Regional Assessment of Child Protection  
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Introduction

Save the Children’s child protection program is among the strongest thematic areas the organization focuses on. The regional offices assessed in this study have leveraged legislation, government and non-governmental organizations to maximize their effort to protect children from harm. This report begins with a summary of the main themes in existing literature on urban child protection. Following the literature review is the data gathered through surveys and interviews with country offices. Upon analyzing the data collected from regional offices, six themes emerged which were common elements of the child protection programs. Those themes are: protection from violence, preventing exploitation, child labor rights, family support services for teen parents, child protection training in communities and schools as well as, capacity building. We were able to identify two examples of child protection programs in Albania and Vietnam that were specifically designed for an urban context. The best practices gathered from the regional offices are highlighted in this report.

Literature Review

The state of children in the urban areas of the world is riddled with issues that affect their well being. In recent years, several studies have been conducted which explore the multifaceted problems facing these young people. One of those studies is a report by the United Nations Children Fund entitled: “The State of the World’s Children 2012 Children in An Urban World.” The issue of child protection is discussed extensively in this report. Researchers found that more than 50 percent of the world’s children live in urban areas.¹ These children encounter challenges that are similar in nature to their peers residing in rural areas, but often the plights of urban children are exacerbated because of the environment in which they live. It is estimated that 15 million children are domestic workers worldwide.² For example each year, millions of children migrate or are trafficked from rural areas to work in domestic settings within urban areas. Some families send their children to cities as laborers because they believe there are more opportunities for children to learn additional skills which can improve their economic and social status.³ While in these situations, some children may benefit, more often these young people are abused and inadequately compensated. This is one of many examples in which the rights of children in urban areas are compromised as a result of their environment.

Several factors are thought to be especially problematic for urban children. Some examples include high rates of mortality, malnutrition, disease exposure, human trafficking, urban violence and disaster risk. The literature gathered in this study focuses on the three program areas Save the Children targets to ensure children are protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence.

Children on the Move

Rural migrants contribute significantly to the population growth in urban areas. By 2025, over 1.1 billion urban people in less developed regions will be rural migrants. It is estimated that about 214 million people worldwide are international migrants. About one third of the migrants are youth between the age of 12 and 25. Millions of these youth are under 18 years old and live in developing countries. These young people are considered children on the move because they fit into one or more of the following categories: traveling across state borders or within countries either seasonally or permanently, forcefully or voluntarily, accompanied or unaccompanied. These children may also be internally displaced persons, asylum seekers and refugees, migrants, trafficked persons or child soldiers.

Rural-urban migration presents a host of opportunities and challenges for youth. For example, some impoverished families encourage children to migrate to urban areas as means to mitigate risks and to diversify economic opportunities and to broaden and consolidate social networks and to meet children's needs for clothing, shoes and other material items. In addition, child migration to urban places gives them closer proximity to healthcare and other social services. Unfortunately, proximity to healthcare does not equate to access. Nearly 8 million children died in 2010 before reaching the age of 5- most from pneumonia, diarrhea, or birth complications. These health issues were exacerbated in urban areas due to low levels of immunization and high population densities within slum and informal settlements.

Children on the move also face the challenge of being stateless and undocumented. In 2006, the UNHCR reported that about 15 million people were stateless-those who do not have a nationality and/or lack their own government. The number of children that fall into this category vary considerably, but researchers agree that children who are stateless are denied certain protections under the law due to their status. Approximately 40 percent of children born each year are unregistered. As a result, their ability to participate in the formal economy, receive proper healthcare and educational opportunities are severely limited.

Children without Appropriate Care

Children in urban settings are particularly vulnerable when they lack appropriate care. Appropriate child care ensures that the safety, health and overall well-being of the child is consistent with their ability to develop adequately and lead productive lives. Orphans are among the most susceptible groups of children lacking proper protection. In 2005, there were 132 million orphans in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Many of these children had one or both parents die from AIDS. The ubiquity of orphans as a result of the AIDS epidemic has contributed to the frequent occurrence of child headed households. Children living

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7 UNICEF 2012, p. 4.
8 J. Bhabha, Arendt's children: Do today's migrant children have a right to have rights?, Human Rights Quarterly, 31(2), p.410-451,862.
9 Bhabha, 410-451,862.
under these conditions are often unable to attend school and adequately care for themselves or others. As a result, the welfare of these children is compromised significantly.

