# CAAFAG
# Theory of Change
# Narrative

**unicef** 
for every child

# INTRODUCTION

Tens of thousands of children are recruited and used by armed forces and armed groups in conflicts around the world. During their period of association with armed forces or armed groups, girls and boys are used in a variety of ways from support roles, such as cooking or portering, to active fighting, laying mines or spying. Girls are frequently forced into marriage and used for sexual purposes. The recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups violates their rights and causes them physical, developmental, emotional, mental, and spiritual harm.[1]

Some children are abducted or forcibly recruited, while others may be driven to join by poverty, by circumstances of political or social exclusion, or the desire to seek revenge for violence committed against them or their families. Some children are manipulated to join armed groups with false promises or appeals to identity or increased social status. Other children are encouraged by their families and communities to participate in armed conflict, despite the danger and harm this involves. In all cases the conscription of children for military purposes and their use by armed forces or groups is a grave violation of their rights.[2]

The recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups has been a focus of international attention and has been widely condemned. An Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict to the Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the General Assembly in May 2000, and as of September 2021, has 171 State Parties and 9 signatories, whil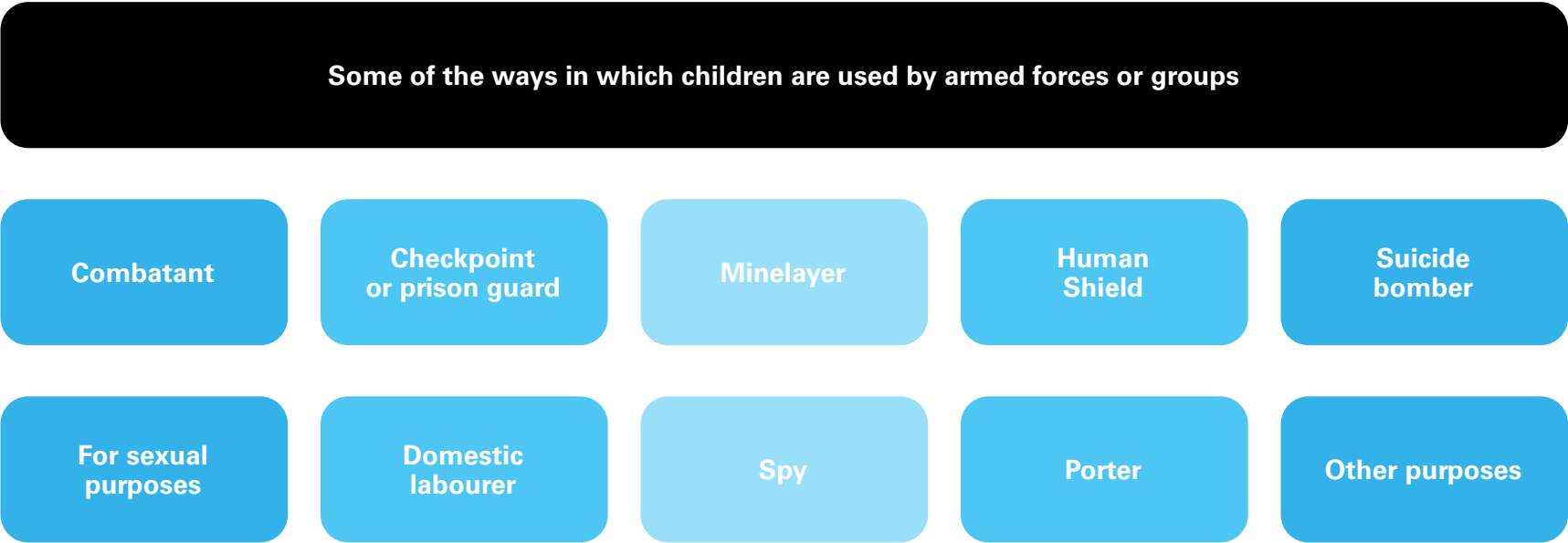e only 17 countries have taken no action.[3] Nevertheless, children continue to be involved in war, to become disabled, die or otherwise exploited in such conflicts.

While the release and reintegration into civilian life of many children associated with armed forces or groups has been supported through interventions and programmes designed to assist them, others have returned home on their own, often to face an uncertain future and a further fight for acceptance from their family and community. Girls in particular are likely to be stigmatized and even rejected by their community if it is known that they have been used by an armed force or armed group; the rejection of their children may be even more severe.

Despite their experiences, these children are resilient and can contribute constructively to reconstruction and reconciliation efforts if given appropriate help, support and encouragement.[4]

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1     UNICEF, (2017), The Paris principles: Principles and guidelines on children associated with armed forces or armed groups
2     UNICEF UK, (2015), Ending the Recruitment and Use of Children in Armed Conflict
3     https://indicators.ohchr.org/
4     UNICEF, (2017), The Paris principles: Principles and guidelines on children associated with armed forces or armed groups

**Figure 1: Roles filled by Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (CAAFAG)**

**Some of the ways in which children are used by armed forces or groups**

| Combatant | Checkpoint or prison guard | Minelayer | Human Shield | Suicide bomber |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| For sexual purposes | Domestic labourer | Spy | Porter | Other purposes |

# CPHA AND CAAFAG

The Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (CPHA) section is one of five sections of the UNICEF Child Protection Programme Division. The mandate of CPHA encompasses interventions aimed at saving lives, alleviating suffering, preventing violations, maintaining human dignity, and protecting the rights of affected populations wherever there are acute humanitarian needs. This is regardless of the type of crisis[5] and irrespective of the gross national income level of a country, or the legal status of the affected populations.

