\)

**Macedonia: Peace-building**

The Young People Development Centre was launched in 1999 in Veles, Macedonia, after the Kosovo crisis. The programme works to ensure young people's participation in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society by developing their skills and abilities and enabling them to engage in community-based activities. A key focus of their work is civic education and democracy building. In preparation for assuming a more active role in their communities at large, youth play a key role as volunteers in implementing and organising activities in the youth centre. It also provides a safe environment for the discussion of human rights, conflict, and other problems confronting youth. Other life skills that are addressed include the development of inter-personal skills, critical thinking skills, and problem-solving skills.\(^\text{59}\)

**Uganda: Integration of social, political and economic skills**

In Northern Uganda, Save the Children built the life skills and resilience of children and young people living with or affected by HIV and AIDS over a seven-year period. The project, called ‘the Positive Prevention Project,’ focused on strengthening the children’s and young people's social, economic and political resilience. Strategies included promotion of positive and healthy living, shared responsibility of avoiding HIV transmission, negotiation and problem-solving skills and age and gender specific needs of children and youth. Strategies also included building resilience against stigma and discrimination, leadership training, as well as vocational skills training, income-generation activities, access to community loans and savings groups, livelihood activities, apprenticeships and job opportunities for the young people.\(^\text{56, 59}\)

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\(^{\text{59}}\) Thorup (2003) p. 20-21
Haiti: Integration of psychosocial support, health and vocational training

In response to the earthquake in 2010, Save the Children Haiti piloted a programme for adolescent girls that integrated (i) psychosocial support (the Children’s Resilience Programme focused on protection from violence and abuse), (ii) sexual and reproductive health and (iii) financial literacy. The programme was implemented through the Haitian Adolescent Girls Network and in collaboration between Save the Children and two other organisations. The project responded to the particular needs faced by adolescent girls, while also including some joint activities with both adolescent boys and girls. In addition to sessions on life-skills related topics, the vocational component of the programme included study visits to various ‘social structures’ such as banks. Parents and caregivers were also welcome to join these visits.

Yemen: Integration of the Youth Resilience programme and vocational training

In the south of Yemen, due to high population rate, poverty, illiteracy and displacement, the need for livelihood training was high and most frequently requested. Save the Children initially conducted focus group discussions with young people aged 18-25 years to find out which skills would best help them to support themselves, as well as their families and communities. It was found that a combination of both hard and soft skills were required to make sure that youth were equipped with the necessary capacities to constructively interact with their community. Once the specific skills had been identified, Save the Children signed an agreement with the governmental department in charge for vocational training, which could provide for relevant teaching courses and tools. As a second step, the Youth Resilience Programme was implemented (with mandatory attendance for those who wished to participate in vocational trainings) to ensure that the youth acquired a combination of the necessary skills to successfully work and interact in their community. Through the participatory approach of the integrated programme, the youth reported feeling ownership of the programme and commitment to the community they were coming from. The programme also included training in peer facilitation, so that the youth who had completed the Youth Resilience Programme, could come back to facilitate sessions for new participants.

Community resilience and coherence

The term ‘resilience’ can be used in association with households and communities. It can be defined as the dynamic set of conditions and processes which enable communities to resist, to adapt and to manage change by maintaining or transforming living standards in the face of shocks or stresses, without compromising their long term prospects. The Youth Resilience Programme aims to foster community coherence and resilience as well as a sense of unity, by providing opportunities for parents, caregivers, community members and youth to come together. The programme can, for example, be integrated with community-based disaster risk reduction programming, whereby young people, families and community members work together to identify and address various hazards and risks. This may include prevention and response to specific protection risks for young people in times of crisis, which helps in creating a safer community and thereby preventing a hazard from turning into a disaster. The community mapping activity in the Introductory workshop 4 can be useful in this regard; so can many of the caregivers’ sessions, such as meeting 2: Young people’s reactions to problems and ways to support them.
The life skills workshops enable young people to be better equipped to deal with challenges, both at individual, family and community level and become “agents of change”. Many of the skills and qualities worked on in the programme enable young people to apply the knowledge and skills gained from other forms of resilience-building programming, such as those linked to disaster risk reduction. The workshops also help to raise awareness on various types of risks faced by youth in their communities, who can help in times of crisis, how to manage oneself and how to navigate different types of resources. Parent and caregivers’ meetings to strengthen family cohesion and wellbeing complement the life skills workshops, enhancing families’ capacities to cope in times of crisis.

The youth workshops and parent and caregivers’ meetings give everyone an opportunity to identify and work on the challenges that they face. Participants may also feel empowered to join other community activities that strengthen social cohesion and risk reduction, such as summer camps, youth clubs, street theatre, football games, tree planting, awareness-raising events and peer-peer mentoring.

Sustainability and exit strategies

It is not always possible to continue running a project until needs have been fully met or until needs no longer exist. Organisations often commit to supporting the implementation of psychosocial interventions for a specific time frame. Programme managers therefore need to plan from early on how programme achievements will be sustained and progress continued beyond the scope of the project. There are various approaches and strategies to ensure that a programme is sustainable:

• Ensure community buy-in.
• Build partnerships.
• Establish a well-planned, phased exit strategy.
• Ensure that there are diverse funding sources.
• Document and share achievements and lessons learned.
• Build on existing structures in the community, or support the creation of new ones, such as youth clubs/forums/committees.
• Integrate the core activities into existing youth programmes, such as educational programmes provided by the Ministry of Education.
• If there is the technical and organisational capacity to do this, a strong youth programme could be spun off into a separate organisation.
• Strengthen referral pathways and community-based child protection mechanisms to sustain a protective environment where young people can thrive.

If the Youth Resilience Programme is having a positive impact on young people’s wellbeing, the youth, their parents and caregivers and other community members may be interested in continuing the programme. An exit strategy would then focus on identifying the specific activities needed to empower those people to take over the full implementation of the activities. Other partners who are interested in supporting the programme might also be identified.

Including all project stakeholders in the relevant discussions is necessary to promote sustainable programming. Involving young people themselves and local partners from the onset increases capacity in moving forward independently. Good methods for this are focus group discussions and other participatory forums. Children and youth can play an active role in identifying activities and approaches that are sustainable and appropriate for the longer term.

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60 If the Youth Resilience programme is part of a broader Disaster Risk Reduction programme, it can be useful to add additional workshops on identifying various types of hazards and risks faced by youth in their communities and come up with plans for how to deal with them.
3. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning

The Youth Resilience Programme has been developed based on consultation with young people, parents, caregivers and community members. Learning from the Children’s Resilience Programme has also fed into the design of the programme, thanks to stringent efforts of monitoring, evaluating and learning from programme implementation. It is therefore very important to establish monitoring and evaluation processes when implementing the Youth Resilience Programme and provide space for young people’s engagement in these processes to facilitate further learning and adaptation. Monitoring and evaluation improve the assessment and design of programmes, as young people may provide a different perspective to adults on their lives, problems and abilities. Young people’s involvement in monitoring and evaluation also increases their sense of ownership, their desire for an initiative to be successful and their efforts to make it so.

Monitoring the programme

Ongoing, planned monitoring tracks whether the Youth Resilience Programme is being implemented as planned and can give information about the appropriate use of resources and guidance for ways forward. It also helps the team to reflect upon the quality of the programme. If there is a discrepancy between the expected and actual output, in the pace of implementation, or in the quality of the activities, programme implementation may need to be re-examined.

Monitoring efforts that are focused on the process looks at the development progress of the programme, such as whether there are problems that have arisen which need to be dealt with or opportunities for improving the psychosocial response. Monitoring may also look at the results of the implemented activities and explore, for example, whether the activities are relevant to the needs of young people and their parents and caregivers. It will also help stakeholders to understand whether the objectives are still realistic and if any changes in the targeted population or external environment have occurred that require changes in the programme approach. It is important to set up a mechanism for youth to anonymously communicate any concerns they may have. This also forms part of the monitoring of the Youth Resilience Programme and ensures accountability in programming. The Youth Resilience Programme suggests gathering questions and comments from participants in a hat or basket during workshops. The facilitator is then able to address the issues raised at the end of each workshop. Facilitators and programme managers should consider other mechanisms for feedback as part of a wider accountability and learning system.

Evaluating the programme

Evaluations measure to what extent the goals of the Youth Resilience Programme have been met. In this process, evaluations look at what worked and what did not while noting any unintended outcomes (positive or negative). Mid-term evaluations assess whether the implementation of the programme at a midway point in its cycle is on track and is making progress or if any adjustments are needed. Final evaluations explore if the programme has achieved its objectives, for instance, improved psychosocial wellbeing among young people, and highlights what has been learned in the process. These evaluations compare baseline and current data in order to determine which changes have taken place.

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61 Parts of this chapter have been adapted from the Children’s Resilience Programme: psychosocial support in and out of schools by IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support and Save the Children (2012)
62 IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support and Save the Children (2012)
63 SOS Children’s Villages International (2012)
Evaluations usually include recommendations on whether further activities are needed with the target group and how these could be planned. These reports can have a wider application, being part of an evidence base for psychosocial support programming to guide the further development and use of, for example, the Youth Resilience Programme.

**Outcome and Impact**

Outcome evaluations measure the change in lives of individuals, their families and communities that have come about in the course of the programme. These types of evaluations look both at the outputs and outcomes of the planned response. They measure to what extent the goals or overall objectives of the programme have been met. In the context of the Youth Resilience Programme, an outcome evaluation will explore if and how the youths’ psychosocial wellbeing, quality of life and resilience have improved.

Impact evaluations identify the lasting change that has been brought about in individuals, families and communities as a result of the intervention. It looks at not only intended, but also unintended effects of the programme. An impact evaluation is often undertaken by independent, external consultants or evaluation specialists. Assessing, measuring and identifying impact may be beyond the scope and capacity of the intervention, as it requires follow-up with young persons and their families some time after the end of the programme. Although impact evaluations of psychosocial support programming are quite rare, they are necessary if we are to examine the long-term benefits with for instance the Youth Resilience Programme.

**Questions to guide an evaluation of psychosocial support**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevance:</strong> Is the response appropriate to the specific psychosocial needs and resources?</td>
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<td><strong>Efficiency:</strong> Are the psychosocial response activities successfully implemented in the intended time frame and at low cost? Has the response been implemented in the most effective manner compared to alternatives?</td>
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<td><strong>Impact:</strong> What has changed as a result of the implemented response?</td>
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<td><strong>Effectiveness:</strong> Are the set objectives achieved?</td>
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<td><strong>Sustainability:</strong> Will or did the benefits of the response continue with the programme activities after implementing organizations exit?</td>
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<td><strong>Protection:</strong> Does the project contribute to protecting children by strengthening the protective environment?</td>
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<td><strong>Coherence:</strong> Has work been consistent with the guiding standards and approaches?</td>
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<td><strong>Coverage:</strong> Has programming reached all intended geographical areas targeted?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Coordination:</strong> Have organizations worked well together towards the common goal of improving the children's psychosocial wellbeing and protection?</td>
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These questions are based on the ‘Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance' (OECD, 1991).

**Indicators**

A programme needs to define a set of indicators in order to measure success. Consideration has to be made both of what needs to be measured and how it can be measured. As a general principle, the indicators should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART). In psychosocial support programmes, the most effective indicators are those relevant to the local context and prevailing social norms. Young people, parents and caregivers and affected community members can best define how to recognise if someone is doing well or not doing well and how the community is functioning. Youth should therefore ideally be actively involved in the identification of indicators. They can be involved as researchers and they can participate in monitoring through youth clubs or youth consultations, etc.
For both the Children’s and Youth Resilience Programmes, a set of standard indicators have been developed with reference to emotional wellbeing, social wellbeing and skills and knowledge. The indicators have been put together based on academic and practical experience. Please consult Save the Children Denmark for more information.

Tools for monitoring and evaluating psychosocial support programmes

There is a wide range of participatory tools and methodologies that can be used for monitoring and evaluation:

• Visual techniques with groups or individuals, such as drawings, diagrams and maps.
• Role-play, drama and songs, usually improvised by children.
• Photo appraisals and video-making.
• Group techniques to reduce the adult-child power relationships.
• Children’s writing, including essays, diaries and observations.
• Storyboards.
• Individual or collective drawing.
• Participatory photo monitoring.
• Pre- and post-questionnaire to assess the change in psychosocial wellbeing in the group.
• Semi-structured or unstructured interviews/focus group discussions.

Tools for monitoring and evaluating the Youth Resilience Programme and technical support on how to best use these tools can be sourced from Save the Children Denmark. Tools available include pre and post questionnaires, focus group discussions guides and a template for observing and seeking feedback from the facilitators.

The notes for the closing activity in the programme also show how facilitators can evaluate workshops using smiley faces. This type of evaluation gives a snapshot of participants’ experience of the workshop. The participants are asked to draw the smiley face that best represents how they would answer the following question: “Was today’s workshop useful to you in your life?”

1. (very happy smiley face): I found this workshop very useful.

2. (happy smiley face): I found this workshop useful.

3. (in-between): I did not find the workshop useful nor was it useless.

4. (unhappy smiley face): I did not find this workshop useful.

5. (very unhappy smiley face): I did not find this workshop useful at all.
Other monitoring and evaluation activities in addition to the smiley faces are essential in collecting more detailed feedback on what went well and what did not. This gives important information for planning the next workshop. It is also important for the facilitators in assessing their work and whether they are achieving the goals of the workshop.

### A comprehensive participatory monitoring and evaluation strategy for a girl’s empowerment project: (UNICEF)

The objective of the Kishori Abhijan Empowerment of Adolescent Girls Project in Bangladesh was to empower adolescents, especially girls, to participate in decisions that affected their lives and to sustain a supportive environment at household and community levels. The programme aimed to achieve this through “recreational and networking groups or clubs, issue-based life-skills, livelihood opportunities and programme participation including monitoring and evaluation.”

