



LIVELIHOOD INTERVENTIONS FOR CAAFAG

TECHNICAL NOTE



THE ALLIANCE
FOR CHILD PROTECTION
IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Publisher:

The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action
(The Alliance)
% UN Plaza
New York, NY 10017
United States of America
The Alliance 2023

Suggested citation:

The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (2023)
Livelihood for CAAFAG Technical Note. New York

Licence:

This document is licensed under Creative Commons
Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0. It is attributed to the Alliance for
Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (The Alliance)

Cover image: ©Plan International. Burkina Faso



Executive summary	7
Recommendations	7
Acknowledgement	9
Section 1. Introduction	10
Background	11
Methodology	11
Who are children associated with the armed forces or armed groups?	11
The legal and normative framework	12
Pathways of association	12
Economic risk and protective factors for recruitment and use	12
Impact of recruitment and use	13
Livelihood interventions for prevention, release and reintegration	13
Prevention	14
Release	14
Reintegration	14
Differences between child protection and livelihood approaches	15
Section 2. Summary of key challenges	18
Lack of funding and short duration of programmes	19
Lack of livelihood expertise	19
Lack of outcome measurement	20
Working in silos	20
Section 3. Lessons learnt and good practices for quality livelihoods programming for CAAFAG	21
Key considerations	22
Gender	22
Age	22
Children with disabilities	23
Decent work	23
Child participation and motivation	24
Climate resilience livelihoods	25
Conflict-sensitive livelihoods	26
Safety	26
Key considerations and recommendations	26
Adopting a phased approach to livelihood interventions for CAAFAG	27
Pathway 1: Addressing basic needs and stabilising income	29
Pathway 2: Economic recovery for reintegration	29
Pathway 3: Sustainable and decent work	29
Phased approach recommendations	29
Theory of change for quality livelihood programmes for former CAAFAG	30
Recommendations of the three pathways	38
	38
Section 4. Promoting collaboration between the child protection and food security sectors	43
Mainstreaming	45
Joint programming	45
Integrated programming	45
Cross-sector collaboration recommendations	46

Acronyms

ACF: Action Contre la Faim

AFAG: Armed Forces and Armed Groups

CAAFAG: Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups

CAR: Central African Republic

CRC: Convention of the Rights of the Child

CVA: Cash and Voucher Assistance

DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo

ILO: International Labour Organization

IRC: International Rescue Committee

MHPSS: Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

UNOWA: United Nations Office for West Africa

WCUK: War Child United Kingdom

Glossary

Case management: an approach to address the needs of an individual child and their family in an appropriate, systematic and timely manner, through direct support and/or referrals.¹

Cash and Voucher Assistance: CVA refers to all programmes where *cash transfers* or *vouchers* for goods or services are directly provided to recipients. In the context of humanitarian assistance, the term is used to refer to the provision of cash transfers or vouchers given to individuals, household or community recipients; not to governments or other state actors. This excludes remittances and microfinance in humanitarian interventions (although microfinance and money transfer institutions may be used for the actual delivery of cash).²

Cash for work: Cash payments provided on the condition of undertaking designated work. This is generally paid according to time worked (e.g. number of days, daily rate), but may also be quantified in terms of outputs (e.g. number of items produced, cubic metres dug). CFW interventions are usually in public or community work programmes but can also include home-based and other forms of work.³

Child labour: work which deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and which is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work which:

- is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children.⁴

Child marriage: Child marriage is a formal or informal union where one or both parties are under the age of 18. All child marriage is considered forced, as children are not able to give full consent to marriage.⁵

Children associated with armed forces and armed groups: as defined by the Paris Principles they are “any person below 18 years of age who is or who has been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity,

including but not limited to children, boys, and girls used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes. It does not only refer to a child who is taking or has taken a direct part in hostilities.”⁶

Child safeguarding: the responsibility that organisations have to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children. It includes policy, procedures and practices to prevent children from being harmed by humanitarian organisations as well as steps to respond and investigate when harm occurs.⁷

Child well-being: A dynamic, subjective and objective state of physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual and social health in which children:

- Are safe from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence;
- Have their basic needs, including survival and development, met;
- Are connected to and cared for by primary caregivers;
- Have the opportunity for supportive relationships with relatives, peers, teachers, community members and society at large; and
- Have the opportunities and elements required to exercise their agency based on their evolving capacities.⁸

Decent work: working in conditions of freedom, equity, safety, and human dignity where the worker’s rights are respected, and s/he can take part in decisions which may affect her/his welfare.⁹

Economic recovery: the process of stimulating the growth of an area’s local economy following a downturn through developing markets, strengthening new and existing enterprises and creating jobs in the private sector and public institutions.¹⁰

1 The Alliance (2019). Child Protection Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Action.

2 The Cash Learning Partnership (2019). Glossary for cash and voucher assistance.

3 The Cash Learning Partnership (2019). Glossary for cash and voucher assistance.

4 ILO definition.

5 The Alliance (2019). Child Protection Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Action.

6 Article 2.1 Paris Principles.

7 The Alliance (2019). Child Protection Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Action.

8 Ibid.

9 ILO. Employment and decent work. https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/sustainable-growth-and-jobs/employment-and-decent-work_en

10 The Alliance (2019). Child Protection Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Action.

Hazardous work: work which, by its nature or by the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety, and morals of children, and which must be prohibited for children under the age of 18 years (even when this is above the general minimum working age).¹¹

Multi Purpose Cash Assistance: it comprises transfers (either periodic or one-off) corresponding to the amount of money required to cover, fully, or partially, a household's basic and/or recovery needs that can be monetised and purchased. Cash transfers are multi-purpose if explicitly designed to address multiple needs, with the transfer value calculated accordingly. Multi-Purpose Cash transfer values are often indexed to the expenditure gaps based on a Minimum Expenditure Basket, or another monetised calculation of the amount required to cover basic needs.¹²

Vulnerability: the extent to which some people may be disproportionately affected by the disruption of their physical environment and social support mechanism following disaster or conflict. Vulnerability is specific to each person and each situation.

For child protection, vulnerability refers to individual, family, community and societal characteristics which reduce children's ability to withstand adverse impact from violations of and threats to their rights.¹³

Worst forms of child labour: A term defined in ILO Convention No. 182. These forms of child labour must be prohibited for all people under the age of 18 years and include the following:

All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage, serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;

Using, procuring, or offering a child for prostitution, the production of pornography, or for pornographic performance;

Using, procuring, or offering a child for illicit activities—in particular, for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties; and

Work which, by its nature or because of the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of the child. See also Hazardous work.

11 Ibid.

12 The Cash Learning Partnership (2019). Glossary for cash and voucher assistance.

13 The Alliance (2019). Child Protection Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Action.



©Plan International. Nigeria

Executive summary

Children associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAAFAG) are often recruited and used due to economic risk factors. Providing livelihood interventions to CAAFAG and vulnerable children can be used to prevent children from being recruited and used by armed forces and armed groups and may encourage children's exit from armed groups and armed forces and promote their reintegration.

Collaboration between the food security and child protection sectors is essential to foster quality and holistic programmes for CAAFAG. However, the differences between the child protection and food security sectors in terms of focus (child and household), framework (socio-ecological framework and sustainable livelihood framework) and outcomes have historically hindered such collaboration.

Various **challenges** affect the quality of livelihood programming for CAAFAG and the opportunities for cross sectoral collaboration. Lack of funding and the short duration of grants are key issues that prevent comprehensive programmes. Child Protection players do not always have the skills and expertise to implement quality livelihood programmes and within such programmes may prioritise psychosocial outcomes over sustainable economic outcomes. Often, the short timeframe of humanitarian funding does not allow for the measurement of mid- to long-term livelihood outcomes. Working in silos has been reported, related to coordination structures, organisations' internal structures, sectoral differences in vulnerability criteria and the exclusion of children from livelihood interventions due to their age or education level.

Key considerations should be taken into account to promote quality programming. These include work that is decent and relevant, climate-resilient, gender-sensitive and (where children are the ones who will be doing the work) work which enables child participation and observes the legal working age for children.

The scope of this paper includes livelihood interventions targeting parents and caregivers of CAAFAG or children at risk of recruitment and use by armed forces and armed groups, as well as livelihood interventions targeting children who are old enough to work themselves, including child-headed households.

Good practices involve adopting a phased approach that considers three distinctive and overlapping pathways

when designing livelihood programmes: 1) Addressing basic needs and stabilising income generation, 2) Economic recovery for reintegration, 3) Sustainable and decent work.

- 1. Addressing basic needs and stabilising income generation.** The first pathway focusses on short-term interventions immediately after the release of CAAFAG, to cover their basic needs.
- 2. Economic recovery for reintegration.** The second pathway focusses on medium-term interventions, once former CAAFAG are reintegrated in their families and communities.
- 3. Sustainable and decent work.** The third pathway focusses on long-term interventions at community level to contribute to the prevention of recruitment and use and to support the reintegration of CAAFAG and vulnerable children.

Child protection and education interventions are also needed specifically for former CAAFAG to support their transition from military to civilian identity, improve their psychosocial well-being, promote community and family acceptance, provide functional literacy and numeracy skills, and ensure a supportive family environment.

Cross-sector collaboration is needed to achieve a quality and comprehensive livelihood programme for CAAFAG. This requires a culture of collaboration, encouraged and role-modelled by cluster leads and coordination groups, the senior leadership of organisations and team managers. Cross sector collaboration can be achieved through mainstreaming, joint programming and integrated programming within the same organisation, between organisations and at cluster level.

Recommendations

Key considerations

- Ensure equal access and control over resources in considering the specific needs of boys and girls and children with disabilities who were formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups.
- Document and take into consideration conflict sensitivity, climate resilience and child participation when designing and implementing livelihood programmes.

- Give children over 15 access to livelihood opportunities based on national child labour law and the ILO Convention 138 on Minimum Age. For children under 15, consider providing livelihood opportunities to their caregivers, so they can address the needs of their children.
- Offer decent work opportunities to CAAFAG who are above the legal working age, and to their caregivers for children under the legal working age.

Phased approach recommendations

- Document outcomes for children and head of households across the 3 pathways to generate learning and adapt programmes if needed.
- Include other vulnerable non-CAAFAG children in livelihood interventions for CAAFAG to avoid stigmatisation and/or create perverse incentives for joining AFAG.
- Consider the most appropriate pathway based on funding available and duration of the grant.
 - **Pathway 1:** CAAFAG (and children at risk of recruitment) and heads of household have the resources to provide for their basic needs (1 year)
 - **Pathway 2:** CAAFAG (and children at risk of recruitment) and heads of household develop their livelihood to recover from shock and children are reintegrated into the community (2 years)
 - **Pathway 3:** Conflict affected population is self-reliant and has stable income

Enabling conditions recommendations

- Provide livelihood interventions for CAAFAG coupled with case management to identify and address the holistic needs of children and support their transition from military to civilian identity.
- Improve former CAAFAG psychosocial well-being, promote a supportive family environment and families and communities' acceptance.
- Provide functional literacy and numeracy skills as well as other formal and informal education opportunities combined with livelihood opportunities.

Cross-sector collaboration recommendations

- Develop a culture of collaboration between the food security and child protection sectors through coordination group leads, organisations' senior leadership, and team management role models to strengthen the quality of livelihood programmes for CAAFAG.
- Promote cross-sector collaboration through mainstreamed, joint or integrated programming between child protection and livelihood actors.

Recommendations for donors

- Extend support beyond humanitarian assistance to look at interventions across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus with long-term funding to take into account the drivers of conflict, tackle the root causes of discrimination and strengthen the resilience of CAAFAG and the communities in which they live.
- Request for livelihood for CAAFAG programmes:
 - A risk assessment
 - A non-targeted approach (including other vulnerable children)
 - Climate resilient and gender-sensitive programme
 - Coordination between child protection and livelihood actors

Acknowledgement

Numerous individuals contributed their time and expertise in developing this Technical Note. Sandra Maignant (Plan International) led the development of this document in consultation with a reference group.

The reference group included representatives from both the Food Security and Livelihoods and the Child Protection sectors:

Vanessa Coeffe (Action Contre la Faim),
Emily Sloane (International Rescue Committee),
Giovanna Vio (UNICEF),
Salimatou Traoré (International Rescue Committee),
Jan Söhlemann (Plan International),
Tiara Ataii (War Child-UK),
Elsa Claire Jeanne Rovai (Save the Children)

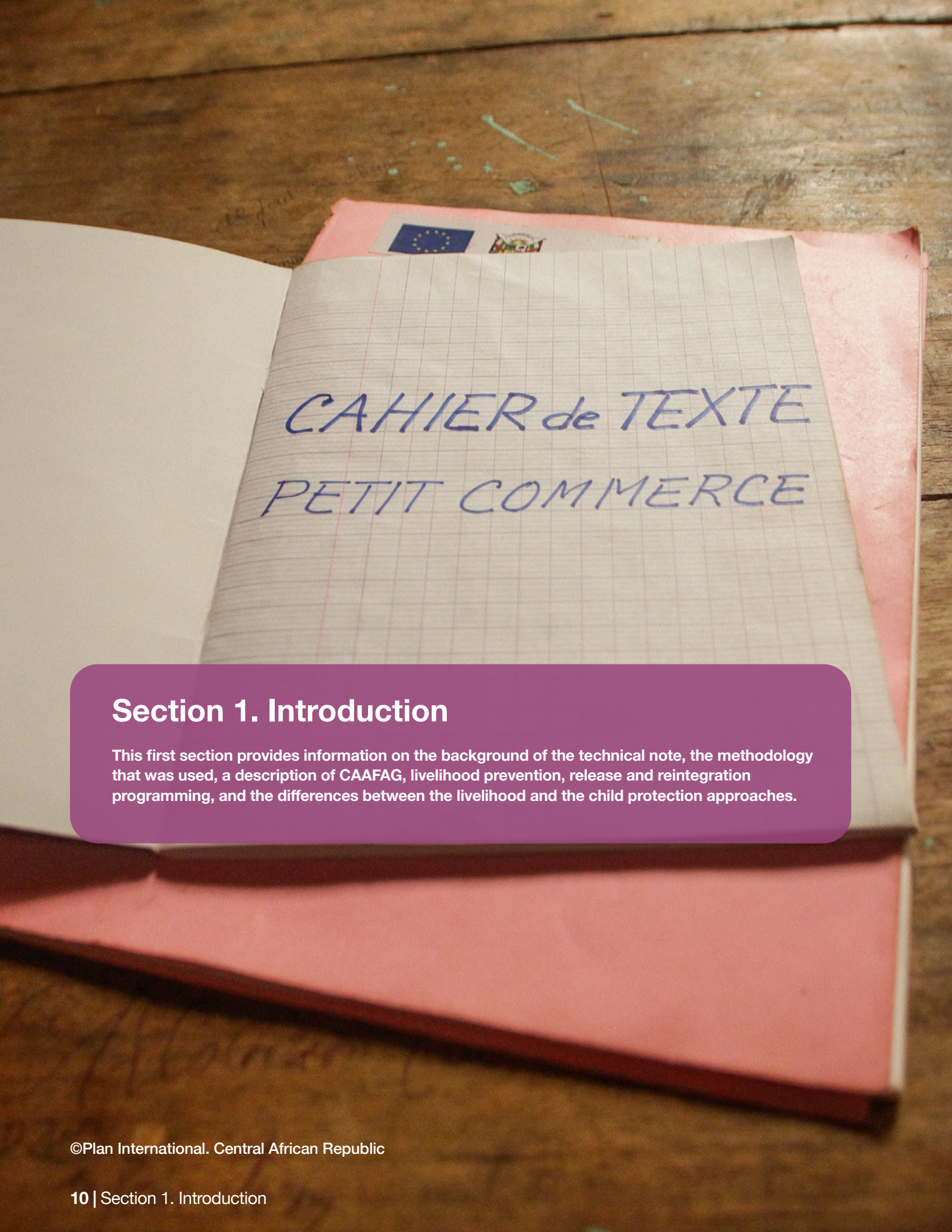
We would also like to acknowledge the review of the technical note from Augustin Thomas (Save the Children), Damien Joud (Global Food Security Cluster), Yang Fu (Plan International), Simon Hills (International Labour Organization), Paul Fean (Plan International) and Camilla Jones (Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action).

