

# 4 Planning a programme

## By the end of this chapter you will:

- understand what is meant by child rights-based programme planning
- know how to develop a child rights-based plan
- be ready to try out child rights-based planning tools.

*This chapter builds on and requires an understanding of the core CRP principles, tools and processes given in Chapter 2.*

This chapter explains what we mean by a child rights-based programme plan, and how you can build a child rights perspective into your planning systems.

## What is a child rights-based programme plan?

Your child rights-based programme plan should set out:



- your **vision** (informed by the CRSA) of the changes you want to bring about for children in the long term (10–20 years' time). For example, *“children’s survival and development rights are fulfilled in all our project areas”*
- your **goal** (also informed by the CRSA) – what practical contribution you will make to the vision and the fulfilment of children’s rights with the resources available to you. For example, *“10 per cent of the poorest households in the areas where Save the Children is working will have secured a minimum income”*



- your **change objectives** – the changes you need to bring about to fulfil your goal. You can use the dimensions of change tool (see Chapter 2) to help you set your objectives. For example, *“by 2010 an alternative model for household economic security, which is relevant and effective for children, established in one district”*.



- a range of **activities, outcomes and indicators** linked to your change objectives. Activities are the actions you take that will lead to the changes described in your objectives. The activities should together lead to the achievement of your objectives and can usefully be expressed using the three pillar model (see page 17). The outcomes and indicators relate directly to your objectives and enable you to measure progress in each of the dimensions of change. (See Chapter 2 for a detailed explanation of the dimensions of change and other core CRP tools.)

## How to plan and design a child rights-based programme

Your child rights-based programme plan should reflect:

- an awareness and understanding of human rights, childhood and child rights programming
- the CRSA – with your geographical or sector focus (eg, health, education – see Chapter 3)
- a good internal analysis, covering capacity, partners, funding, organisational culture, opportunities, etc. (See Chapter 9)
- the views and contributions of children, community members, donors, partners and government (your stakeholders)
- ownership by the programme team, based on their involvement throughout the planning process
- the values, priorities and strategies of your organisation.

### Case studies

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, Save the Children needed to draw up its first country strategy in 2006. But there was no CRSA, limited planning and strategic thinking capacity, and the added pressures of an emergency programme working in an insecure environment. Planning to complete the strategy within six months, we began by carrying out some internally led capacity-building on CRP and CRSA planning. This enabled us to carry out a CRSA, with cross-programme involvement, using field research, and consulting children. We then

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### **Case studies** *continued*

held a workshop (facilitated by an external consultant) to analyse data and identify any missing information. The CRSA laid the foundations for our country strategy.

A further workshop was held to identify the key content for the country strategy and again involved a range of programme participants. The CRSA was key to the analysis during this workshop; it helped create a common understanding of the situation for children in the country, identifying the different stakeholders and their capacity, and the unique contribution Save the Children planned to make. Each stage of the planning process reinforced the programme's integration of a child rights-based approach, giving confidence to team members and greater clarity and direction to the overall country strategy. However, no other key stakeholders were involved at the planning stage and so, to some extent, the country strategy was left unvalidated by the very people it aims to work with and for.

Nevertheless, the strength of the process lay in its momentum, buy-in and motivation across the team, with concrete and useful outputs put to immediate use and investment in capacity-building.

In **Uganda**, Save the Children's team emphasised inputs to their country strategy from children, their carers and a range of other stakeholders. Similarly, the CRSA was based on primary research using participatory approaches to find out the views of children, young people and a range of community members. The feedback we received varied from "continue distributing mosquito nets to children in camps", to "build separate school toilets for girls", to "train all out-of-school youth in vocational skills so that they are self-reliant". Messages from children to fathers, mothers, government officials, local organisations and community leaders also informed the strategy.

## Key steps

Before we present the key steps to take, here are some top tips to help you as you plan your child rights-based programme.

### Top tips

- Get the preparation right, including your baseline information; be clear about roles and responsibilities and the limits to your time, capacity and finances.
- See this as an opportunity to build the capacity of your team as you make key decisions.
- Consult your external stakeholders – you will be working with them and need their buy-in.
- Limit your planning workshop to a maximum of, say, 20 participants. Be clear from the start whether the workshop is for making decisions or getting new ideas.
- Make sure that the process is open. You should keep all team members up to speed on progress, their roles and expected inputs.
- Ensure that your activities together will achieve your objectives, your objectives together will achieve your goal and that, overall, these have diverse impacts on children reflected through the dimensions of change.