CAAFAG is one of seven CPHA workstreams, the other six are:

**CPHA PACKAGE**

| This Document | Workstream 1 | Workstream 2 | Workstream 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| CAAFAG | CPHA Theory of Change Narrative | GBViE | MHPSS |

| Workstream 4 | Workstream 5 | Workstream 6 | Workstream 7 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mine Action and weapons | MRM | PSEA | UASC |

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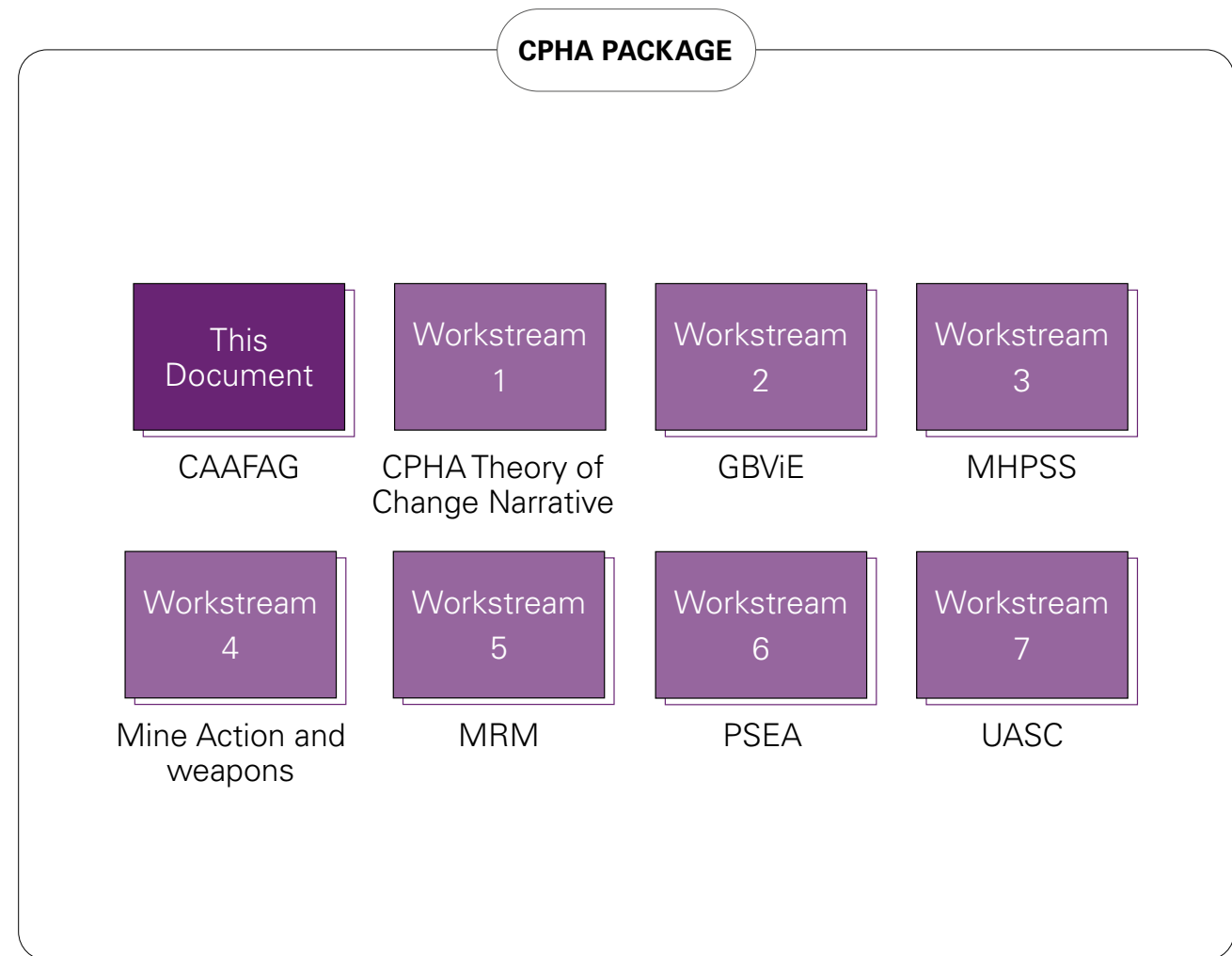
5    Sudden-onset or protracted emergency, natural disaster, public health emergency, complex emergency, international or internal armed conflict, among others.

The key populations that CPHA works for are not limited to children. The CPHA Theory of Change (ToC) explains that the term "Protection" is used, rather than the more specific Child Protection. This is done to encompass all aspects of child protection, but also protection issues for women, for families, including caregivers, and communities. Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (GBViE), Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) are workstreams that focus on children, but also to women and families.