The programme measured behavioural change among participants, social change process over time, and programme efficacy and efficiency. Methods to measure change included social mapping, spatial mapping, most significant change stories, structured checklists, meeting minutes and formal reports. Adolescents were also involved in the analysis of data as part of their life skills training. This participatory process required extensive time and resources. However, it was an empowering process for participants, which built capacity beyond the goal of the initial project, providing local measures of change and generating many new ideas and innovations. The participatory monitoring and evaluation techniques and tools developed in this project were well documented and shared with stakeholders interested in replicating them.
Good practice in monitoring and evaluating a programme

It is not only the tools that matter when monitoring and evaluating a programme, but also the manner in which the tools are being implemented. The guidance below lists key features for good practice in participatory monitoring and evaluation:65

• **Clarify the purpose and benefits to participants:** Be clear on why you are taking a participatory approach, ensuring that it is the right method given the context. Participating in assessments, monitoring and evaluation should provide clear benefits to the participants, for example, skills building and an opportunity to truly influence the programme.

• **Consider the risks to participants:** Take into account power imbalances between adults and children. For example, young people’s participation in an assessment of a closed institution or community in which they live may put them at risk of reprisal, undue pressure, etc.

• **Design around young people:** Design culturally appropriate and fun activities for monitoring and evaluating. Ensure a realistic timeframe (not too short, as capacity building and inclusion take time, but not too long, so as not to increase drop-out, data collection fatigue or, simply, youth growing out of that particular phase). Use a variety of communication techniques to ensure that you are able to include youth with different abilities.

• **Ensure inclusiveness** of all stakeholders’ views on the programme to ensure different perspectives.

• **Be ready to listen** and do not just listen to the most articulate youth: Make sure that you take the time and make the effort to include marginalised young people. “Given appropriate tools and support, all children, including those considered to have severe or profound disabilities or challenging behaviour, are able to express their views, wishes and feelings and get their views across to a wider number of people.”66

• **Provide young researchers with adequate training and support:** Young researchers need to be informed of the purpose and scope of research and ethical issues surrounding it, including confidentiality and the rights and responsibilities of involving human subjects in research. They also need to be trained on research methodology, tools and key concepts, as well as the impact their research intervention may have on respondents. In addition, consider compensation for the young researchers.

• **Ensure credibility** of the evaluation, through the use of appropriately skilled and independent evaluators and through the transparency of the evaluation process, including the wide dissemination of results.

• **Provide feedback, disseminate results and follow-up:** A participatory process should also be an accountable one in which results are shared and discussed with the community. Ensure usefulness of the evaluation findings and recommendations through timely presentations of relevant, clear and concise information to decision-makers and communities.

65 Adapted from SOS Children’s Villages International (2012) and Powers & Tiffany (2006)
66 SOS Children’s Villages International (2012)
4. Workshop basics

What is a workshop?

A workshop is a series of planned activities conducted with a specific group of people. A workshop typically has one or more facilitators who plan and prepare the activities that are implemented in each workshop. The workshops, focused on specific objectives and following a certain structure, are core to the Youth Resilience Programme. They help youth to deal with problems and improve their ability to cope by building personal and social skills, whilst also teaching them how to protect themselves from violence and abuse. Facilitators who are trained in the Youth Resilience Programme will be responsible for planning and implementing workshops at regular times, suitable to the given context.

A workshop of the Youth Resilience Programme typically follows this structure:

• Introductory activities – to make the participants feel relaxed and comfortable
  - Recap, feedback and introduction
  - Introductory activity: ice breaker
• Thematic activities – to focus on issues commonly faced by youth
  - Variety of activities and exercises, using different facilitation techniques
• Energizers – to give participants energy to continue working
• Closing activity – to signal end of the workshop
  - Our song
• Evaluation activity – to provide an opportunity to reflect and give feedback
  - Smiley face evaluation.

The workshop venue

The Youth Resilience Programme is suitable for in and out-of-school contexts. It may serve as a mechanism to encourage young people to return to school and help them to (re)integrate into a structure and group setting. The workshops can be conducted in any safe location, such as schools, community centres, refugee camps or emergency sites. The venue could be indoors or outdoors. Youth are generally well able to adapt to most circumstance, but privacy and noise are still primary concerns. Youth, just like adults, are also conscious of being observed.

Important considerations for venues

- Be quiet and respect privacy.
- Be a space where participants feel safe and comfortable.
- Be physically and socially accessible to all participants.
- Have enough space for all the participants to sit comfortably in a half- or full-circle.
- Have enough space for group work and for participants to talk privately in pairs.
- Ensure access to water for drinking and washing hands during the workshops, as well as latrines that are safe for boys and girls to use.

It is best to organise the workshops in a private space, where there is enough room for group activities and for the participants to form circles for group discussions. If an enclosed space, like a classroom, is not available, create a physical boundary that marks the workshop space. Where indoor space is completely lacking, it is possible to hold most, if not all, the workshop activities in the open, for example, under a shady tree. Set up mats or chairs in a circle at the beginning of every workshop to create a sense of continuity and structure for the participants. Be sure to think about safety, for example make sure that bathrooms are available for boys and girls and that there are locks on toilet doors.

Parts of this chapter has been adapted from The Children’s Resilience Programme: psychosocial support in and out of schools by IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support and Save the Children (2012).
Consider the physical and social accessibility of the space. When it is not possible to find a space that is accessible to people with disabilities, stakeholders can work together on making activities more reachable. Measures can include building a ramp, moving activities to rooms on the ground floor and ensuring bathrooms are on the same floor as the workshop area. Programme managers and facilitators should also be aware of potential social barriers to accessing a potential workshop space. These can include a mixed-sex space being inaccessible to young women, a space used for children’s activities being seen as too child-oriented for youth or a space dominated by one ethnic group that creates feelings of exclusion of the other group. Arranging different times for different groups and clearly advertising the youth programme in spaces serving other age groups may help to encourage young men and women to participate.

 Ideally, the venue and time for workshops should remain the same throughout the programme cycle. This is particularly important in humanitarian contexts, as a way of enhancing a sense of continuity and safety in otherwise chaotic circumstances.

The timing of the programme

The Youth Resilience Programme constitutes a flexible tool that can be used in both humanitarian and development contexts, in different locations and situations, and as part of other youth programmes. A workshop cycle can be of varying length, depending on needs and resources, but commonly consists of a total of 8-16 youth workshops and four parents and caregivers meetings. It is important to carefully consider the timing of the workshops in order to optimise the results. Some general recommendations are:

• The workshops should be held once or twice a week. Three times a week may also work in humanitarian contexts, for instance, that often demand more intensity. It is advised that workshops are held at minimum once a week so that participants and facilitators are able to follow through on work from one session to the next.

• A day or two should be included between each workshop to let the participants digest the content. It is not recommended to run two workshops with the same group of youth in a single day. However, if the facilitators’ capacity and time allow, it is possible to run a youth workshop and a parents and caregivers meeting during the same day.

• Facilitators may be in charge of several groups per week. However, it is not recommended that facilitators run more than three groups at a time. This enables facilitators to keep a clear focus on the process that each group is going through.
The decision on the timing and duration of a workshop series depends on a number of factors. It is essential to seek input from both the youth and their parents or caregivers prior to implementation:

**Available time:** How busy are the participants and facilitators with other activities and commitments in their usual daily schedules? When do they have time for workshop activities? How often?

**Participants who are in school:** Is it possible to conduct the workshops during school-time or should it be an extra-curriculum school activity that will be held after regular school hours?

**Participants who are out of school:** Are participants gathered in one place at a regular time? What is the best way to organise a workshop for these young people? Consider if the participants have work or home chores to do.

**Vulnerabilities:** When should workshops be held to reach the most vulnerable young people? How long should the workshop series be?

**Venue:** Is the venue for holding workshops available during a particular time?

**Project period commitment:** Is the workshop supposed to be held within a certain period that has been set by an external actor? If so, make sure to take this into account as well.

### Materials and refreshments

A list of materials required is included in every workshop description. Before starting the programme, the facilitator should make a complete list of all materials that will be needed in the workshops. These materials should be organised beforehand to make sure they are available at all workshops. It is possible to adapt the materials to the context or substitute them with local alternatives that are more readily available or culturally appropriate. Note also that most of the workshops can be implemented with almost no materials at all.

Handouts and other materials can be handed out during each workshop to be used and taken home by participants. Some materials, however, like drawings or pieces of writing produced by young people, may be used for a workshop later on. It is recommended to keep these items with other essential materials in safe storage.

Every workshop should include breaks and games or energizers. If considered appropriate, provide refreshments to the participants and always make drinking water available throughout the workshop.

### Selecting the participants

The Youth Resilience Programme is designed to fit the development of young men and women aged 14-20 years and above, in various life situations and from different locations in urban and rural areas. It is not limited to those who have experienced hardship and distressing events that have undermined their healthy development, such as family violence, poverty or community unrest, though it can certainly benefit such individuals.

Prior running the Youth Resilience Programme, a list of criteria and the method for selecting youth should be agreed upon and communicated to relevant stakeholders, including the youth themselves. Examples of criteria can be sex, age and community or school. Criteria of vulnerability is not recommended or other ways of singling out vulnerable youth for inclusion, as this may lead to further stigmatization within their group or community. That being said, stringent efforts should be made to reach those most vulnerable, for instance by using multiple ways of mobilising youth or collaborating with social workers.
For the programme to be the most successful, factors like the participants’ capabilities and needs should also be taken into account when establishing the groups. For example, considerations should be made to whether young people in and out of school should be mixed, or whether it is better to keep these two sub-groups separate. Make sure that non-discriminatory and inclusive methods are used to choose participants. This means, for instance, that when a natural grouping of youth is invited to participate in workshops, such as a class in a school or a group of youth living in a particular community or area, there should be no reason to exclude any particular youth in the chosen target group. If there are participants who need assistance because of a physical disability, this must be made available.

Programme managers/facilitators should make every effort to get to know who the participants are before implementing the Youth Resilience Programme, so that the activities are appropriate for their age, gender, social and cultural practices. Home visits can be an important method for motivating youth and their parents and caregivers, whilst learning about the youth’s social status, family life and living conditions. Home visits help to establish a relationship with families and build trust with parents and caregivers. If this is not possible, then focus group discussions or informal discussions with young people can be an alternative way of getting to know the young people who are going to attend the workshops.

Number of participants for each workshop

Ideally the number of participants should not be too small, nor too big. An optimal number of participants for the workshops presented in this programme is between 15-20. However, the workshops can also be conducted with a larger group of participants, as is often the case in emergency or crisis situations. This will mean, however, that the facilitators may have to adapt the activities to suit a larger number, or plan to divide the larger group into smaller sub-groups.

A workshop should be facilitated by a minimum of two adults to be able to adequately pick up on verbal and non-verbal signals within the group, as well as to comply with the minimum standards. If the group is larger, the recommended adult-to-youth ratio is one adult per ten participants.

Attendance

It is generally preferred that all participants attend every workshop, as irregular attendance is not conducive to individual development, nor to the process of the group. The activities depend on the gradual building of trust in the group and group dynamics can be very sensitive to changes. Each individual’s process is also dependent on regular attendance, as the workshops follow a certain order where more challenging topics are tackled towards the middle or end of the cycle. At this point, more trust is likely to have been built in the group and individuals may be better prepared to handle potential difficult emotions.

Staff can involve youth in deciding how many times participants may miss a session. Ideally, a participant should not be absent for more than two consecutive sessions. If a participant is missing for a period of time, it is advisable to investigate the reason and offer support.

It is also important that the same facilitators conduct the series of workshops and meetings, to maintain a sense of stability and to manage group dynamics and processes that develop over time.

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Informed consent

It is essential to get permission for young people’s participation in the workshops from the youth themselves as well as from their parents or caregivers. Careful explanations of what the workshops will involve and why they are being held should be given to the youth, parents and caregivers alike. It is important to follow local procedures in getting informed consent. The preferred option is that parents or caregivers sign informed consent forms in an orientation meeting about the workshops. An example of an informed consent form, which has been used for the Child Resilience Programme in many different countries, is provided in this resource kit (online). If a young person is over 18 years of age, consent may be required from both the individual themselves and from parents, depending on legal and traditional custom.

The consent can always be withdrawn and participation in the Youth Resilience Programme is completely voluntary and free of charge.

Confidentiality

The Youth Resilience Programme activities should be conducted in a safe space where the confidentiality of each youth is respected. This means that mutual respect between the participants is central and that personal information should not be disclosed outside the group.

An exception is if information about a child being the victim of violence, abuse, exploitation or matters that are in conflict with national law are brought up during training. The facilitator has a responsibility to bring this information to the knowledge of relevant persons and agencies that can help to address the problems. Before taking any action, however, make sure to inform the person who discloses the matter and try to agree upon actions together with this person.

The issue of confidentiality is discussed in Workshop 1 when setting the ground rules. The box below, taken from the Workshop 1, provides guidance for facilitators:

Explanations confidentiality

We work with caregivers, teachers and other adults that are part of your lives. By doing so, they can understand better what we have learned in this group. You are also welcome to talk to your caregivers and others about the general content of the workshops. At the same time, we must treat each other with kindness, respect and with tolerance for different opinions and feelings. It is important that everyone feels that they can share personal information (such as feelings), knowing that it will not be shared outside this group. This is called confidentiality. It is important that we all agree to the rule of confidentiality because that will make us all feel safe and comfortable about sharing personal and private matters.

Explain the exception to rule of confidentiality:

The only exception to the rule of confidentiality is if any of you share information about you being hurt or abused by someone. It is my responsibility as a caring adult to help you to be safe and to help you to be protected from harm. If I learn that someone is hurting you, I will do everything I can to help you and prevent this from ever happening again. I will always inform you about whom I talk to and what I will be saying.

