



It takes a nation
to protect the future generation

World Vision
South Sudan

Children Associated with Armed Forces & Groups

Programme Brief | Yambio, South Sudan



2019



“We were made to walk for three days without rest and food. I felt weak and tired but kept moving for fear of getting killed. They took us to the bush and I was handed over to one of the group’s commanders who treated me badly. But what scared me most was watching people being killed.” *Mary (not her real name), a 17-year-old former child soldier*

Read more: [From horror to hope: Former child soldier sews her way to healing and recovery](#)

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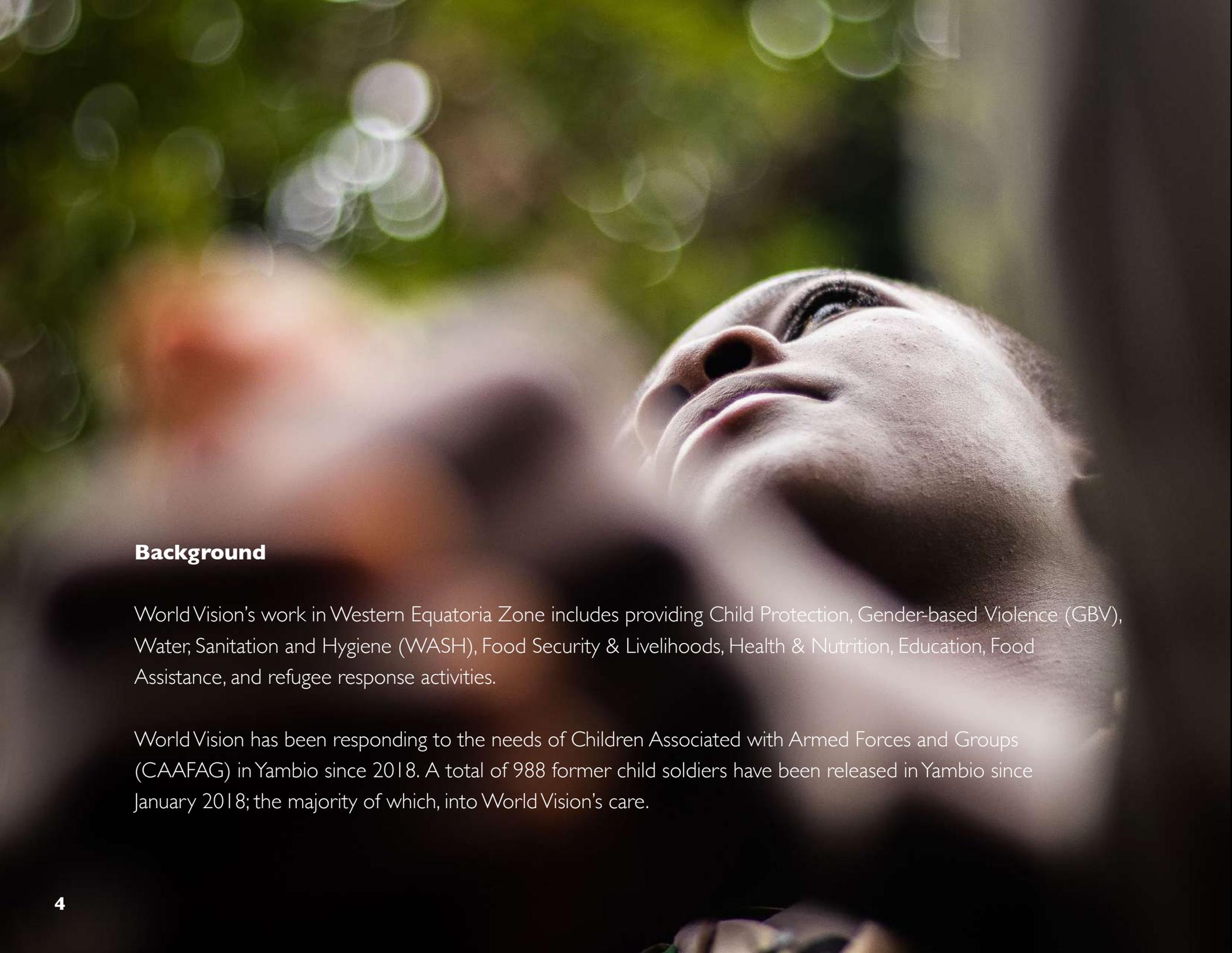
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Background

World Vision's work in Western Equatoria Zone includes providing Child Protection, Gender-based Violence (GBV), Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Food Security & Livelihoods, Health & Nutrition, Education, Food Assistance, and refugee response activities.