CAAFAG is an important component of the work done by CPHA which is strongly guided by the CRC. The commitments and accountabilities of CPHA are outlined and inscribed in the Core Commitment for Children in Humanitarian Settings (the CCCs). Mine Action is one of ten Child Protection commitments under the CCCs[6]:

CCC Commitment 6 on Children associated with armed forces and groups and detention of children in the context of armed conflict: Child recruitment and use by armed actors, as well as illegal and arbitrary detention and criminal processing of conflict-affected children, are prevented and addressed.

Commitment benchmarks:

Drivers and causes of child recruitment and use are identified, prevented and addressed;

Children who have exited armed forces or groups are identified and provided with safe, community-based reintegration services in accordance with the Paris Principles; and,

Coordinated advocacy against illegal and arbitrary detention and for adherence to international standards of juvenile justice for conflict-affected children is undertaken, including for their immediate release to child protection actors

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6      UNICEF (2020), Core Commitment for Children in Humanitarian Action, https://www.corecommitments.unicef.org/ccc-2-3-5, last accessed on 13/10/21

# BACKGROUND OF TOC DEVELOPMENT/REVISION

In 2019 the UNICEF Evaluation Offices conducted an Evaluability Assessment (EA) of CPHA which identified strengths and challenges in the current system. The Evaluation Office provided recommendations intended to improve programme design and implementation of CPHA-related programmes, and ultimately strengthen CPHA evaluability. The primary recommendation of the EA was:

UNICEF should develop a comprehensive CPHA programme impact pathway and associated results framework with indicators at different levels. All CPHA work streams should fall within its scope, with particular attention to children and the armed conflict agenda.

Two overarching objectives were defined:

**A**
Develop holistic, multi-sectoral ToC and package of interventions and indicators for all CPHA workstreams. For each of these, include required contributions from different sectors.

**B**
Co-create one overarching conceptual framework that brings together all ToCs for all workstreams and will contribute to meaningful inclusion in a new Strategy for Child Protection, as well as guidance, to CPHA practitioners in different humanitarian situations.

The Theory of Change on CAAFAG described in this document was created in response to the first overarching objective defined in the management response to the EA.

# WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM THIS TOC?

The primary purpose of this ToC is to encourage collective responsibility of all UNICEF offices and its partners for CAAFAG outcomes and programming logic. It is also intended to introduce shared indicators that can help measure whether the sector is collectively achieving the set outcomes.

Four key audiences for this ToC have been identified:

**UNICEF teams at all levels** (headquarters, Regional Offices (ROs), Country Offices (COs) and Field Offices (FOs), as a programme design and management tool, because it helps to:

- Understand and explain the UASC system in emergencies and its interdependencies;

- Inform policy making;

- Plan, design and monitor programming;

- Co-ordinate national and international support and identify gaps;

- Identify and leverage wider developmental and humanitarian efforts, including work Allied Sectors[7], to maximise results.

**Governments** being CRC State Parties with accountabilities under the CCCs, as a programme design and management tool, because it helps to:

- Understand and explain the CPHA system in emergencies and its interdependencies;

- Inform policy making;

- Plan, design and monitor programming;

- Co-ordinate national and international support and identify gaps;

- Enhancing the accountability by laying out what UNICEF and its partners are committed to;

- Identify and leverage wider developmental and humanitarian efforts to maximise results.

7    Aligned sectors and partners are those that have mainstreamed CP in their response and mitigation, e.g., Education, Health, Nutrition, Social Protection, Livelihoods, WASH, Shelter and Settlement, Camp Management and others. They can include UN agencies, government or local authorities, and civil society.

**Donors,** because it helps to:

- Align international support for UASC with country-level objectives;

- Recognise where specific objectives have interdependencies with other stakeholders;

- Identify the most strategic use of resources and partners to achieve objectives;

- Identify and leverage wider developmental and humanitarian efforts, including work in Allied Sectors, to maximise results.

**Partners,** UN sister organisations and civil society organisations, because it helps to:

- Understand how specific PSEA activities contribute to the sector overall;

- Inform design of programmes that understand interdependencies with other stakeholders, including work in Allied Sectors, to maximise results;

- Distinguish between implementation failure and theory failure and inform adaptation and advocacy as needed

**This ToC was created and revised as part of a wider effort to create ToCs for each of the seven CPHA workstreams.** While each of the individual workstream ToCs can be used as a stand-alone ToC for specific workstream programming, in this case to strengthen CAAFAG programming specifically, multiple ToCs can be used at the same time to develop and monitor broader CPHA programmes that can include activities across workstreams. **The overarching CPHA ToC largely follows the logic of the individual workstream ToCs which generally have pillars around prevention, response and mechanisms and systems and through the seven workstreams it focusses on national systems strengthening across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus**. The programming approaches across the workstreams are similar and in line with the overall UNICEF Child Protection Strategy 2021 - 2030.