It can be difficult to decide who should be involved, and to what extent, when you design and plan your programme. Keep in mind the following checklist, adapted from *Toolkits: A practical guide to monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment*, Save the Children, 2003 (p.23).

### Who to involve in the planning process

	<b>Insiders</b>	<b>Outsiders</b>
<b>Who</b>	Staff, managers and partners Individuals and groups affected by the work Non-beneficiaries	Staff from same agency but another programme External consultants with specialist expertise
<b>Advantages</b>	Know the organisation Know the programme Understand organisational behaviour and attitudes Known to staff Greater chance of adopting recommendations Less expensive Build internal capability Familiarity with context Know the constraints	Objective – no organisational bias Fresh perspective Broader experience Broader skills Not part of power structures Can bring additional resources
<b>Disadvantages</b>	Can question objectivity Organisational structure may constrain participation Personal gain may be questioned Accepts assumptions Lacks expertise Acceptability/credibility by others Bias	May not know organisation May not understand constraints May be perceived as an adversary Expensive Follow-up may be weak Unfamiliar with environment Learning leaves with the person May miss out on important insights
<b>Role of leader</b>	Facilitator, with skills in participatory techniques, particularly in children's participation Needs good communication skills	Consult with others, but ultimately responsible for drawing conclusions and making recommendations
<b>When is it useful?</b>	Any rights-based programme Social development projects Where aim is to enable groups to develop organisational capacity Where active participation of different groups is essential for success of the work Where there is an opportunity to do so	When a particular type of expertise is needed To take a more objective view To gain a wider view of a project or programme When a donor needs specific information about the programme

Here are the steps you need to take in your child rights-based planning process.

1. Analyse your organisation's capacity
2. Set your goal
3. Set your change objectives and indicators
4. Identify activities

### 1. Analyse your organisation's capacity

You can use the **SWOT** (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) tool to analyse your organisation's capacity. See [www.odi.org.uk/rapid](http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid) and *Toolkits*, p.242 (Save the Children, 2003).

Save the Children has also developed a tool you can use to see how far your organisation meets the profile of a rights-based organisation. See *Child Rights OD tool*, (Save the Children Sweden, 2007) for how to put this tool into practice.

### 2. Set your goal

Your overall goal will be informed by your CRSA. It should help you identify the changes you want to bring about for children and how you can help them fulfil their rights. You can draw this as a Problem Tree, showing both your goal and the changes you need to start making, which you can then transform into SMART objectives (see overleaf).

See [www.odi.org.uk/rapid](http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid) for how to do a Problem Tree analysis, and how to identify goals and objectives. The Roots and Fruit Tree may also be of help, outlined in *Working for Change in Education: A handbook for planning advocacy* (Save the Children UK, 2000).

### 3. Set your change objectives and indicators

You can also use the Problem Tree and/or Roots and Fruit Tree tool to set your change objectives. But remember to check your change objectives against the **Dimensions of Change** tool (see Chapter 2). This will help you identify any gaps and link your activities to the wider changes you want for children

You can use the familiar **SMART** tool (specific, measurable, agreed/achievable, realistic/relevant and time-bound) to draw up your objectives. But you could try a different tool that reflects a more rights-based approach. Ask yourself if your objectives are:

- a) **clear** – is it easy for an outsider to see what changes you are trying to bring about *for children*?
- b) **change-oriented** – make sure you are talking about something that is related to one or more of the Dimensions of Change, rather than describing an activity. Being able to distinguish between a means to an end (an activity) and what that end is (the change you want to bring about) will help you identify clear indicators so that you can monitor the impact your programme is having on children's lives
- c) **realistic** – can your team achieve the objectives, given the time frame, resources and budget available?
- d) **measurable** – do you know how you will go about collecting the information you need to tell whether you have achieved your objectives?

If the answer to any of the above questions is 'no', you need to rethink your objectives!

Here is an example from an education programme in Myanmar. It shows the overall goal, objectives and indicators. You can see how each indicator relates to one or more of the Dimensions of Change, to make a real difference to children's lives.

## **Example – change objectives and indicators (education)**

### **Overall goal**

By April 2011, we will increase access to, and the quality of, early childcare and development (ECCD) services for 40,000 children and of primary education, specifically grades 1 and 2, for 100,000 of the poorest children in Myanmar. A total of 120,000 children will be reached through this strategy. Half of these children will be from minority ethnic communities.

### **Specific objectives – (change objectives)**

#### **Objective 1**

ECCD: By April 2011, 40,000 children (disaggregated by gender; ethnicity and disability) in the programme areas who have never had access to ECCD will acquire access to high-quality home or centre-based ECCD.