World Vision has been responding to the needs of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Groups (CAAFAG) in Yambio since 2018. A total of 988 former child soldiers have been released in Yambio since January 2018; the majority of which, into World Vision's care.

Context in South Sudan

Grave Violations Against Children

- 1 Killing and maiming of children
- 2 Recruitment and use of children by armed forces or groups
- 3 Attacks on schools and hospitals
- 4 Rape or other sexual violence against children
- 5 Abduction of children
- 6 Denial of humanitarian access to children



19,000

children associated with armed forces and groups

Understanding CAAFAG in South Sudan

- Many children are part of locally organized armed groups, or community defence forces tasked with protecting their homes
- Government of South Sudan has passed legislation criminalizing recruitment and use of children under 18 by armed forces
- Both boys and girls are at risk of recruitment; roles within the armed forces and groups are determined based on sex and age
- Adolescent boys are recruited into combatant roles; younger boys are given roles of cooks or body guards for commanders
- Girls are also recruited in various roles: combat activities, intelligence gathering, forced marriage and child birth, and domestic duties
- Economic factors and lack of basic necessities influenced decision to 'join', or in the case of abductions, stay

Read more: [No Choice Country Case Study in South Sudan, World Vision International](#)

World Vision's Response

- **Holistic response** to CAAFAG requires comprehensive child protection interventions
- **Awareness** of rights and responsibilities
- **Engagement** with children, caregivers, and communities
- Children will require significant **psychosocial** support and other **holistic** care
- Support and monitor children's safe social and economic **reintegration**
- **Prevention & advocacy**

752

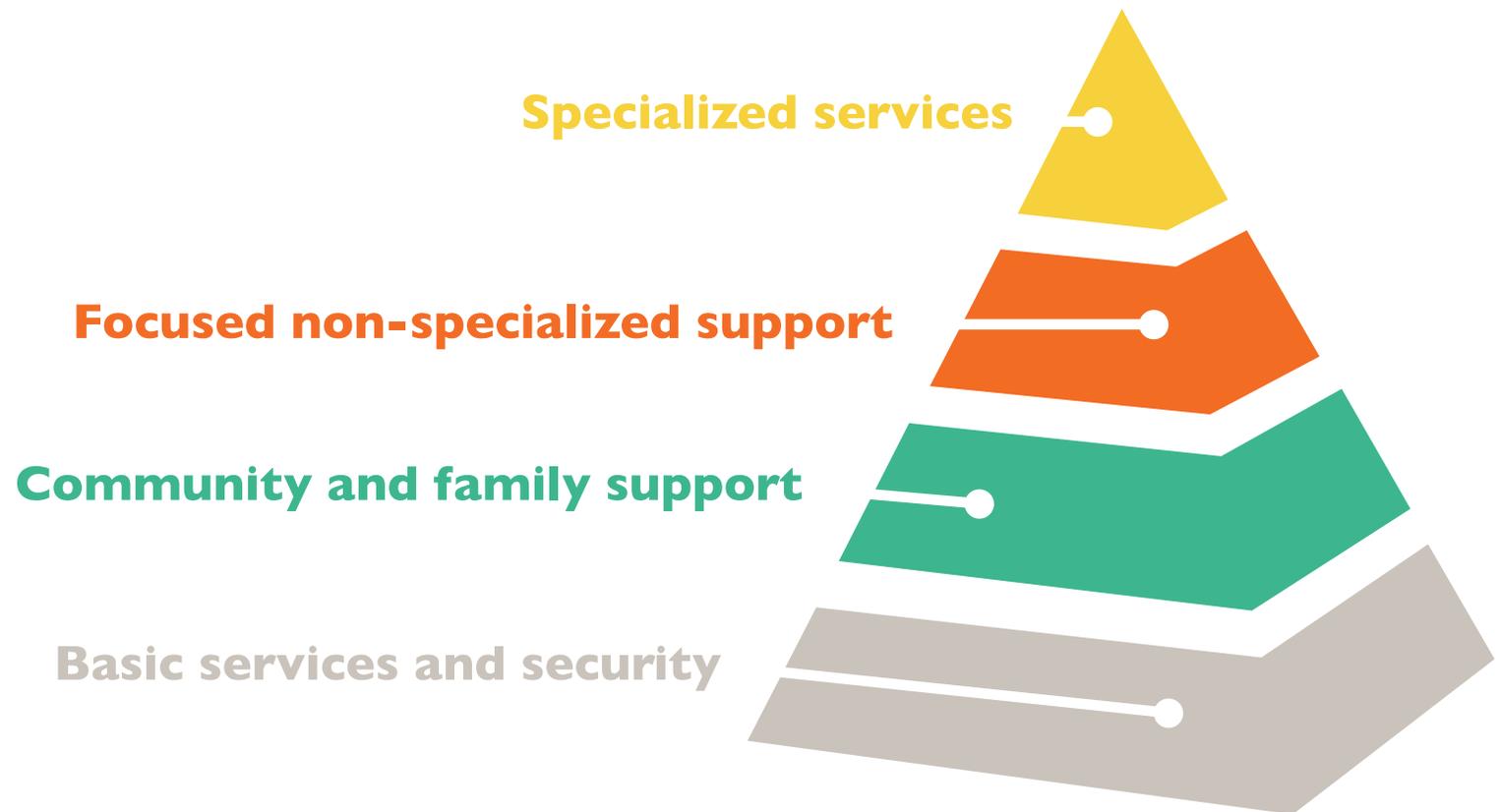
released children have been supported
by World Vision in Yambio since 2018