The health of children in low-income urban areas is also a major concern. High levels of air pollution in urban areas cause millions of children to suffer from respiratory illnesses such as asthma and bronchitis. Each year indoor air pollution kills an estimated 2 million people while outdoor air pollution claims 1.3 million lives annually.

The aforementioned topics are just a few issues that plague children in urban areas. There is limited literature available specifically on the unique challenges urban children face to receive appropriate care. More expansive inter-disciplinary research should be conducted to further explore this niche topic.

Protecting Children in Emergencies

During times of disaster, children are one of the most at-risk groups. The severity of the disaster increases the likelihood that children will be separated from their families, thus susceptible to psychosocial distress, injury and death among other dangers. In recent decades the number of weather related natural disasters such as cyclones, tsunamis, earthquakes, floods and mudslides have increased ten-fold. When disaster strikes cities, areas that are poor, overpopulated and those whose buildings are shoddy are usually impacted the worse. Children are particularly vulnerable in these situations due to their cognitive immaturity. As a result, some experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PSTD) which can endure for a long period of time. Children who suffer from PSTD can develop depression, anxiety and a host of phobias among other symptoms. Early psychological intervention that integrates psycho-socio-educational tools is recommended in order to best serve these youth following a disaster.

Protecting Children from Exploitation

One of the major challenges in ensuring that children’s rights are protected is their vulnerability to sexual exploitation. Youth who migrate from rural areas to cities do so for a variety of reasons. Some are migrants in search of employment opportunities, others are orphans and some seek escape from the devastating effects of poverty in their place of birth. While some of these reasons are thought to be progressive factors for youth to migrate, they present a host of hidden dangers. Many youth who migrate to urban areas become children of the street. In a study conducted on Ghanaian youth, street children were defined as a child who lives and works on the street, and has made the street their home. Additionally, children ‘on’ the street, comprise the urban poor children who survive daily on the street but still have family ties. At any given time, street children are susceptible to sexual abuse. In their pursuit of stability and inclusion, many encounter violence, sexual exchange for protection, prostitution and the lack of privacy and

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12 UNICEF 2012, p.22.
15 Kar N, P. 8
16 Georgina Yaa Oduro, ‘Children of the street’: sexual citizenship and the unprotected lives of Ghanaian street youth, Comparative Education, 44(1), 1 February 2012, p.43.
decently in their sexual practices. These factors inherently, infringe upon young people’s right to navigate their sexuality while making decisions that are best for their health and well being. In the research conducted on the street children of Ghana, rape was a common reality that girls faced. This aspect of gender based violence is a serious problem in urban environments where children are forced to sleep, bathe and socialize in public areas without the protection of family. While women and children are most often the victims of rape, the perpetrators are themselves victims of circumstance. Drugs and alcohol, socio-cultural factors as well as poverty are elements that influence urban rapists to carry out violent acts.

Although some children are non-consenting victims of sexual abuse, others consent to sexual exploitation as a means of survival. Transactional sex in the form of prostitution is commonplace amongst children of the street. The lack of education and high levels of unemployment leave these youth with few options to earn a wage. As a result, prostitutes risk high levels of exposure to sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS. This adds to the already devastatingly high amounts of disease in underdeveloped regions.

Researching from the sexual citizenship framework, Oduro (2012) highlights the ways in which street children use their sexuality to cope with poverty, abandonment and struggles with identity. Similar to Oduro’s study, Xue examines the lifestyle of urban street children in China. Xue suggests various forms of social exclusions lead children to the streets. For example, families that are poor cannot afford to pay school fees therefore their children are often denied an education to which by law they are entitled. On the other hand some children decide to live on the street as a means to escape abusive and dysfunctional families as well as those that place strict demands on education. Despite the varying factors that lead children to live on the streets of China’s cities, most are faced with similar ostracism. They are often excluded from the typically close-net community structure in China namely due to the perception of street children as transitory, dirty, lazy and dangerous. The stigmatization of street children is enduring and can be difficult to overcome without intervention.