# TIMEFRAME

**Setting a time-frame for a ToC is not essential since it is best practice to use a ToC as a living document that is constantly updated**. However, given changes in UNICEF and in the contexts where it works, it is important to review the underlying logics and assumptions after a number of years of programming. For this ToC, and indeed the overarching ToC for CPHA, it was decided to follow the same timelines as the period set for the recently released UNICEF Strategic Plan. **This means that this ToC will be relevant for the period 2022 to 2025 when it should be reviewed**. Especially the strategic shift that is underway towards more prevention programming in Child Protection warrants a review by 2025.

2020  2021  2022  2023  2024  2025  2026

# WHO ARE THE KEY AUDIENCES FOR CAAFAG AND HOW CAN YOU REACH THEM?

Key audiences for the prevention and response to children associated with armed forces and armed groups include:

CAAFAG programming also focusses on:

Boys and girls, including adolescents, who are at risk of being associated with armed forces and armed groups, who are associated with armed forces and armed groups, and those who were previously associated with armed forces and armed groups.

1. Parents and customary caregivers or guardians and families of these children;

2. Communities where these children live or originate from;

3. Government authorities local, regional and national levels;

4. Parties to conflict;

5. UNICEF CPHA workstreams including GBViE, MHPSS, UASC, Mine Action, MRM and PSEA

6. UNICEF allied sectors including child protection, health, education, WASH, social protection, and others and other actors including livelihoods, food security, camp management, shelter & settlements;

7. Other United Nations agencies including UNHCR, WFP, UNDP, WHO, UNFPA, OCHA,

8. Donor Community and international and national humanitarian and development partners.

# DESIRED CHANGE

To support children affected by armed conflict during and after conflict, including children at risk of recruitment and use, children who are currently associated or who have exited armed forces or armed groups, CAAFAP programming aims to:

1. Strengthen existing formal government and community-based systems for child protection and increasing access of children, families and communities to such services.

2. Support and strengthen informal community-based child protection structures for child protection and resilience in conflict affected areas.

3. Implement contextualized community-based humanitarian age-appropriate gender transformative child protection programmes, including through other CPHA workstreams, for children, families, and communities affected by armed conflict.

4. Collaborate with other sectors such as education, social protection, food security and livelihoods to support children, families, and communities to address both the drivers of child recruitment and use by armed forces and armed groups and the needs of children who have exited armed forces or armed groups and their families.

5. Promote release of children or their safe identification if they have already exited armed forces or groups.

6. Support appropriate non-stigmatizing, age-appropriate, gender transformative community-based reintegration programmes, including for children detained for their actual or alleged association with armed forces or groups.

The overall long-term aim of CAAFAG work is that all UNICEF targeted girls and boys affected by conflict are protected from recruitment and use, safely released from armed forces and armed groups, and (re) integrated into their communities where in their best interests.

# PROGRAMMING APPROACHES

In line with the UNICEF Child Protection Strategy 2021 – 2030[8], CAAFAG programming builds on five strategies that have been adopted by the UNICEF Child Protection sector, and its partners, globally. The five programming approaches are briefly introduced below:

- **Strengthen data and research generation and use**: CPHA will work so that UNICEF, its partner governments, and the international community are equipped with the data and evidence to address child protection adequately in all humanitarian settings. The data and evidence landscape for Child Protection is improving but at too slow a pace. CPHA will prioritize data and evidence generation and utilization over the in coming years, particularly in those areas where evidence is insufficient to guide policy and programming choices;

- **Advocacy and action to prevent child association with armed forces and groups**: This refers to accessing funding, but also to scaling up human resources, technical capacities, supplies and donor commitment;

- **Build capacity for scaled-up child protection prevention and service delivery across sectors**: CPHA will work with governments and non-governmental partners in humanitarian and development contexts, to build capacity for prevention and child protection service delivery, particularly in Social Welfare and Justice sectors but also in sectors such as Health, Education, Nutrition and WASH, Social Protection, Food Security, Shelter & Settlement, and Camp Management;

- **Strengthen the engagement of communities, caregivers, children and adolescents**: CPHA will employ a range of strategies to strengthen child and adolescent participation, parent, caregiver and family support and community engagement across humanitarian settings to effectively address the behavioural, social, cultural and economic determinants of child protection violations at scale;

- **Develop partnerships and promote coordination between multiple sectors, organizations and actors involved in CAAFAG**: Given the multi-sectoral response required to address CAAFAG, coordination between multiple sectors, organizations and actors is important to create and implement unified prevention and preparedness strategies.