586

released children continue to be
supported by World Vision in 2019

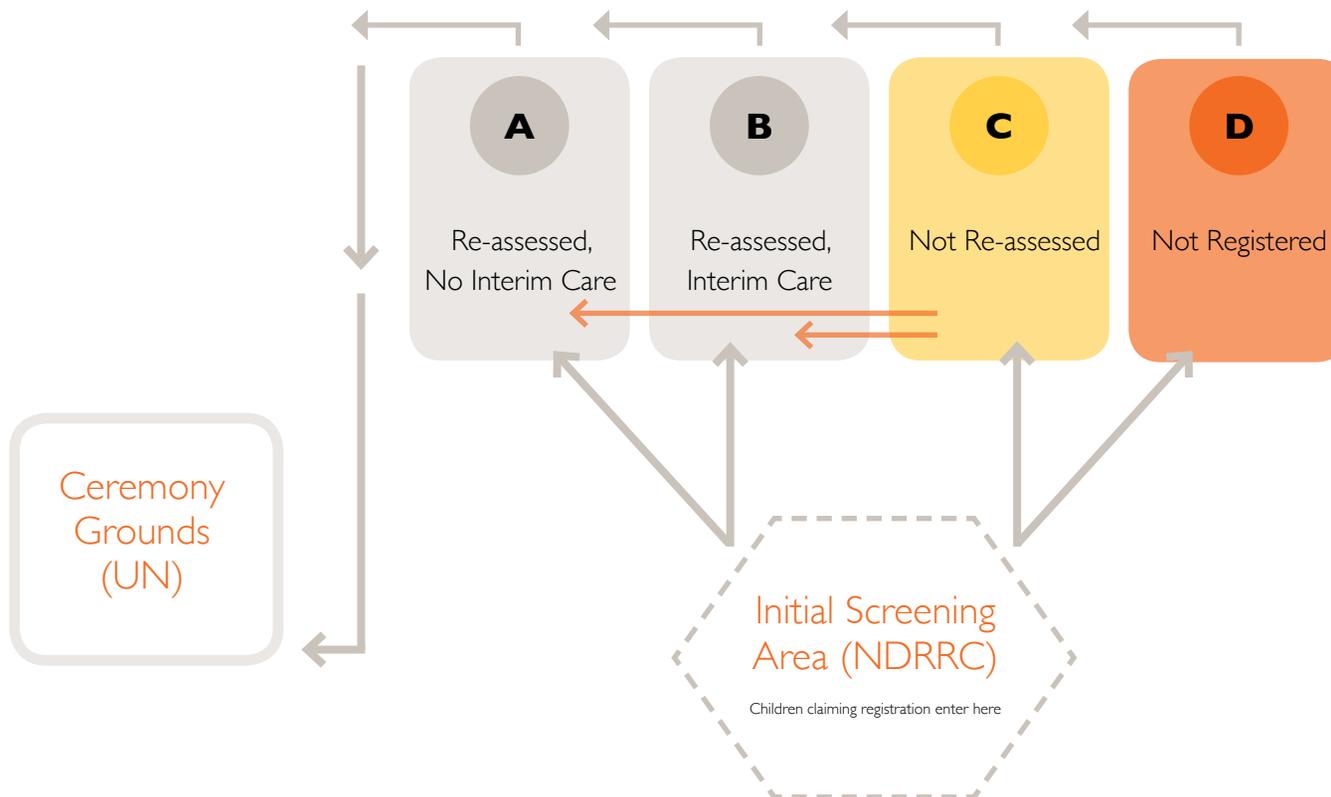
Psychosocial Intervention Pyramid



Activities for CAAFAG

- Release ceremony
- Interim Care Centres
- Family Tracing and Reunification
- Comprehensive Case Management
- Community-Based Psychosocial Support
- Family Tracing and Reunification
- Social Reintegration
- Economic Reintegration

Release Ceremony





“After the abduction in school, I spent six months in the armed group’s camp in the bush. The only thing in my mind at that time was my fear of being killed and my parents’ suffering because of my abduction. I did the laundry for the commander, cooked and sometimes, I was forced to beat people who tried to escape. It was completely in contrast to my dream of becoming a midwife.” *Rose (not her real name), a 20-year-old former child soldier*

Read more: [Abducted and raped, former child soldier fights for her future: “I am not ashamed”](#)

Interim Care Centre

- Having children in the Interim Care Centre is an activity of last resort; best practice is a community-based solution
- For unaccompanied and separated children or in need of interim care
- Care for specialized mental health concerns, including: depression and suicidal thoughts
- Point of contact for referral and partnership with Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), ensuring a trained psychologist provides in-depth counseling



119 children received Interim Care services

Family Tracing and Reunification

- Identifying parents, caregivers, next of kin, communal relatives, and foster care placements
- Confirm identity of children and families/caregivers
- Facilitate reunification, including provision of counseling to both child and receiving kin



128 children received Family Tracing and Reunification services

Comprehensive Case Management

- Provided by social workers and case supervisors
- Children have tailored case management action plan
- All children have received a minimum of 3 follow-up visits