Under the provisions and principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, young people have the right to be protected from violence and abuse in all forms. Despite these international human rights standards, sex trafficking is a growing problem. In the United States for example, homeless youths are the most at-risk group for sex trafficking. The prostitution of minors is considered to be the least studied form of child sex trafficking. In urban areas in particular, high rates of unemployment, poverty, crime homelessness, and elevated levels of police corruption all make children easy prey to pimps and other perpetrators. While most research tends to focus on women and girls as primary victims of sexual abuse, the focus of young boys as sex slaves is equally important. Adolescent and preadolescent boys in Sri Lanka were the focus of a multi-year field study that assessed the role young men have in the sex

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17 Oduro, p. 46
18 Oduro, p. 47
tourism industry. In the case of Sri Lanka, government instability was the primary contributing factor to commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). The government did little to penalize tourists who came to the country to engage in relations with young boys. Most perpetrators were wealthy men who came from Western countries. The researchers explore the impact that power and privilege had in perpetuating the sex trafficking industry.

**Child Labor**

Although most developed countries have laws to protect youth from forced labor, there are many countries that do not. Rapid urbanization and industrialization has increased the demand for labor. Children are commonly used to fill labor needs, but typically at the expense of their well being. It is estimated that more than 200 million children are working as laborers worldwide. Webbink (2011) examines the factors at the household, national, district and levels that determine whether or not a child will become a laborer. At the household level factors such as the amount of education a mother has received correlates to the likelihood of her child to become a laborer. In urban places where education is largely determined by socio-economic factors, child labor is a frequent occurrence amongst poor families. Families send their children to work instead of to school since income is more of a priority than education. Despite the tendency of poor urban families to send their child to work, others are positively influenced by the diffusion of value patterns that stress the importance of education. Also, transportation infrastructure is more developed in cities, which makes schools more accessible to children. The growing efficiency and reliability of factory equipment has helped decrease the demand for child labor in cities. Children in rural areas however, still have a tendency to become victims of factory based labor as a result of underdeveloped machinery.

Although there are some immediate financial benefits for families that send their children to work, a study conducted in Brazil showed the intergenerational trap of child labor. Emerson (et. al. 2003) found that children who labor in their youth tend to earn lower wages as adults thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty for generations. Child labor directly violates the rights of children to receive education, to play and to be protected from harm. Luckily, increased globalization is positively affecting the perception of child labor as taboo and unjust.

**Urban Violence and Youth Gangs**

Urban youth tend to be overwhelmingly exposed to violence and crime. The competition for scarce resources, the close proximity of people on varying degrees of the socio-economic

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24 Webbink. p. 822.
26 Webbink. p. 823.
28 Webbink. p. 822.
strata and the ubiquity of broken families make urban youth particularly susceptible to participate in, become victims of and or witness violence. Violent youth sometimes join gangs with their peers for protection, social acceptance and economic opportunity. Youth who have been abandoned by their families seek the camaraderie and acceptance of gang members. Because many of these youth are poor, gangs also provide housing and food for its members, which is a better alternative to living on the street. The distribution and consumption of drugs and alcohol is common among gangs. Research shows that without intervention, children who are members of gangs are more likely to lead a life mired in drugs and criminal activity.

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a problem for children who experience community-based violence. Community violence and post-war adolescent refugee populations have reported that PTSD prevalence rates vary between 30% to 70%;[2] however, figures up to 100%[14] have been quoted in children especially those exposed to sudden, unexpected man-made violence. Densely populated urban areas also make it difficult for young people to exercise their right to play safely. Not only are these youth exposed to prostitution and gangs, they are also innocent victims of violence. In public areas such as parks and playgrounds youth gangs and other criminals gather. These groups pose an immediate risk to children’s safety in environments where they are supposed to be safe. Moreover, urban communities are often wrought with abandoned, dilapidated buildings, which are havens for criminal activity. A public health study conducted on vacant properties and violence in neighborhoods showed increasing levels of vacancy were associated with increased risk of assaultive violence in urban block groups.

Ensuring Children Have Quality Care

Many advocates for the Convention on the Rights of the Child believe that protecting children begins at birth. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has found that more than one third of children in urban areas are unregistered at birth. One reason for this is that many poor families do not have access to health care services. This lack of protection of children at the outset of their lives, contributes to years of endangerment and political disenfranchisement. The lack of official identity renders millions of children invisible. This population makes up a significant portion of child laborers, sex traffickers and the homeless. In Africa for example, 36 percent of children in rural areas are unregistered and 61 percent of children are not registered in urban areas. Thankfully, strides are being made to close the gap between urban and rural

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31 American gangs: There are no children here. The Economist. 17 December, 1994.
32 Kar N
35 UNICEF 2012
unregistered births. In 2012, the European Union UNICEF project committed to implementing and restructuring birth registration systems in several developing nations.\textsuperscript{37}

Like all human beings, children’s rights begin at birth. International laws such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as organizations like Save the Children are leading the way to ensure that children are protected throughout every stage of their development. Nevertheless, there is more work to be done to safeguard young people. Urban youth still face unique challenges in acquiring protection due to a number of environmental, social and cultural factors.