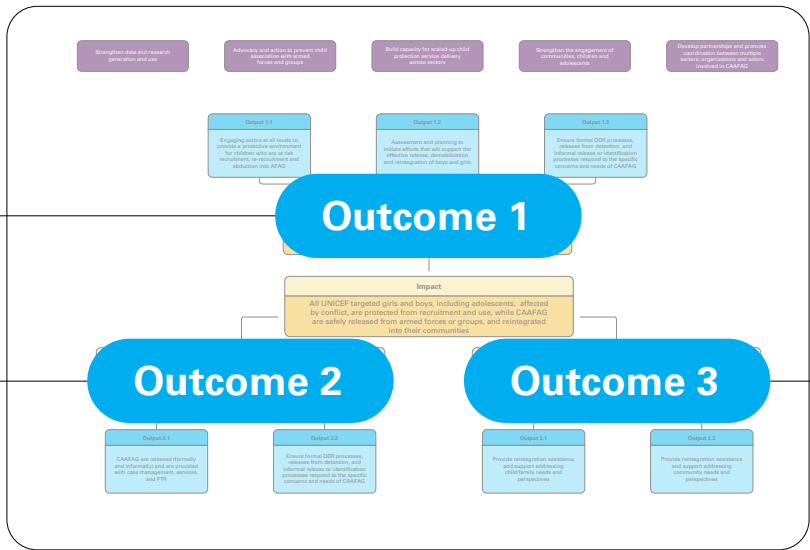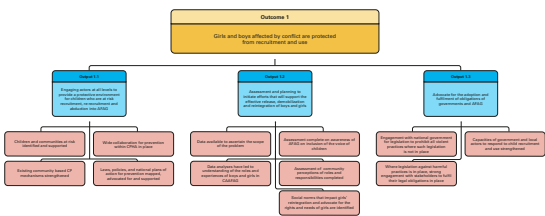8    https://www.unicef.org/documents/child-protection-strategy, last access on 28/10/21
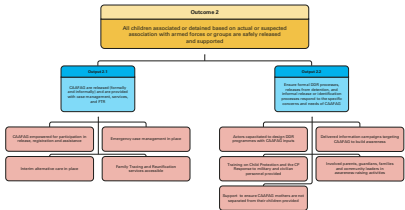
# CAAFAG THEORY OF CHANGE

On the next page the complete ToC diagram for CAAFAG is presented. In the subsequent figures different parts of the ToC are highlighted with larger boxes and fonts for easier reading.
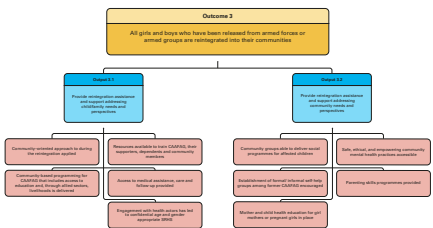
Outcome 1

Outcome 2

Outcome 3

## Figure 2: CAAFAG ToC

Strengthen data and research generation and use

Advocacy and action to prevent child association with armed forces and groups

Build capacity for scaled-up child protection service delivery across sectors

Strengthen the engagement of communities, children and adolescents

Develop partnerships and promote coordination between multiple sectors, organizations and actors involved in CAAFAG

**Output 1.1**

Engaging actors at all levels to provide a protective environment for children who are at risk recruitment, re-recruitment and abduction into AFAG

**Output 1.2**

Assessment and planning to initiate efforts that will support the effective release, demobilization and reintegration of boys and girls

**Output 1.3**

Ensure formal DDR processes, releases from detention, and informal release or identification processes respond to the specific concerns and needs of CAAFAG

**Outcome 1**

Girls and boys affected by conflict are protected from recruitment and use

**Impact**

All UNICEF targeted girls and boys, including adolescents, affected by conflict, are protected from recruitment and use, while CAAFAG are safely released from armed forces or groups, and reintegrated into their communities

**Outcome 2**

All children associated or detained based on actual or suspected association with armed forces or groups are safely released and supported

**Outcome 3**

All children associated or detained based on actual or suspected association with armed forces or groups are safely released and supported

**Output 2.1**

CAAFAG are released (formally and informally) and are provided with case management, services, and FTR

**Output 2.2**

Ensure formal DDR processes, releases from detention, and informal release or identification processes respond to the specific concerns and needs of CAAFAG

**Output 3.1**

Provide reintegration assistance and support addressing child/family needs and perspectives

**Output 3.2**

Provide reintegration assistance and support addressing community needs and perspectives