There might be times when you feel uncomfortable about sharing something personal in the group. You do not have to do this if you do not want to. If you would like to talk to me about something alone after the workshop is finished, you can always do this. Just ask me and we will arrange a time to talk.
5. Staffing the programme

Staffing of the Youth Resilience Programme is one of the most important components in achieving successful outcomes. The illustration below shows an example of how the programme can be staffed. This chapter also presents the roles and responsibilities of each programme staff member and elaborates the importance of proper capacity building and mentoring of facilitators.

**STAFFING THE PROGRAMME**

![Diagram of programme staff roles](image)

**The programme manager** has the overall responsibility for the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Youth Resilience Programme. The tasks of the programme manager is to:

- Ensure appropriate capacity building is planned and undertaken.
- Supervise and support field coordinators, facilitators and volunteers.
- Support referral mechanisms.
- Act as the official link between the implementing organisation and the community and other stakeholders working to promote youth wellbeing and safety.
- Prepare detailed job descriptions for each staff position that outline the required competencies.

**The technical psychosocial support advisor** may be necessary in providing technical support throughout the programme cycle.

**The field coordinators** are often the closest helpers to programme managers and facilitators. They play an essential role in programme success. Ideally, field coordinators should have experience in psychosocial support programming, in order to carry out their tasks of:

- Collect, process and store data from the workshops and provide programme managers with relevant information on a continuous basis, such as in the form of monthly monitoring reports.
- Provide support to facilitators before and after the workshops and offer support during the workshops as requested (sometimes through co-facilitation).
- Assist in the referral of youth that need additional support to, for example, psychosocial support, health services or protection mechanisms.
- Identify and solve problems as they arise and report on these to the programme managers so that similar problems can be prevented in other workshops.
- Involved in facilitating community activities.

Parts of this chapter has been adapted from *The Children’s Resilience Programme: psychosocial support in and out of schools* by IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support and Save the Children (2012)
Field coordinators need excellent technical and communication skills in order to manage the critical role of mediator between programme managers, facilitators, parents, caregivers and youths. They should therefore be carefully selected and trained.

The facilitators of the Youth Resilience Programme are typically adults with a relevant background of working with children and youth, such as teachers, animators, health and social workers. Interested and skilled youth themselves who have completed a workshop cycle may also be trained to co-facilitate the workshops for their peers together with an adult. If this approach is used, it is essential that an adult remain in charge of the workshops. A youth should never be left to facilitate a group alone, as there may be discussions or protection concerns raised that are beyond the youth’s ability or role to respond to.

What is the role and responsibilities of the facilitators?

The role of the facilitators is fundamental to the success of the Youth Resilience Programme. Their role is complex and ranges from extensive knowledge about the programme content to excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to empower young people while also recognising the importance of having their parents and caregivers on-board. The facilitators are the direct link between parents and caregivers and the implementing organisation. The facilitator must also have a good understanding of youth development and be able to identify young persons who are in need for further support. It is therefore crucial that facilitators are provided with adequate support from programme coordinators and managers in order to be able to carry out their role successfully.

Facilitators who receive training and mentoring in the Youth Resilience Programme will be responsible for:

• Planning and implementing youth workshops and caregivers meetings at regular times, suitable to the given context.
• Making sure everyone involved is informed about the programme and gathering youth and parents/caregivers’ informed consent to participate.
• Ensuring confidentiality and promoting mutual respect among the participants.
• Promoting a fun, safe and inclusive learning environment as well as an active involvement by the youth.
• Ensuring cultural appropriateness of the workshops and replacing an activity if needed.

The replacement of an activity should be done in coordination with the field coordinator and programme manager with the support from the technical specialist, to ensure that the workshop objectives are still met.
• Being sensitive and responsive to verbal and non-verbal signals.
• Identifying and referring youth in need for basic services or more specialised mental health service or psychosocial support (with the support from the field coordinator).

The active involvement of the youth themselves is fundamental in the Youth Resilience Programme. Facilitators should make sure that the workshops and the issues raised are relevant to youth so that they are interested in being involved. Facilitation methodologies should be used to encourage active engagement among the participants, seeking their ideas and viewpoints without imposing the ones of the facilitator. When relevant, the participants’ own ideas and initiatives for new activities and themes in subsequent workshops should be gathered. This is a good way to motivate participation and to make participants feel that they are being taken seriously.

In many cultures, both youth and adults feel more comfortable in workshop or meeting settings if their facilitator is of the same sex as them. If it is possible to have both a female and male facilitator and group work with young people of the same sex, participants may feel more able to share personal experiences.
Capacity building and ongoing support

The success of the Youth Resilience Programme depends on the interpersonal and social skills of programme staff and their abilities to encourage enthusiasm and positive experiences amongst the youth. It is important that facilitators are very well prepared for each workshop and feel comfortable about the planned activities. Therefore, a critical component of the programme lies in building the capacity of those involved directly or indirectly in the day-to-day activities. Training should be carried out at the start of the programme cycle and as one of the very first activities once the programme has been approved and budgets have been allocated. Refresher trainings should also be organised at regular intervals. All capacity building initiatives should be tailored to each specific target group, building on existing resources and skills and complemented by ongoing support.

The programme manager has the responsibility to ensure that all programme staff have the opportunity to participate in relevant capacity building activities. This will allow the facilitators to:

- Facilitate the workshops for youth and meetings with parents and caregivers.
- Strengthen their communication skills with young people, parents and caregivers.
- Implement methods of positive discipline and establish a fun, safe and inclusive learning environment.
- Understand youth development and what factors support their psychosocial wellbeing and resilience.
- Understand the concept and importance of child protection, and identify and refer youth that need additional support, such as protection, specialised psychosocial support or basic services.

“Understanding Children’s Wellbeing,”70 a resource available from the Children’s Resilience Programme, can be used in addition to this resource kit, to provide basic orientation and sensitisation to young people’s wellbeing. Training in Psychological First Aid (PFA) for Child Practitioners 71 is also an useful component to add to the training package. This training enables programme staff to understand children and young people’s reactions to crisis and how to identify, communicate and support youth.

Number of facilitators per group

The Youth Resilience Programme involves both verbal and non-verbal communication. As illustrated in the previous chapter, successful implementation of a workshop is not simply about facilitating a specific activity. It is also about carefully observing the group and managing interpersonal relationships within the group that develops over time. Each workshop should therefore be facilitated by a minimum of two adults to manage group processes and to comply with the minimum standards.72

The same facilitators should ideally implement the workshops throughout the cycle, to maintain a sense of stability and safety among the youth. If for some reason it is necessary to replace a facilitator, this should be clearly communicated to the participants. As indicated earlier, it is recommended that facilitators work with a maximum of three groups in parallel and that the number of workshops per week is kept to a reasonable level. This allows facilitators to take the necessary time for reflection and planning, as well as enables them to keep track of the processes within each group. The number of facilitators needs to be planned and budgeted for accordingly.

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70 IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support and Save the Children (2012)
71 Save the Children (2013)
72 Child Protection Working Group (2013)
6. Overview of the life skills workshops for youth

This chapter provides an overview of the Youth Resilience Programme. The life skills workshops are intended for use with young people with a variety of needs and in different contexts. Using carefully designed activities, the workshops promote individual resources and skills known to be important aspects of psychosocial wellbeing, such as self-esteem and the ability to manage oneself. They also aim to strengthen social interaction and support by encouraging assertive communication, constructive problem-solving, mutual trust and tolerance of differences.

During implementation, it is essential that the objectives of the specific workshop and its activities are kept in mind. Being guided by the objective of each activity and workshop allows facilitators to be more flexible during implementation and more alert to the process of achieving that objective. It is equally important for the workshop participants to understand the objectives of the workshops and for them to have an opportunity to share their expectations. This gives facilitators an indication of whether the participants have understood why they are there, and what they will be doing.

The Youth Resilience Programme cycle

The Youth Resilience Programme follows a workshop cycle of four introductory workshops, a series of thematic workshops and a closing workshop. This is combined with a series of parents and caregivers meetings. The four introductory workshops along with the closing workshop are obligatory, while the number of thematic workshops may vary depending on needs, time and resources.

The programme always begins with a first meeting with the parents and caregivers. This takes place before the first youth workshop is held in order to get their consent for participation and their support. Once the parents and caregivers are on-board and informed about the process, the first introductory workshop with the youth should be held. After the introductory workshops have been held and a selection of thematic workshops has been made, it is generally time for the second meeting with the parents and caregivers. A second parents and caregivers meeting may also be held in parallel to the introductory workshops as indicated in the more detailed description of these sessions.

A workshop cycle can be of varying length, depending on needs and resources, but commonly consists of a total of 8-16 youth workshops and four parents and caregivers meetings. Programme managers and facilitators may, however, vary the number of workshops and meetings.
# Youth Resilience Programme Overview

## Monitoring & Evaluation

### Workshop 1
- Team building, trust and mutual respect (2h)

### Workshop 2
- Know yourself and your network (2h)

### Workshop 3
- Wellbeing and distress (2h)

### Workshop 4
- Our community and personal goals (2h)

### Revise the results from the Diamond raking activity and your ongoing observations and decide on thematic workshops

### Monitoring during and after each meeting:
- Attendance record of participants
- Workshop evaluation (smiley faces)
- Feedback from previous workshops

### Monitoring and Evaluation on a regular basis (frequency depending on needs and programme set-up)
- Participatory Photo Monitoring
- Guidance for observation and consultation with the facilitators
- Mid-term evaluation

### Parent meeting 1:
- Introducing the Youth Resilience Programme (2h)

### Parent meeting 2:
- Young people's reactions to problems and ways to support them (2h)

### Ongoing assessment of the results from the Core activities of each workshop and of the Facilitator's observations.
THEMATIC YOUTH WORKSHOPS

Theme 1: Decision making (3 workshops)
Theme 2: Communication (3 workshops)
Theme 3: Emotions (3 workshops)
Theme 4: Identity (3 workshops)
Theme 5: Interpersonal relationships (5 workshops)
Theme 6: Equality & Non-discrimination (2 workshops)
Theme 7: Conflict management (4 workshops)
Theme 8: My body is mine (4 workshops)

CLOSING YOUTH WORKSHOPS

Alternative 1: My future (2h)
Alternative 2: Our future (2h)

MONITORING & EVALUATION

Post-questionnaire
FGD with youth
FGD with facilitators
FGD with parents & caregivers
Evaluation workshop, etc.
Analysis of Participatory Photo Monitoring

Parent meeting 3: Understanding the young adult (2h)
Parent meeting 4: Positive discipline (2h)
Parent meeting 5: Gender norms (2h)
Parent meeting 6: Protecting young people from violence and harm (2h)
Parent meeting 7: Protecting young people from sexual abuse and early marriage (2h)
Four introductory workshops

The four introductory workshops are designed to enable the young participants to map issues within their lives and communities. Through this process they choose the issues and skills they want to address in the workshops, with the support of the facilitator. Workshop 1 introduces the Youth Resilience Programme to the participants, seeks their consent to participate in the programme and promotes trust and friendship in the group. Workshops 2 to 4 contain a number of core activities that help facilitators to design an appropriate series of workshops for the youth. The introductory workshops are critical for team-building and developing trust within the group, which are fundamental to the subsequent workshops. The four introductory workshops are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop 1: Team-building, trust and mutual respect</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This workshop allows participants to become acquainted with each other and to start working together as a group. The purpose and structure of the Youth Resilience Programme are introduced and the participants are asked for their consent to participate. Ground rules for the workshop space are also established and agreed upon in this workshop, to establish a fun, safe and inclusive workshop environment.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop 2: Know yourself and your network</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In this workshop, the participants explore their lives, social networks and coping mechanisms. Two core activities help the youth to reflect upon what factors helped them to overcome difficulties in life and what skills are needed to create and maintain positive social relationships.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Workshop 3: Wellbeing and distress</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In this workshop, the participants' awareness of psychosocial support is raised as they identify signs and causes of wellbeing and distress. Participants reflect upon what skills and knowledge they need to promote young people's wellbeing and protection in their community and to contribute to the mitigation of risks or help someone in distress.</td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Workshop 4: Our community and personal goals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In this workshop, participants map their communities and identify problems and challenges that youth face, as well as the resources they have and the supportive factors available in the community. Participants reflect on their role within the community. This allows for an identification of skills they consider themselves needing to increase their influence in the community that may be addressed in the Youth Resilience Programme. The second core activity provides the participants with an opportunity to identify a personal goal to be achieved through the programme. The final activity is a ranking exercise to select themes for the programme. Programme staff are then able to select appropriate workshops.</td>
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</table>

The process set out in the introductory workshops generates a list of life skills, which are then ranked by the youth themselves and the facilitator. Allowing the youth to identify life skills to be addressed in the thematic workshops is important for several reasons:

- To contextualise and focus the programme on the most relevant issues in the young peoples' lives.
- To clarify the limits of the programme and the issues that are not covered.
- To enhance motivation by linking the themes directly to the needs of the participants.
- To put into practice the principle of participation in the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

The role of the facilitator is crucial in the process of identifying life skills to be addressed in the programme. The facilitator has a better chance of having an engaged and motivated group, if the most relevant life skills are chosen, as well as gathering information about the group dynamic and the youths' needs. Facilitators therefore need to be clear and prepared about

Thematic workshops

The thematic workshops are selected from the facilitator handbook, based on the participants’ input from the introductory workshops. The thematic workshops are divided into eight different themes. Each workshop aims at building specific life skills linked to the dimensions of “I AM”; “I CAN” and “I HAVE.” For instance, one theme is strongly focused on the understanding and strengthening of self-esteem, and is linked to “I AM.” Other themes are focused on communication and conflict resolution skills, and are linked to “I CAN.”