This Technical Note builds on the results of a literature review and key informant interviews with representatives from governments, UN agencies and national and international NGOs.

Our deep appreciation goes to the following organisations across 10 countries¹⁴ who shared their lessons learnt and good practices: UNICEF, Search for Common Ground, Save the Children, Plan International, International Labour Organization, Danish Refugee Council, Action Contre la Faim, Ajedi-Ka, Street Child, Goal Prime, Food and Agriculture Organization, Transcultural Psychosocial Organization, International Rescue Committee, SoS Village, Intersom, Transition International and War Child UK.

This publication was made possible through support provided by the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, U.S. Agency for International Development. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

14 Central African Republic, Cameroon, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Ivory Coast and Syria.



CAHIER de TEXTE PETIT COMMERCE

Section 1. Introduction

This first section provides information on the background of the technical note, the methodology that was used, a description of CAAFAG, livelihood prevention, release and reintegration programming, and the differences between the livelihood and the child protection approaches.

Background

This technical note on Livelihoods for children associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAAFAG) was produced by the CAAFAG Task Force of the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, co-led by Plan International and UNICEF.

Sandra Maignant (Plan International) led the development of this technical note.

This technical note builds on the result of an online consultation on cross-sectoral work with field practitioners working with CAAFAG. In this consultation, livelihoods was one of the sectors selected with the highest needs for additional guidance to promote cross-sector collaboration, alongside education. It complements the CAAFAG Programme Development toolkit, which provides detailed, step-by-step guidance on programme design and implementation.

Livelihoods is one of the key elements of programmes to reintegrate CAAFAG, but also to prevent their recruitment and use by armed forces and armed groups. (See definition p. 5) Inter-agency context analysis¹⁵ and community consultations¹⁶ across multiple locations show that access to job and training opportunities and poverty are among the main risk factors which cause children to join armed groups and armed forces. Similarly, access to job opportunities, vocational training and entrepreneurship training are highlighted by children and communities as solutions to facilitate the reintegration of children formerly associated with armed actors. However, the lack of coordination between the livelihoods and the child protection sectors has led to low quality programmes that rarely succeed in addressing both the needs of CAAFAG and achieving stable income generation.

This technical note documents the challenges and best practices for supporting children formerly associated with armed players with livelihood programmes. It provides guidance on the key elements of quality livelihood programmes for CAAFAG with the theory of change, recommendations and strategies to promote collaboration between the two sectors, case studies and key points of advocacy. This technical note is intended for NGOs, governments and UN agencies working towards the prevention of recruitment and the promotion of CAAFAG reintegration through programme design and implementation. It is also intended to influence donors and key stakeholders' policy.

Children below the age of 18 are the primary focus of this technical note. However, most of the findings and the recommendations of this technical note also apply to youth (up to 24 years old).

Methodology

The technical note builds on the result of a literature review of reports, guides, academic articles and programme evaluations and 27 key informant interviews with representatives from governments, UN agencies and national and international NGOs from 10 countries (Cameroon, CAR, Colombia, Ivory Coast, DRC, Nigeria, Myanmar, South Sudan, Somalia and Syria).

The perspectives of children were collected during context analysis conducted in Nigeria, Iraq, CAR, and Colombia as part of the field testing and rollout of the Programme Development for CAAFAG toolkit. In each country, a 2-day workshop was organised between 2021 and 2022 with former CAAFAG to ask them (among other things) about the risk and protective factors of recruitment and the attributes of successful reintegration.

Who are children associated with the armed forces or armed groups?

CAAFAG are defined by the Paris Principles as “any person under 18 years of age who is or who has been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys and girls used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes. It does not only refer to a child who is taking or has taken a direct part in hostilities.”¹⁷

CAAFAG include both boys and girls who are associated with armed forces and armed groups. However, girls are often overlooked. Although studies estimate that girls represent 6 to 50%¹⁸ of children associated, only a fraction of girls are formally identified and released.¹⁹

15 Context analysis conducted as part of the CAAFAG toolkit roll-out in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Iraq, Central African Republic, Mozambique, Colombia, and Nigeria between 2021 and 2022.

16 Community consultations were conducted by Child Frontier in 2022 in Nigeria, Myanmar, DRC and Turkey/Syria.

17 Paris Principles (2007). Principles and guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups.

18 Spellings, C. R. (2008). Scratching the surface: a comparison of girls soldiers from three geographic regions of the world. International Education, Volume 38 Issue 1.

19 The Alliance (2020). Girls associated with armed forces and armed groups. Lessons learnt and good practices on prevention of recruitment and use, release and reintegration.

The legal and normative framework

The recruitment and use of children in armed forces and armed groups (AFAG) is prohibited under international law and several international legal and normative frameworks have been established to prevent the recruitment of children during conflict.

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC): Article 38 of the CRC prohibits the recruitment and use of children under 15 in hostilities. Furthermore, it obligates states to take all feasible measures to ensure that children under 18 are not directly participating in hostilities.
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC): Establishes 18 as the minimum age for compulsory recruitment and use of children in armed conflict and any recruitment and use of children under 18 by non-state armed groups.
- International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour: Prohibits the worst forms of child labour, which includes the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict.
- United Nations Security Council Resolutions: Several UN Security Council Resolutions have been adopted to prevent the recruitment of children in conflict, including Resolution 1261 (1999), which calls for the protection of children affected by armed conflict, and Resolution 1612 (2005), which established a monitoring and reporting mechanism to document and report on the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict.
- The Paris Commitments and the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups reinforce that children should not be conscripted.

Pathways of association

Children can be recruited into armed groups and armed forces through various pathways as highlighted in the diagram below.

Forced recruitment can be through abduction from their homes, schools, or other locations, or they may be intimidated into joining through threats or acts of violence.

Propaganda is another commonly used tool to recruit girls and boys. Some armed groups and armed forces spread misleading ideas, information or rumours specifically targeting young people for the purpose of recruiting new members.

Economic needs. In contexts where families face extreme poverty, the prospect of access to a regular income, clothes, food or toiletries to cover basic needs can lead to child association.

Family ties with an armed group may serve as a motivating or facilitating factor for children's association. Some children's parents are already part of an armed group.

Community ties with an armed group or defence militia can lead to pressure on families to let their girls and boys participate in the protection of the community.



A close relationship with an armed group fighter can lead to the recruitment of children, including girls. In contexts of armed conflict where communities are exposed to violence, girls may choose to be in a relationship with a combatant as a form of protection.

Child marriage is another form of recruitment of girls with some girls forcibly married to fighters. Sometimes under the threat of releasing explicit pictures that will ruin the reputation of the girl and her family, after a sexual abuse to protect the honour of the girl (and family), or in exchange of protection for the family.

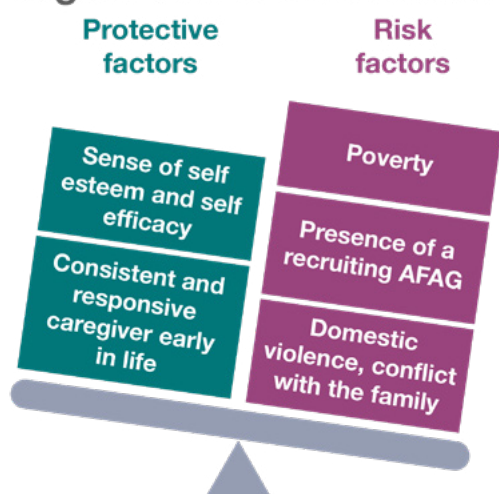
Economic risk and protective factors for recruitment and use

Risk factors are environmental factors, experiences or individual traits that increase the probability of a negative outcome.²⁰ Protective factors reduce the probability of a harmful outcome and support well-being. Both risk and protective factors can be found at the individual, family,

community and society levels.²¹ Girls and boys are often influenced by multiple risk factors, which combined, increase their likelihood of becoming associated with AFAG. It is the accumulation of risk factors and the lack of protective factors to counteract these risks which cause a specific harmful outcome, such as association with an AFAG.

Poverty, lack of stable income and a lack of employment opportunities are among the risk factors of recruitment most frequently cited by children.²² A report commissioned by UNOWA confirmed that the lack of youth employment is one of the main causes of youth participation in armed conflict in West Africa.²³ The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers confirmed that the lack of economic opportunities is one of the main drivers of children joining armed groups and armed forces.²⁴ However, other studies suggest that they are rarely the only risk factors.

Higher risk of recruitment



The Alliance. 2022. CAAFAG Programme Development guidelines

Even if it is identified as the main factor, the need for money is often combined with other risk factors. For example household violence, the need for protection, a desire for revenge, a quest for significance.²⁵ These will have an impact on the likelihood of recruitment, as well as the prevention of re-recruitment, and the reintegration of children formerly associated. Furthermore, other contextual factors may lead to recruitment. Such as perception of impunity and insecurity,²⁶ or community pressure.²⁷ There also seems to be differences between boys and girls. An assessment conducted in the Central African Republic by the International Rescue Committee highlighted that economic risk factors are one of the first causes of stress for boys and girls and that these may lead to recruitment.²⁸ Therefore, addressing risk factors of recruitment, including economic risk factors, is a

key component of prevention of recruitment strategies, and prevention of re-recruitment when the child is reintegrated into his/her family and community.

Impact of recruitment and use

The experience of CAAFAG is not homogeneous and may vary according to the age of the child at the time of recruitment, the child's gender, the duration and form of recruitment and the role the child played in the AFAG.²⁹ Most CAAFAG have been exposed to war-related violence, loss, displacement and potentially traumatic events as victim, perpetrator and/or witness of physical, psychological and sexual violence.³⁰ Although CAAFAG are at heightened risk of anxiety, depression, severe stress disorders and increases in aggression and hostility³¹, they also have their own resources, assets and skills to be resilient. Depending on the age of recruitment and the duration, children may have missed years of education. However, they may also have learnt new skills.

In some contexts, the stigma attached to a child's association may lead to discrimination and exclusion from community associations, as well as acts of reprisal. The level of stigma is often different for girls. It seems to last longer, is more severe and is more difficult to reduce than for boys.³²

In addition, CAAFAG are transitioning from a military identity to a civilian identity, which may be challenging. Many of these children had status and power while being associated. Some girls were the spouse of a commander, boys were private secretaries of armed group leaders, drivers or recognised experts in military strategy. The loss of status and power and considering them as simple children can be very challenging to accept and may affect their reintegration.^{33 34}

Livelihood interventions for prevention, release and reintegration

In child protection, primary **prevention programmes** aim to prevent the recruitment and use of children in addressing the risks factors of recruitment, strengthening protective factors at population or sub-population levels. **Release programmes** include the process of formal and controlled disarmament and demobilisation of children from an armed force or armed group as well as the informal ways in which children leave by escaping, being captured or by any other means. They also include the identification of children who have informally exited AFAG in their communities. **Reintegration programmes'** processes promote children's transition into civil society, including meaningful roles and identities as civilians who are accepted by their families and communities.³⁶

Prevention

Release

Reintegration

Prevention

Livelihood interventions for vulnerable children at risk of recruitment and their families in conflict-affected areas can contribute to the prevention of recruitment and use. In many contexts, the literature shows that poverty, the lack of stable income for families and the lack of job opportunities for older children³⁷ are risk factors which increase the likelihood of recruitment. The literature also highlights that strengthening protective factors such as caregivers' access to stable income and opportunities³⁸; children's access to opportunities to develop problem-solving skills, learning and adaptation³⁹; and children's ability to find meaning in life⁴⁰ contribute to prevention of recruitment. Protective factors act to counterbalance risk factors, increasing children and families' coping capacity and resilience to protect their children.⁴¹

In addition to directly supporting the most vulnerable children and their families, strengthening the local economy to increase economic opportunities for youth will also likely contribute to the prevention of recruitment in contexts where this was identified as a risk factor. Working on economic systems, for example by diversifying sources of income, developing the value

chain and facilitating access to markets and financial services will contribute to strengthening systems and the economic development of a community at large and contribute to peace.⁴²

Release

Access to livelihood interventions may serve as an incentive to encourage children who have the possibility of exiting armed groups or armed forces and return to their communities. These programmes offer alternatives to income received from armed groups or armed forces for children or their caregivers. However, this should not be the only way of accessing these services. Otherwise these programmes may be perceived as an incentive to join armed groups or armed forces.⁴³

Reintegration

Livelihood activities are one of the key interventions in the process of reintegration of children who have been associated with armed actors. Boys and girls formerly associated with AFAG consulted during context analyses in multiple countries systematically highlighted that having a job or a regular income was an attribute of successful reintegration.⁴⁴

20 The Alliance (2022). Primary Prevention Framework for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action.

21 The Alliance (2022). Primary Prevention Framework for Child protection in Humanitarian Action.

22 O'Neil, S., Van Broeckhoven, K. (2018). Cradle by conflict: Child involvement with armed groups in contemporary conflict. UNU.

23 UNOWA (2005). Youth Unemployment and regional insecurity in West Africa.

24 Specht, I. (2010). Stocktaking report on sustainable economic reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups and other vulnerable children. Transition International.