(This covers Dimensions of change – ‘Changes in the lives of children and young people’; and – ‘Changes in equity and non-discrimination of children and young people’.)

#### **Indicators**

- 40,000 children, both girls and boys, benefiting from ECCD services for the first time.
- Children from households in the poorest category and from minority ethnic communities participating in ECCD programmes at the same rate as the community as a whole.
- Children in ECCD programmes achieving key developmental milestones.

#### **Process indicators/milestones**

- 140 new ECCD centres constructed and equipped with adequate learning materials by the end of year 1, and 200 more by year 4.
- 600 ECCD teachers trained and capable of providing quality care and stimulation for children by end of year 1, and 1,000 more by year 4.
- 140 ECCD centres functioning at end of year 1, and another 200 by year 4.

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## **Example – change objectives and indicators (education)**

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### **Objective 2**

Transition into primary school: 100,000 children (disaggregated by gender, ethnicity and disability) in the programme areas will have a better transition to, and experience in, primary school compared with those outside project areas (measured by improved active learning, reduced dropout and repetition rates, assertiveness).

(This covers Dimensions of change – ‘Changes in the lives of children and young people’; and – ‘Changes in children’s and young people’s participation and active citizenship’.)

#### **Indicators**

- 100,000 grade 1 and 2 pupils, both girls and boys, benefiting from improved learning environment in their community and schools.
- Children are well prepared and happy in first three months of grade 1.
- Reduced drop-out rates in grades 1 and 2, especially among poor and minority ethnic children.
- Teachers and local authorities demonstrate a change in attitude to children and their development, with 480 schools demonstrating welcoming, active, developmentally appropriate learning environments for children by end of year 2.

#### **Process indicators/milestones**

- School orientation activities implemented in 480 schools by mid-year 2.
- ECCD management committee members trained on learning environment/school assessment and improvement by end of year 2.

### **Objective 3**

The government adopts and implements: ECCD best practice policy guidelines, a revised transitions curriculum, and a developmentally appropriate (child-centred) methodology in grades 1 and 2 of primary school.

(This covers Dimension of change – ‘Changes in policy and practice affecting children’s rights’.)

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## **Example – change objectives and indicators (education)**

*continued*

### **Indicators**

- Government accepts revised transitions curriculum (including methodology) and includes it in teacher training.
- Government commitment to change the methodology in the first couple of years of primary school to a child-centred one is included in the EFA mid-decade assessment report.

### **Process indicators/milestones**

- Transitions curriculum reviewed by end of year 1.
- Transitions curriculum piloted by mid-year 2.
- Strong working relationship with DEPT by mid-year 2.
- ECCD and “transitions” best practice policy guidelines developed and disseminated by mid-year 3.

### **Objective 4**

80% of the ECCD centres are being managed sustainably by ECCD management committees without Save the Children's support by April 2011.

(This covers Dimension of change – ‘Changes in civil society and communities’ capacity to support children and young people’s rights’.)

### **Indicators**

- Parents and ECCD management committees demonstrate a change in attitude to children and their development.
- 80% of ECCD centres started by Save the Children working viably by end of year 3.
- 60% of ECCD centres started by local NGOs working viably by end of year 5.

### **Process indicators/milestones**

- 140 ECCD management committees mobilised, trained and functioning by end of year 1.
- ECCD committee members trained on management, leadership and book-keeping by end of year 1.

## 4. Identify activities

The Three Pillars tool (see Chapter 2) is ideal for looking at the overall balance of your programme strategy and how this may change over the lifetime of your plan. By mapping separate activities onto each of the pillars a picture of the full programme and the links between the different elements can emerge. This tool can be used for various levels of planning, such as country strategy, sectoral strategy or donor project proposal.

### Pulling it all together: the planning workshop

Your planning workshop is a key part of the process. The box below gives an example of a programme for a four-day country strategy planning workshop.

#### Example of a four-day planning workshop

##### **Day 1 – setting the scene** (could be a short or half day)

1. Introductory session
2. Participatory exercise around personal challenges, working environment, capacity, etc
3. Quiz on corporate positions and child rights-based approaches  
Organisation planning processes  
Lessons learned from others
4. Your organisation's history in the country/region, what you are doing now, key challenges and lessons learnt
5. Wrap up and evaluate the day

##### **Day 2 – analysis and vision**

1. Introductory session and feedback from previous day
2. Identify key issues for children's rights in the country/region. Use your CRSA and other information available
3. Roles and responsibilities:
  - i) who are the main stakeholders?
  - ii) what are their capacities?
  - iii) roles (job descriptions) for your organisation, civil society, the state, the private sector and the international community
  - iv) SWOT analysis
4. What is your vision and the vision of children you work with? What will their lives look like 10 years from now?
5. Wrap up and evaluate the day

