

Christian Children's Fund

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Christian Children's Fund Seeks Protection for All Children

Children speak out on risks that impact them the most

Richmond, Va. – April 28, 2009 – “Some children in our community have to get married. We know that they are not ready to get married.”

These are the thoughts of children and youth who live in environments that do not protect them from abuse, exploitation or neglect. The children and youth are often prevented from healthy development.

That's why Christian Children's Fund, which will begin operating as ChildFund International on July 1, is addressing these issues head on with child protection workshops for staff to recognize the problems.

“Often there is an assumption that collective poverty is the primary root cause of child protection problems,” said CCF child protection specialist Martin Hayes. “While poverty is a significant problem for many in a community, the power dynamics in communities are often overlooked.”

Child protection risks include: an alcoholic parent with the custody of a child; a community with traditions that do not value girls' participation in decision-making or access to services; parents encouraging their children to engage in prostitution or to migrate to urban areas for work; and a child with a disability who is hidden indoors by his mother.

CCF's programs will remove these obstacles by promoting protective environments, Hayes said. CCF's child protection workshops are designed to have children speak up about the issues that affect them the most. Children are divided up into groups by gender and age and are then participate in participatory action research exercises using CCF's child friendly assessment tools.

As part of its child protection work, CCF partners with communities to support children's development.



Christian Children's Fund is a global force for children, helping the world's deprived, excluded and vulnerable survive and thrive in order to reach their full potential. Serving children since 1938, CCF works in 31 countries and helps more than 15.2 million children and family members worldwide, regardless of race, creed or origin. CCF is a member of the ChildFund Alliance. It has earned 4 stars from Charity Navigator.

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“Children’s perspectives of the protection risks and local resources in their communities are of great importance for guiding our work,” Hayes said.

At a recent child protection workshop in Rapid City with participants from Cheyenne Reservation program in South Dakota, Mississippi and Texas there was a clear difference between age groups with what impacted their lives.

Older children found racism to be an issue, while younger children were worried about crowding in their homes. All children found domestic violence and alcohol abuse to be a significant issue.

Late last year, child protection workshops also were held in Ecuador and Indonesia to help CCF identify child protection issues.

CCF’s approach to child protection mainstreaming has three major components: improving program designs and implementation to remove risks of unintentional harm; promoting the protection of vulnerable groups of children through improving access and addressing their specific needs through core programs; and strengthening the resilience of children by promoting their psychosocial competencies through the core programs.

“CCF will promote a protective environment for all children,” Hayes said. “This will strengthen CCF programs’ abilities to remove the developmental obstacles faced by the most vulnerable children where CCF works.”

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