25 O'Neil, S., Van Broeckhoven, K. (2018). Cradle by conflict: Child involvement with armed groups in contemporary conflict. UNU.

26 MINUSCA (2018). National Community Violence Reduction strategy. Principles, coordination and sustainability. Central African Republic.

27 International Labour Organization (2003). Wounded Childhood: the use of children in armed conflict in Central Africa.

28 International Rescue Committee (2021). Perspectives of families in Central African Republic on adolescents' involvement in armed groups. Research Brief.

29 The Alliance (2022). CAAFAG Programme Development Guidelines.

30 UNICEF (2020). Guidance on CAAFAG in COVID-19.

31 The MHPSS Collaborative. UNICEF (2022). Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in CAAFAG programmes. Operational guidance.

32 The Alliance (2020). Technical Note on Girls Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups.

33 Tonheim, M. (2017). A troublesome transition. Social reintegration of girls soldiers returning 'home'. Thesis. University of Bergen.

34 Vermeij, L. (2011). Socialisation and reintegration challenges: a case study of the lord's resistance army. Child soldiers from recruitment to reintegration Palgrave Macmillan.

35 The Alliance (2022). CAAFAG Programme Development Guidelines.

36 Paris Principles (2007).

37 UNDP (2017). Journey to extremism in Africa: Drivers, incentives and the tipping point for recruitment

38 ILO (2003). Wounded Childhood: the use of children in armed conflict in Central Africa.

39 Child soldier international (2016). "If you could go to school..." Education as a tool to prevent the recruitment of girls and assist with their recovery and reintegration in Democratic Republic of Congo.

40 Mazurana, D., Carlson K. (2006). The girl child and armed conflict: recognising and addressing grave violations of girls' human rights. UN Division of the Advancement of Women.

41 The Alliance (2022). CAAFAG programme development Toolkit: guidelines.

42 Norberg-Hodge, H. (2015). Strengthening Local Economies: The Path to Peace. Duke University Press <https://doi.org/10.1215/08879982-3140368>

43 African Studies Centre Leiden (2016). The aftermath of demobilisation for children and youth in the Central African Republic.

As already mentioned, these livelihood interventions should not only target CAAFAG, but rather adopt a non-targeted approach which allows other vulnerable children to access the same services. In addition to preventing recruitment, this approach will contribute towards:

- reducing the risk of stigmatisation of CAAFAG,
- reducing jealousy and mitigating the risk of resentment and retaliation against CAAFAG because they access services which other vulnerable children do not,
- giving access to services to children, particularly girls who may not want to disclose their association.

Despite their prominence in reintegration programmes, literature^{45,46} also shows that livelihood interventions alone are not sufficient to promote the successful reintegration of CAAFAG. They should be combined with other support through a holistic approach which will address any specific needs that boys and girls may have. These needs can be found amongst children showing signs of distress, who are struggling to adjust to civilian identity, who are not welcomed in their families or communities or who haven't finished their primary studies will likely need additional support to succeed in their livelihood activity. Through case management support, a case worker can

effectively coordinate all the services provided to help the child and his/her family to strengthen their resilience to future shocks.⁴⁷ Successful reintegration with a holistic approach will also mitigate the risks of remobilisation.

Differences between child protection and livelihood approaches

Despite the critical importance of collaboration between child protection and livelihood players to deliver livelihood programmes for CAAFAG, key informant interviews and the literature revealed that there are differences in terms of focus, framework, vulnerability and outcomes. These are important to highlight in order for each sector to better understand each other.

The child protection sector tends to focus on individual children, using the **socio-ecological framework**, a case management approach, and considering individuals at risk based on protective and risk factors. While the livelihood sector focusses on the whole household, using the **sustainable livelihood framework** and considering vulnerability in terms of exposure to shocks and negative coping strategies. The table below summarises the main differences between the two sectors' approaches.

Child Protection	Livelihood
Focus: child	Focus: household
Framework: socio-ecological framework and case management (See Figure 1)	Framework: sustainable livelihood framework (See Figure 2)
Vulnerability: Individuals at risk, protective and risk factors	Vulnerability: Household vulnerability to shocks and negative coping strategies
Outcomes specific to CAAFAG: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CAAFAG are reunified with their families and their immediate needs are addressed 2. CAAFAG are socially reintegrated into their family and community and have improved psychosocial well-being 3. CAAFAG are not re-recruited into armed groups 	Outcomes specific to households: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Households meet their basic needs and are food secure 2. Households develop their livelihoods and recover from shocks 3. Households are self-reliant and have long term economic stability

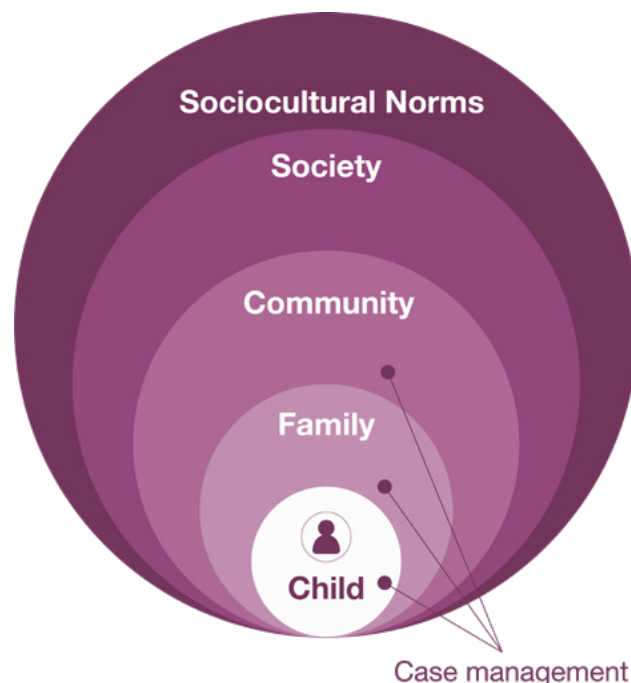
Figure 1: Socio-ecological framework

The socio-ecological framework helps identify how various factors are interconnected and how they influence child development and well-being:

- Children actively participate in their own protection and well-being and that of their peers.
- Children are mostly raised in families, but sometimes this layer includes other close relations.
- Families are nested in communities.
- Communities form wider societies.

Applying a ‘socio-ecological’ approach to child protection involves designing integrated approaches that work in partnership with children, families, communities and societies.

Case management is one of the key child protection approaches. Case management is an approach for addressing the needs of an individual child who is at risk of harm or has been harmed. The child and their family are supported by a caseworker in a systematic and timely manner through direct support and referrals. Case management provides individualised coordinated, holistic, multisectoral support for complex and often connected child protection concerns. Case management systems are an essential part of the child protection response for both prevention and reintegration.⁴⁸



Socio-ecological framework

Source: [Child Protection Minimum Standards](#)

44 Consultation of former CAAFAG conducted in Colombia, CAR, Iraq and Nigeria in 2021 and 2022.

45 Sommers, M. (2006). ‘Youth and Conflict: A Brief Review of Available Literature’, USAID/EUIP.

46 Munive, J. (2008). ‘Youth Employment in Fragile States’, DIIS Policy Brief, Fragile Situations.

47 Walton, O. (2010). Youth, armed violence and job creation programmes. A rapid mapping study. Norwegian Peacebuilding Centre.

48 The Alliance (2019). Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action.

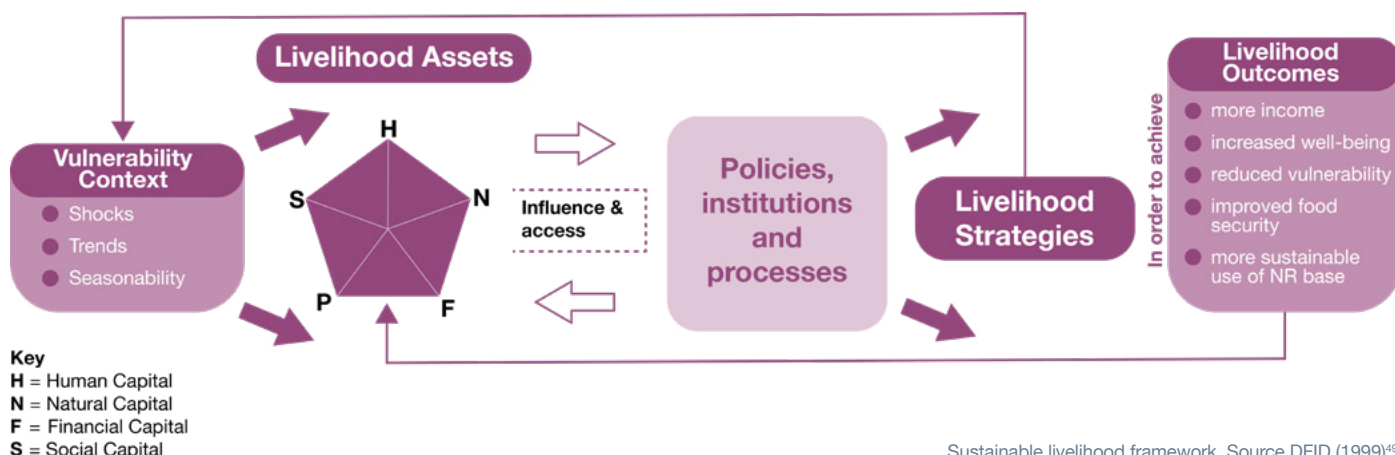
49 DFID (1999). Sustainable livelihoods guidance sheets. Framework introduction.

50 Ibid.

Figure 2: Sustainable livelihood framework

The sustainable livelihood framework summarises the main components of livelihoods. It does not provide an exhaustive list of issues to be considered. Livelihoods are shaped by a multitude of forces and factors which

are themselves constantly evolving. Analysis using the framework usually begins with simultaneous investigation of people’s assets, their objectives (the livelihood outcomes which they are seeking) and the livelihood strategies which they adopt to achieve these objectives.



Vulnerability context

Vulnerability context refers to the shocks, trends and seasonality which affect people’s livelihoods – and which are not controllable by local people in the immediate or medium-term.

Trends

- Population trends
- Resources trends (including conflict)
- National/international economic trends
- Trends in governance (including politics)
- Technological trends

Shocks

- Human health shocks
- Natural shocks
- Economic shocks
- Conflict
- Crop/livestock health shocks

Seasonality

- Of prices
- Of production
- Of health
- Of employment opportunities

Livelihood assets

The livelihood asset pentagon (shown in figure of the Sustainable livelihood framework above) shows the inter-relationship between the various assets. Asset endowments are constantly changing, and assets can be combined in multiple ways to generate positive livelihood outcomes.

Transforming policies, institutions and processes includes working with organisations, both public and private to improve processes (policies, legislation, culture, etc.) and alleviate barriers.

Livelihood strategies

The sustainable livelihood approach seeks to understand factors which lie behind people’s choice of livelihood strategy, to integrate the positive aspects and mitigate the constraints or negative influences. This is most likely to be achieved by working to improve people’s access to assets and to make the structure and processes more responsive to their needs.⁵⁰



Section 2. Summary of key challenges

Key informant interviews and the literature revealed challenges in both sectors that affect the quality of programming and the opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration. These challenges are outlined in this section including the lack of funding, of livelihood expertise, and of measurement, and each sector working in silo.

Lack of funding and short duration of programmes

Lack of funding and inadequate funding mechanisms are major issues for livelihoods for CAAFAG programming. Humanitarian funding mechanisms are often too short and rarely allow for a full livelihood programme as detailed in the theory of change of this technical note. Many projects funded under humanitarian funding streams are implemented for 12 months or less, which is not enough time to properly implement an effective and comprehensive livelihood programme incorporating best practices as detailed in the theory of change page 30. Humanitarian-development-peace nexus funding which would address these challenges is still too rare in conflict affected countries.

“We need a reflection on a minimum benchmark for funding. When we get small fund, we have low results.”

Elam Firrichi - Street Child Nigeria

Most CAAFAG have been through a difficult journey and rarely find suitable livelihood opportunities in a conflict-affected or post-conflict economy. The setup of a business or job placement is only the beginning, and they will still need sustainable support through mentoring and close monitoring over a long period of time to be successful.

Development funding mechanisms tend to offer longer project periods but rarely account for the specific needs of CAAFAG, such as robust psychosocial support, to recover and facilitate the transition from a military to a civilian identity. These funding mechanisms focus instead on system strengthening approaches which do not take into account the immediate needs of these children and rarely accommodate conflict sensitive approaches which require more flexibility.

Lack of livelihood expertise

Livelihood interventions for CAAFAG are often designed and implemented without drawing upon sufficient livelihood expertise, which limits their effectiveness. They are often more focussed on the supply of skills rather than on the demand side of job creation. The absence of labour market assessments to understand the constraints and capabilities of labour markets and the potential to expand labour opportunities within a market system, the

lack of understanding of value chains and the ignorance of technical aspects of income generation and poverty alleviation were widely reported during key informant interviews as well as in the literature.⁵¹

In apprenticeship programmes, children often have the choice between a few predetermined trades, identified based on the availability of craft masters or training centres, which leads to the oversaturation of markets with certain skills and trades. The structure and duration of apprenticeships are rarely long enough to properly learn a trade, particularly for children with a low level of education. These trainings are often not certified by the local Chamber of Commerce or the government, which prevents former CAAFAG from continuing their learning and devalues the certificate they receive.

Across a range of livelihood interventions, a lack of business skills training, follow-up and access to microfinance are also recurrent challenges. The distribution of startup kits on the last day of the programme with no additional support often results in children selling their kits a few weeks later. It typically takes many months for a new business to become profitable. During which time CAAFAG still need support to meet their basic needs, and to navigate the challenges of business management, during that period of time.

In general, the approach taken by child protection actors is frequently more social than economic. With a focus on child protection objectives and outcomes which do not achieve long term livelihood outcomes which reduce economic risk factors of recruitment. Some evaluations have nonetheless shown positive psychosocial outcomes of these programmes: They contribute to social cohesion, increase self-confidence,⁵² particularly for girls, and seem to have more positive outcomes in ‘trauma healing’ and as ‘pro-social activity’ than in providing long term income.⁵³

In some contexts, the aim is more to address security threats and promote stability in the short term⁵⁴ than to link short-term job creation to long-term opportunities.⁵⁵ CAAFAG are often considered a threat to national security. Livelihood programmes are thus used to keep them away from gangs or mercenary work in the short term, without anticipating long-term perspectives.

Lack of outcome measurement

The short timeframe of humanitarian funding does not allow for the measurement of mid- to long-term livelihood outcomes such as the % of children engaged in entrepreneurship programmes who report earning an income 6 months or 1 year after the setup of their business. In many cases, only outputs are measured, such as the number of children who are trained in business skills, or the number of children who receive a start-up kit.