**Day 3 – identifying goals, change objectives activities and indicators**

1. Introductory session and feedback from previous day
2. Consolidate your vision
3. How will you choose priority areas of work?
4. Where will you work (scale and scope)?
5. What key approaches will you use?
6. What are your change objectives? What are the risks and what assumptions are you making?
7. Mapping your activities onto the three pillars – your overall programme strategy
8. Wrap up and evaluate the day

**Day 4 – resources and further planning**

1. Introductory session and feedback from previous day (consolidation/quiz, pick up from challenges on first day)
2. Impact: link your objectives to the dimensions of change (map onto cards and put full programme on the wall)
3. Resource implications – financial, human resource, organisational cultural change, etc (in groups)
4. Next steps: finalising your strategy. Make sure you consult all teams and key stakeholders
5. Wrap up and final evaluation

**Yes, but...****“We don’t have the time to consult and involve different stakeholders.”**

You will already have consulted key stakeholders when you did your CRSA. You can consult further by holding information meetings, tagging discussion onto other meetings or building it into regular field trips. This is important both as a reality check and to build up your analysis over time.

**“Our plans and positions are sensitive. We can’t share internal analysis and discussions with others, given the security risks and potential to alienate.”**

You need to decide when, what, with whom and how to share information given your situation. Some discussions do need to be internal. But if you want to make a real difference to children’s lives, you have a responsibility to be open and accountable.

**“We haven’t completed our CRSA but still need to go ahead and agree on key strategies.”**

Your decisions need to be based on detailed and reliable information. If your CRSA is not complete, make sure you have the best possible information base and that you ask the relevant questions. Be clear about what information you don’t have and, if possible, build research to gather this into your plans. When you do complete your CRSA, be aware that you may need to review your strategic decisions.

**“We’ve only got a general CRSA and not a health-specific analysis, yet we have to complete our health strategy soon.”**

Use the information in your general CRSA as your starting point. Decide what information is missing and how you can get that information. Try and fill some of the gaps by taking advantage of ongoing opportunities (planned field trips, meetings with partners, etc). Make sure you plan and carry out a sector-specific CRSA as early as possible.

**“Most of the staff haven’t had any CRP training and exposure and have certainly never used the core CRP tools.”**

Then use this as an opportunity to build the skills base of your team! Take them through some of the basics and use the core tools in your planning process.

**“Why bother with a ten-year vision when we are only planning a three-year strategy?”**

Ensuring substantial and lasting changes for children requires a long-term perspective across various sectors. You must be able to review and adapt your activities over time to ensure that your work contributes to a longer lasting legacy.

**“Service delivery is not rights-based, it is needs-based and reinforces unsustainable and charity-orientated responses.”**

Where the state (the main duty-bearer) is unable to meet its obligations, you may be fulfilling this role by providing basic services such as food, water and medicines. But you also need to support the duty-bearer to meet their obligations, and help children and their communities claim their rights as part of a longer-term vision for change.

**“Writing a proposal for a donor within their format leaves no space for much of the CRP elements and, anyway, is not necessarily what the donor wants to see.”**

Many donors have adopted a rights-based approach to their development and emergency programmes. They will want to see that you are accountable to the children and communities you work with, and that you are working in partnership. They will also want to see that they are getting value for money and that their funding is having a positive impact on children's lives. Keep to your donor's reporting format – but also use it to get your message across.

## Where to go for more information

*CRP: A resource for planning*, Save the Children UK, 2004

This will help support your team in the practical application of CRP throughout the strategic planning process (and beyond).

*CRP checklist for assessing project proposals*, Save the Children Sweden, 2007

A series of questions you should ask when assessing project proposals. For example: Has a child rights situation analysis been carried out? Are the goals and objectives rights-based? Does the organisation have the capacity for the project? How will the project be monitored?

*Format for rights-based project proposals*, Save the Children Sweden, 2005

This model project document format was developed in Asia as a means of assisting the implementation of a child rights programming approach.

*Generic Guidance for Thematic Programme Plans*, Save the Children UK, 2005

Particularly good executive summary checklist taking you through each stage of the programme planning process, asking key questions to enable you to plan a child rights-based strategy.

*Toolkits: A practical guide to monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment*, Save the Children, 2003

*Working for Change in Education: A handbook for planning advocacy*, Save the Children, 2000

Overseas Development Institute (ODI) planning tools: [www.odi.org.uk/rapid](http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid)