



## LEADING PRINCIPLES AND OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES<sup>1</sup>

- 1. Child Rights.** The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflicts are the main frameworks for reference in War Child's operations.

*Operational guidelines:*

- War Child encourages governments, communities and individuals (including young people and children) to have a real and effective commitment to the principle of the child's rights and ensure a safe, secure and healthy environment for children.
- War Child takes action on articles of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, which are relevant for War Child's mission.
- War Child introduces and promotes the rights of the child through creative methods.

- 2. Non discrimination.** Every child in the world is as important as any other child.

*Operational guidelines:*

- War Child operates irrespective of children's religious, ethnical, or social or cultural background.
- War Child actively seeks opportunities to work with children from all backgrounds and advocates the principle.

- 3. Participation** of all key-stakeholders, including children and youth, ensures that programs are tuned to people's own perceptions and definitions of the needs, their priorities and resources.

*Operational guidelines:*

- War Child involves key-stakeholders in planning, implementation and evaluation of the programs.

- 4. Protective factors** are important for the psychosocial well-being and development of children:

- **Constructive coping mechanisms within the child**
- **Adult support**
- **Peer interaction**
- **Sense of normalcy and future prospect**
- **Safety and peace**

*Operational guideline:*

- War Child aims at enhancing the normal development of children and the prevention of future disorders, by strengthening the protective factors through activities targeting both children and their social environment, including creative activities and events, training, awareness raising and lobby.

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<sup>1</sup> All the numbered paragraphs are principles, the bullet points refer to operational guidelines.



**5. Professionalism** is sought after in all War Child programs. Our programs have their roots in social sciences and arts, as well as best practices in the field.

*Operational guidelines:*

- War Child collects and systemises different project experiences in order to extract 'best practices'.
- All War Child interventions are closely monitored and evaluated.
- War Child actively seeks coordination; cooperation and exchange with other national and international organisations to validate implementing strategies and sufficiently meet psychosocial needs and rights of children.

**6. Capacity building.** (Re)building and strengthening local capacity makes it possible to meet the needs and rights for psychosocial support for children. Children and young people are best served with programs that guarantee a sustainable impact.

*Operational guidelines:*

- War Child builds upon local available expertise.
- War Child supports local initiatives and organisations with expertise and/or finance.
- War Child works with local partner organizations that share our objective. War Child prefers to support them instead of establishing its own infrastructure.
- War Child will look for possibilities to work through local partners continuously during the different phases of the project.
- To ensure sustainability, an exit strategy is proposed at the start of every War Child project and further developed during the course of the project.

**7. Cultural diversity.** Values and practices in child rearing, and ideas about child development and psychosocial problems are to a large extent culturally determined.

*Operational guidelines:*

- War Child aims to adapt its approach to the specific cultural situation and its particular ways of creative expression.
- War Child designs psychosocial programs adapted to local practices, provided that those practices are in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**8. Advocacy and Awareness raising.** The rights and needs of children and young people will be met more efficiently in a political and social climate where these rights and needs are understood and supported.

*Operational guidelines:*

- War Child strives to influence policy and practice concerning child rights through focusing public attention on the plight of children in war and conflict zones, both on community level and on a national and international level.