LEGEND:
- Outputs
- Programming Approaches
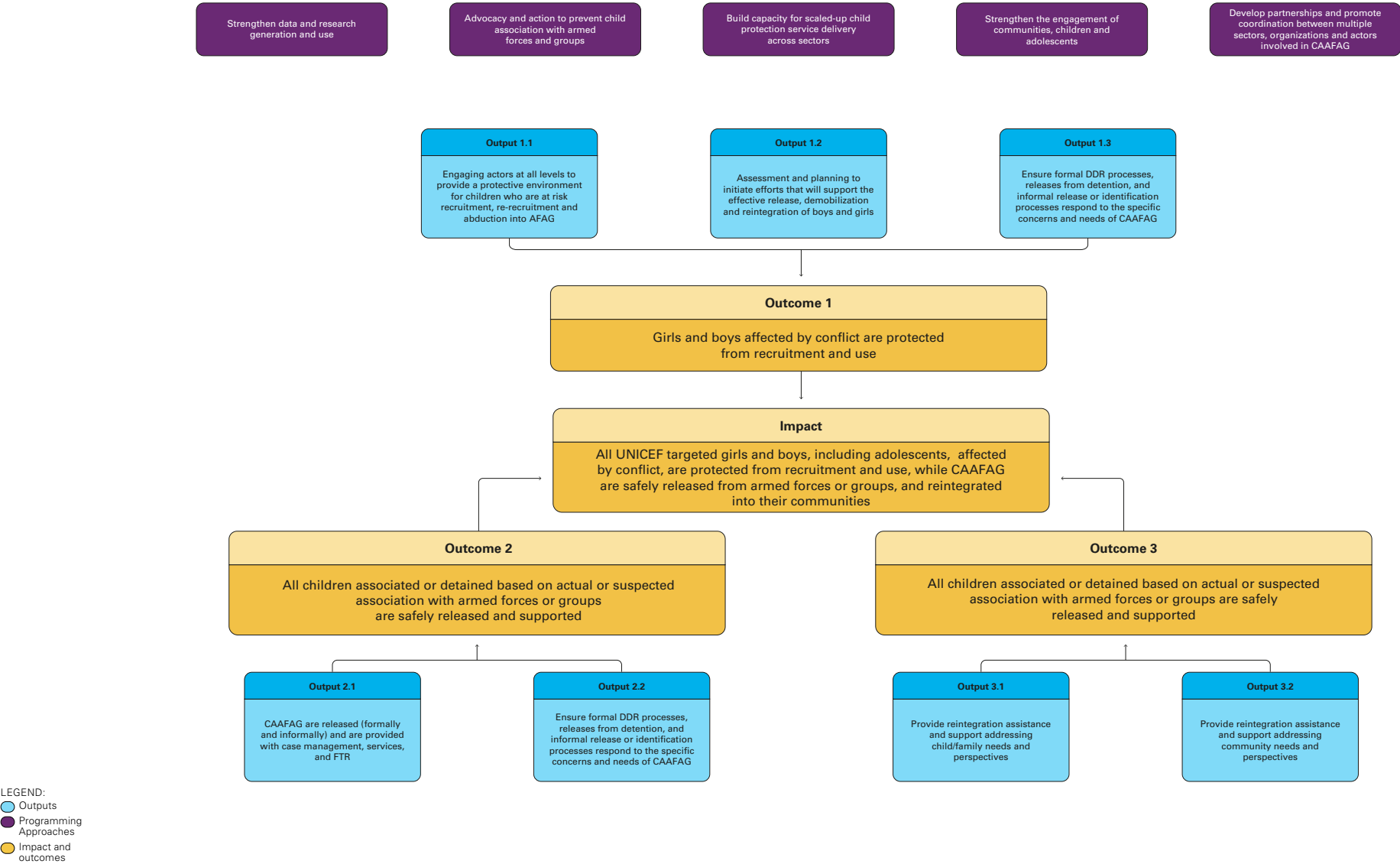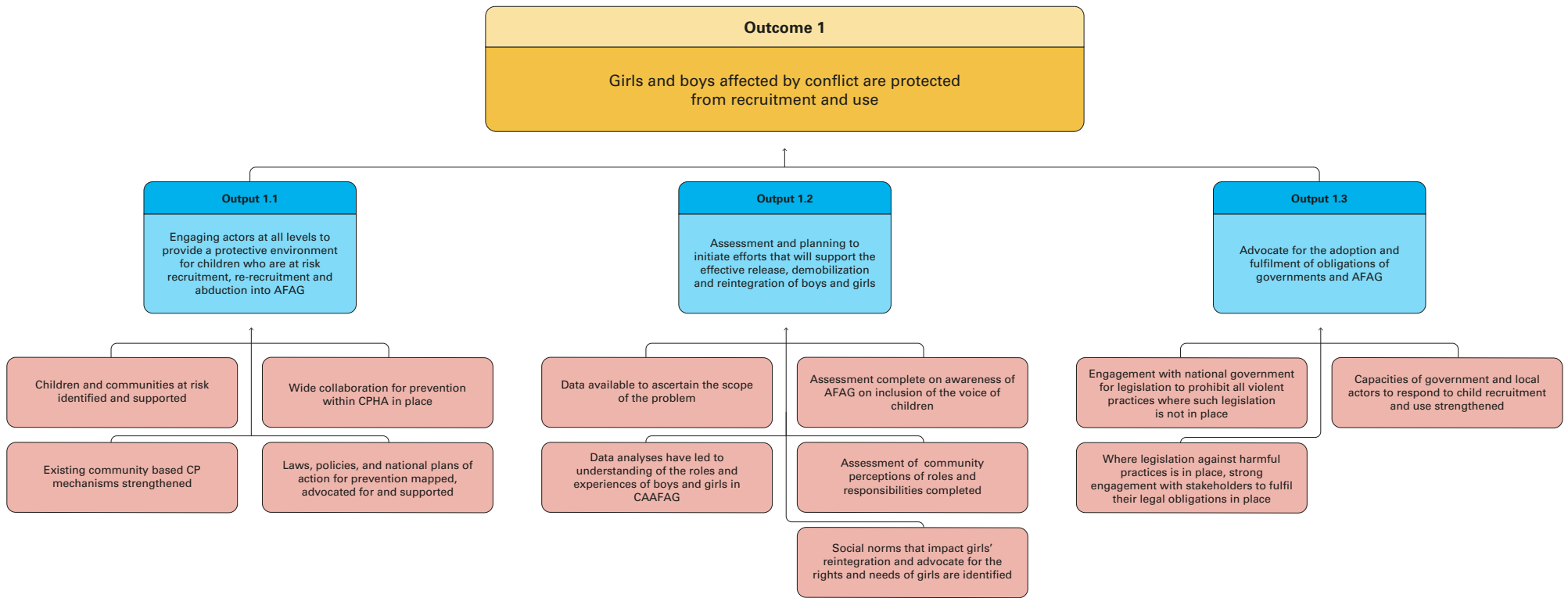