

Child Protection in Emergencies

Michelle's Speech opening the second CCF Child Protection Workshop
Paris, France – Hotel Ibis- Bastille-Opera

7th August 2005

Welcome all of you to this relaxing, problem-solving space in Paris. We deliberately chose Paris for this workshop because it is a great place to relax. You are all working in areas of acute tension and stress and you need time to enjoy Paris and to enjoy talking with each other and sharing experiences. Work together and exchange your experiences while you relax. Taking care of yourselves is an important part of your work in emergency relief, whether you are in a war zone, a post-conflict rebuilding period, or helping people to restart their lives after the *tsunami*.

Child Protection comes into all of this work. The leaders of our Child Protection work are Mike Wessels and Carlinda Monteiro, who have been the pioneers. Over 10 years in the field we have developed our own CCF-CFI approach to Child Protection. We think our approach is broader-based than many other agencies and now that we have defined our strategy on paper, we will be main-streaming Child Protection in the 35+ countries where we are working.

Again, Carlinda will show us the way. Angola has come out of war. The Angolan war led Carlinda to become the CCF pioneer in Child Protection. Now Angola has come out of war, Carlinda Monteiro will again be pioneering the making of Child Protection a leading feature of our work in rebuilding peace under the program we call Bright Futures.

We now have a CCF-CFI Child Protection policy, developed from work carried out by a Group of Ten led by Mike Wessels, Christie Scott and Wendy Weeton. We have in our agency one of the biggest groups of Child Protection experts in the world. A lot of our experience comes out of our work in West Africa with post-conflict rebuilding and DDR – the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of adult and child soldiers and other victims of violence. You only have to look around the tale to know that our work experience in this area ranges far wider than Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Chad and Northern Uganda. Our work with DDR and conflict transformation has been recognized in Afghanistan and East Timor, Philippines and Latin America, and now we are working with post-conflict-post-*tsunami* areas in Sri Lanka and Aceh (Indonesia) among others.

In all of these crisis zones, Child Protection is a vital part of reconstruction and it is a role in which we as an agency have come to be recognized as having special expertise.

I also want to tell you – particularly those of you who are attending a world-wide workshop for the first time – what CCF-CFI is, especially as Child Protection becomes more important in our overall work. Jason Schwartzman is here to tell you more about

CCF growth in all directions, since he is Director of Program Development (the job that Daniel Wordsworth had until he moved to Asia). Jason is also here to learn from you about Child Protection.

We have been growing in many ways. In financial terms, we have gone from \$120 million at the start of the Millennium to around \$200 million annually today. This growth in our budget has come both from private contributions and from government and foundation grants. We now work more closely with USAID and OFDA, with UNICEF and UNHCR and the European Union. This presents us with new challenges. Nevertheless the majority of our funds remain private, coming from the pooled value of tens of thousands of individual sponsorships.

Child Fund International was launched on June 28th 2005. There are twelve founder member organizations in CFI including the French 'Un Enfant par la Main' (who have so kindly organized the present workshop for us), CCF-USA, and our sister organizations in Australia and New Zealand, Taiwan, Japan and South Korea, Ireland and Canada, Sweden, Denmark and Germany. Others will join for sure. The network will grow and make us more global. CFI will become bigger and more influential. The name Child Fund is already current in many of the places we operate: Sweden and Denmark use it, and so do Child Fund Afghanistan and Child Fund Aceh, for example, as well as Australia, New Zealand and Ireland.

Perhaps this is a good moment to explain briefly the history of CCF and its name. The CCF organization was founded in 1938 by an American Christian missionary in China. When he returned to the USA and established himself in Richmond, Virginia, the founder wanted to work in other countries like Korea. The China Children's Fund was changed to Christian Children's Fund: the initials CCF remained but the name itself was made broader in keeping with the organization's new mission. CCF is – by decision of the Board – neither a 'Christian' organization nor a proselytizing organization. We help and work with children of all faiths, whether Jew or Hindu or Muslim or Christian or anything else.

A similar process is happening today. American may be a faith-based society, but it is not an exclusively Christian society: Islam is growing fast, and there are Jews and Hindus, Buddhists and Bahais who do not identify with the name 'Christian'. Moreover in America, the word 'Christian' has been hijacked by fundamentalists: 'Christian' has now become a denomination (or sect) of the Christian faith. This has given us problems in Guatemala, for example, where the majority Roman Catholic population thinks that CCF is a part of a fundamentalist, evangelical movement. Yet if Roman Catholics are not 'Christians', I wonder what they are?