All the workshops incorporate methods that are known for strengthening youth resilience and that build a wide range of interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, etc. The workshops are designed to be gender sensitive and there is one workshop dealing specifically with gender norms. Activities that build the participants’ awareness of their social protective networks, influencing the “I HAVE” dimension, are also mainstreamed throughout the workshops.

The eight themes and the workshops are:

**Theme 1: Decision-making**

These workshops are primarily linked to the “I CAN” dimension of life skills and invite the participants to explore important factors when making decisions. The workshops are:

| Workshop 1: Central steps in decision-making | This workshop is an introduction to decision-making skills. The activities invite participants to create a framework for making decisions. Through role-plays and discussions, the participants work on some decision-making scenarios and identify important steps in making well-considered decisions. |
| Workshop 2: Practising decision-making | This workshop is a follow-up to the previous workshop. Using role-play, participants practise decision-making and explore important factors in making decisions. Participants also explore the link between values and decision-making. |
| Workshop 3: Imagining the future | Using case studies and reflection on their own hopes for the future, participants are encouraged to think about their dreams and reflect on how the decisions they make will influence their futures. |

**Theme 2: Communication**

Working on effective methods of communicating, both verbal and non-verbal, these workshops are linked to the “I CAN” dimension of life skills, while influencing both the “I AM” and “I HAVE.” The workshops are:

| Workshop 1: Passive, aggressive and assertive communication | The first workshop introduces different ways of communicating and indicates obstacles to effective communication. Participants learn about passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour: |
| Workshop 2: Body language and I statements | In this workshop, participants explore body language and reflect on its importance. Using role-plays, participants practise non-judgmental, assertive communication through the use of “I statements.” |
| Workshop 3: Assertive messages | Participants learn the steps to creating an assertive message. Role-playing activities and group discussions enable participants to formulate and deliver their own assertive messages. |
Theme 3: Emotions
These workshops are primarily linked to the “I CAN” dimension of life skills and are carefully designed to allow the participants to recognise, understand and express different emotions, while ensuring personal safety. The focus is not on individual stories or remembering distressing events, but rather on the common experience. The workshops are:

| Workshop 1: Exploring emotions | This workshop introduces the concept of different emotions. Participants learn to recognize and express different emotions. A discussion of how and why emotions change helps participants understand that it is common and normal for people to experience events in different ways and that even unpleasant emotions can serve an important purpose. |
| Workshop 2: Managing emotions | In this workshop, participants reflect on the connection between events, emotions and reactions. Using role-play, they explore how to deal with emotions in a constructive way. The group identifies steps in managing emotions. |
| Workshop 3: Coping with stress | In this workshop, participants learn about stress and its symptoms, differentiating between positive and negative/long term stress. Using role-play, participants identify and learn positive ways of dealing with stress. |

Theme 4: Identity
These workshops are primarily linked to the “I AM” dimensions of life skills, which in turn influence both what a person can do (“I CAN”) and how he or she relates to other people (“I HAVE”). The workshops include activities to stimulate participants’ understanding of themselves and to build their self-esteem. The workshops are:

| Workshop 1: Identity | This workshop enhances participants’ understanding of themselves and encourages reflection about who they are and want to be. Through a discussion on role models, participants are encouraged to reflect on characteristics and qualities they admire and seek to emulate. 

*Please note: This workshop combines well with the workshop on leadership, (see ‘Interpersonal relationships,’ workshop 5).* |
| Workshop 2: Self-esteem | In this workshop, participants are introduced to the concept of self-esteem and encouraged to reflect on its meaning and source. Participants do a variety of activities to help them become more aware of their own worth and how to build self-esteem. |
| Workshop 3: Self-awareness and self-esteem | Activities in this workshop aim to enhance self-awareness and build the self-esteem of participants. Participants are encouraged to focus on positive aspects of themselves. Activities also aim to create awareness among participants of how they can influence how they feel about themselves through positive actions. |
Theme 5: Interpersonal relationships

These workshops are primarily linked to both the “I CAN” and “I HAVE” dimensions of life skills. They stimulate participants to develop and maintain positive relationships to other people. Through various activities, the participants identify and practise dealing with factors that influence social relationships, such as power, empathy and trust. The workshops are:

| Workshop 1: People around me | The aim of this workshop is to stimulate the development of successful inter-personal relationships. Participants identify the different relationships in their lives and name qualities they value in these relationships. They are then encouraged to reflect on ways in which to show appreciation of and maintain important relationships. |
| Workshop 2: Self-assertion and maintaining interpersonal relationships | In this workshop, participants practise assertiveness and interpersonal skills in order to improve the way they manage relationships. Using activities such as a game, discussion and role-play, the participants practise their problem-solving and negotiation skills. |
| Workshop 3: Empathy | In this workshop, participants explore the notion of empathy. Using small exercises and role-plays, participants practise their empathetic skills. |
| Workshop 4: Trust | In this workshop, participants explore what trust means and what role trust plays in relationships. They also explore how trust may be built or broken in relationships. Using various activities, participants practise creating trusting relationships. |
| Workshop 5: Leadership | In this workshop, the participants explore the role and need for leadership. Using a variety of activities and discussions, the participants brainstorm the qualities of a positive leader. The workshop also allows participants to reflect on ways in which they may be positive leaders for other young people.  

*Please note: This workshop combines well with the workshop on identity, (see ‘Identity,’ workshop 1).* |

Theme 6: Equality and non-discrimination

These workshops raise awareness about non-discrimination and equality. They are linked to all the three dimensions of life skills that influence resilience of young people. Discrimination may affect some of the participants in the group personally for a range of different reasons, such as belonging to a certain group, speaking a minority language, living with a disability, being a refugee etc. This may influence the sense of identity, confidence and self-esteem of a young person, thereby linking to the “I AM” dimension. How young people are able to prevent or cope with discrimination is influenced the level of social support available from family and friends, when needed (and is therefore linked with “I HAVE.”) Each and every person can play an active role in preventing discrimination from happening and promoting inclusion of young people. The different skills and qualities associated with the “I CAN” dimension of life skills are therefore very important. The workshops are:

| Workshop 1: Preventing discrimination | In this workshop, participants are encouraged to discuss issues and experiences of discrimination. Participants explore discrimination in their community and are encouraged to develop strategies to help prevent it. |
| Workshop 2: Gender norms | In this workshop, participants reflect on different social norms associated with boys and girls in the community. The discussions focus on different needs and barriers to promote equal opportunities. |
Theme 7: Conflict management
These workshops are primarily linked to the “I CAN” category of life skills and seek to enhance the participants’ understanding of conflict, how to constructively manage a conflict and generate positive solutions. This in turn has a strong influence on the “I HAVE” dimension, i.e. available social support from family and friends when needed. The workshops are:

| Workshop 1: Understanding conflict | This workshop seeks to enhance participants’ understanding of conflict. Participants reflect on their own reactions to conflicts and practise how various reactions to conflict affect the course of a conflict. They also practise using escalating and de-escalating language. |
| Workshop 2: Practising dialogue | In this workshop participants are guided through a dialogue involving the whole group. They gain an understanding of the motivations, needs and values behind different views. They learn to see things from a different perspective and discover the possibility of changing one’s view. |
| Workshop 3: Managing conflict | In this workshop, participants’ understanding of conflict will be enhanced. Participants learn to analyse a conflict and generate positive solutions. Using group activities, the participants also practise conflict management. |
| Workshop 4: Promoting peace | This workshop aims to stimulate reflection about peace and reinforce the idea that everyone has something to give, as well as to receive in peace-building work. Activities aim to stimulate thought on how each participant can contribute to a peaceful environment. |

Theme 8: My Body is mine
These workshops are linked to all three dimensions of resilience, by focusing on the self-worth of the youth, how they can protect themselves and others, and who can help. An essential component of these workshops is also to increase knowledge about the role of social protective networks for young people. The workshops are:

| Workshop 1: What is abuse? | This workshop aims to promote an understanding of what child abuse is and raise awareness of signs and possible consequences of child abuse. |
| Workshop 2: My body is mine – good touches and bad touches | Activities in this workshop raise awareness of the body and what constitutes good and bad touches. |
| Workshop 3: My body is mine – protecting ourselves from abuse | An awareness of body and body boundaries are developed through the activities in this workshop. The workshop also aims to raise awareness on sexual abuse and abusers. |
| Workshop 4: Grooming and future action | This workshop raises awareness on grooming, and actions for protection. Grooming refers to the process where a person is manipulated through threats, emotional dependency, gifts, etc. into an exploitative situation. |

The closing workshop
The series of workshops ends with a closing workshop, which gives participants the opportunity to reflect on what they have done during the workshop series and what their plans are for the future. There are two closing workshops available to choose from in this programme:
Closing workshop – alternative 1: My future

This workshop encourages participants to visualise their dreams and hopes for the future and identify ways to achieve them. This workshop provides a good follow-up to the personal goals that the participants developed in the introductory workshop.

Closing workshop – alternative 2: Our future

This workshop focuses on exploring how the participants can help make their community a better place, using relevant activities that they suggest together with the facilitator. This workshop provides a good transition and planning activity for programmes with a community engagement component.

Opening and closing activities for each workshop

All introductory, thematic and closing workshops start and end the same way using an opening and closing activity. This helps to participants feel safe and secure in the course of the programme. These activities also play an important role for monitoring and evaluating the Youth Resilience Programme. The opening and closing activities are presented in detail below:

Opening activity: Recap, feedback and introduction

The aim of this activity is to welcome the participants, recap, and give feedback from the evaluation of the last workshop, as well as to set the scene for the workshop of the day. It is important to provide feedback from the evaluation and to agree any changes required to the programme, to ensure youth feel that they are able to influence the workshops and that their opinion is valued and acted upon. A detailed description of how to do the opening activity is in chapter 4 of the *Facilitator’s Handbook: Life Skills Workshop for Youth*.

Closing activity: Wrap-up and evaluation of the workshop

The aim of this activity is to summarise the session, clarify any remaining questions from the participants and for the youth to evaluate the usefulness of the workshop. This activity is essential to the facilitator in understanding how the youth feel about the workshop and in deciding whether any changes are necessary, either to the content of the workshops or the facilitation methodology. A detailed description of how to do the closing activity is in chapter 4 of the *Facilitator’s Handbook: Life Skills Workshop for Youth*.

Parents and caregivers meetings

The Youth Resilience Programme contains seven parents or caregivers meetings. The meetings, presented in the *Facilitator’s Handbook: Parents and Caregivers meetings*, are designed to provide guidance and support to programme managers and facilitators in their interactions with adults who are closest to young people’s development and protection. The meetings aim to inform and engage parents and caregivers about the activities their children will be doing, as well as raising awareness about the wellbeing and protection of young people. The seven meetings are:

- Introducing the Youth Resilience Programme
- Young people’s reactions to problems and ways to support them
- Understanding the young adult
- Positive discipline
- Gender norms
- Protecting young people from violence and harm
- Protecting young people from sexual abuse and early marriage.
Programme managers may choose to implement all or some of the parents and caregivers meetings depending on the issues that are relevant, the timeframe etc. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to influence the selection of topics to be covered through their meetings in an activity in the first meeting. When selecting topics for the parents and caregivers meetings, it is also important to take into account the topics for the youth workshops and other child protection concerns in the community. Workshops on violence and protection can be matched, for example, with one or two parents and caregivers meetings on the same topic.

One of the most important protective factors for young people is the availability and support of caregivers. It is therefore important not to compromise on the parents and caregivers meetings. It is recommended that no less than three meetings are selected, creating a series of at least a total of four parents and caregivers meetings. It is also important that programme managers and facilitators regularly update parents and caregivers on the progress of the Youth Resilience Programme. Parents and caregivers should be regularly consulted on issues they feel should be tackled in relation to their children. The format used to do this may vary according to context and resources.

The contents of the parents and caregivers meetings are briefly described below, with an indication of when these meetings should be held:

**Meeting 1: Introducing the Youth Resilience Programme**
This meeting presents information about the aim of the Youth Resilience Programme and the life skills workshops, together with details about when and where the workshops will be held. Parents and caregivers also consulted about the selection of topics to be covered in their meetings. They are also asked to sign a consent form giving permission for the young people to participate in the workshops. It is therefore very important that this meeting is held before the first life skills workshop.

**Meeting 2: Young people’s reactions to problems and ways to support them**
This session aims to raise collective awareness about the problems faced by youth in the community. The challenges facing young people are identified and an exercise illustrates how multiple problems in a youth’s life can weigh the individual down and interfere with positive and healthy development. This meeting outlines youth’s reactions to problems and encourages discussion with the parents and caregivers on how best to provide support.

**Important:** This meeting can provide important input for the selection of thematic workshops for the youth (see the Theory and Programmatic Guide: ‘Step-by-step guide in designing a series of youth workshops’ for more details). Programme managers may therefore consider holding this meeting before introductory workshop 4 so that parents and caregivers are able to contribute to theme selection.

**Meeting 3: Understanding the young adult**
This meeting aims to raise awareness of young people’s developmental stages, focusing on girls’ and boys’ physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. It also explains how protective and risk factors influence young people’s wellbeing and resilience. The meeting seeks to strengthen the role of parents and caregivers in nurturing the positive transition from childhood to adulthood. This session fits best before the positive disciplining session (meeting 4).

**Meeting 4: Positive discipline**
Parents and caregivers reflect on positive discipline strategies and skills during this meeting. This session provides an overview of the positive discipline approach.**73** If programme managers and facilitators feel that this issue is a priority in the community in which they are working, they may wish to conduct additional sessions, using for example the source materials on which this workshop is based.