Implementers have very little visibility on the effectiveness of these projects and as a result cannot adjust their activities if needed. Evaluations that have been conducted often fail to document the sustainability of business and job placement beyond the project period.⁵⁶ There is also limited rigorous evidence of the impact of these programmes on increase of income and employment for youth affected by conflict.⁵⁷

Working in silos

The child protection sector is the lead sector for CAAFAG programming. Yet, other sectors such as livelihoods, food security, health or education have a key role to play for successful prevention of recruitment and reintegration of children. However, coordination between sectors can be challenging and each sector tends to work in a silo, both within individual organisations and within the inter-agency humanitarian coordination system.

As described above, most livelihood programmes for CAAFAG are implemented by child protection players who often lack the expertise to deliver market-based economic programming.⁵⁸

However, referrals of CAAFAG from child protection to livelihood players is extremely challenging, as reported by key informants. The vulnerability criteria defined by livelihood actors rarely match CAAFAGs' profiles. Livelihood programmes are mainly designed for adults, and use vulnerability criteria for the whole household rather than individuals. Entrepreneurship programmes often do not target the most vulnerable. They require a minimum level of education, an entrepreneurial mindset and commitment to succeed. Additionally, the areas of intervention are not necessarily the same as where CAAFAG are from; usually remote rural communities affected by conflict and poorly connected to existing markets. They also do not always match their priority and interest. CAAFAG often are not interested in agriculture activities perceived as unstable, and hard work for low pay.

More generally, livelihood players are reluctant to engage children in their activities due to fear of doing harm, encouraging child labour although children are above the legal working age and keeping them away from education. Most funding available for livelihood programmes targets adults and very few opportunities are for children.

51 ILO - IPEC (2010). Children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups. How to guide on economic reintegration.

52 Coulter, C., Persson, M., Utas, M. (2008). Young female fighters in African Wars: Conflict and its consequences. The Nordic Africa Institute.

53 Coulter, C. (2004). The girls left behind project: an evaluation report. UNICEF Freetown.

54 Walton, O. (2010). Youth, armed violence and job creation programmes. A rapid mapping study. Norwegian Peacebuilding Centre.

55 Beasley, K. (2006). 'Job Creation in Postconflict Societies', Issue Paper No. 9, April 2006, USAID.

56 Sommers, M. (2006). 'Youth and Conflict: A Brief Review of Available Literature', USAID/EUIP.

57 Marin, C. M. (2016). Conflict-affected youth livelihoods programming: bridging the gap between research and practice.

58 Paris Principles Steering Group (2022). Paris Principles Operational Handbook.



Section 3. Lessons learnt and good practices for quality livelihoods programming for CAAFAG

Based on the findings of the literature review and the key informant interviews, this section summarises key elements to consider when designing and implementing a quality livelihood programme for CAAFAG. It includes key considerations, details of a recommended phased approach and a theory of change with three pathways.

Key considerations

Key considerations encompass gender, age, children with disabilities, decent work, child participation, climate-resilient and conflict-sensitive livelihood and safety.

Gender

Girls, particularly those with children of their own, face higher social and family pressure to be self-sufficient to provide for themselves and their children.⁵⁹

They also face additional barriers compared to boys to having sustainable income. They tend to have less control over resources, they have to manage childcare constraints, household chores and experience gender-based barriers to participating in livelihood programmes.⁶⁰ They also face more hurdles than boys to investing the money they earn into their business⁶¹ because of family pressure, and are limited to jobs and trades which tend to have lower income than male dominated sectors.⁶²

Some interventions, combined with livelihood programmes, will likely reduce barriers and increase women and girls' success in generating a sustainable income such as:

- **Childcare:** Access to childcare and adaptation of training hours allow girls with children to have equal access to training opportunities.⁶³
- **Involvement of parents and husbands** through counselling, parenting skills sessions or gender discussions may reduce social and gender barriers for girls to accessing services and increase girls' freedom of movement and their control over income.⁶⁴
- **Safe space for women and girls** to meet, and discussing with other women issues related to them and their families can reduce social isolation and psychosocial stresses.⁶⁵ The EA\$E approach from IRC combines Village Saving and Loan Association

and business skills training with gender discussion groups for female members and their spouses or key male gatekeepers in the home.⁶⁶

- **Supporting access to non-traditional jobs:** girls tend to choose traditional female trades and jobs because they do not know about alternatives. During career orientation, girls should access information about other opportunities such as male-dominated trades and ways of alleviating constraints.⁶⁷ It has been recommended that girls interested in pursuing these opportunities should be supported with gender-transformative interventions, where contextually appropriate, to mitigate the risks of further stigmatisation which are exacerbated for girls associated with armed forces and armed groups (GAAFAG).⁶⁸
- **Gender-specific life skills:** life skills sessions can focus on sexual and reproductive health, socio-emotional skills and decision-making. Life skills sessions can also encourage girls' participation and build their self-confidence. Combining life skills with vocational training can lead to an increase in income and employment rates.⁶⁹
- **Role models:** successful businesswomen can be role models and support girls through mentoring and counselling. Peer support and encouragement is particularly important for girls starting a business and is cited as critical for their success.⁷⁰

Age

Children who have reached the minimum age of employment set by the national legislation, usually the Labour Code, are eligible for livelihood and economic reintegration support. The minimum age is usually 15. According to the ILO Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age, apprenticeship is permitted from the age of 14 to prepare them for employment promotion programmes when they reach the minimum age of admission.⁷¹ In the case of children under 15, or children who are willing to continue their education, caregivers should be considered

59 Verhey, B. (2004). Reaching the girls: study on girls associated with armed forces and groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo. International Save the Children Alliance, CARE, IFESH, IRC.

60 Jayachandran, S. (2021). Social norms as a barriers to women's employment in developing countries. IMF Economic Review <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41308-021-00140-w>

61 Bernhardt, A., Field, E., Pande, R. and Rigol, N. (2019). Household Matters: Revisiting the Returns to Capital Among Female Microentrepreneurs. American Economic Review: Insights 1: 141–60.

62 Hicks, J. H., Kremer, M., Mbiti, I., Miguel, E. (2016). Evaluating the impact of vocational education vouchers on out-of-school youth in Kenya. International Initiative for Impact Evaluation.

63 The Alliance (2020). Technical Note on Girls Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups

64 Key informant interview. Nigeria.

65 ODI. UNICEF (2014). Effects of the Palestinian National Cash Transfer programme on children and adolescents. A mixed method analysis.

66 IRC. Economic recovery and development at the International Rescue Committee: women's economic empowerment. <https://www.rescue.org/resource/economic-recovery-and-development-international-rescue-committee-womens-economic>

67 ILO - IPEC (2010). Children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups. How to guide on economic reintegration.

68 The Alliance (2020). Technical Note on Girls Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups.

for economic support with the aim of supporting their children’s needs, including their education.⁷² Accelerated learning programmes and other adapted education activities may need to be provided. (See The Alliance. 2023. Education for CAAFAG technical note). In this situation, the support of a case worker through case management is critical to providing counselling to children and caregivers to reduce pressure on the child to provide for the family and encourage PSS activities, attendance of child-friendly space or youth club.

Children with disabilities

Association with armed forces and armed groups can cause long-term impairments or disabilities. The identification of children with less visible impairments, such as vision or sight impairments, or capacities to concentrate, may be more challenging. Field practitioners should consider the Washington Group set of questions⁷³ on child functioning during initial assessment to identify them sensitively.⁷⁴

Livelihood activities should be sensitive to and inclusive of persons with disabilities. For instance, training for children with disabilities, including physical, developmental disabilities and mental disorders may require some adaptation to accommodate their needs such as crutches, wheelchairs, visual aids, adaptation of the content, the training session length and regularity, and training venue.⁷⁵

Not all work done by children qualifies as child labour. The participation of children above the minimum working age in work which does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with compulsory education is perceived as positive.

Child labour is defined as work which deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work which: is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and/or interferes with their schooling by: depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

ILO Definition.

In conjunction with partners, children with disabilities should also receive specific life skills training to inform them of their rights, how to deal with prejudices and how to access public services.⁷⁶

Tools

- [World Vision. ACF. 2016. Employment of people with disabilities](#)
- [The Alliance. 2023. Guidance note. Qualitative assessment approaches for the protection of children with disabilities within humanitarian contexts](#)
- [The Washington Group. Child functioning module.](#)

Decent work

Work should be safe and not expose children to risk of harm, harassment or violence in the workplace. Particularly for former CAAFAG who have received a regular income and had power and status while associated with an AFAG, work opportunities should be attractive, meaningful and sustainable to effectively prevent recruitment or re recruitment. They should not only provide income, but also status and positive power; contributing to the feeling that they meaningfully contribute to their community.

As earlier mentioned, work should be attractive to children who often reject rural and traditional farming work done by their parents, perceived as too hard and unable to provide a decent income. Work should be innovative, provide a new civilian identity and satisfaction to “be someone again”.⁷⁷ A ‘conflict and child-sensitive economic and social environment assessment’ (see in the tools below) is useful to identify the specific vulnerabilities of and opportunities for CAAFAG.

- 69 Bandiera, O. et al. Women’s Empowerment in Action: Evidence from a Randomized Control Trial in Africa. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*. Jan 2020, Vol. 12, No. 1: Pages 210-259.
- 70 Minniti, M. (2010). Female entrepreneurship and economic activity. *European Journal of Development Research*, 22, 294-312. doi:10.1057/ ejdr.2010.18.
- 71 ILO - IPEC (2010). Children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups. How to guide on economic reintegration.
- 72 Specht, I. (2010). Stocktaking report on sustainable economic reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups and other vulnerable children.
- 73 <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-uncif-child-functioning-module-cfm/>
- 74 If impairments are identified, they should refer them to a medical specialist or specialist organisations for a comprehensive assessment and provision of technical aid if needed.
- 75 The Alliance (2020). Technical Note on Girls Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups.
- 76 ILO - IPEC (2010). Children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups. How to guide on economic reintegration.

For the ILO, decent work means working in conditions of freedom, equity, safety, and human dignity where the worker's rights are respected, and he/she can take part in decisions which may affect her/his welfare. Although finding decent work may be perceived as impossible in a conflict environment, it is a fundamental principle aligned with the fundamental right to work. The right to work is essential for realising other human rights and living in dignity.

Practically, decent work includes:

- Ensuring that fundamental rights are respected (no child labour, no forced labour, no discrimination);
- Promoting a productive activity that generates adequate income;
- Ensuring voice and representation.

ILO. Employment and decent work

United Nations. Economic and Social Council. The right to work. General comment No 18. 24 November 2005

“Agriculture programmes are facing challenges because of climate change. Yields are not good, there is not enough rain or there are insect attacks.”

Simon Kangeta - Ajedi-Ka in DRC

Tools:

- [ILO - IPEC \(2010\) Children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups. How to guide on economic reintegration](#) (including guidance for a local economic and social environment assessment)

Child participation and motivation

Children's motivation can be a key factor in the success of livelihood interventions, and greater child participation in the project can contribute to this. Child participation is a fundamental principle enshrined in the Convention of the Rights of the Child. Children should be involved from the design phase of programmes to influence programme modalities. Participation of children is not only their right, but their opinions are critical to contribute to more relevant responses. They know best what they need and how these needs can be addressed.

Experience shows that not engaging with at-risk children, particularly girls, often leads to incorrect assumptions that affect the programme's reach and impact,⁷⁸ and may do harm.⁷⁹ Child participation is also critical to ensure motivation and commitment of former CAAFAG into the programme. They rarely have role models; therefore, motivation is essential to maintain ambition despite difficulties, to encourage them to keep trying through the cycles of ups and downs.

Older children don't like to be told what to do, particularly when they don't perceive themselves as children. For some of them, they were in positions of power, treated as adults by the armed group or armed force. The learning modalities should be adapted to conversations rather than lectures, where children have the space to think and are empowered to make decisions.

Empowering former CAAFAG, particularly girls, to raise their voices and become local activists in climate change for instance, could help them transition from a negative position of power using violence to a positive position of power. The Accountability to the Affected Population framework (AAP) is useful to allow the participation of communities in the design of programme strategies.

Tools:

- [ILO - IPEC \(2010\) Children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups. How to guide on economic reintegration](#)
- [IASC \(2020\) With us & for us: Working with and for Young People in Humanitarian and Protracted Crises, UNICEF and NRC for the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action](#)

Climate resilience livelihoods

Livelihood programming should always be climate-sensitive. This means that the programme must not do harm to the local environment and ideally should respond directly to climate change.

For example, this may include training on producing crops that are less water intensive, encouraging the use of renewable energy such as biogas, solar power, or agroforestry for carbon absorption.⁸⁰ Life skills and business skills training should include elements of climate change awareness and solutions to reduce the negative impact of economic activities on climate.

Livelihood programmes should also be climate-resilient in assessing climate threats and natural hazards which may directly impact the livelihoods. It also includes support to the development of preparedness plans at households and community-levels, diversifying livelihoods and sources of income, introducing new technologies and skills, giving access to early warning systems and building saving capacities to cope and adapt.

Conflict-sensitive livelihoods

Understanding how the provision of livelihood services for CAAFAG intersects with factors which drive the conflict is important to ensure conflict sensitivity and to adhere to the humanitarian principle of ‘do no harm’. The process of designing and implementing a programme may affect how the programme is perceived by the community. The involvement of community members, youth and parents in programme design, through a conflict-sensitive approach, will contribute to identifying the programme modalities that will mitigate risks and ensure no harm is done.

Safety

Providing valuable assets to children in a context of extreme poverty may expose children to risks of being targeted out of jealousy, frustration or power imbalances. For example, in the Central African Republic, some CAAFAG had to share the startup assets they received for their businesses with community members or armed groups leaders or these items were destroyed by the armed groups.⁸¹

77 ILO - IPEC (2010). Children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups. How to guide on economic reintegration (p. 64)

78 Claessens, L. (2020). Adolescent programming toolkit. Plan International.

79 The Alliance (2022). CAAFAG programme development Toolkit: guidelines.

80 Ataii, T., War Child UK. (2023). Livelihood approaches for 2023.

“Motivation is key. It’s very important that people don’t lose their motivation to keep trying. Especially in chronically poor or crisis affected settings, where entrepreneurship is hard but a necessity in absence of employers, educational and training systems must pick up on that challenge.”