586

children received comprehensive case management services



68

children referred for specialized psychosocial support services

Community-Based Psychosocial Support

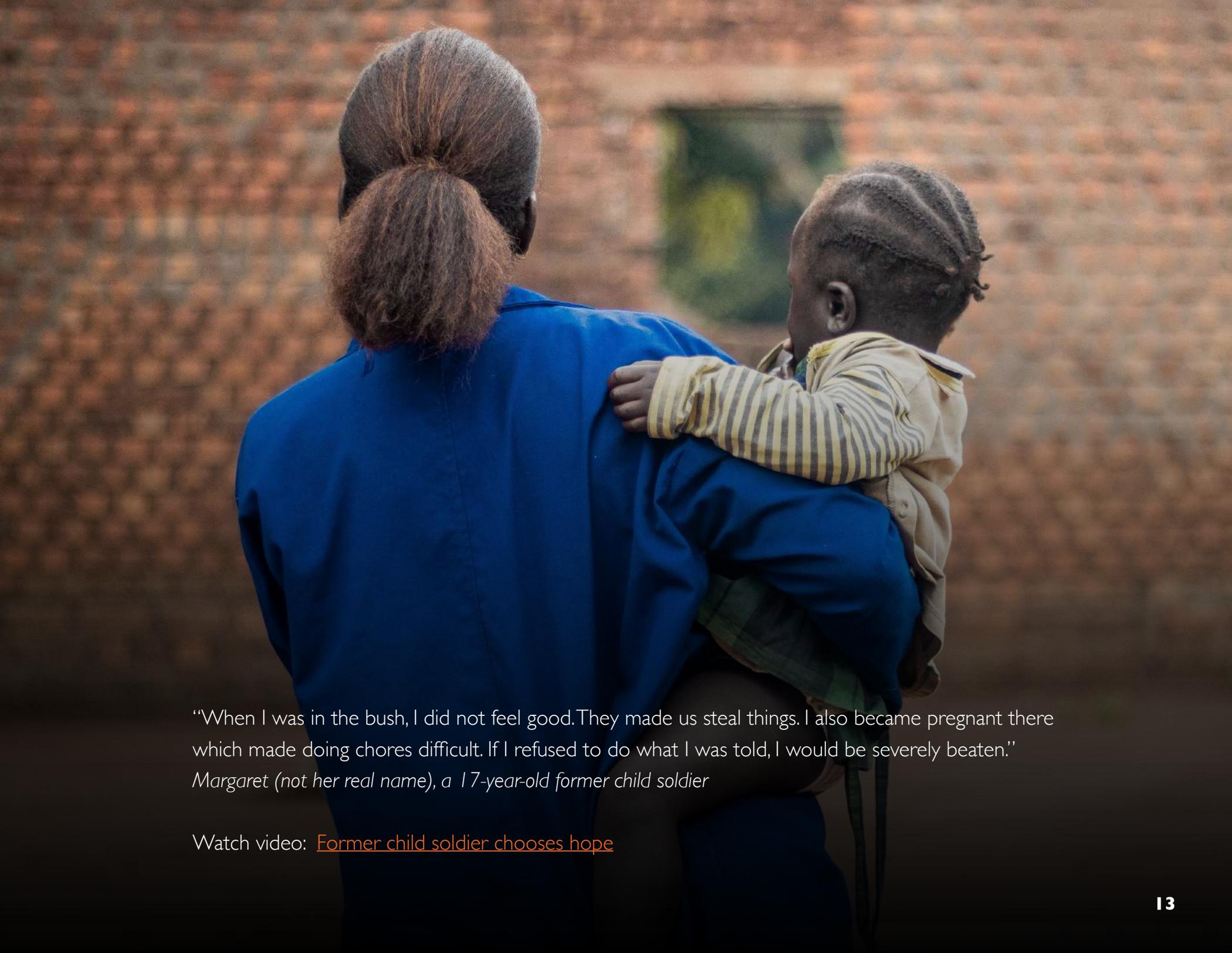
- Offered by social workers and animators
- Work within Child-friendly Spaces and schools
- Establish and strengthen community-based child protection committees



12,694

children received community-based psychosocial support services

(both CAAFAG, other vulnerable children with protection issues and children from the community)

A photograph showing the back of a woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a bright blue long-sleeved shirt. She is carrying a young child on her back. The child is wearing a yellow and black striped long-sleeved shirt and a tan jacket. They are standing in front of a brick wall. The lighting is soft, suggesting an outdoor setting during the day.

“When I was in the bush, I did not feel good. They made us steal things. I also became pregnant there which made doing chores difficult. If I refused to do what I was told, I would be severely beaten.”
Margaret (not her real name), a 17-year-old former child soldier

Watch video: [Former child soldier chooses hope](#)

Social Reintegration

- Enrollment in formal schools (primary and secondary)
- Medical check ups
- Home visits
- Family counseling
- Community outreach



235

children enrolled in primary education

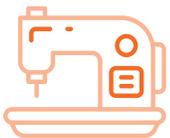


41

children enrolled in secondary education

Economic Reintegration

- Formal vocational training (sewing, carpentry, metal welding, electrical, etc.)
- Technical training (business, agriculture, etc.)
- Informal apprenticeship opportunities and mentorship
- Start-up of small scale businesses to increase household income
- Support income generating activities



206

children enrolled in vocational skills training



183

children and their families benefitted from economic reintegration activities



“My first interaction with some of the former child soldiers was back in February 2018. They were scared, perplexed, and emaciated for staying too long in the bush. It is high time to intensify collective efforts to get the estimated 19,000 children associated with armed forces and groups released with a hope for a life in all its fullness.”

Dr. Mesfin Loha, Country Programme Director, World Vision South Sudan

Read blog: [Stop violence against children: A child lost to armed groups is one too many](#)

Watch video: [It's the end of our suffering'](#)



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