

# STRENGTHENING & SAFEGUARDING A WOMAN AND A CHILD

A GBV and Child Protection Programme Strategy



Gender-based Violence (GBV) and Violations of Child Rights are not mutually exclusive categories. Whilst GBV can include children, violations of child rights can occur in the form of GBV. In Afghanistan, both of these are a hard reality. Yet, certain groups of children, like indirect victims of GBV, young boys and under-18 married girls, do not fall under the radar of stakeholders. Underreporting of cases and weak referral systems for child protection and GBV cases are reported. How can the missing link between GBV and Child Protection be addressed at the field level?

This research project focuses on two extremely sensitive, yet critical concepts and endemic operational issues: GBV and Child Protection (CP). The aim of this research is to provide a roadmap to programming in these areas that will realistically: a) address the needs of the people and b) allow for optimum use of present capacity and resources. As a structure therefore, this research will on the one hand, aim to look at GBV and CP as stand alone issues in selected areas in the provinces of Kabul, Kunduz, Baghlan and Takhar. On the other hand, it will also explore the overlaps between GBV and Child Protection – namely:

- What GBV issues do children face?
- Do interventions targeting GBV include CP and vice versa?

This report, commissioned by ChildFund Afghanistan and undertaken by Samuel Hall, reports on GBV and CP cases, to fill information gaps and offer a program strategy to better link GBV and CP in the field.

## Main Findings

**Children as victims of GBV:** In Afghanistan, GBV was reported in both under-18 girls and boys. Actors reported more cases of sexual abuse amongst boys than girls.

**Key vulnerable groups forgotten:** Certain groups of children like indirect victims of GBV, young boys and under-18 married girls do not fall under the radar of stakeholders.

**Under reporting of cases:** GBV cases in general are extremely under-reported in the target provinces. Moreover, information collection and analysis need further improvement.

**Weak referrals:** Referral systems for CP and GBV cases are uneven across provinces. They are not supported by strong follow-up procedures.

## Response to GBV and CP

The key features of a stakeholder mapping exercise conducted in the target provinces are:

**Who is doing what where?** There are a number of actors who do child protection and GBV but few work on the link between GBV and CP, such as addressing sexual violence amongst boys or indirect victims of GBV.

**Uncoordinated groups:** The study finds that whilst the cluster system exists, as well as the CPAN and DCPAN in the provinces, there are still additional and uncoordinated committees at the national, provincial and local level that could be used to gain access and outreach by NGOs.

## Challenges & Gaps

### Environmental Challenges

- Insecurity
- Long-held cultural norms
- Internal community conflicts
- Shortage of local resources (especially female staff)

### Programmatic Challenges

- Poor capacity amongst implementers
- Difficulties in changing the minds of people
- Lack of trained professionals in GBV and CP
- Challenging laws that safeguard the rights of women and children.
- Vulnerability of women and children in institutions like prisons, JRCs and orphanages.
- Mismanagement of referrals

### Coordination Challenges

- Discrepancy of presence in Kabul and the provinces
- Difficulties with government coordination
- Poor information gathering and reporting

### Gaps in Programming

- No education and welfare of children whose mothers are in prisons
- Accountability in referrals and case follow-ups
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Inconsistent data collection and analysis

The programme strategy recommends **continued programming in CP with strong emphasis on GBV issues.**

The strategy is based on a 5-point cycle:

1. Developing an understanding
2. Defining a position
3. Evidence-based programming
4. Cross-cutting sectors, and
5. Advocacy

## Concept Notes for Future Programming Initiatives on GBV / CP

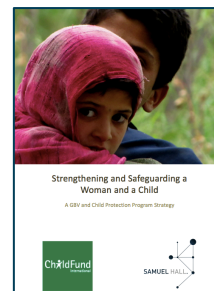
Two concept notes for future projects have been developed to address our core findings:

### CN 1: Violation of Child Rights: Strengthening Reporting on CP Cases

The objective of this project is to strengthen the procedures through which cases of child violations are handled through an identification of bottlenecks and facilitating points in current procedures, stakeholder collaboration and capacity building. Information collected through the course of this project will feed into pre-defined advocacy manuals and case studies to highlight challenges of case implementation in Afghanistan.

### CN 2: Addressing the Needs of the Forgotten – GBV and CP Links

The objective of this project is to divert resources and attention to some of these marginalised groups of children, who are often forgotten in the challenge of responding to the needs of direct and acute victims of GBV. This project addresses the needs of two key groups of populations that are vulnerable to GBV: Young boys and indirect victims of GBV – those children who have been exposed to violence. Other peripheral target groups include: children of female prisoners, children in orphanages and children in juvenile rehabilitation centres.



For more research and analysis, visit our website: [samuelhall.org](http://samuelhall.org)

The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the views of ChildFund.