- Impact and outcomes
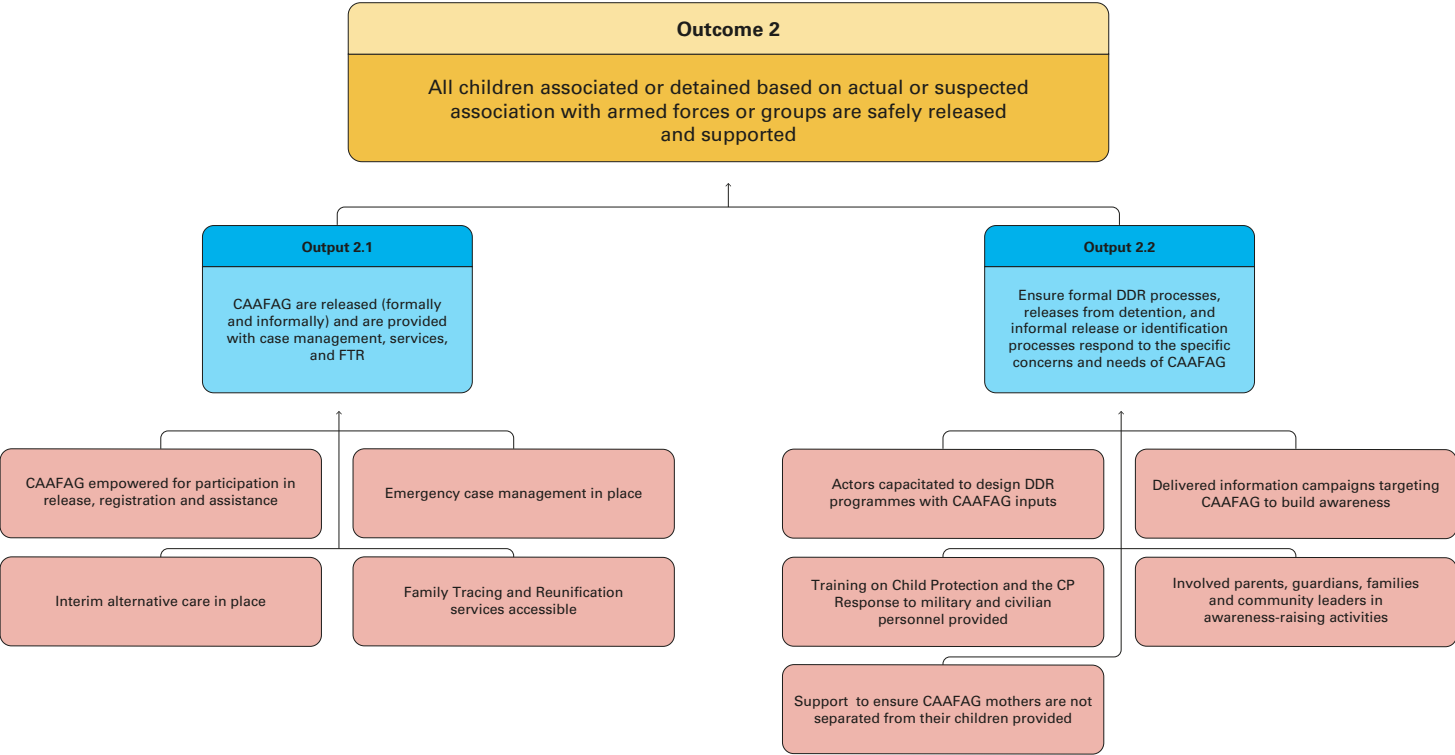
### Figure 3: Outcome 1