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### Mapping and Analysis of Existing Save the Children Child Protection Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Partner Organizations</th>
<th>Sub-Thematic Area</th>
<th>Population Served</th>
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</table>
| Burkina Faso | • Programme to fight child trafficking  
• Children Lead the Way          | • UNICEF  
• SC Canada                                 | • Child exploitation  
• Child labor rights  
• youth vocational training                  | • Children communities along the axes of child migration in the regions of Boucle du Mouhoun, Cascades and Hauts-Bassins.  
• Child domestic workers in urban and rural areas |
| DRC          | • Children without Appropriate Care Support programme  
• Street Children programme          | • USAID  
• World Bank                                | • Family protection  
• Child exploitation                          | • Families in urban and rural areas  
• Street children in Kinshasa                 |
| Bangladesh   | • Working children  
• Children Without Appropriate Care  
• Violence Against Children          | • DANIDA  
• SIDA  
• European Union  
• Ikea Foundation  
• SC Foundation  
• SC Korea  
• SC Australia                        | • Child sexual exploitation  
• Child labor rights                   | • Children who have survived exploitation  
• At-risk children  
• Parents  
• Local leaders  
• Community organizations              |
| Indonesia    | • Child Domestic Worker  
• Commercial Sexual Exploitation on Children  
• Street Children  
• Child trafficking                | • US Dept of Labor                        | • Child labor  
• Child exploitation                   | • Children engaged in exploitative work, including street workers, sex workers, plantation workers and domestic workers |
| Myanmar      | • Sustainable Multi-actor Solutions for Migration Related Child Poverty in the Greater Mekong Sub-region  
• Protection of vulnerable children in Myanmar from trafficking and other forms of harm  
• Promoting children’s protection rights and addressing the problem of child soldiers in Burma  
• Protecting children in Burma  
• Children, Community, Civil Society: Reducing Vulnerability to Exploitation, Abuse, Violence and Neglect through Coordinated Structures and Systems at the Community and Duty Bearer Level | • EC  
• UNICEF  
• Belgian MOFA  
• Danida  
• IKEA                         | • Child poverty  
• Trafficking  
• Violence and children             | • Children vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking and violence |
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Partner Organizations</th>
<th>Sub-Thematic Area</th>
<th>Population Served</th>
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</table>
| Vietnam    | • Sustainable Multi-Actor Solutions to Migration Related Child Poverty in the Greater Mekong Sub-region  
• Strengthening the Child Protection System in Vietnam to Protect Vulnerable Children from Violence, Abuse, and Exploitation  
• Strengthening the participation of Civil Society Organizations in Child Protection  
• Strengthening the participation of Buddhist Organizations in Child Protection  
• Protecting Children on the Move in East and South East Asia  
• Creating a Child-Friendly Textile and Garment Industry in Vietnam | • EC regional  
• EC VN  
• SCS  
• SCS  
• OAK Foundation  
• TRAID | • Child abuse and violence  
• Child poverty  
• Exploitation  
• Child migration  
• Child labor rights | • National child protection system  
• Vulnerable children  
• Children in Buddhist shelters  
• Child garment workers |
| Haiti      | • Family tracing and reunification program  
• IBESR Capacity Building  
• Community-based child protection committees | • USAID,  
• OFDA  
• CIDA  
• SIDA  
• UNICF  
• DANIDA | • Sexual exploitation  
• Child abuse  
• Violence  
• Capacity building | • Children affected negatively by the 2010 earthquake |
| Albania    | • Regional Child Trafficking Response Program  
• Strengthening Child Protection Mechanisms  
• Drop-In Centre for Street Children in Tirana  
• a Socio-Educative Centre in Tirana  
• Child friendly justice for children in conflict with the law  
• Access to services for Roma children in Shkodra city  
• Fighting violence against children  
• Mario Project | • Bvlgari  
• Oak Foundation  
• EU delegation  
• SC Italy/private donors  
• SC Switzerland  
• Mettler Foundation  
• IKEA | • Trafficking  
• Migrant children  
• Street children | • Children in Tirana, Berat, Cerrik, Kucove, Burrel, Durres and Elbasan  
• Street children  
• Children in conflict with the law  
• Roma children  
• Migrant children |
| Azerbaijan | • The Rebuilding Lives Project  
• Supporting Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities Project | • UNICEF  
• Japan International Cooperation Agency  
• Open Society Georgia Foundation  
• USAID | • Street children  
• Capacity building  
• Disability rights | • Street children  
• Vulnerable children  
• Children with disabilities |
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<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Partner Organizations</th>
<th>Sub-Thematic Area</th>
<th>Population Served</th>
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</table>
| Egypt   | • Violence in school program  
• Minimum care standards at state institutions | • Ford Foundation  
• EC  
• Egypt-Italian Debt Swap  
• SCUK/US private breakthrough fund | • Street children  
• Violence | • Street children  
• Children in state institutions |
| Australia | • Parenting support  
• Intensive family support  
• Domestic violence refugees  
• Future Parents Programs | • Australian Government Department for Families and Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs  
• Queensland State Department of Communities  
• Northern Territory Department of Child Protection  
• Aboriginal Controlled organizations, including Larrakia Nation | • Family support systems | • Young parents  
• Victims of child abuse |
| Mexico | • Program on violence prevention  
• The early childhood program  
• ContruyeT program | • Telefónica Foundation  
• Federal Government  
• SC Switzerland and Norway | • Violence | • Schoolchildren in Sinaloa, Quintana Roo and DF |
Protection from Violence

A country’s violence can have detrimental effects on the children. Conflict breaks apart families, physically harms children and psychologically affects their development. Some child protection programs in urban areas work to limit the damage caused by violence and conflict and help survivors. While many countries, such as Albania and Egypt, have programs to mitigate the impact of violence in urban settings, Mexico is the best example.

Most of Mexico’s urban child protection programs focus on violence. One of the most unique aspects of these programs is that they are designed specifically for urban areas, where the effects of drug-related violence are most often seen, and are actually being adapted for some rural areas. In research in other countries, rural programs are more often adapted for urban settings, making Mexico’s child protection programs very unique. The programs start with the very youngest Mexicans, with the Early Childhood program, which works in 246 community child development centers with 1098 community educators and 12,600 children under the age of six. Then there is the Program on Violence Prevention for primary and secondary school kids. The ContruyeT Program helps develop individual and social skills of 65,648 young people in prep school so that they can cope with the difficult and dangerous violent situations in their life and stay in school. And finally, the “Legal Vulnerability of Girls and Young Women in Socially Violent Contexts” project is being operated in the states of Sinaloa and Quintana Roo and the Distrito Federal. Stakeholders at every level are involved in establishing a Mexican Child Protection System.

The general objective of the programs is to create a protection system based on affectionate, equitable and humane relationships for children, youth, parents, teachers and institutions preventing all types of violence. They divide the audience focus to three sectors: children, parents and educators.

With the children, they use a methodology called “pedagogy from the arts” to help build social skills in children who have had to cope with violence or abuse in the past. For example, children are given exercises in which they are given conflicts which they must solve peacefully
with open and assertive communication. They are encouraged to express their emotions and channel their feelings into art and physical exercises.

For parents, they implement workshops that encourage positive discipline with a focus on child rights. They encourage affection and promotion of propositional attitudes and teach adults how to take responsibility for their actions and understand the behavior of children. They believe positive discipline promotes generosity and mutual respect, assertive communication and focuses on problem solving.

Finally, educators are encouraged to promote inclusion, affection and respect in public schools and community spaces. These are the best places for applying positive discipline and building safe spaces free of violence. They tell educators to consider a human rights approach as the guarantors of the rights of children. If a child feels safe at school, they are more likely to attend. They need to feel it is a place of learning, recognition and participation, where their rights are respected and human and development is promoted. Discipline is important as long as it is positive discipline, in which case it will promote a safe learning space with appropriate interactions.

**Preventing Exploitation**

Under the provisions and principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, young people have the right to be protected from violence and abuse in all forms. Despite this international human rights standard, cases of child sexual exploitation continue to increase.

