

Channels of Hope for Child Protection

OVERVIEW

Channels of Hope is an interactive process to create a safe space for faith leaders, their spouses and faith communities to become active participants in the well-being of children through science-based information and insight from religious texts. It reaches to the root causes and deepest convictions that impact attitudes, norms, values and practices toward the most vulnerable. The process is grounded in guiding principles from participants' religious texts and is designed to move the heart, inform the mind and motivate a sustained and effective response to significant issues. Channels of Hope equips faith leaders to apply their religious texts to key social issues and encourage other faith leaders and faith communities to do the same.



The Channels of Hope process

Channels of Hope is both a methodology and a process focused on partnering with local faith leaders, their congregations and communities for sustainable solutions to community needs. The process is structured into four phases of activity: prepare, catalyse, strategise, and empower.



The Channels of Hope for Child Protection objectives

Channels of Hope for Child Protection is an adaptation of Channels of Hope that specifically addresses child protection issues including abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harmful practices. It supports and advocates for children's rights, promotes positive discipline, strives to prevent other forms of violence against children, and fosters a wider enabling environment to strengthen both formal and non-formal elements of the child protection system.

The Channels of Hope for Child Protection methodology is packaged into a facilitative and interactive workshop, grounded in guiding principles from the participants' faith tradition(s) and religious texts. The methodology aims to create a safe space for faith leaders and faith communities from various denominations and/or religions to learn, share

and debate challenging issues related to violence against children. It seeks to address the root causes and deepest convictions that maintain harmful attitudes, norms and values. The goal of Channels of Hope for Child Protection is to motivate and equip faith communities to respond in meaningful ways to prevent and respond to violence against children, including restoring child survivors; to address sociocultural norms and attitudes that drive violence; to promote peace and overcome violence; and to strive for authentic justice that brings healing and reconciliation.

Key outcomes

- Increased meaningful engagement and competence of the faith community to address various forms of violence against children
- Faith community addresses sociocultural norms that make children vulnerable
- Increased policy advocacy to support justice for children
- Religious institutions become safer for children
- Improved social cohesion in communities

Faith Community Contribution to Ending Violence Against Children research

The Faith Community Contribution to Ending Violence Against Children is a five-year research collaboration, launched in 2016, with Queen Margaret University (Edinburgh) and Columbia University (New York). The study will collect and collate evidence on World Vision's Channels of Hope for Child Protection interventions across a range of settings. The goal of the research is to understand how Channels of Hope for Child Protection equips faith leaders and faith communities to take action to reduce violence in their local communities and at higher levels of society. It will shed light on the strategic role faith leaders play in strengthening the protective environment for boys and girls at sites in Guatemala (a Christian majority context), Senegal (a Muslim majority context), and Uganda (mixture of Christian and Muslim context).

The Senegal midline report was completed in mid-2018 and is the first full piece of work capturing impact. In this report, we've found statistically significant improvements in knowledge, attitudes, behaviour and theological reflection of faith leaders and spouses since the project began. This has included changes in views on corporal punishment, birth registration, and early marriage. It is clear that faith leaders and faith leader spouses experienced transformation on a personal level resulting in taking individual action as well as mobilising participants and community member to bring out positive change.

'We used to do a lot of things through ignorance that we do not do today. I used to punish the child and hit him but further to the training, there is a lot of change. I do not hit the child in case of fault.... And when the child does something wrong I ask him why he does it and advise him not to do it anymore. Now I take care of the child because he will become someone tomorrow. Bad practices can drive the child out of society.'

- Faith leader in Senegal

Story of transformation in Malawi

Chiyembekezo comes from a Muslim family and lives in Chingale, Malawi. Chiyembekezo dropped out of school in the year 2014 and had made up his mind on starting domestic work in the barracks.

'I had a lot of challenges,' he says. 'I had no school uniform, exercise books were also difficult to come by and a friend of mine said that dropping out of school and instead finding domestic works would forever solve our problems,' added Chiyembekezo, popularly known among his peers as Chembe.

From then on, they both embarked on a job hunting mission that took them all over their Chingale Trading Centre and finally to the house of Reverend Mitengo of Chingale Church of Central African Presbytery (CCAP) who is also the Chairperson of the Pastors Fraternal in the community.

'I told them that I had a job yes, but not for young boys like them,' said the pastor. 'It was quite emotional for me considering that I had just returned from the orientation where I was eye-opened on such issues.'



The pastor and his wife talked to his family, and supported him to go back to school. They bought him a school uniform, books and some pencils

Chembe is more optimistic about the future today than ever before. He wants to become a medical doctor and with the pastor right beside him, he thinks the future is possible. 'I always go to the pastor when I have challenges and he talks to my parents,' says Chembe Reverend Mitengo has dedicated Sunday church sessions for parents to openly discuss challenges concerning children and how these can be resolved. He is also working hard to invest in the Sunday school so that kids can also be using that as a channel for expressing their challenges and fears experienced every day.

'We enjoy the Church discussions on children's rights and the kind of justice we can administer to our children so that we do not punish but as well as plant hope in our children,' said one faithful member of Reverend Mitengo's congregation, Alice Banda.

Through such approaches, there is hope in Chingale and other communities in Zomba that for once, pastors and Churches in general can play a leading role in advocating for children's rights like never before.

For more information on World Vision's Channels of Hope work please visit www.wvi.org/faith-and-development/channels-hope