Jan Söhlemann - Plan International

Risks of economic abuse, or domestic violence, against female CAAFAG, have been reported because her husband or parents want to take a share of her income.⁸²

Existing guidance has recommended that a risk assessment should be conducted to assess the risk of providing livelihood programmes to CAAFAG and other vulnerable children in the community and to identify risk mitigation measures.⁸³ The risk assessment should analyse the power structures, who has visibility and a voice, what are their interests and conduct a stakeholder mapping to better understand the relationship between players.⁸⁴ The first risk mitigation measure is to implement non-targeted programmes. If this is done, livelihood support provided to former CAAFAG and children and youth at risk of recruitment in the community can contribute to preventing recruitment, to reducing the risk of stigmatisation and reprisal, and tensions in the community.⁸⁵

Risk assessment tools:

Cash and voucher assistance programmes

- [Alliance 2022. Guidance Note on cash and voucher assistance for child-headed household and unaccompanied children](#)
- [UNHCR. 2017. Cash feasibility and response analysis toolkit \(protection risks and benefit analysis tool\)](#)
- [Save the Children. 2019. Child safeguarding for cash and voucher assistance guidance](#)
- [Alliance The toolkit for monitoring and evaluating child protection when using cash and voucher assistance. Tool 1: focus group discussion/key informant interview tool to identify child protection benefit and risks before starting cash and voucher assistance](#)
- [IRC. 2019. Safer Cash Toolkit](#)

Reintegration programmes for CAAFAG

- [Alliance 2022. CAAFAG Programme Development toolkit](#). Risk assessment focus group discussion and key informant interview.

Key considerations and recommendations

- Develop gender-sensitive (taking into consideration specific gender-based needs) and gender-transformative (contributing to change gender social norms) livelihood programmes.
- Ensure equal access and control over resources in considering the specific needs of boys and girls associated with armed forces and armed groups, particularly girls who have children, when designing livelihood programmes.
- Document and take into consideration conflict sensitivity and the safety of children and staff when designing and implementing livelihood programmes using risk assessment tools to ensure the safety of children and conflict sensitivity, design and implement livelihood programmes using risk assessment tools.

Give children over 15 access to livelihood opportunities based on national child labour law and the ILO Convention 138 on Minimum Age. For children under 15, consider providing livelihood opportunities to their caregivers, so they can address the needs of their children.

- Consider the specific needs of former CAAFAG with physical and developmental disabilities and mental disorders when designing programmes to ensure equal access and respects of their rights.
- Offer decent work opportunities to CAAFAG, according to the ILO definition, which are relevant to their interests and capacities to ensure the safety and sustainability of livelihood intervention.
- Ensure that all livelihood programming is climate-resilient and promote elements of climate change awareness, solutions in life skills and business skills training, access to early warning and shock responsive social protection to prevent harm to communities and the environment.

Empower and engage children and youth throughout programme design and implementation processes with a particular focus on girls to ensure motivation of CAAFAG when participating in livelihood activities, empower and engage them.

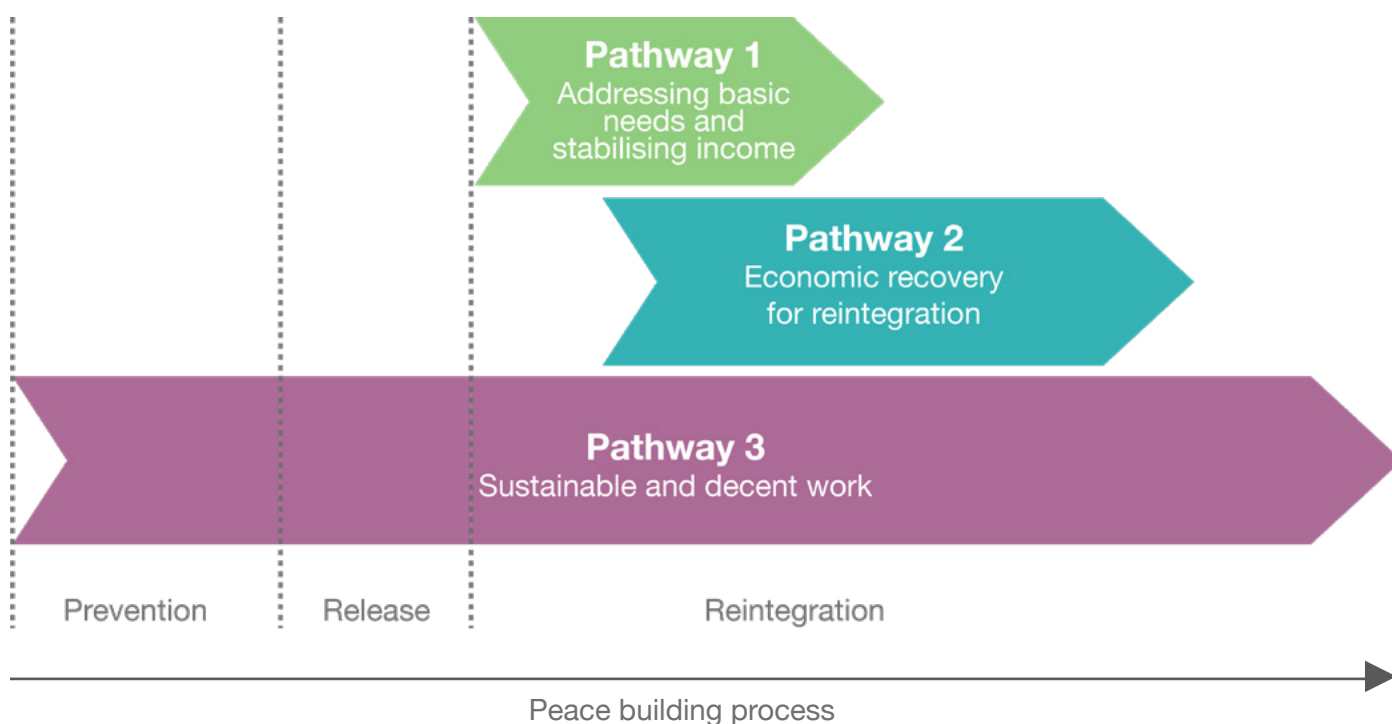
Adopting a phased approach to livelihood interventions for CAAFAG

The literature as well as findings from the key informant interviews show that a phased approach in livelihood programming is needed. This section outlines this approach in detail and makes reference to the findings of both where appropriate.

As part of a phased approach, basic needs should be addressed first to stabilise the children and their families after the release of children, then focus on economic recovery for the reintegration, while working towards sustainable income throughout, both for prevention and reintegration. In 2008, the UN published a combined policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration.⁸⁶ The report suggests a similar ‘three track approach’.

The three pathways recommended in this technical note, adapted from the UN report mentioned above, are contextualised to CAAFAG programming and include 1) Addressing basic needs and stabilising income generation; 2) Economic recovery for reintegration; and 3) Sustainable and decent work.

The diagram below shows how the 3 pathways overlap across prevention, release and reintegration, while the peace building process is implemented.



81 African Studies Centre Leiden (2016). The aftermath of demobilisation for children and youth in the Central African Republic.

82 Key informant interview. Nigeria.

83 Plan International (2022). Conflict sensitivity. A guidance note.

84 Plan International (2022). Conflict sensitivity. A guidance note.

85 The Alliance (2022). CAAFAG programme development Toolkit: guidelines.

86 <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/670379?ln=en>

RESPONSIBLE SECTOR	ACTIVITIES	PATHWAY 1	PATHWAY 2	PATHWAY 3
Livelihood or Child Protection	Cash and voucher assistance (multi-purpose unconditional cash, fresh food vouchers)	●		
	Cash for work	●		
	Cash for protection	●		
	Non-food items distribution	●		
	Risk assessment	●	●	●
	Discussion sessions on gender sensitive income management in the household	●	●	●
Livelihood	Business skills training	●	●	
	Veterinary support, feed distributions, water provision for animals	●	●	
	Rehabilitation of market infrastructures and services	●		
	Vocational training/Apprenticeship		●	
	Market assessment		●	●
	Micro finance (VSLA, micro credit)		●	●
	Livelihood assets/capital (business start-up kit/grant)		●	
	Mentorship - Business monitoring		●	
	Market system development		●	●
	Advocacy for land rights		●	●
	Community-based natural resource management plans			●
	Public-private partnerships for market-driven employment and business development services			●
	Linkages and support for market actors			●
	Market governance and cooperatives support			●
	Child Protection	Case management	●	●
Mental Health and Psychosocial Support		●	●	●
Parenting skills		●	●	●
Community engagement to increase CAAFAG acceptance and prevent recruitment		●	●	●
Life skills		●	●	●
Numeracy and literacy skills and accelerated learning programmes in partnership with the education sector		●	●	●

Pathway 1: Addressing basic needs and stabilising income

Key informants highlighted how important this first pathway is to addressing the basic needs of children and their family to ensure the success of future livelihood activities. If children don't have enough money to cover their basic needs, they tend to go back to armed groups or armed forces to be re-recruited, resort to other negative coping strategies (such as seeking work within other worst forms of child labour) or sell the assets that they have received at the end of their vocational training. This first pathway gives time to children to recover from potentially traumatic experiences, transition from military to civilian identity and gradually adjust to their (new) family and community environment. It includes modalities such as cash and voucher assistance, including cash for work, cash for protection, part-time education, as well as programmes such as child protection case management and psychosocial support. The objective is to address basic needs of vulnerable children in the short term, including their psychosocial well-being until their income is stabilised.

Pathway 2: Economic recovery for reintegration

This pathway focusses on the provision of resources and skills to children and their families to recover from shocks. These include the recruitment into AFAG, but may also include other shocks which impact on livelihoods such as death of the head of household, displacement, loss of assets or loss of access to their land due to the conflict. The livelihood intervention should address the challenges faced by children and their families in finding employment or starting their own business through activities such as skills strengthening, vocational training, apprenticeship, access to micro credit, business startup and mentorship.⁸⁷ It includes parenting support, community engagement to decrease stigmatisation, continuous psychosocial support, life skills and civic training with ongoing coordination and monitoring by a case worker until the child is successfully reintegrated. This pathway will likely overlap with the first pathway on basic needs. For instance, cash and voucher assistance can overlap with business skills training to allow children and families to focus on learning new skills and start their business while their basic needs are addressed. The objective is to support economic reintegration of children in the medium term.

Pathway 3: Sustainable and decent work

Through this pathway, players with the appropriate expertise will contribute to strengthening economic systems in conflict-affected locations. It includes private-public partnerships to alleviate barriers to youth employment, strengthening of the value chain, financial inclusion mechanisms (e.g. Village Savings and Loans, or micro-finance services) and access to markets to boost the formal and informal local economy. Programmes should stimulate both the demand and supply sides of the market. Legal reforms and national youth policies can be strengthened to help CAAFAG transition into the formal sector. This pathway is highly impacted by the peace building process. Peace and security are needed to establish partnership, and to secure public and private investments. The objective of this pathway is to promote long-term and sustainable income and prevent recruitment.

Phased approach recommendations

Consider 3 distinctive and overlapping pathways when designing livelihood programmes:

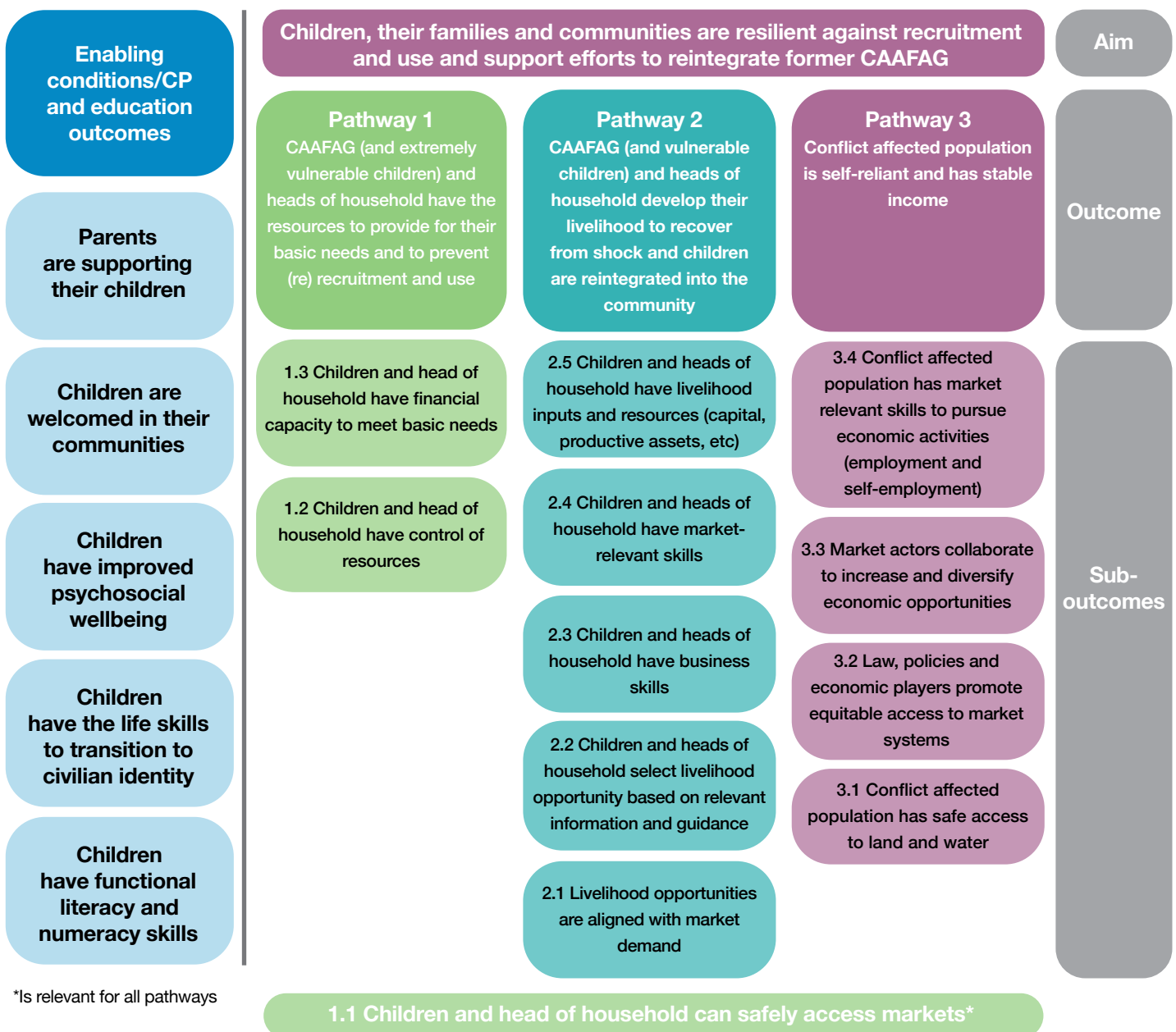
- Pathway 1: Addressing basic needs and stabilising income, short-term interventions immediately after CAAFAG release to cover basic needs.
- Pathway 2: Economic recovery for reintegration, medium-term interventions, once former CAAFAG have settled down.
- Pathway 3: Sustainable and decent work, long-term interventions at community level to contribute to the prevention of recruitment and use and support the reintegration of CAAFAG and vulnerable children.

87 United Nations (2008). Policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration.

Theory of change for quality livelihood programmes for former CAAFAG

The theory of change below is an attempt to summarise the 3 pathways developed in the previous section, taking into consideration the body of evidence available and the findings from consultations with both child protection and livelihood sectors.

The suggested outcomes are integrated outcomes, combining both sectors. Sub-outcomes are livelihood outcomes and the enabling conditions are child protection and education outcomes.



*Is relevant for all pathways

Pathway 1: CAAFAG (and children at risk of recruitment) and heads of household have the resources to provide for their basic needs

This pathway suggests that **if** children and heads of household can safely access markets (1.1), **and if** they are able to access and control resources (1.2) **and if** they have access to financial capacity (1.3), **then** they have the resources to provide for their basic needs.

Children who have just been released need support to meet their basic needs, including food, water, shelter and other essential items without resorting to harmful coping strategies. This support should focus on households with children at risk of recruitment, including those with CAAFAG to avoid stigmatisation and tensions in the community.

1.1 Children and heads of household can safely access markets *

Children and heads of household must safely access markets to meet their basic needs. This means that there are sufficient market points in the communities that children, including girls, and heads of household, including women, can access safely, without feeling threatened.

Basic needs modalities must take into consideration the safety and accessibility of markets.⁸⁸

Risk assessment will help identify risks and mitigation measures.

* This is relevant to pathways 1, 2 and 3.

1.2 Children and heads of household have control of resources

Children, particularly girls may not have control of resources due to social and gender norms. For instance, children living with their caregivers or girls in a relationship may not have control over their income. If caregivers or men are not properly engaged, girls, boys and women recipients of cash, for example, may not have control over the spending. Gender transformative programmes, including gender discussion with men, and caregivers may be needed to ensure that recipients of assistance have access and control over it.

1.3 Children and heads of household have financial capacity to meet basic needs

Children and heads of household must have purchasing power or access to basic items to be able to meet their basic needs. This can be achieved through various modalities such as cash and voucher assistance (CVA) including cash for work, food assistance including fresh food vouchers or non-food item distributions.

Cash and voucher assistance for children and heads of household is efficient and cost-effective. It stimulates local economies, and it is a dignified way of providing aid.⁸⁹ There are numerous perceived risks to CVA, such as corruption, diversion of funds, or use of cash to purchase non-essential items. Yet, evidence indicates that CVA is no more risky than in-kind assistance and can be delivered in ways which promote safety and security, even for adolescents. In some situations,

“If there are not enough funds to do a good livelihood programme, it’s better to do multi-purpose cash. If they use the cash to buy income-generating assets, we can then engage them in training later.”

Tiara Atai – War Child UK

88 IRC. People meet their basic needs and protect livelihood during emergency theory of change.

89 European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (2019). Factsheet: Cash transfers and Vouchers. https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/cash-transfers-and-vouchers_en

in-kind assistance may present a greater risk.⁹⁰ Risk assessment should be conducted to assess the risk and identify mitigation measures. CVA is primarily directed at caregivers or heads of household, but children may also directly be targeted with CVA with an adapted mechanism if they are head of household, for instance, or if they are providing for their own children.⁹¹

Cash transfer can be used by beneficiaries to meet their basic needs, but also to buy assets and develop a livelihood. Some programmes provide cash assistance

which is superior to the minimum food basket to encourage households to invest the surplus in assets and livelihood. If basic items are not available in local markets, in-kind distributions can be considered or short-term support to markets. It includes market rehabilitation, support to market functionality and stock. In non-food item distribution, consider the specific needs of boys and girls in the household. For instance, girls with children will need extra supplies for their babies and girls need the means to manage their menstruations with a dignity kit. Children with disabilities may also need specific support.

90 Bailey, S. and Harvey, P. (2015). State of evidence on humanitarian cash transfers: Background Note for the High Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers, ODI. <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/9591.pdf>

91 The Alliance (2022). Cash and voucher assistance and child protection in humanitarian action: Guidance note on cash and voucher assistance for child-headed households and unaccompanied children.

92 Specht, I. (2010). Stocktaking report on sustainable economic reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups and other vulnerable children.

93 Mercy Corps, Save the Children, IRC (2016). Labour market analysis in humanitarian contexts. A practitioner's guide.

94 Specht, I. (2010). Stocktaking report on sustainable economic reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups and other vulnerable children.

95 Key informant interview. IRC.

96 Paris Principle Steering Group. (2022). Paris Principles Operational Handbook.

97 ILO. (2010). Study on reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and groups through informal apprenticeship. Case studies of Korhogo (Ivory Coast) and Bunia (DRC).

“If they don’t have food on the table, there is no point training them on trades. This is the most important. If their basic needs are not met, they will use the money to buy food.”

Stephano Battain – IRC



Pathway 2 CAAFAG (and children at risk of recruitment) and heads of household develop their livelihood to recover from shock and children are reintegrated into the community

This pathway suggests that **if** livelihood opportunities are aligned with the market (2.1), **and if** children and heads of household select livelihood opportunity based on relevant information and guidance (2.2) **and if** they have business skills (2.3), **and if** they have market-relevant skills (2.4), **and if** they have livelihood inputs and resources (2.5), **then** CAAFAG (and children at risk of recruitment) and heads of household develop their livelihood to recover from shock and children are reintegrated into the community.

CAAFAG who are in the process of reintegration, or their caregivers, need support to recover from shocks. This support should be extended to other extremely vulnerable children to avoid stigmatisation and tensions in the community and contribute to the prevention of recruitment.

2.1 Livelihood opportunities are aligned with market demand

The mismatch between the offer of skills through livelihood programmes and the demand of the market was one of the main challenges raised by key informants. The trades selected for vocational training, for instance, are not always aligned with the market demand in the location where children are reintegrated. Training too many people in a limited number of skills in restricted areas leads to fierce competition, falling incomes, pressure to migrate, high mortality of micro-enterprises and finally, to failure of reintegration.⁹² Therefore, conducting a labour market analysis before the selection of livelihood opportunities and trades is key. Labour market analysis is about understanding the constraints, capabilities and potential to expand labour opportunities within a market system. In humanitarian contexts, this includes consideration of how target populations access labour markets.⁹³ It is crucial to map all economic players and understand the roles they play in economic reintegration of children. These include Chambers of Commerce, public and private employers, employment services, universities, business incubators, micro-finance institutions, business placement schemes of ministries for youth and private firms.⁹⁴ This market assessment should be done locally to identify viable trades or business ideas where CAAFAG will reintegrate, rather than a macro level analysis.⁹⁵

Market analysis tools:

- [Women's Commission for Refugee Women. Market Assessment Toolkit for Vocational Training Providers and Youth, 2008](#)
- Truelove, S., Shorey, B., Swift, A., Noronha, T., Pelly, I. and Long, C. [Labour market analysis in humanitarian context. A practitioner's guide](#) Save the Children, IRC, Mercy Corps 2016

“We need to look at gaps in the market, the value chain, in order not to saturate communities with one or two skills.”

Elam Firrichi – Street Child Nigeria

2.2 Children and heads of household select livelihood opportunity based on relevant information and guidance

Children and heads of household need support and guidance to make an informed decision about which area of employment they want to go into, what options are realistic in their context and therefore what kind of training they will benefit from.⁹⁶ A career counsellor will provide career orientation, explore expectations, projects and help match initial ideas with economic reality. It is also an opportunity to encourage girls to consider non-stereotyped occupations.⁹⁷

This is a fine balance between what they want, the market demand, their skills, abilities and network and the income they can expect.

Aspects to consider, particularly for children are:

- Recognise skills and experiences children have gained during the period of association with an armed group or armed force which they can transfer into civilian work.
- Give enough time to children to think and discuss options with friends and relatives.
- No ‘one size fits all’ approach. Encourage diversification and innovation; gaining several skills, enables them to better withstand fluctuations in the market. Attractiveness of jobs is a decisive criterion to get their adherence.

- When possible, consider organising trade fairs, job fairs, internships or visits to businesses or training centres, where children can learn more about different types of work.⁹⁸
- Explore land, networks and support they can access through their parents, ethnic group or community structures. This includes the possibility to join group business.

2.3 Children and head of household have business skills

Business skills training supports children and heads of household with the identification of a business idea, a detailed business plan, and entrepreneurship training. It is complementary to vocational skills training or can be standalone for resale activity in contexts where there are limited employment opportunities. More intensive, comprehensive approaches, with longer training and greater combination of services tend to be more effective.⁹⁹ Developing a business plan is one of the key components. It encourages children or heads of household to think outside the box and should include a phased approach. They can first test their idea and then scale up. Some organisations encourage the development of two business plans to have a backup plan if the first plan fails. It helps them bounce back from failure.

The training may include, depending on the context:

- Draft of a business plan
- Draft of a marketing strategy
- Estimation of the sales, costing goods and services, planning production and purchases, investments, payment of taxes and calculation of profits
- Selection of the legal form of the business, including a cooperative structure
- Cooperative principles and procedures if relevant
- Getting a clear idea about the licences and permits needed
- Assessment of the environmental impact of the planned business
- Assessment of occupational safety and prevention of health risks, including improvement of workplace environment and productivity
- Basic financial education
- Separation of family affairs and business
- Consideration of issues of specific interest to girls/women¹⁰⁰

Business skills tools:

- [ILO: Gender and Entrepreneurship Together: GET Ahead for Women in Enterprise, Bangkok, 2004](#)
- [ILO. Start and Improve Your Business](#)

“We need to support them with businesses which thrive in the communities where they have been re-unified or reintegrated. They become confident when they start making money from the business or skills. If they don’t make money, they become demotivated, sell the startup kit and explore other ways to survive - which are often negative.”

2.4 Children and heads of household have market-relevant skills

The technical and soft skills provided should address the mismatch in skills between job seekers and employers or entrepreneur and market demand, based on a market analysis. Evidence shows that vocational training and life skills and/or business training should be combined to be more effective.¹⁰¹ It also shows that apprenticeship is more effective than training programmes when employers or craft masters are experienced and ready to provide learning opportunities. Some programmes provide an additional incentive to the trainers based on the success of their trainees to increase their commitment. However, apprenticeship can create negative spillovers, potentially substituting employment away from other workers¹⁰² and increase competition when the apprentices set up their business in the same locations.

Apprenticeships should be formalised and aligned with national legislation to avoid exploitation and exposing children to safety risks and provide decent work according to the age of the apprentice. Their training should be certified and recognised by a national authority or the chamber of commerce. This is crucial to allow apprentices to find employment and to continue their training if needed. Vocational skills are accompanied with soft skills, such as employability skills, how to behave with an employer, duties and responsibilities and understanding their rights.

2.5 Children and heads of household have livelihood inputs and resources

Livelihood inputs and resources are necessary to start a livelihood after a shock, when assets have been lost. Access to inputs and resources will promote the startup of a business, but also its growth and profitability. It includes capital through cash grants, tools, machines, land and seeds.¹⁰³

A study in Liberia with former fighters shows that the combination of training and capital was effective to reduce mercenary work, while the impact of the training alone, without capital seems to be lower.¹⁰⁴

The evidence and theory on the advantages of in-kind grants versus cash is mixed. Cash is more cost-effective but in-kind grants can reduce intra-family conflict over resources, particularly for women and girls.¹⁰⁵ In the case of CAAFAG, there is evidence of pressure on children for both cash and in-kind. For example, in Nigeria, armed group leaders requested children to give them a percentage of the cash they received.¹⁰⁶ In the Central African Republic, armed group leaders and parents requisitioned in-kind startup grants from children for their own purpose. However, the provision of cash results in greater flexibility and is a more dignified approach. Again, these examples emphasise the need to conduct a risk assessment and identify risk mitigation measures, as well as a child-friendly feedback mechanism to monitor risks children may be exposed to.

Saving interventions, such as village saving and loan associations (VSLA) should be considered as a possible alternative to cash. They are cost-effective and have shown positive impacts. They are also more sustainable than cash and may facilitate continued investment over time. A study in Liberia found that VSLA were relevant to youth and contributed to significantly increased saving habits and led to business startup for 26% of them.¹⁰⁷ VSLA can also be combined with cash and voucher assistance.

Once the children and head of household have started their business, it is only the beginning of their journey. Key informants estimated that a minimum of 6 months follow-up is needed after the start of their business, with regular visits. They also highlighted that group businesses can provide greater physical security for CAAFAG, particularly for those with disabilities. However, they should be composed of a mix of youth from various backgrounds to avoid 'CAAFAG businesses' and to contribute to reconciliation.

Follow-up can be done by livelihood officers with the support of social workers to ensure the sustainability of vulnerable small enterprises. Support provided through

mentoring or peer networks is more reliable. Few studies identified that the mentorship component significantly improved profits¹⁰⁹, in a cost-effective way.¹¹⁰

VSLA Tool:

- VSL Associates. www.vsla.net/vsla-tools/

Case study Tech hub in DRC

The objective on the project led by War Child was to create a tech hub in Kibabi in Masisi territory as an alternative pathway to child recruitment. The pilot project specifically focused on youth at risk of mobilisation through markers identified by War Child in previous work. The youth received a training on the technical skills of digital annotation which offers freelance work opportunities that can be completed remotely. The project was managed by a supervisor who received training from Humans in the Loop, a private partner. The supervisor provided ad hoc support on entrepreneurship and supported on the quality assurance. 100% of the youth passed the training and finished the mock-up project.

Key learning from the pilot included the need to provide IT training and freelancing skills in addition to digital annotation, as well as basic English for understanding English terms in coding language. The project overall would benefit from an operation support manager. Internet access was too weak and required the purchase of a V-sat. Electricity was also challenging and required the purchase of larger battery storage and solar panels. Access to banking system for youth participants was also a challenge for the payment of stipends and will have an impact on their capacity to do freelance work. Future iterations should include financial inclusion components. Making the tech hub available for the community was crucial to the success of the project to ensure community buy-in and to reduce potential tensions.

- 98 Paris Principle Steering Group (2022). Paris Principles Operational Handbook.
- 99 Cho, Y. and Honorati, M. Entrepreneurship programmes in developing countries. A meta regression analysis. Policy research working paper 6402 (2013).
- 100 ILO - IPEC (2010). Children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups. How to guide on economic reintegration.
- 101 Kluge, J. et al. (2017). Interventions to improve the labour market outcomes of youth: a systematic review. Campbell Collaboration.
- 102 Almeida, R., Orr, L. & Robalino, D. Wage subsidies in developing countries as a tool to build human capital: design and implementation issues. IZA J Labour Policy 3, 12 (2014). <https://doi.org/10.1186/2193-9004-3-12>.

Pathway 3 Conflict affected population is self-reliant and has stable and decent work

This pathway suggests that **if** conflict affected population has safe access to land and water (3.1), **and if** law, policies and economic actors promote equitable access to market systems (3.2) **and if** market players collaborate to increase and diversify economic opportunities (3.3) **and if** conflict affected population has market relevant skills to pursue economic activities (3.4), **then** the conflict-affected population is self-reliant and has a stable and decent work.

The approach for this pathway is to strengthen the economic system at the community level rather than an individual level intervention. This approach will contribute to reducing risk factors to recruitment and as a result prevent recruitment, and facilitate the reintegration of CAAFAG.

3.1 Conflict-affected population has safe access to land and water

In the agri-food system, equitable access to productive land and water resources is essential.¹¹¹ During conflict, land may not be accessible due to land mines or requisition for military purposes, and water infrastructures may have been destroyed or contaminated. Safe and equitable access to land and water and land tenure must be promoted through advocacy to government and investors to rehabilitate land and water infrastructures and for the development of equitable resource allocation systems in rural and urban settings.

3.2 Law, policies and economic players promote equitable access to market systems

Market systems have laws and policies to promote inclusivity of children and heads of household affected by conflict. This may include the right to work, to make decisions, to control resources and to access supportive services and resources. Institutions and processes determine access to the various types of capital which will have an impact on livelihood strategies. Regulations may be very complex, and procedures can be costly.¹¹² Advocacy to the government for simplified regulations for populations affected by conflict, the establishment of standards and frameworks for social protection may alleviate barriers to access formal economy for vulnerable populations.¹¹³

3.3 Market players collaborate to increase and diversify economic opportunities

The involvement of private players is critical to ensuring long-term economic growth. Value chain and supply chain players must collaborate to increase and diversify the availability of economic opportunities for children and heads of households affected by conflict. This may include cooperative establishment and support, facilitating market linkages to suppliers of business inputs and services, working with traders and processors as well as finding and connecting partners and clients to new markets that purchase their goods and services.¹¹⁴ This may also include connection of children and heads of household with existing government institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture or Tourism, the Chamber of Commerce or private networks and systems.

3.4 Conflict-affected populations have market relevant skills to pursue economic activities (employment and self-employment)

The private and government sectors should be involved in programme design, to ensure that training courses are relevant and meet the market demand in formal and informal sectors.¹¹⁵ This includes the revision of technical and soft skills curricula and working with government training centres to update their equipment. Market relevant skills will support employment and self-employment, including technical and vocational training, market information, financial services and ongoing coaching and mentoring. Programmes will support the agricultural value chain, career development and business growth coaching, linkages and support for market players.¹¹⁶

“We want to move away from project approach towards a systemic approach to address the causes of child labour. In Niger, we are supporting host communities to develop the value chain. The approach is more about connecting refugees to this value chain.”

Sophie De Coninck – ILO

Case study - Employment Intensive Investment Programme in Myanmar

The ILO project was designed to support vulnerable women and men – in particular youth – in conflict-affected ethnic areas of rural Myanmar. The objective was to derive social and economic benefits and increase resilience in fragile situations from employment intensive investments in key infrastructure and demand driven Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)”.

The project focused first on the implementation of a policy for economically viable and conflict-sensitive job strategies.

Then, they designed effective employment-intensive and conflict-sensitive strategies for decent job creation and social and economic empowerment for vulnerable people. It included strategies such as building infrastructures (bridges, schools, etc.), training and mentoring support to manage construction contracts, the establishment of Village Development committees and creating a platform for key stakeholders in a conflict environment to develop relationships and work together.

Duty bearers were also engaged in the promotion and adoption of decent work practice, employment for peace instead of forced labour.

ILO. 2020. Evaluation summary. More and quality jobs are created through better policies and frameworks and a strengthened labour market information system



©Plan International. Burkina Faso

- 103 IRC ToC People develop their livelihood and recover from shocks.
- 104 Blattman, C., Annan, J. (2015). Can employment reduce lawlessness and rebellion? A field experiment with high-risk men in fragile state. Working paper 211289. DOI 10.3386/w21289.
- 105 IRC (2020). Livelihood literature review.
- 106 Magombedze, F. (2019). independent final evaluation report for supporting the socio-economic reintegration of children associated with armed forces and armed groups including the civilian joint task force (CJTF) in North East Nigeria Project. Search for Common Ground.
- 107 USAID. (2017). The advancing youth project learning agenda: youth participation in village savings and loan associations in an integrated ABE programme.
- 108 Specht, I. (2010). Stocktaking report on sustainable economic reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups and other vulnerable children.
- 109 Brooks, W., Donovan, K., Johnson, T. R., Mentors or teachers? Microenterprise training in Kenya. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics 2018, 10(4): 196–221 <https://doi.org/10.1257/app.20170042>.
- 110 IRC. Long-term economic stability theory of change.
- 111 Majale, M., Towards pro-poor regulatory guidelines for urban upgrading. A review of papers presented at the international workshop on regulatory guidelines for urban upgrading (2002).
- 112 IRC (2020). Livelihood literature review.
- 113 IRC. Long-term economic stability theory of change.
- 114 Ibid.
- 115 ILO - IPEC (2010). Children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups. How to guide on economic reintegration.
- 116 Ibid.

Recommendations of the three pathways

- Document outcomes for children and head of households across the 3 pathways to generate learning and adapt programmes if needed.
- Include other vulnerable non-CAAFAG children in livelihood interventions for CAAFAG to avoid stigmatisation and/or create perverse incentives for joining AFAG. (Non-targeted approach)

Pathway 1: CAAFAG (and children at risk of recruitment) and heads of household have the resources to provide for their basic needs

- Ensure safe access to markets for children and heads of household using risk assessment tools.
- Promote control of resources, particularly for girls and female head of household through gender-transformative programmes, such as gender discussion with male heads of household.
- Provide or enable access to financial capacity to children and heads of household using modalities such as cash and voucher assistance, food assistance or non-food item distributions.
- Prioritise pathway 1 if there is not enough funding and time to implement a quality economic recovery programme.

Pathway 2: CAAFAG (and children at risk of recruitment) and heads of household develop their livelihood to recover from shock and children are reintegrated into the community

- Ensure that livelihood opportunities are aligned with market demand using market analysis tools.
- Support children and heads of household in the selection of livelihood opportunities through individual career guidance based on skills, education, market demand and resources available.
- Provide or enable access to business skills to children and heads of household using simplified, and contextualised business skills training packages.
- Support children and heads of household in developing market relevant skills through formalised apprenticeship and soft skills training.

- Provide or enable access to livelihood inputs and resources to help children and heads of household start their livelihood through cash or in-kind grants, access to saving schemes and regular follow-up.

Pathway 3 Conflict affected population is self-reliant and has stable income

- Advocate to the government and investors for safe and equitable access to land and water and land tenure.
- Advocate to the government to establish market laws and policies which promote inclusivity of children and heads of household affected by conflict.
- Encourage market players to collaborate to increase and diversify economic opportunities such as support to facilitate linkage between value chain and supply chain players.
- Provide or enable access to market relevant skills to conflict-affected populations to support employment and self-employment.

Achieving Child Protection and Education Outcomes - Enabling conditions

The enabling conditions are Child Protection and Education sub-outcomes which should be achieved in concomitance with the three pathways. They were drawn from the literature review and the key informant interviews. Most of these sub-outcomes will require first an assessment of the needs of individual children and their families or at community level. Education programming integrated with Child Protection and livelihood programming will contribute to address risks CAAFAG face during their reintegration and provide a holistic response to their needs.

The role of the child protection caseworker, through the case management process, will be essential to assessing children and family needs, referring them to and coordinating with multiple service providers. Case workers will conduct an assessment of the needs of each child and his/her family looking at care arrangements, basic needs (food, shelter, clothes, etc.), their safety, family dynamics, family and community acceptance, psychosocial needs, level of education, etc. and develop an action plan to address the needs identified in a timely manner, taking into consideration the following elements. Training of the caseworker in livelihood will contribute to a stronger understanding of the livelihood needs throughout the case management process and stronger collaboration with the livelihood service provider.

Parents are supporting their children

Findings from the literature review and the key informant interviews show that the involvement of caregivers in livelihood programmes is essential. They can be involved as direct beneficiaries of livelihood activities to increase household income to care for their children, thus allowing them to go to school rather than needing to contribute to family income. Caregivers can also be involved to support the economic reintegration of their children. A family-based approach to economic reintegration has proven successful with the provision of basic services and access to humanitarian assistance to reduce economic stress on the family. In addition, it is observed that one of the barriers of succeeding in youth entrepreneurship has been family interference, including pressure to borrow money at the start of their business which then is rarely paid back.¹¹⁷ It seems that this is particularly relevant for girls who have less control over their income.¹¹⁸ In the Central African Republic, some parents who were not involved in the programme have jeopardised the livelihood of their children. For example, some of them removed the wheels of a pushcart provided to their children or they created problems because they didn't allow their children to graze the cattle which was given.¹¹⁹ In some communities, children from 13-15 years old are considered mature enough to make their own living. If parents do not provide for school fees, they feel they can make their own decision and they do not owe any explanation to their parents, creating tension in the family.¹²⁰ In other contexts, caregivers put pressure on their children to contribute to family income, despite parents being supported through livelihood programmes. Social workers may engage parents or caregivers through counselling and parenting programmes such as Growing Strong Together from IRC to mitigate these risks. Thus, the parents will become allies and support the success of their child.

Parenting skills tool: [Growing Strong Together. A parenting programme to support the reintegration of children and prevent their recruitment. IRC – The Alliance 2021](#)

Children are welcomed in their communities

Former CAAFAG are often exposed to stigmatisation and discrimination when they return to their family and community. Community social acceptance is crucial to promote their economic reintegration. In economic reintegration, understanding how the child is perceived in the community is critical. If they are not accepted socially, economic programmes are likely to fail. Interventions aiming at strengthening social acceptance of CAAFAG will be essential. Staff of vocational and business training and mentors, need to be trained on the background of CAAFAG and how

Case study - Community leaders engagement in Nigeria

Search for Common Ground in Nigeria partnered with Peace FM to develop and amplify messages on the needs for release and socio-economic reintegration of former CAAFAG.

Community leaders and selected line ministry representatives were engaged through project advisory committee in decision making and project implementation. They also attended micro-enterprise training and testified how the training transformed the mindset of children as well as theirs. Putting community leaders in the driver's seat of the project decision-making was determinant to the success of the project.

to handle potential behavioural problems they may experience.¹²¹ Community leaders should be involved. As they often have the power to change social norms and the perception of these children. Social workers may directly connect with the local leaders or involve community mobilisers from their organisation.

- 117 Specht, I. (2010). Stocktaking report on sustainable economic reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups and other vulnerable children. Transition International.
- 118 Findings from gender analysis in Nigeria, Mozambique and Burkina Faso.
- 119 African Studies Centre Leiden (2016). The aftermath of demobilisation for children and youth in the Central African Republic.
- 120 Ibid.
- 121 Specht, I. (2010). Stocktaking report on sustainable economic reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups and other vulnerable children.
- 122 Wessels, M. (2006). Child soldiers: from violence to protection. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- 123 Boothby, N., Crawford, J. and Halperin, J. (2006). 'Mozambique Child Soldier Life Outcome Study'. *Global Public Health*. 1(1). pp. 87-107.
- 124 Kular, S. and Willman, A. (2016). Healing invisible wounds and rebuilding livelihoods: Emerging lessons for combining livelihood and psychosocial support in fragile and conflict affected settings. *Journal of Public Health Policy* · September.
- 125 UNICEF (2019). MHPSS & Children Affected by Armed Conflict.
- 126 The Alliance (2020). Technical Note on Girls Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups.

Case study - Peace gardens

War Child in Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo established Peace Gardens to support the well-being of children and young people through the social and therapeutic benefit of farming and gardening. The initiative also aims to teach conflict-affected communities vital skills to grow their own food and create a sustainable livelihood.

Peace gardens adopted the innovative social and therapeutic horticulture methodology which address both the needs for social skills and boost young people's capacity to grow their own food through modern techniques. The peace gardens create a safe space for vulnerable children, including former CAAFAG, and help rebuild their physical and mental well-being whilst improving their communication skills by collaborating and supporting each other.

"After my release from the armed group, I did not know what to do to survive. Thanks to the kits and my participation in the activity, I now have the skills to grow my own food and earn an income in order to manage my daily needs." Catherine, member of the Peace Garden group

Children have improved psychosocial well-being

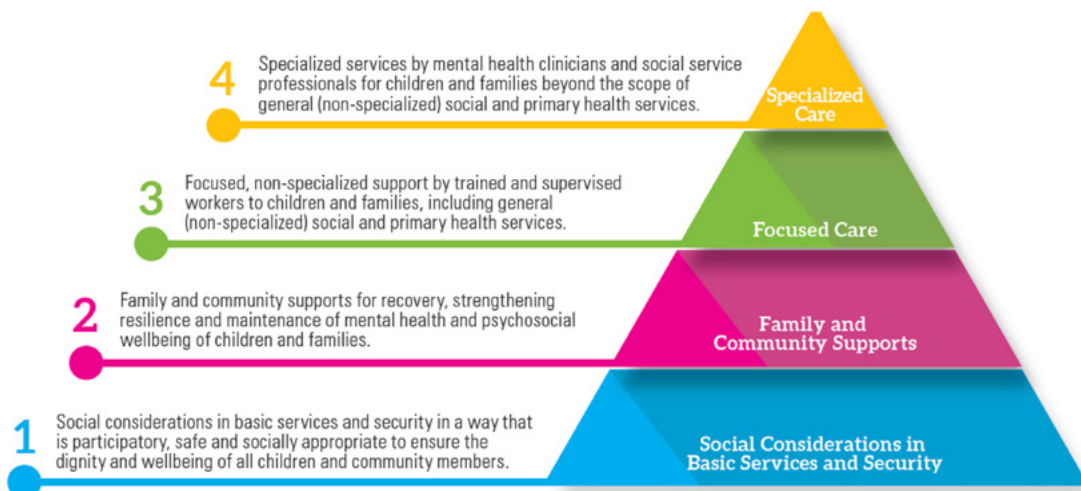
Relieving economic stress of CAAFAG and their caregivers through economic reintegration programmes contributes to mental health and psychosocial outcomes, as well as strengthening self-confidence and hope, particularly for girls.¹²² Evidence shows that livelihood programmes have been successful in improving livelihoods and income earned later in life, as well as providing some psychosocial support,¹²³ particularly if the livelihood intervention builds economic assets rather than only providing a short-term income boost.¹²⁴

Yet, some children may need psychosocial support to recover from traumatic experiences before and while attending livelihood interventions. Both boys and girls who have experienced violence may show signs of anxiety, difficulty with mood regulation, aggression, difficulty sleeping, nocturnal enuresis (nighttime incontinence) and post-traumatic stress disorders, as well as challenges in developing trusting relationships.¹²⁵ The stigma, discrimination and isolation that some children face, particularly boys and girls who are survivors of sexual violence, may also lead to additional stressors. Girls who have children due to sexual violence during their association often face additional discrimination.¹²⁶

Some key informants highlighted that mental health conditions and psychosocial problems of children may have an impact on their businesses. Thus, taking the time to recover with mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), and providing ongoing counselling through case management while meeting their basic needs (Pathway 1), can be a soft transition before starting livelihood activities (Pathway 2).

Evidence shows that the combination of both livelihood and psychosocial support seems to enhance psychosocial well-being, particularly if the support is sustained over time.¹²⁷ Providing vocational teachers, and business skills trainers on psychosocial first aid is also critical to promoting a safe learning environment.

Based on the assessment, caseworkers will identify the MHPSS service providers and, in some cases, provide direct psychosocial counselling when they have the required skills. MHPSS interventions may take various forms, such as encouraging peer support groups, recreational activities in safe spaces, or psychosocial support sessions across the various levels of the IASC MHPSS intervention pyramid.¹²⁸



IASC MHPSS intervention pyramid: adapted from the UNICEF's MHPSS Technical Note

MHPSS Tool: [UNICEF.The MHPSS Collaborative. 2022. Mental health and psychosocial support in children associated with armed forces and armed groups programmes](#)

Children have the life skills to transition to civilian identity

The transition from military to civilian identity may be challenging for children, particularly for those who had positions of power and respect during the period of association. Reintegration implies that children have **desisted** from the armed group or force (cessation of activities for the armed group or force) and are **disengaged** (disincorporation and de-identification as group member).¹²⁹ Yet, some children may have a difficult time adjusting to programmes that do not recognise their agency and decision-making power or treat them like children when they were used to taking on adult roles.



Entry into the labour force is often perceived as enabling youth to redefine themselves and to shift their identity from soldier to civilian.¹³⁰ However, some children may need additional support through counselling, and identifying new role models in their life which are not military figures to guide them through the transition. A caseworker, through the case management approach, can help them in this shift and in the identification of new role models. Life skills training such as the Save the Children Life Skills for Success¹³¹ providing communication skills, higher-order thinking skills, positive self-concepts, self-control and social skills may be useful to support the transition to adulthood and secure decent work.

“Sometimes we are including children too fast into economic recovery programmes with a lot of pressure to be productive, while psychologically, they are not ready for that.”

Stephano Battain – IRC

Children have functional literacy and numeracy skills

Some children who have been associated with armed forces and armed groups may have missed years of education. This may result in lack of functional literacy and numeracy skills which are essential to their economic reintegration, particularly for entrepreneurs. Too often, children are given the choice between education and livelihood activities, whereas the two can be combined. The combination of both interventions has proven to reduce economic stress, while keeping them focused on their education. Education interventions such as catch-up programmes, remedial programmes or accelerated programmes may also contribute towards bridging the gap to reintegrate formal education.

For other children, access to functional literacy and numeracy skills will provide the necessary skills to follow apprenticeship, set up their business or enter into employment.

The combination of formal education through accelerated learning, with apprenticeships and work, has been one of the most successful practices of the child reintegration programme in Liberia.¹³²

In conjunction with the livelihood service provider, and based on the wishes of the child, social workers may identify the need for education support and refer the child to formal or informal education opportunities.

Education tool:

- Alliance 2023. Education for CAAFAG Technical Note

127 Kular, S. and Willman, A. (2016). Healing invisible wounds and rebuilding livelihoods: Emerging lessons for combining livelihood and psychosocial support in fragile and conflict affected settings. *Journal of Public Health Policy*.

128 Hijazi, Z & de Carvalho Eriksson, C. (n.d.) Mental Health and Psychosocial Technical Note. UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/documents/mental-health-and-psychosocial-technical-note-in-the-MHPSS-operational-guide>.

129 O’Neil, S. & Van Broeckhoven, K. (2018). Cradle by conflict: Child involvement with armed groups in contemporary conflict. UNU.

130 The MHPSS Collaborative. UNICEF (2022). Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in CAAFAG programmes. Operational guidance.

131 Save the Children Life Skills for Success. <https://www.savethechildren.org/content/dam/usa/reports/ed-cp/life-skills-for-success-overview.pdf>

132 Ibid.

Enabling conditions recommendations

- Provide livelihood interventions for CAAFAG coupled with case management to identify and address the holistic needs of children.
- Support former CAAFAG in their transition from military to civilian identity through counselling and new role models.
- Improve former CAAFAG psychosocial well-being through case management counselling and MHPSS interventions.
- Work closely with families and communities to promote former CAAFAG acceptance and social cohesion, reduce discrimination and prevent re recruitment.
- Provide functional literacy and numeracy skills as well as other formal and informal education opportunities combined with livelihood opportunities.
- Promote a supportive family environment through counselling and parenting skills.

“We often see that children don’t stay long in the communities of reintegration because they are not accepted in their communities. They face stigmatisation, people have not forgotten their experience, they see them as perpetrators. When the people don’t accept them, the risk of recidivism may increase.”

Christopher Chinedumuije PhD
– Goal Prime Nigeria



Section 4. Promoting collaboration between the child protection and food security sectors

Multisectoral programming which intentionally includes and addresses child protection considerations contributes to higher-quality impacts. As it contributes to improving the outcomes of both sectors. Three ways of working across the two sectors can be distinguished: 1) Mainstreaming, 2) Joint programming, and 3) Integrated programming.

The collaboration can be within one organisation which has programmes in both sectors, between two organisations or between coordination groups.

The table below summarises the three ways of working and provides examples of programming.

Ways of working across Child Protection and Food Security sectors¹³³

Ways of working	Definition	Considerations	Examples
Mainstreaming	To promote a safe, dignified and protective environment for children and to improve the impact of all livelihood interventions by applying the do no harm principle and proactively reducing risks and harm for children	Interventions are conducted within a specific sector	<p>Training of livelihood staff in child safeguarding and child-friendly communication</p> <p>Training of child protection staff in identifying children or families for livelihood programmes</p> <p>Joint workshop on protection risks in livelihood interventions</p> <p>Discussion between the CP and food security clusters to harmonise livelihood packages, share information about market analysis, minimum food basket, agree on vulnerability criteria, organise a joint workshop on cash for protection, develop joint standard operating procedures, etc.</p> <p>Including CAAFAG as a vulnerability criterion for livelihood interventions, whether for direct support to children (see age consideration p x) or to the heads of household</p> <p>Adapting vocational training and employment programmes to the needs of CAAFAG</p> <p>Engaging youth, including CAAFAG, in livelihood programme design</p> <p>Allocating a % of beneficiaries with protection risks in cash programmes, such as CAAFAG</p>
Joint programming	To achieve child protection outcomes alongside livelihood outcomes	Child protection and food security sectors maintain their own objectives while jointly planning and implementing certain aspects of their programmes	<p>Developing joint standard operating procedures to identify and refer CAAFAG and vulnerable children for case management (CP actors) or for livelihood support (livelihood actors)</p> <p>Livelihood actor provides vocational training to CAAFAG and vulnerable children in a youth centre managed by a CP player</p> <p>CP player provides life skills and MHPSS sessions to youth attending livelihood activities who are at risk of recruitment</p>
Integrated programming	To achieve shared outcomes for children through deliberate, joint assessment, joint programme design and implementation	A holistic understanding of child-well-being and healthy development is the starting point of action	<p>A comprehensive livelihood programme for CAAFAG is jointly designed and implemented, addressing the 3 pathways of the theory of change and the enabling conditions.</p> <p>Case workers work closely with livelihood officers to identify and respond to the needs of CAAFAG and vulnerable children in a timely manner.</p> <p>Integrated registration mechanisms, delivery of cash and livelihood support, and integrated feedback and complaint mechanism.</p>

¹³³ Adapted from the types of collaboration of the Alliance Guidance note: Supporting integrated Child Protection and Education Programming in Humanitarian Action and the Alliance Child Protection Minimum Standards.

A culture of collaboration

Stronger collaboration between the food security and child protection sectors entails a mindset of cooperation and a mutual desire to work together to achieve greater outcomes. Each sector has its own skills and expertise that could benefit the other sector. Coming from the perspective of learning from each other and sharing information is essential to break silos. This culture of collaboration can be encouraged and role-modelled by cluster leads, organisations' senior leadership, and team management.

Standard 22 of the Child Protection Minimum Standards focusses on livelihood and child protection, providing key actions indicators, and guidance notes.

Mainstreaming

Inter-agency livelihoods and child protection coordinators (e.g. cluster leads and co-leads, refugee sectoral coordination leads, etc.) have a significant role to play in fostering the relationship across sectors to promote mainstreaming. Mainstreaming can be implemented between two teams of the same organisation, between organisations and at the coordination group level. Mainstreaming can be done both ways, by child protection players to ensure that children are considered and protected in livelihood interventions; and by livelihood players to promote quality livelihood programmes in child protection interventions. Training on child safeguarding, protection risks analysis, conducting joint workshops across teams, training on market assessment, etc. are ways to mainstream livelihood and child protection in each sector initiated by organisations or coordination group leads. Mainstreaming is a good start to promote collaboration. However cross sectoral monitoring needs to be included to ensure the quality of programming.

Joint programming

Joint programming is mainly conducted through mutual referral and the provision of services for each other's beneficiaries. For instance, CAAFAG identified by a child protection player can be referred to a livelihood player to access an employment programme. Livelihood actors can also refer CAAFAG identified among their beneficiaries or children at risk of recruitment to a child protection player to provide case management, MHPSS and other protection services. This requires the training of staff in safe identification and referral and the development of standard operating procedures, including criteria and referral procedures. Joint programming is defined between organisations (through an MoU) or discussed across teams at the proposal development

stage to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and that enough budget is allocated for each team. This also ensures that vulnerability criteria are defined jointly. In joint programming, each team achieves its own outcome separately.

“The project approach is positive. We have one person dedicated to the project to facilitate the integration. He received training on child protection approaches, vulnerability and risks. This is an advantage.”

Salimatou Traoré – IRC CAR

Case study – Cluster collaboration in Syria

In North East Syria, the CAAFAG task force of the CP cluster as developed a guidance note with the food security cluster on livelihood for CAAFAG.

The guidance note highlights how the livelihood sector can support engagement with released children and children at risk of recruitment through positive livelihood strategies and activities.

It highlights how livelihood actors can undertake dedicated activities to prevent and respond to girls and boys affected by recruitment through their own sectoral interventions. It highlights why livelihood is important for CAAFAG, guidance on collaboration at all steps of the project cycle, coordination, capacity building and various livelihood programme interventions for CAAFAG.

Integrated programming

Integrated programming involves strong collaboration between two organisations or two teams of the same organisation through all the steps of the project cycle, from the assessment to project design, implementation, and monitoring. Developing integrated programmes can be challenging. Competition for funding and deciding who is going to manage what are some of the barriers to integrated programming. It usually requires additional time and effort to factor in throughout the project cycle. Yet, integrated programmes are one of the most effective ways of addressing some of the challenges highlighted by key informants. The issue of

vulnerability criteria not including CAAFAG is addressed from the design stage. Coordination challenges and confidentiality are also addressed through internal standard operating procedures, clearly highlighting the roles and responsibilities of each team and including training on data management and confidentiality. Within the same organisation, a project approach, instead of a sector approach, may facilitate the management of an integrated programme. In this case, the project manager has a dual reporting line with a multisectoral team, who receives technical support from each sector lead.

Cross-sector collaboration recommendations

- Develop a culture of collaboration between the food security and child protection sectors through coordination group leads, organisations’ senior leadership, and team management role models to strengthen the quality of livelihood programmes for CAAFAG.
- Mainstream livelihood in child protection interventions and mainstream child protection in livelihood interventions to foster relationships across sectors and to promote a safe, dignified and protective environment for children.
- Promote joint programmes between the two sectors through joint planning and joint implementation of certain aspects of their programmes to ensure common vulnerability criteria and achieve child protection outcomes alongside livelihood outcomes.
- Promote integrated livelihood and child protection programming for CAAFAG to achieve shared livelihood and child protection outcomes for children.

Recommendations for donors

- Consider the triple nexus in funding CAAFAG programming, including humanitarian, development and peace building interventions to facilitate the reintegration of children.
- Require a risk assessment and conflict sensitivity analysis before implementing a livelihood for CAAFAG programme.
- Request for livelihood for CAAFAG programmes
 - A non-targeted approach (including other vulnerable children)
 - Climate resilient and gender-sensitive programme
 - Coordination between child protection and livelihood actors

Case Study - CVA for CAAFAG

In DRC, Save the Children has developed an integrated programme on cash and voucher assistance for CAAFAG and other vulnerable children at-risk of enrolling into armed groups/forces with a research component. The objective is to build evidence on the effectiveness of CVA to achieve child protection outcomes. The research component includes a baseline study, a post-distribution monitoring survey, an endline study and an impact assessment 3 months after project end. The baseline/endline/impact assessments are undertaken through focus group discussions and key informant interviews with local CP players as well as a household survey administered as a census (100% of the caseload).

The project included a CVA risk assessment with local child protection players as well as local authorities to determine CVA risks and opportunities and subsequent mitigation measures. Multi Purpose Cash Assistance and basic financial management is being delivered to complement regular case management, access to psychosocial services through child-friendly spaces, and legal support (ex-CAAFAG certification by national demobilisation, disarmament, and reintegration authorities). Project design and implementation is undertaken jointly between the CP and CVA teams who meet on a regular basis to ensure the effectiveness of the complementary support.

The two sector leads jointly facilitated a workshop at the beginning of the project to bring the two teams together and to define the roles and responsibilities of each team.

- Encourage mainstreamed, joint or integrated programming between child protection and livelihood players.
- Provide long-term funding for livelihood programmes targeting CAAFAG to accommodate their specific needs and to generate evidence on programme outcomes.
- Consider the following duration of programme:
 - 1 year minimum for pathway 1: Addressing basic needs and stabilising income generation
 - 2 years minimum for pathway 2: Economic recovery for reintegration
 - 3 years minimum for pathway 3: Sustainable and decent work
- Ensure that all outcomes of a pathway are covered when funding livelihood interventions for CAAFAG.