Save the Children’s program office in Indonesia is working with the United States Department of Labor to combat the problem of child laborers, sex trafficking and other exploitation. The office has sought to reduce the number of children engaged in exploitive child labor (ECL), particularly those who are in commercial sex work and domestic service, plantation work and girl street children in Indonesia. To support this goal, SC Indonesia intends to:

- Strengthen policies on child labor and education
- Withdraw and prevent children from engaging in ECL
- Raising awareness of the importance of education for all children and mobilizing a wide array of actors to improve and expand education infrastructures
- Supporting research and the collection of reliable data on child labor
- Building local capacity to ensure long-term sustainability

Similar to SC Indonesia, the child protection program in Vietnam also works with foreign organizations to support its child protection initiatives. TRIAD UK is one SC Vietnam’s partners which has helped to create a child-friendly textile and garment industry within the country. Some of the program’s objectives include helping authorities monitor children working in the garment industry to ensure those children have access to education and social services. Unlike most of the other CP programs, Vietnam specifically designed their several programs for the urban environment. The regional officer reported that their urban programs focused more on social services to support and protect children from harms of abuse, violence, trafficking and exploitation while non-urban programs had priority in the prevention areas.

**Child labor rights**

Child labor is a large problem worldwide and it is not uncommon for many countries to have some aspect of child labor rights protection in their portfolio. Violations of child labor
rights are very common in urban areas because of the many opportunities for child employment. Many countries deal with child labor rights in collaboration with child migration and street children issues.

In Indonesian urban areas, Save the Children is working to help children involved in various kinds of labor, especially domestic service, commercial sex work, plantation work and female street children. Since 2009, they have been involved in a project called “EXCEED: Eliminate Exploitative Child labor through Education and Economic Development,” with funding from the U.S. Department of Labor. On a direct level, the project works to stop children from engaging in exploitative child labor (ECL) by providing educational services. They also advocate for stronger policies against child labor, education systems that encourage at-risk children to attend school instead of working, and national institutions with a focus on battling child labor. They do this by raising awareness about the importance of school over work for children and working to gather research and data about the dangers of child labor and child rights violations.

Save the Children in Bangladesh is also working to end child labor. One of their three child protection sub-thematic areas is Working Children (WC). The goals are simple. First, to strengthen non-state actors and local bodies to reduce child poverty and promote the rights of vulnerable children. By assisting this population of children, they hope to keep more children from turning to labor. Second, to empower and educate working children so they can sustain and enjoy their rights.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, most of the child protection programs focus on street children and children without appropriate care, and do not necessarily work to protect child laborers. When making recommendations though, they stated they believe child labor protection in urban areas is under-funded. Issues such as children working in dangerous industries are largely ignored because they are not seen as an interesting priority to donors, because it does not typically occur in conflict areas and is a continuous, chronic problem that won’t be easily solved. Save the Children in the DRC believes SC should do more to educate and increase awareness for potential donors and mobilize more private funding for urban child protection programming, especially in the area of child labor rights.

**Family Support Services for Teen Parents**

Save the Children provides support for parents to develop the necessary skills to protect children from neglect and abuse. For example, in Australia, Save the Children has established the Future Parents Program, which is a holistic curriculum that focuses on child health, development, and safety. The program specifically focuses on those between the age of 13-25 who provide care to children, are pregnant or parenting, or who have been identified as being at risk of teenage pregnancy. Save the Children collaborates with community organizations and educators to provide a free interactive course that seeks to increase understanding of issues dealing with child abuse, neglect and domestic violence. The course topics include the following:

- Caring for young children
- Toys, games and activities for children
- Stress and stress management
- Child health and safety
- Basic child development
- Dealing with emergencies
- Child abuse and neglect
- Domestic violence
- Personal safety

The program was provided for free and spanned over the course of eight weeks. More than 1000 young men and women have benefited from the program since 1989 and evaluation is based on enhancement of basic child care skills, self-confidence, self-esteem and increased access to information and resources relating to parenting. Save the Children administered a survey and 100 percent of the program participants indicated that the program helped them to understand the importance of raising healthy children and how to implement preventive measures to protect children.

Child Protection Training in Communities and Schools

Save the Children supports projects that promote student led advocacy and research around the issue of child protection. Not only does Save the Children focus on equipping young people with the tools to be knowledgeable of their rights, but also strengthens community based organizations to be respectful of those rights. For example, in Myanmar, Save the Children worked on strengthening the commitment to punish individuals who violate students’ rights and developed strategies to prevent the abuse and exploitation of students in schools. Children in Myanmar continue to be assaulted in schools as means of discipline and teachers consider their actions justifiable. The Convention on the Rights of the Child puts an obligation on governments to take legislative and educational measures to protect mental and physical well-being of all children. Save the Children recognized this obligation and in response, provided technical support to Township Child Rights Committees (TCRC) and 45 Child Protection Groups (CPG), which prepared them to be implementers of protection programs in schools and communities.