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**Save the Children/ Joan E. Durrant (2013)**
Meeting 5: Gender norms
This session introduces the concept of gender to parents and caregivers, and raise awareness of the impact of gender stereotypes and inequality. The meeting would benefit from being implemented at the same time as youth do their life skills workshops on the same theme. It provides a good introduction to and links with gender-based violence. It is therefore recommended to hold this session before meetings 6 and/or 7 on protection from violence, sexual abuse and early marriage. This meeting can also be a good stand-alone session addressing gender inequality and discrimination.

Meeting 6: Protecting young people from violence and harm
During this meeting, parents and caregivers’ awareness is raised on the various forms of violence that young people face, its effect on them and the role of parents and caregivers in protecting their children. This meeting can be a good opportunity to get parents’ and caregivers’ opinions about protection issues being faced by young people in their community and the challenges that they face as caregivers in this regard.

Meeting 7: Protecting young people from sexual abuse and early marriage
This session promotes awareness of the role of parents and caregivers in caring and protecting their children, particularly from sexual abuse and early marriage. It is important to have a discussion with parents and caregivers on sexual abuse before tackling the youth workshop theme: ‘My body is mine.’ It is therefore recommended to do this session before doing the workshops with the youth on the same theme.

When implementing the caregiver’s session on violence and sexual abuse – important note
The topic of violence and sexual abuse is sensitive and may trigger difficult emotions among parents and caregivers. Some may have been victims themselves as children or may be still living in abusive relationships as adults. Some may even be perpetrators themselves. A guidance note is presented prior to these sessions. It is of outmost importance that the facilitators of these meetings prepare themselves carefully and have received adequate training and support from their programme manager to safely implement these meetings.

The introductory workshops: also a stand-alone assessment tool
The introductory workshops can be used as a stand-alone assessment tool for developing integrated youth programming. The exercise of identifying protective factors and risk factors in young people’s lives at individual and community level provides useful information in formulating proposals or strategies. The participatory nature of the workshops is also appropriate for assessment processes.

If used as an assessment tool, the introductory workshops should either be done with several groups or with a youth reference group from various parts of the community or camp, to be as representative as possible.

Data from these workshops can also be used in evaluating programmes. If the workshops have been used for planning, the information gathered can be used as a baseline for the purpose of evaluation.
7.
7. Step-by-step guide in designing a series of youth workshops

The overall aim of the introductory workshops is to identify the themes/life skills for the following thematic workshops. The selection of thematic workshops is a participatory process and it is essential that the facilitator collect information during all four workshops. This is done through two complementary methods:

- The facilitators record the outcome of discussions held during the core activities.
- The facilitators observe the group and its dynamics and record these observations.

This chapter provides step-by-step guidance on managing the core activities to facilitate the selection of themes. It also contains a guide on observing the group during the introductory workshops.

The core activities of the introductory workshops

The introductory workshops (workshop 1-4) contain in total five core activities, in addition to a variety of other activities, such as games and energizers. The core activities constitute a range of different mapping exercises with a focus on both the individual and the community. Each core activity helps the youth explore their personal strengths, as well as resources in the community that can help them to positively cope with difficulties. Using these core activities, the facilitator gathers information from the participants about the content for the thematic workshops. The core activities facilitate the identification of life skills that the youth would like to learn or strengthen, as well as areas for improvement in their communities and where young people may have an influence. The core activities of the introductory workshops are:

- “Lifeline” (Workshop 2)
- “Who am I and which roles do I play in life?” (Workshop 2)
- “The wellbeing and distress tree” (Workshop 3)
- “Drawing our community” (Workshop 4)
- “My personal goal” (Workshop 4)
All core activities include a discussion on the life skills participants feel they have or need to address difficulties in their lives or in the community. This discussion is guided by a set of questions, which are presented in the detailed instructions in the facilitator handbook. The same questions are also presented below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions to help identify life skills during core activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core activity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity: “Lifeline” (Workshop 2)</td>
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<td>Activity: “Who am I and which roles do I play in life?” (Workshop 2)</td>
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<td>Activity: “The wellbeing and distress tree” (Workshop 3)</td>
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<td>Activity: Drawing our community (Workshop 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity: My personal goal (Workshop 4)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

During these activities, facilitators stimulate the discussion and note down the key life skills that are mentioned by the youth on flipchart paper. After each introductory workshop, the facilitators should review the list of key life skills that were mentioned during the discussion and reflect whether they can and/or should be worked on in the programme. The questions below can be used by the facilitators as a guide for reflection during this internal review:

- Are any life skills mentioned repeatedly during the same workshop, or are any like skills referred to in several workshops? If the same area of skills is mentioned several times, for instance conflict resolution skills, then it makes sense to include this as one of the thematic areas.
- Are there any linkages between the change wished for at an individual level and community level? For example, the youth may mention confidence in communicating in front of other people as an important individual skill, while also mentioning the importance of doing joint communications/awareness-raising to promote a change at community level. If this happens, it makes sense to include communication skills as one of the thematic areas.

The lists of life skills that are generated in each introductory workshop should be kept until the fourth introductory workshop. The entire group then reviews the lists, and a final selection of life skills is made.
Helping youth to identify life skills

During the activities and discussions, the youth themselves may not be able to articulate important factors in their lives using life skills-terminology. They may however give examples of stories or personal experiences using other words. The role of the facilitator is to help the youth to identify life skills by:

- Asking probing questions about what helped the young person positively cope with an adversity. Do NOT focus on any details of the difficult event itself.
- Reflecting and rephrasing the story of the youth to reflect life skill(s).
- Verifying with the youth that the life skill(s) adequately reflect what they meant before noting it down (e.g. by turning the reflection into a question).

### Examples from South Sudan of testimonies and rephrasing into life skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant statement:</th>
<th>Life skills:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I saw all my friends go to school and finally managed to convince my father to let me go to school as well.”</td>
<td>“Your ability to communicate well with your father and to negotiate your needs helped to obtain his consent to enroll in school?” (Identified life skills: communication and negotiation skills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I did not give up the fight for going to school.”</td>
<td>“Your belief in yourself and self-esteem, as well as your awareness about children’s right to go to school made you finally reach your goal?” (Identified life skills: self-esteem and belief in oneself)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I saw my friends going to school and how they managed to get a job afterwards.”</td>
<td>“Your awareness about your friends’ situation and ability to see positive outcomes by going to school motivated you to go to school?” (Identified life skills: awareness about the community and positive peer networks)</td>
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<td>“My father sold a goat to get money for the family to eat.”</td>
<td>“The support you gained from your family and social network as well as your father’s ability to prioritise the money right, helped your family to cope with the difficult situation?” (Identified resource: support from family and social network)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“It is important to learn well in school.” (The participant gave listening and ability to concentrate as two examples).</td>
<td>“What skills helps you to learn well in school?” (Identified life skills: listening and concentration)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Observing the group’s needs

In addition to discussions on life skills, the four introductory workshops feature activities that require the participants to work both individually and in groups. This gives the facilitators opportunity to observe how groups and individuals relate to one another. The information gathered from these observations is helpful in noting strengths and areas for improvement, which can then be used to guide the selection of life skills to be included in the thematic workshops. The following questions may help facilitators in the observation process:

• How does the group generally function in terms of listening to each other and creating dialogue?
• How do individuals integrate themselves within small groups?
• Do small groups welcome new members?
• How do teams solve problems?
• How do teams come to a decision?
• Are there any tensions/conflicts within teams or between individuals? What are the underlying causes? What are the consequences?
• What is the capacity of the youth to experiment in front of others (such as presenting themselves)?
• What do youth say about themselves and their role in relation to others?
• What emotions are being expressed (and not expressed) during the workshops – both verbally and non-verbally?
• Are there any activities that seem particularly easy or difficult for the youth to carry out? Why?

The facilitators should take time to reflect together after each workshop. These observations will help to identify life skills that the group need to work on, such as listening actively, trust, managing emotions, communication, etc. The observations will also help facilitators to understand which issues are particularly important to the group, based on what the strengths and resources the participants have, as well as their needs and challenges. Prioritise which life skills are the most important based on the observations. Then, look for synergies with the list of life skills identified as important by the youth themselves. It is crucial to analyse observations after each of the introductory workshops before making the final selection of themes at the end of the introductory workshop 4.

Selecting Youth Resilience thematic workshops

The fourth and final introductory workshop ends with a diamond ranking activity (please see details in the Facilitator’s handbook: Life skills Workshops for Youth). The youth themselves rank the life skills that are the most important for them. The information gathered during the core activities is used for this exercise. This information together with facilitators’ observations and other considerations is then used to make the final selection of workshops.

Once this ranking has been done, it is time for the programme staff to do the actual selection of thematic workshops. The recommendation is that a programme cycle include workshops from at least two different themes.

When assessing and selecting workshops for the series (or assessing the suitability of a specific activity), the following factors should be taken into account:

• The inputs and ideas put forward by the participants: It is important to recognise ideas of the participants and to be honest and open about what is possible and what is not possible.
• Participants’ psychosocial needs, resources and capabilities: The activities should be carefully chosen to address the issues that the youth have identified as challenging, while building on their internal resources and external social network.
• **Age, gender, etc.:** The activities chosen must be suitable to the specific age group and considerations must be taken in relation to other factors, such as gender.

• **Cultural and social norms:** The activities should be appropriate and acceptable in the participants’ daily cultural and social environment. For example, in some cultures it is inappropriate that boys and girls participate in activities together where they have close physical contact.

• **Participants’ best interests:** All activities that are held with the participants should be in their best interest. If there is a risk of negative consequences as a result of any activity, then that activity should be left out or replaced with another more appropriate activity.

All these considerations are based on facilitators observing the group and having a good understanding of the local context and its dynamics.

Making the final choice of workshops takes time and attention to detail. Programme staff may use all the workshops set out in a particular theme or select just one or two of the workshops per theme. Many of the workshops within a specific theme build on one another. The workshops should therefore be conducted in the order they are presented in the handbook. If only one or two workshops are selected from a certain thematic area, programme staff should take care that no essential activities from the previous or following workshop are left out.

**Substituting workshop activities**

It is recommended that the Youth Resilience Programme always follow the structure of having introductory workshops, followed by a series of thematic workshops and a closing workshop. If some of the activities are inappropriate or cannot be used for other reasons, the facilitator can replace them with other more appropriate activities from other sources. However, some of the workshops are designed so that the activities follow each other in a sequence and the outcome of one activity may lead to the next activity. This is clearly indicated in the facilitator notes. It is important that the facilitators and programme staff ensure that any added activity fits into the relevant workshop and fulfils the workshop objective.

**What if the participants choose themes that are not in the handbook?**

If participants come up with themes that are not in the handbook, programme staff may create their own workshops. Additional materials are available online (see [http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se](http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se)). Activities include photo monitoring, a power walk exercise, forum drama and puppet theatre.) The structure of any new workshops should mirror the ones in the handbook to maintain a sense of predictability, stability and safety among the youth.

It may also be the case that the youth identify other types of skills and knowledge in addition to the life skills workshops in the Youth Resilience Programme, or issues that they would like to address in the community. This encourages integrated programming. It may, for example, be relevant to invite external actors to speak about a certain topic, such as health, nutrition or conduct vocational trainings. Other activities may include dance/music/drama, anti-stigma activities or youth clubs.
8. Facilitation methods and techniques

Building resilience in young people and empowering parents and caregivers is not just about the specific activities within a programme, but is also about the manner that these activities are facilitated. The facilitator is a role model and is responsible for the atmosphere and communication in the group. To create a stimulating space for life skills learning, facilitators should establish a fun, safe and inclusive environment, by using a variety of facilitation techniques and by being prepared to deal with difficult emotions. Good facilitation skills are the foundation for developing trust, empathy and tolerance between participants and provide the basis for life skills activities promoting resilience in young people.

A fun, safe and inclusive learning environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fun</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laughter and fun have a series of benefits that support learning. Laughter eases anxiety and fear and improves the mood of the participants. It also lowers stress hormones, relaxes muscles and can elevate levels of serotonin and dopamine in the nervous system. Moreover, having fun has social benefits for the group, as it strengthens relationships, enhances teamwork, helps defuse conflict and promotes group bonding.</td>
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As the facilitator, mix the emotional, social, or cognitive challenges with fun activities. The more you encourage creativity and tap into the participants’ sense of fun, the easier it will be to introduce greater challenges. Some people think of play and fun as the opposite of work. However, young people (and adults) learn best when having fun. A good facilitator balances playfulness, creativity and seriousness at the same time.

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<th>Safe</th>
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<tr>
<td>The facilitator should be aware of safety issues including:</td>
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**Physical safety:** This includes the safety of the building being used, the location and the route that participants will have to take to get to the workshops.

**Moral safety:** Make sure that all activities are appropriate and that participants are not involved in activities that embarrass them.

**Social and emotional safety:** Although the life skills workshops tackle some sensitive subjects, they are designed to maintain the social and emotional safety of the participants. The following are important aspects of creating a safe environment from an emotional and social point of view:

- Never allow mocking or bullying.
- Set clear rules and apply them.
- React if someone is excluded.
- Do not encourage young people to speak negatively about their parents or about other young people.
- If you are concerned about a young person, refer him or her to the appropriate services.
- Behave in a well-balanced, kind and respectful manner and validate all opinions. Handle strong emotions in the group accordingly.
- Avoid unexpected events and keep participants well informed about activities. For example, if it is not possible for everyone to share, tell them in advance.
- Keep a clear structure, be well prepared and keep time, as this enhances participant’s feeling of structure and safety.

It is essential that the facilitators are fully aware of the organisation’s child safeguarding policy and code of conduct and work actively towards implementing it throughout the Youth Resilience Programme.

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74 This chapter is based on the manual *Fun, Safe, Inclusive – a half-day training module on facilitation skills published by Save the Children* (2015).
Inclusive

The facilitator should be model inclusive, for example, by making sure that all opinions are respected and no one is intimidated. There are various methods to make sure that all participants have the chance to express themselves and not just those that are the most outspoken:

- Demonstrate exercises in front of the group, so that everyone has a chance to understand.
- Energizers help young people and adults who do not have a long attention-span to focus (let participants facilitate).
- Different methods benefit different participants, depending on their learning styles. Use songs, film, art, stories, discussions etc.
- Use a variety of activities to create the opportunity for each youth to play a key role – including young individuals with disabilities.
- Use brainstorming or buzz-groups if there are shy participants in the group. Let the participants discuss in groups of 2-3 before discussing in plenary.
- Let participants take turns. This will allow shyer participants to speak. But do not pressure people to speak.
- Check on participants when they are doing group work. Encourage them to take turns presenting. Also, encourage them to help each other to solve the task.
- Invite participants who have not said much to participate.
- Work with participants’ input and adapt sessions to their everyday life.
- Make sure that everyone understands. Ask “Any questions?” and be attentive to non-verbal signals as well.
- Explain the process to participants before every activity.
- Use participatory methods in doing recaps.
- Use a suggestion box, for example, you can have a cardboard box in the room for ideas and feedback.

Ground rules for the workshops

The Youth Resilience Programme includes a variety of activities to ensure a conducive environment for building life skills and promoting resilience. For example, in workshop 1 the participants are asked to agree on a set of ground rules for a safe and inclusive workshop environment. Consequences for breaking a rule are also discussed and the youth are actively engaged to monitor the adherence to the rules, through the so-called “chaperone.”

It is important to note that these consequences are meant as reminders of the ground rules for the entire group, rather than as a punishment of the individual(s) who broke the rules. The facilitator must make sure that the consequences do not humiliate anyone or put anyone in an uncomfortable situation. For example, if someone has to sing a song as a consequence of breaking a rule and this person is clearly uncomfortable with it, the group should be asked to help come up with a song and sing it together.

Important: Although a chaperone is chosen at each workshop to make sure that the ground rules are followed, it is the responsibility of the facilitator to deal with what happens if the rules are broken. It is important as a first step to find out why someone has broken a rule and to do this without humiliating anyone. The next step is deciding with the person what can be done to prevent this from happening again. For example, if a participant arrives late, ask for the reason and find out with the person what they could do to make sure they come on time the following day. If someone laughs at or ridicules another participant, it is important to make clear that this is not acceptable. Ask the person who laughed to reflect on how he/she would feel if he/she was the one being laughed at. Make it clear that treating each other with respect is essential for creating a trusting and safe environment and getting the most out of the workshop series.
Facilitation techniques

A wide range of participatory learning techniques is used in the Youth Resilience Programme to keep the youth engaged, whilst promoting the development of their personal and interactive life skills and strengths. These tools and methods include:

**Brainstorm and buzz groups:** The participants are asked to reflect and comment on a concept, idea or problem, either in small groups or in the entire group. Every response is acceptable. There are no right or wrong responses in a brainstorm and the more responses the better. The responses are written up on a board or flipchart where everyone can see them. The participants are encouraged to keep giving ideas, without judging or commenting on each other’s ideas. A brainstorm should not last too long and time should always be provided after the responses have been given, for the participants to reflect on the outcome.

**Case studies:** A case study can be made-up or real. It is a story or description of an incident or situation that has happened or may happen in the future. Case studies are very popular in workshops, as they stimulate reflection and discussion. They can be accompanied by specific questions or tasks that the participants have to complete through their understanding and analysis of the case study.

**Clap** to show appreciation when someone comes up with a good idea or has done something good. Appreciation makes people feel good, motivates and encourages further participation.

**Demonstration:** This technique is used to explain as clearly as possible what the participants are expected to do in a given task or activity. It may be done verbally or physically, for example in demonstrating how to do certain movements or actions.

**Discussion:** This is a free flowing conversation that gives all of the participants the opportunities to express themselves and listen to opinions and ideas of the group. The workshop facilitator does not take the leadership role, but is instead an equal participant in the discussion. When a discussion is held in a workshop environment, where the participants have agreed to treat each other with respect and tolerance, a discussion can be a lively exchange of different and diverse ideas and opinions. It is a method of learning that stimulates the cognitive skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

If you are in a group where a couple of people are dominating the conversation, wait for a pause and then – in a friendly way – invite a quiet group member to talk. For example, “Lily, what do you think about this issue?”

**Drawing** is enjoyed by many young people – though not everyone likes it. Drawing can be used as a relaxation exercise without a predefined task, or as a way of getting to know the youth and their resources and challenges. You can ask them to draw about their everyday life, their education, their workspace, what makes them happy and their dreams, etc. If you use drawings with a purpose, make sure you have enough time to talk about the drawings and to take care of the emotions the drawings may evoke.

**Energizers:** These are fun activities that are used to make participants comfortable about being in the same space together. They are often used at the beginning of a workshop to give participants a chance to get to know each other better or when participants seem to be getting tired and need to get up and move around. Energizers can also be used as a neutraliser after an activity that may have been emotionally challenging. The activities are usually short, around 10 minutes or so and can be incorporated throughout a workshop. They can either be planned or added if the facilitator sees the need for them. It is good practice to ask the participants to suggest energizers, and ask them to explain and instruct the other participants on what to do. The energizers included in the Youth Resilience Programme compliment the thematic activities, by promoting e.g. team building, communication, problem-solving and trust.

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The descriptions of workshop techniques are adapted from National Association of Child Care Workers, The Way of the Peaceful Warrior and the International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2003).
Feedback: Giving and receiving feedback is an important part of social interaction and learning in a workshop. The participants are often asked to give feedback on their own participation in activities and on how others performed, for example, in role-plays. Feedback is a critical reflection tool that can lead to important discussion amongst the participants. Make sure that the participants and facilitators give each other positive and constructive feedback that does not put anyone down or hurt their feelings. Encourage the participants not to judge another person’s behaviour or try to interpret why someone else is as he/she is, or does what he/she does. Ask them instead to report back on how their behaviour or performance affected the person who is giving the feedback. When receiving feedback, encourage the participants to try to learn from the feedback and to use it as a constructive and helpful tool.

Flip charts and poster boards are very good for keeping track of what you need to remember and to ensure that all ideas are included. Most people cannot retain extensive amounts of detailed information for long. If you have written or drawn essential decisions or ideas on a flip chart and posted them on the wall of the venue, everyone can refresh their memory any time.

Games and play: Games are structured activities where two or more participants play according to a set of rules. Games are both entertaining and educational. Playing naturally makes most people relax and is a way to get to know one another and, at times, come up with new ideas. Both games and plays can be used to stimulate specific group dynamics, such as trust and a sense of togetherness. They are also often used to encourage positive competition and cooperation. Playing helps people develop their ways of creative thinking, imaginations and problem-solving skills. Many games and play contain elements of learning and life skills. By asking the youth what they learned from a game or from playing something, you may stimulate their analytical skills, critical thinking and self-esteem.

As with songs and jingles, most cultures have traditional games that can be used in workshops to help participants feel at ease, as they are familiar with games from their homes or childhood. Games can also be incorporated in a workshop spontaneously if the facilitator senses the participants need to have some fun – for example after an activity that raised difficult emotions. Some of the activities used in the Youth Resilience Programme may seem more like a game to the participants, than a focused activity. This is good, because it encourages the participants to relax and act naturally in the activity, and to not try to do what they think is expected of them. It is important that the facilitators keep the objective of the game or play in mind when implementing the activity.

Group work is a way of providing space for more voices than in a plenary session. Some participants do not like to speak in a large group or never get an opportunity to speak. In a smaller group they may feel safe and valued, find it easier to express themselves and come up with new ideas. While youth – like adults – often have their favourite friends they prefer to work with, it may make sense to form new groups. There are numerous ways of creating groups, including drawing lots; giving each participant the number 1, 2, 3 or 4 that represents four different groups; or forming groups according to what people like, their capacities or other qualities that make sense in the given situation. Helping youth form groups ensures inclusiveness so that the individuals who are new or who do not have close friendships with anyone in the big group are included in an non-offensive way.

Materials: Make sure that the basic materials are available, such as markers, flip charts, tape and art supplies. Read through the instructions to the planned workshops as they contain a detailed list of materials. Most of the workshops can be conducted with very little material at hand. With creative thinking, there is always a way to get by, even if the availability of material is very limited. For example, a ball can be made out of paper or even a bed sheet.

‘Microphone/talking stick’ This is a way of giving each person a chance to talk while ensuring the group members’ full attention to that person. This in turn enhances the sense of self-esteem and social support. Introduce an object that is to be your ‘microphone’ – a pen, a marker or a little stick – and hand it to the person who is going to talk. No one else is allowed to talk when someone has the ‘microphone’. When one person has finished talking,
the microphone is passed on to the next person who would like to speak. The microphone should never just be passed around the circle, as this can be intimidating and make some people worry so much about their impending turn that they are unable to listen to what the others are saying. A person should never be forced to take the microphone, but rather choose to use it if he or she wants to. The microphone is more about everyone listening than it is about the person talking.

**Open discussions** are very good when you want to establish contact with youth who are not yet part of a club. Gestures, eye contact and smiles may act as the initial icebreaker. Plays and games also work well as an icebreaker during open discussions. When the youth start asking questions or request something you can start the discussion. Pay complete attention to the discussion and do not take notes until a later stage. Through informal discussions, you can connect with the youth and gradually you may get to discuss their life style, problems, livelihood, coping mechanisms, hazards and risks in their lives, values, relationships, dreams and visions. Open discussions also allow room for the youth to reflect on how they perceive their own situation, position, expectations and roles.

**Parking lot:** In workshops with adults or young participants, it is a good idea to create a ‘parking lot’ for questions or comments. In this programme, a hat or a basket is used for this purpose. A parking lot can also be a designated space, such as a wall, or if you are outside, it could be a notebook. In these cases, provide a pen or pencil and post-it notes or other small pieces of notepaper that can be pinned on the wall, or instruct the participants to write in the notebook.

Explain the purpose of this space and encourage the participants to post any questions or comments they want to have addressed during the workshops. It is the responsibility of the facilitator to make sure these questions or comments are addressed, either in a plenary with all the participants, or with the individual person who left the question or comment (if the person has made him or herself known). However, it may not be possible to address all points that come up. If some points are not addressed, the facilitator could read them out at the end of the workshop and then the group can decide on when and how to address these and who should be responsible for following up. It could also be decided that some points do not need to be addressed at all.

**Problem-solving:** Giving a group of participants a problem to solve together is a popular workshop method, as it enhances group interaction and cooperation. When left undisturbed to solve a problem, individual personalities and behaviours in a group setting are often magnified. For example, one person typically takes the role of leader; another may be the one who writes notes and another may choose to be the one who reports back to the bigger group.

**Relaxation exercises:** Relaxation exercises encourage the participants to relax their bodies and minds, and to focus on being in the workshop space. Relaxation exercises can be used at any point in a workshop between other activities. In situations of crisis or emergency, adults and young people may have strong reactions when they are given the opportunity to relax and feel their emotions. They may have been too busy reacting to and dealing with the chaos that typically accompany such situations. They may also not have been aware of the strong feelings of sadness, grief, anger etc. that may arise during moments of relaxation. If a participant becomes overwhelmed by strong emotions during relaxation exercises, give him or her an opportunity to talk about this in the group, if he or she would like to, or take a moment to be alone. If the participants do not want to talk, move on to a physical activity or game that can distract the person from the situation and follow up with him or her later to make sure that he or she feel strong enough to leave the workshop space.

**Role-play:** Group members act out a relevant life situation as if it was happening at that time. The participants may be given roles to play, or they may be able to choose a role to play, depending on the nature of the activity. Sometimes, the participants are asked to play themselves in a role-play, but mostly they have to take on the role of someone else and imagine what that person would do and feel. Role-plays often include some form of conflict that the participants have to work through, or depict a situation where there is a need for peer support.
Role-plays can help adults and youth explore their attitudes towards themselves and others. They give people the opportunity to understand and feel empathy for other people’s challenges and situations being faced. It can also give them practice in dealing with difficult situations, including conflict resolution and negotiation, as well as a wide range of other real life situations, thereby providing valuable life skills.

A debriefing should always follow role-plays. This means that group members ‘step out’ of the roles they have been acting to reflect on the role-play and on their feelings and on what they have learned through the role-play. If any participant seems upset or otherwise affected by a role-play, take some time to talk to the participant individually, to make sure he or she is feeling ok by the time the workshop is complete.

**Rounds:** This is a particularly useful technique of encouraging the participation of everyone in the group. The participants are usually asked to sit or stand in a circle. As you go round the circle, each participant takes a turn to share their experiences, feelings or opinions, or to do a certain action.

**Serving snack or lunch:** Eating together creates a sense of closeness and may be beneficial for team building and a positive atmosphere in the group.

**Songs and jingles:** This type of activity can be useful in workshops with young people. Local songs and jingles usually hold specific cultural or historical value and can be used either for discussing specific topics, or simply to make the participants feel comfortable and at home in the workshop setting. Many songs and jingles can be accompanied by dance or movement, and work well as energizers or icebreakers. Young people often like to suggest songs or jingles they know and like.

**Visioning:** This is similar to brainstorming and problem-solving, except the participants are asked to imagine how something they know could be different in a positive way. For example, “What kind of community would you like to live in when you grow up?” Visioning is an activity that can help to generate a common goal and a sense of hope. It gives the group something to move towards and encourages creative thinking and passion. It is a way of moving towards something positive, whilst problem-solving moves away from something negative.

**Learning facilitation skills**

There are different ways of improving your facilitation skills. For example:

**Learning by doing.** You can practise basic facilitation skills at home and with your friends. Ask your co-facilitator or mentor to give you constructive feedback after a workshop.

**Networking** is a way of sharing experiences with and learning from others. Meet regularly with other facilitators who work with youth. Start by letting people explain what they are doing at present, move on to address issues and problems experienced by your peers and then brainstorm about solutions.

**Observing other facilitators** at work or when you attend workshops may help you become a better facilitator. You have to keep yourself firmly focused on the processes the facilitator applies rather than getting involved in the content of the workshop. You can also try observing different kinds of meetings. Watch the chairperson and the participants. Who speaks and when? What happens when someone speaks and no one takes any notice?

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76 This chapter is adapted from A youth participation best practice toolkit: Save the Children in partnership with the MasterCard Foundation (2015), part two, p. 16.
Pairing an experienced facilitator with a new facilitator for a while may make much more sense than a series of formal training sessions, workshops, briefings, presentations and study trips. When you work with another facilitator, you gain in-depth knowledge about the adjustments in facilitation that make activities fruitful. A more experienced facilitator may provide you with constructive feedback in the role of a mentor and it can give an opportunity to practise co-facilitation skills.

Reading and researching can provide you with a theoretical understanding of how to become a good facilitator. If you have Internet access, you can find materials on some of the common search engines, by typing for instance “good facilitation skills.” If you also have the funds and a credit card to purchase materials, certain webpages produce a list of the latest publications. Otherwise, many organisations may have materials on facilitation skills which you can borrow.

Study trips to similar projects and programmes may feed facilitators with new ideas and energy. The visits have to be well prepared with a very clear objective, as well as plans for what the facilitators are supposed to learn and achieve during their visit.

Participation in a training workshop is an easy way of learning the basics of facilitation. Good training should give you experience in facilitating groups similar to your own and allow you to learn by observing others in action. Usually, there is some supervision and guidance by an experienced facilitator and you receive feedback from the facilitator and the other participants. However, some new facilitators find it difficult to apply knowledge gathered from courses in their everyday lives. This makes it important to complement trainings with ongoing supervision and mentoring.

Tips and good practice in being a good facilitator

Being a facilitator is both a very rewarding and quite complex task. It is a process of mutual learning and exchange between facilitator and participants. The following section provides tips and good practice in being a good facilitator.

A good facilitator prepares well for every workshop
• Know the participants you are working with, and their context and expectations. This is the most important means to success and helps everyone involved to feel comfortable about the planned activities.
• Bring at least one game that can be use as an icebreaker if needed. Ideas for icebreakers are in most training manuals developed by Save the Children and partner organisations.

A good facilitator gets to know their participants well
• Find out why participants are attending.
• Explore their hopes and expectations, as well as their fears and concerns.
• Seek to understand the range of experience, age, gender and status in the community.

A good facilitator demonstrates flexibility, open-mindedness and a positive attitude
• Be prepared to take part in activities if needed.
• Be flexible and responsive and make sure you are prepared to adapt activities when required.
• Enjoy facilitating and have fun doing it. A sense of humour always makes things work more smoothly.
• Be yourself and trust your facilitation skills.

This chapter is adapted from A youth participation best practice toolkit Save the Children in partnership with the MasterCard Foundation (2015), part two, p. 17. Permission to be finally confirmed before 30/9.
A good facilitator demonstrates good communication skills

- Promote good communication between the participants.
- Use open-ended questions, e.g. “Can you tell me the story so far?” Closed questions like “Do you understand?” that require a simple yes or no may make people feel awkward about admitting that something is not clear. Use suggestions like, “Please let me know if you want me to clarify something.”
- Listen to understand, rather than evaluate or challenge what is being said.
- Listen actively without interrupting, listen more than you talk and ask what issues people are concerned about instead of making assumptions.
- Speak slowly and clearly and avoid using jargon or jokes that can be misinterpreted, such as sarcasm.
- Facilitate endings by summing up decisions and the way forward.

A good facilitator demonstrates strong interpersonal skills and group management

- Manage group processes and try to solve conflicts as soon as they arise.
- Encourage dialogue. If one person tends to speak a lot, ask the others what they think about what the person said. You may also tell the person that it is now someone else’s turn to talk, but that he or she may talk again later.
- Seek agreement. If agreement is not possible, remember that it is also OK to ‘agree to not agree.’
- Admit that you do not know all the answers and when you are unable to respond to a question, make sure that you say you will try to find out.

A good facilitator is patient and respectful

- Take time to explain something again until everybody understands.
- Make suggestions and use examples, case studies and storytelling to explain things that appear to be difficult to understand.
- Allow participants some time to think before continuing the workshop.
- Never discriminate. When you get to know a group of young people, you may feel more attached to some participants than others. Discrimination may at best make the other participants feel inferior. At worst, it may create jealousy and cause division among the group.
- Be realistic – everything takes time.

A good facilitator promotes active engagement and participation

- Invite feedback and acknowledge ideas and contributions.
- Honour each participant; do not use them by taking just what is wanted for the purpose of the activity.
- Limit your own contributions to give more time for others’ participation.
- Learn about the participants’ individual strengths through discussions and observations.

A good facilitator attends to the needs of the participants

- Be attentive all the time and sensitive to unexpressed feelings.
- Be culturally sensitive.
- Be sensitive about what is appropriate in relation to language, posture, gestures and facial expressions, etc.
- Use different facilitation styles over the course of a workshop, as people learn in different ways and therefore need to be stimulated differently.
- Always gives feedback and inform people how their ideas will be taken into account and why – or why not. An immediate response is important for most people, even if they do not dare to ask.
A good facilitator always ensures the safety of participants

- Do not force anyone to participate, but ask opinions and provide choices. Seek to find out why a person does not want to get involved and how the context could be changed to make it more appealing.
- Protect minority points of view and validate helpful comments.
- Maintain confidentiality. Never disclose a person’s personal story to others unless the person has asked the facilitator to do so.
- Never hit, threaten or use abusive language.

### DO’s and DON’Ts of working with young people

#### DO

- Treat young people with respect and recognise them as individuals in their own right.
- Be exploratory and curious in involving participants, that is, ask how they understand something without imposing your own opinions.
- Listen to participants, value their views and take them seriously.
- Ask for permission to take photos or make videos of participants from the young people, their parents or caregivers (follow local legal requirements and those of school management, etc). If permission is granted, ensure all images of the participants are respectful, that the participants are adequately clothed and that sexually suggestive poses are avoided.
- Be aware that touching a young person, perhaps to offer comfort, can be misconstrued by observers or by the young person themselves.
- Try to keep the two-adult-rule – make sure there are always two adults present when working with young people, and stay visible to others, whenever possible. Identify and avoid compromising or vulnerable situations that might lead to accusations of misconduct or inappropriate behaviour, e.g. being alone with a young person.
- Empower young people by actively engaging them and promoting and raising awareness of their rights.
- Discuss issues of concern with young people and explain how to raise concerns. If appropriate, organise awareness sessions with young people and adults about unacceptable behaviour or issues of concern.
- Speak out if you are suspicious of another person’s actions or behaviour with participants.
- Know who you can speak to in your workplace, if you want to discuss or report suspected or known abuse.

#### DON’T

- If participants are discussing one topic, do not give them another topic to discuss at the same time.
- Don’t work with participants if this may expose them to risk or danger – always work on the basis of the participants’ best interests.
- Don’t force young people to participate – participation should be voluntary. Try to encourage participants who are not participating to engage more.
- Don’t direct young people by giving them hints – let them speak freely without imposing your views.
- Don’t put yourself in a position where your actions or intentions with participants can be questioned.
- Don’t use any form of physical punishment, including hitting, physical assault or physical abuse.
- Don’t shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade participants or engage in emotional abuse.

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Adapted from O’Connell, Meuwly & Heiniger (2008) and Benson & Bugge (2007)
Be prepared for the unexpected

Working with emotional and social issues can lead to unpredictable outcomes. Sometimes, activities can provoke unexpected reactions from some participants, or activities do not engage the participants as expected. Facilitators of life skills workshops need to be attentive and responsive to the reactions of the participants and they need to be flexible and adapt the workshop according to the participants’ reactions. This requires flexibility when planning a programme and during the actual implementation of a workshop.

**Flexibility in planning the workshop activities:** Facilitators are often very ambitious about the number and range of activities that can be done in one workshop. In a workshop series, it is important to be vigilant about any issues challenging the participants. Facilitators have to be flexible and ready to adapt activities to meet the participants’ needs. This does not mean that workshop facilitators should not plan, but they should be careful not to engage participants in activities that are irrelevant or inappropriate, just because the facilitators spent a lot of time and effort planning those activities beforehand.

**Flexibility during a workshop:** If an activity takes longer than expected, or it leads to unexpected reactions from the participants, the facilitator should be flexible and adapt the rest of the activities that day. This ensures that the participants are neither rushed nor left with difficult emotions that are not attended to. Flexibility enables facilitators to make adjustments so that participants who are struggling with difficult emotions are given the necessary care and support to cope with these feelings. It is better to do one activity well than to do many activities poorly.

Nevertheless, despite awareness and attempts to be flexible, one of the most demanding tasks for a facilitator is to know how best to deal with a situation when things are not going according to plan. One way of dealing with unforeseen problems in a workshop is to use the approach that if what you are now doing is not working, try doing the opposite. Think about different ways of facilitating activities to get back on track. This enables the facilitator to re-assert a measure of control and may enable the participants to express their own difficulties in a legitimate way within a group. For example:

- If a plenary session is not working, break into smaller groups.
- If a practical exercise is not working, change it to a demonstration.
- If a thinking session is not working, move on to a practical activity.
- If a facilitator’s example is not appropriate, seek out a participant’s example.
- If participants are not engaging in a large group activity, divide them into smaller groups and ask them to apply the material to situations from their own experience.
- If you are unsure what to do next, take a short break (for refreshments, if there are any) to give yourself more time to think.
- If there seems to be resistance, ask participants to say how they are feeling.
- If the present activity is not working, start the next one.
- If you are running out of material, end the workshop early rather than trying to create fillers.
- If the group is becoming fragmented, bring participants back together and ask them to work on clarifying the purpose of their work together.

Remember that different opinions and views are good and stimulate learning. Do not get drawn into arguments. Rather, encourage the participants to debate issues in a friendly and respectful manner and to accept different viewpoints, even if they do not necessarily agree with it. For example, when someone expresses an opinion that is controversial, you can encourage debate and discussion by saying, “That is an interesting point. Are there other opinions on this matter? Remember, there are no right or wrong answers when we discuss opinions.”

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Dealing with your own anxieties as facilitator

Even the most experienced facilitators experience pre-workshop anxieties. There are some useful ways of dealing with them and it is worthwhile spending time reflecting upon these before implementing the workshops.

- Analyse your anxieties and think about how to deal with them. Make a note of the worst things that you think might happen during the workshop, then for each item on the list, note down two ways in which you could deal with the situation. This should make you feel more confident.
- Accept that you will not be able to cope with everything perfectly. You do not have to be perfect. If you feel stressed by the thought of potential crises or by real training problems, the concept of a ‘good enough’ facilitator may be helpful. You are developing your training skills and knowledge every time you facilitate a workshop session.

If the participants seem to be learning something, you are probably doing fine. As soon as possible after the training event, make a note of the things that you did not do so well, and consider how you might handle them differently if they arise again. This exercise will contribute to your own learning process.

Dealing with difficult emotions in the group

This resource kit is designed for work with adults and youth whose psychosocial wellbeing is threatened because they are living in difficult circumstances. These kinds of life experiences are likely to result in a mixture of intense and difficult emotions. The workshop activities are designed to be sensitive to the experiences and expression of these kinds of emotions. Sensitivity does not mean that these emotions are ignored or discouraged. There is indeed a high probability that emotions such as anger, grief, sadness, confusion, guilt, etc. will be experienced and expressed during the course of the workshops. The facilitator needs to be prepared and be able to adapt the workshop activities to respond appropriately. Here are some guidelines in facilitating the workshops in this context:

- **Give choices**

  Be sure everyone in the group knows ahead of time what will be discussed and that some people may choose to share personal stories. Let participants decide for themselves if they want to speak during the activities. Explain that if anyone becomes upset when talking about or hearing about people’s experiences, they may ask permission to leave the group for a few minutes and be alone. However, stress that you would prefer that participants stay together as a group as much as possible, as they can provide support to each other.

- **Respect each other’s private information**

  Let the participants know from the beginning that these workshops are a safe space, where they are welcome to share anything they want to. Take some time in the first workshop you conduct with the participants to explain that the workshops are a safe space and that you respect confidentiality.

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80 Adapted from Save the Children (2013) p. 27
• **Respond to personal stories**

Do not force anyone to share personal experiences if they do not want to. This can feel like an intrusion on personal boundaries and make the person very uncomfortable. When a participant chooses to share, respect what he or she has to say and let the person know that you appreciate what he or she have told the group. If a person expresses strong emotions, try to reflect those back. For example, “I can see that this has been a very difficult experience for you.”

Some facilitators worry that if participants talk about their experiences, the participants will feel angry or sad. This may happen, but sometimes it also helps them feel stronger. For some, it is a relief to share. They can get support from the group.

Due to the sensitive nature of experiences of abuse and/or exploitation, for example, if any participants do share stories of their personal experiences, do not ask probing questions and do not ask for details in front of the big group of participants. Instead, follow up with a private conversation with the participant at an appropriate time. Also, remember and respect that in some cultures it is inappropriate to encourage the display of painful emotions in public. Use your judgement if you feel a participant is sharing something in the heat of the moment, which they may regret later. To protect the participant, you may as a facilitator have to help the participant to limit him or herself. Consider whether to intervene in these circumstances.

• **Acknowledge other participants’ feelings**

Some participants will feel sad when they hear other participants’ stories. Remember, it is normal to feel sad, or even cry, when you hear these stories. Reflect back these feelings in a way that does not make the person feel ashamed. For example, “Hearing that story has touched you very deeply; I’m sure there are others in the room who are feeling the same way.”

• **Change the mood**

After talking about difficult experiences, it is a good idea to do an activity that facilitates a change of mood in the group. After each activity on a sensitive issue, there are suggestions for energizers and activities to get the participants moving and laughing. Taking a break or playing some music that participants can move to may also facilitate a process where they release strong feelings.

• **Offer support to parents and caregivers too**

Experiencing a crisis is distressing for participants and for their parents or caregivers as well. Some of the topics covered in the parents and caregivers sessions may trigger difficult emotions and the facilitator needs to be prepared to deal with that as well. Youth look to the close adults in their life for how to react and behave. It is therefore important to acknowledge and understand that in these circumstances, parents and caregivers need support too.
Caring for staff and volunteers

The needs of staff and volunteers are often similar to the needs of those they are supporting. Managers should monitor the wellbeing of all staff involved in the Youth Resilience Programme and offer support in the form of supervision or mentoring, for example, if needs arise. It is important to acknowledge the stress that can occur to prevent strong feelings and reactions from negatively affecting work which might otherwise lead to staff neglecting their own safety or their social and physical needs. A supportive environment is crucial to minimise stress. An environment where staff and volunteers are able to share and openly express themselves can relieve symptoms of stress. An environment where talking about emotional reactions and limitations is strongly encouraged, as this will ensure the quality and effectiveness of activities and the wellbeing of staff and volunteers.

The programme manager can foster this supportive environment by integrating stress management into the policy and practice of the Youth Resilience Programme, for example by:

• Including provision for staff wellbeing and stress management in staff contracts.
• Being available to give guidance and support to staff.
• Promoting an organisational culture of openness and sharing.
• Creating a team spirit through regular staff meetings and informal retreats.
• Organising trainings about stress management.
• Ensuring that staff take regular days off and take annual leave.
• Establishing a peer support system.

Take care of yourself as facilitator

Talking about difficult experiences with the participants can stir up strong feelings in you as a facilitator. This is nothing to be ashamed of. To care for your wellbeing is your line manager’s responsibility but also your own responsibility. You need to make sure that you take care of yourself. During the workshops, work with at least one other facilitator so that you can take turns leading the group and take a break if you need it. Ask your co-facilitator to help you plan workshops that are safe for everyone. After a workshop or activity session, take time to debrief and reflect with the other co-facilitators. In addition, facilitators can choose a mentor, such as a programme manager or external resource person. Arrange meetings to discuss any problems that come up, and any feelings that you want to share.

Save the Children has developed a one-day staff training on how to handle the stress while providing humanitarian services to disaster victims and other crisis-affected children and caregivers. The training on stress management for staff is in the SCI training manual ‘Psychological First Aid for Child Practitioners’ at the following link: http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/library/save-children-psychological-first-aid-training-manual-child-practitioners

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81 Save the Children (2013)
Glossary

**Attitudes** and life skills are closely interlinked. Social norms, ethics, morals, values, rights, culture, tradition, spirituality and religion and feelings about self and others play a critical role in terms of how life skills and knowledge are put in use and made meaningful.

**Child protection** involves "measures and structures to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence affecting children."

**Crisis** is used when a person is in a life situation in which their previous experiences and learned coping strategies are not sufficient to deal with the present situation.

**Distress** and acute distress is used in the context of unspecified psychological effects after a distressing event. It is not linked to a specified diagnosis or syndrome. Feelings covered by these terms include anxiety, sleeping problems, poor appetite, being withdrawn, and concentration problems, which are all likely to recede slowly with appropriate care.

**Life skills** is a broad concept and comprised numerous of different types, including livelihood or vocational skills; practical skills such as health and safety; physical skills; knowledge, experience and skills related to behaviour and social interaction. The Youth Resilience Programme acknowledges the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) definition of life skills as “abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”. WHO is groups life skills loosely into three broad categories of skills: (i) Decision making and critical thinking, (ii) Communication and interpersonal skills and (iii) Coping and self-management skills. The Youth Resilience Programme works with all these three dimensions of life skills but also gives extensive focus to the social protective environment itself of the young person. This means that the programme both seeks to build these types of skills of young people, and also seeks to influence the availability and accessibility of supportive social networks, including peer-networks, friends and community support. The programme also gives attention to aspects linked to identity, such as self-awareness and self-esteem. The Youth Resilience Programme is framed around the concept of “I AM”, “I CAN” and “I HAVE” to capture the complex interaction of individual and social factors that constitutes resilience.
Participation of the youth themselves in programme design and implementation is fundamental in the Youth Resilience Programme. Guided by the Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Save the Children staff and partners apply nine basic requirements when planning and monitoring children’s and young people’s participation. Participation should be: (1) transparent and informative, (2) voluntary, (3) respectful, (4) relevant, (5) child-friendly, (6) inclusive, (7) supported by training for adults, (8) safe and sensitive to risk, and (9) accountable.

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a diagnosis recognised by DSM-V and used for persistent mental and emotional stress occurring as a result of severe psychological shock after one or more traumatic event(s). It is characterized by a certain pattern of symptoms. The term should not be used arbitrarily or confused with general psychological responses to traumatic events. The term remains controversial because children and young people’s reaction to traumatic events must be viewed within a developmental framework. This means that while some psychological reactions indeed can constitute symptoms of “traumatization,” they may also just be a normal reaction of a child in a certain age.

Protection mechanisms are the wide range of factors (legal, social and cultural) that serve to protect children and youth from abuse, harm or exploitation.

Psychosocial support (PSS) refers to the dynamic relationship between the psychological and social dimension of a person and how these interact. The psychological dimensions include internal, emotional and thought processes, feelings and reactions. The social dimensions include relationships, family and community networks, social values and cultural practices. Psychosocial support is a systematic way of supporting children’s development and their resilience to recover from the impact of crisis on their psychological, social, physical and emotional wellbeing. It includes aspects of mental health but expand to address child development and wellbeing as a whole. Psychosocial support is based on a recognition that child resilience and psychosocial wellbeing as a complex process in which children learn cognitive, emotional and social skills such as trusting others, communicating their needs and developing distinct identities. It is a layered system of support that represent 1) basic services and security, 2) community and family support, 3) focused, non-specialised support and 4) specialized services, where each layer complements the others.

Referral pathways refer to the individuals or institutions available to respond to the needs of children and youth when additional support or services are needed.

Resilience is used generally as a term for understanding the processes of children, families, communities and systems coping with crisis or shocks. In the Youth Resilience Programme, it is used to describe the process of individual adaption in the face of significant adversity. Resilience is not equivalent to wellbeing or robustness of personalities and it is not merely an outcome. “It describes the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural and physical resources that sustain their wellbeing and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided and experienced in culturally meaningful ways.”

In other words, resilience is about the interaction between personal functioning and protective factors within a person’s surrounding, to boost individuals’ ability to successfully cope and adapt with current and future crisis or shocks. For Save the Children, young people’s participation, a protective environment and access to quality basic services are essential components of building resilience. Therefore, a resilience intervention needs to be based on a systems approach where young persons’ needs and rights are addressed at multiple levels and considerations are made to the legal framework, referral systems, service providers and safety nets.
The definition of resilience used for the Youth Resilience Programme is seen as complementary to the definition commonly used by Save the Children: “Resilience is the ability of individuals (including children) households and countries to resist, to adapt and to manage change by maintaining or transforming living standards in the face of shocks or stresses, without compromising their long term prospects”. Ungar’s definition is used for this manual as it pays further attention to the process of adaptation and management of change, by including the reasoning around the ability to navigate and negotiate. It is also used as it emphasis the dynamic relationship between the individual and the resources around him or her.

**Human rights-based approach** refers to the design of a programme to help rights-holders to develop their capacity to claim their rights and simultaneously support those who have obligations to respect, protect and fulfill rights (duty-bearers), by helping them develop their capacities to do so. It also refers to a programme incorporating the principles of universality, non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to survival and development, the indivisibility and interdependence of human rights, accountability and respect for the voice of the child.

**Trauma** is used for an emotional state of discomfort and stress. This is caused by the memories of an unusual catastrophic experience (a traumatic event) or complex traumatic circumstances, like poverty, violence and separation at the same time, which have had a devastating effect on the person’s feeling of safety, injuring their feeling of integrity. For children and young people, most traumatic experiences happen within human relationships and children/youth are likely to react in normal – but yet different – ways than adults. For more information on children and youth’s reactions to distressful events, please see the *Psychological First Aid for Child Practitioners and Understanding Children’s Wellbeing*.

**Vulnerability** refers to the susceptibility of individuals and groups to the effects of difficult conditions or disasters. It is contextual and reflects individual traits as they interact with social systems and power structures. Young people may be marginalised due to gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, health status, sexual orientation and disability.

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91 Save the Children in partnership with the MasterCard Foundation (2015)
92 Save the Children (2010)
93 Save the Children (2013), p.28-29
94 Save the Children (2013), p.28-29
96 Save the Children (2013); Guidelines for Children’s Participation in Humanitarian Programming
97 DSM-V stands for the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. It is the standard classification of mental disorders used by mental health professionals in the United States and contains a listing of diagnostic criteria for every psychiatric disorder recognized by the U.S. healthcare system.
98 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2007)
99 Ungar (2008)
100 UNICEF (n/a): Human Rights-based Approach to Programming
102 DeAngelo (2007), p. 32-34.
103 Save the Children (2013); IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support and Save the Children (2012).
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Organisations and other contributors

The activities used for the Youth Resilience Programme are based on the best practice of a number of organisations with worldwide experience in helping improve the lives of young people. We wish to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the organisations that have kindly made their manuals and materials available for this purpose:

Action on the Rights of the Child
American Psychiatric Association
Antares Foundation
Association of Volunteers in International Service
Breaking the Silence, Bangladesh
Buzzle
Career Internship Network
Catholic Aids Action Namibia
Centers for Disease Prevention and Control
Child Fund International
CIVITAS
IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies including the American National Red Cross and Danish Red Cross.
International HIV/AIDS Alliance
Mathare Youth Sports Association, Kenya
National Association of Child Care Workers, South Africa
Partners for Youth Empowerment
Peace Corps
Plan International
Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI)
Save the Children in: Bangladesh, China, Denmark, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iraq, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Norway, South Sudan, Sweden and Uganda.
Solution Tree
SOS Children’s Villages International
Terre des Hommes
The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies
United Nation Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
War Child Holland
World Health Organization
World Vision
Young People Development Centre, Babylon

In addition to these organisations, special thanks should also be extended to those individual researchers and academics whose efforts have formed a foundation for this resource kit. We would like to acknowledge their contributions in building experience and evidence on best practice in enhancing children’s and families’ resilience and wellbeing around the world.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to those who have volunteered to review this material, including colleagues from Save the Children and the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI). Finally, a special mention of thanks to the young boys and girls, their parents and caregivers and facilitators and programme staff in Denmark, South Sudan, Iraq, Yemen and Jordan who have contributed to the development, testing and reviewing of this material.
How to help young people in crisis

This theory and programmatic guide is part of the resource kit for the Youth Resilience Programme. The concept used – “I AM”, “I CAN” and “I HAVE” – relates to the complex interaction between young people’s internal resources and the care and support of families and communities that facilitates resilience. This dynamic process is influenced by different types of skills and knowledge, including skills related to behaviour and social interaction. For example, a girl’s capacity to protect herself from sexual abuse is stronger if she knows about society, rights and responsibilities, and where to access services and has a belief in herself and her worth, skills to communicate and courage to consult the protective services.

The core of the Youth Resilience Programme is a series of structured life skills workshops that promote positive coping and resilience in youth, together with a series of parents and caregivers meetings. The Youth Resilience Programme is designed for young men and women between the ages of 14 and 20, but can also benefit individuals above this age. The programme is relevant to young people and their caregivers in various life situations. It may be particularly useful in situations where youth have experienced various forms of hardship and distressing events, including family violence, poverty, community unrest, natural calamities, technological disasters or conflict emergencies.

The right to participation is a fundamental component of the Youth Resilience Programme. It encourages youth themselves to take the lead in mapping issues within their communities and lives and in identifying specific skills and qualities to be strengthened through the workshops. The active participation of young people is necessary in overcoming difficulties and learning new competencies to cope with future adversities, whilst drawing on their own internal resources and with the care and support of families and communities. Parents and caregivers are encouraged too to participate in the selection of topics to be covered in their meetings.

The programme uses techniques which have been proven effective in building the resilience of young people, creating a fun, safe and inclusive environment conducive for this purpose.

The full resource kit comprises:

- A Theory and Programmatic Guide
- Facilitator’s handbook: Life skills Workshops for Youth
- Facilitator’s handbook: Parents and Caregivers Meetings

The resource kit is available online on Save the Children’s Resource Centre. It provides guidance and tools for designing and implementing the Youth Resilience Programme itself, as well as other youth programming promoting positive coping and resilience in young people. You do not necessarily need all three manuals to organise great activities for young people. Most of the materials can be used as stand-alone resources. For example, the introductory workshops for youth in the Facilitator’s handbook: Life skills Workshops for Youth can be used as an assessment tool for developing integrated programming with a focus on youth. The parents and caregivers meetings in the Facilitator’s handbook: Parents and Caregivers Meetings can in turn be a useful tool for engaging with caregivers or training foster parents. The full resource kit provides all the materials necessary for organisations to implement the Youth Resilience Programme.
Save the Children works in 120 countries. We save children’s lives. We fight for their rights. We help them fulfil their potential.

Our vision is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation.

Our mission is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.