CCF will remain the name in America where it is a good name for our work, but I think you can understand why the name Child Fund International is becoming increasingly important for our action in the multi-faith and global environment in which we are developing our work in Child Protection. We have values, and they may be Christian values, but they may not be exclusively Christian values. In the global community, using

one religious name is not an advantage to us: and it can lead to confusion for example in Chad or Guinea or Aceh (in Indonesia) where a majority of the population is Muslim. Such a case happened in Sierra Leone which is 60% Muslim and 30% Christian: during the war Christian people came and criticized the CCF staff for working with all victims of the war and for not privileging help for Christians. CCF is not sectarian.

We want to put children at the center of everything we do. We have put a lot of effort into reflecting about our work with children. I am passionate about this, and I know that you are all as passionate as I am about children, and about working with children who are living in difficult conditions. Alan Fowler has been our guru in guiding us through a self-assessment, listening to both parents and children. We needed to understand their problems better, and we therefore carried out a detailed Child Poverty Study based on what children told us. One remarkable thing is that the children were not saying what their parents told us. Even 3-year-olds were able to give clear expression about social exclusion. They did not complain about a lack of material things, but they did tell us about their fear of exclusion.

We find happy children all over the world who are living in extreme poverty, and yet they are not complaining about material deprivation. It is not wealth that brings happiness. I remember in particular a small girl in Uganda who told me, that the only thing she needed was a candle. She could not afford to buy candles for doing her homework. “If I could just get a candle every three days,” she said, “I could study better and make more progress at school.”

One of the things that will change with the CCF-CFI evolution is the CCF logo. Our study of children’s opinions brought the following unexpected question from children: “Why does your letter paper have a picture of a little boy in jail?”

We will change to project a happier picture of children through our logo. We may finish up with a happy child jumping for joy, and a more cheerful color like bright green in place of the dull muddy brown of our present logo.

Out of this Child Poverty Study we have developed five working papers outlining the new policies that will guide our work in the coming years. You have the Child Rights paper in your folder, setting out where CCF stands on Rights Based Approaches (we find the Rights-Based approach of other agencies to be too rigid and often rather unrealistic). The other papers are on CD-Rom. There will be a sixth paper too, when we have time to write it! The CCF-CFI policy papers are:

- Children and Poverty DEV framework by D. Wordsworth, M. McPeak, T. Feeney
- Improving Children’s Chances
- Child Context for Developing Relationships by S Dawes
- Promoting the Agency of Young People by Jason Schwartzman
- CCF’s approach to Rights-Based Approach by Daniel Wordsworth
- Children and the Right to Education by Michelle and others – to be written

You will find in these papers a set of Development Pathways that seek to take account of children's different needs at different ages – and this may be one of the CCF specificities, one our contributions to the child development literature. A young adolescent does not have the same needs as a 4-year-old. We will work with different children at different ages, with different milestones to gauge our impact.

Community Development Programs for children is the old way of working. We want now to become wholly focused on the child. When you talk to parents about adolescent boys in the street, for example, they emerge for the discussion as a 'problem'. We see it differently. From the child's point of view, living in the street may actually be a 'solution' because the alternatives may be far worse: violence in the home, extreme poverty and no food, gang warfare, or whatever. We want to think positively about kids.

“Basic Education’ is not enough. We need to put the child at the center of our reflection, not the classroom. What are the risks to children outside school, and the risks in school? Are the kids experiencing violence in the classroom or the playground, or sexual aggression at school? How successful is the school from the child's point of view? Is there any point in sending children to elementary schools that have a success rate of only 1%? What are the family circumstances and how do these affect the children's success at school?

If we are focused on the child, we will avoid certain simplistic strategies, and not jump at 'solutions' that have shown themselves to offer very poor results. Context and Culture is an important part of our Development Pathways. We need to work with the child in his-or-her environment.

We are neither a needs-based organization nor a rights-based organization: we are a Child-based Development Organization using an enhanced Bright Futures development model

- Focused on the causes of child poverty and deprivation
- Using children as actors in implementation
- Making partnership and advocacy additional tools for success
- Creating a life-cycle approach of 12-15 years

This is the strength of child sponsorship, which removes the artificial, anti-developmental nature of 'project' funding and allows us to look at the needs of a child throughout his life as a child, moving through the different milestones that apply to each phase of his or her development.

We are a team. Many of you are young and learning; some of us are older and we can bring you our experience - what Mike Wessels calls our “geezer credits’. I am really excited that you are working for CCF. CCF is an organization that is now 65 years old, and getting younger!