Participants were trained in child protection, child rights, and child participation. In the Mektilar township of Myanmar, Save the Children coordinated efforts between all of the groups and co-conducted awareness raising sessions in the various schools and communities focused on training teachers and educators. The TCRC and several CPGs worked cohesively to visit 3 state high schools in Meiktila during a period of four months. The groups conducted an assessment, which concluded that there were still high levels of corporal punishment being practiced by teachers. In response, Save the Children developed material for the CPGs to conduct sessions with teachers focused on raising awareness on positive discipline approaches and the elimination of corporal punishment practices. These sessions were usually led by the township education officer and information public relations officer, who are both TCRC members. These sessions also educated students on how to report cases and informed them of their rights.

Capacity Building

Bangladesh represents one of the best examples of multi-faceted child protection programs. Several of its projects support community organizations and governments to scale-up services designed to protect children from exploitation. Under the sub-thematic area of Working Children (WC), SC Bangladesh helped to strengthen non-state actors and local bodies to reduce child poverty and promote rights of vulnerable children. Additionally, SC Bangladesh worked with local community based organizations to increase awareness of Violence Against Children (VAC) while mobilizing stakeholders to get involved and/or increase their involvement in tackling the issues affecting children.
Save the Children Albania, also worked with the local government to increase child protection services. For instance, they established advocacy coalitions to lobby government officials in order to create legislation that would establish a governmental referral system for at-risk youth to receive services once they are identified as being vulnerable to exploitation. The program also empowered young people to be peer-to-peer advocates in order to educate others on violence against children and collaborate to find solutions to the problem. The peer-to-peer initiative has been so successful that SC Albania has modeled its adult program after it.

Quotes from the surveys:

“In urban areas, there is a much wider group of problems for different target groups, so we need to figure out how we can design interventions to fit all their needs.” (China)

“CP is (as is well known) usually under-funded and I think that CP in urban areas might be even more so, as securing funds for non-conflict areas and for chronic issues (for instance: street children, children associated with dangerous forms of labors, children being exploited in urban settings) is very difficult because it’s not a priority most of the time for donors. So SC should do more advocacy/education to donors and additionally, mobilize more private funding for urban programming in CP.” (DRC)

“[Our urban programs] are also carried out in rural areas. Although they are mostly designed for urban contexts, adjustments to suit the rural context, using an intercultural approach allows such to be implemented in rural areas as well.” (Mexico)

“Our urban programs focused more on social services to support and protect children from harms of abuse, violence, trafficking and exploitation while our non-urban programs placed priority in the prevention areas.” (Vietnam)
Experience in each area, by country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Child labor rights</th>
<th>Family protection</th>
<th>Violence and abuse</th>
<th>Poverty, street children and migration</th>
<th>Exploitation and trafficking</th>
<th>Vocational training</th>
<th>Capacity building</th>
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**Conclusion**

While all of the regional offices we studied offer some type of program, there is more that Save the Children can do to protect children. In urban areas in particular, there is greater need for SC to provide services specifically designed to work within the overpopulated, poor urban communities where children face significant perils. One recommendation that can strengthen each of the CP programs came from the Albania office. The representative stated that SC should strengthen child protection systems and mechanisms to ensure that they provide a timely and effective response to at-risk children, through strong multi-sector cooperation at national and local level. In addition, monitoring tools such as referral systems should be developed and/or improved among child protection units. Several of the country offices, including Albania and Vietnam, emphasized the importance of collaborating with municipalities in order to strengthen child protection on the local level. Future collaboration as well as sharing best practices across country offices could
prove to be a useful strategy for strengthening Child Protection programs throughout the organization. It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study due to the low response rates from research participants. The child protection survey was sent to 26 country offices and only 12 responded. To improve the analysis for future projects, we recommend extending the timeframe for survey distribution. At this time, we are unable to provide strong recommendations for the thematic areas in which Save the Children should concentrate. Given the limited data it would be premature to make such recommendations, however a future project that studied more countries would give SC better insight in which to improve its child protection programs.
Bibliography


Bhabha, J. Arendt's children: Do today's migrant children have a right to have rights?, *Human Rights Quarterly*, 31(2).