Figure 3 below shows Outcome 1, the three corresponding Intermediate Outcomes, and outputs under each, that contribute to the protection of boys and girls against recruitment and use by AFAG.



**Outcome 1**

Girls and boys affected by conflict are protected from recruitment and use

**Output 1.1**

Engaging actors at all levels to provide a protective environment for children who are at risk recruitment, re-recruitment and abduction into AFAG

- Children and communities at risk identified and supported
- Wide collaboration for prevention within CPHA in place
- Existing community based CP mechanisms strengthened
- Laws, policies, and national plans of action for prevention mapped, advocated for and supported

**Output 1.2**

Assessment and planning to initiate efforts that will support the effective release, demobilization and reintegration of boys and girls

- Data available to ascertain the scope of the problem
- Assessment complete on awareness of AFAG on inclusion of the voice of children
- Data analyses have led to understanding of the roles and experiences of boys and girls in CAAFAG
- Assessment of community perceptions of roles and responsibilities completed
- Social norms that impact girls' reintegration and advocate for the rights and needs of girls are identified

**Output 1.3**

Advocate for the adoption and fulfilment of obligations of governments and AFAG

- Engagement with national government for legislation to prohibit all violent practices where such legislation is not in place
- Capacities of government and local actors to respond to child recruitment and use strengthened
- Where legislation against harmful practices is in place, strong engagement with stakeholders to fulfil their legal obligations in place

LEGEND:
- ⬤ Outputs
- ⬤ Key Activities
- ⬤ Impact and outcomes

## Figure 4: Outcome 2

Figure 4 shows the logical chain under outcome 2 which focusses on the release of CAAFAG including the immediate emergency support they require but also about the (formal and informal) Disarmement, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) programmes. Through the support from CAAFAG teams DDR porgrammes can de made to cater better for the specific needs of CAAFAG, including a specific focus on girls and young (minor) mothers.
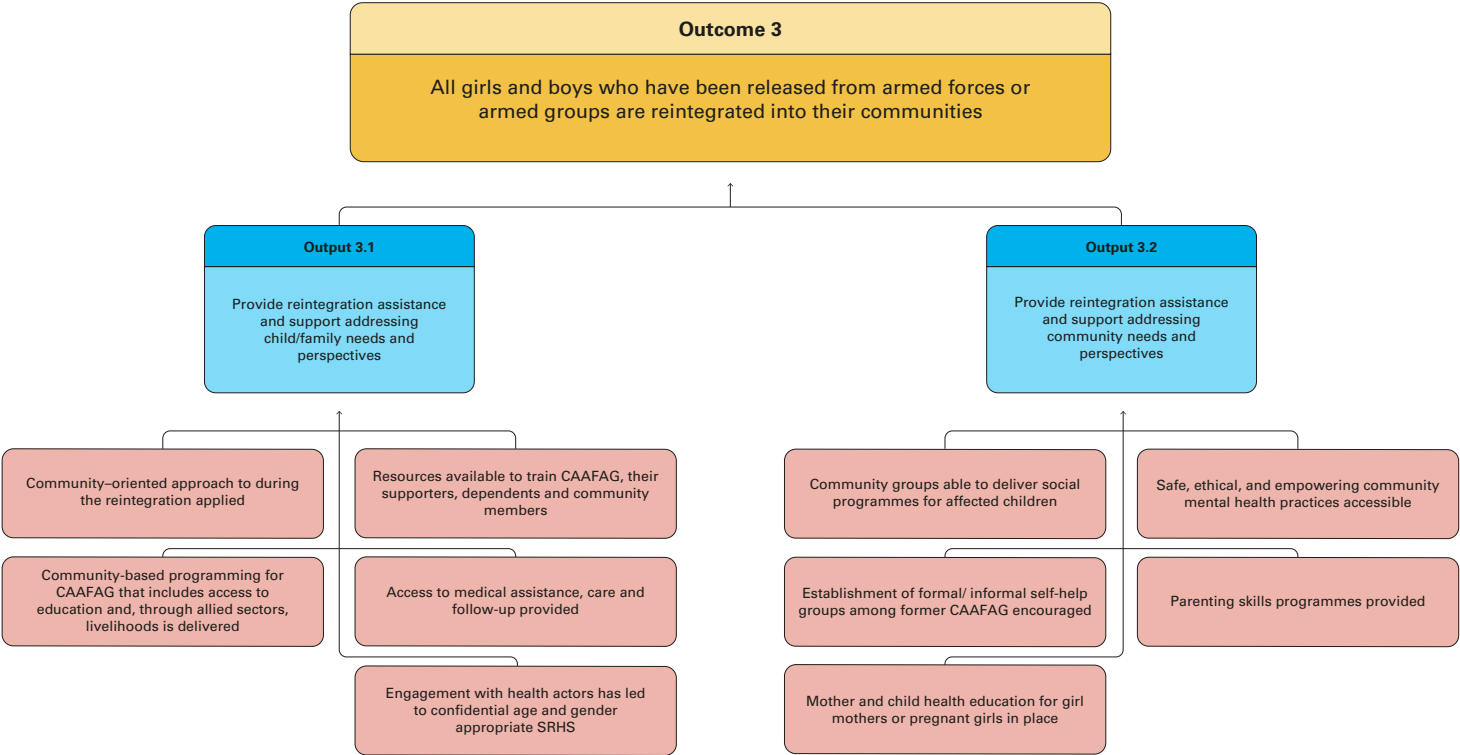


**Outcome 2**

All children associated or detained based on actual or suspected association with armed forces or groups are safely released and supported

**Output 2.1**

CAAFAG are released (formally and informally) and are provided with case management, services, and FTR

**Output 2.2**

Ensure formal DDR processes, releases from detention, and informal release or identification processes respond to the specific concerns and needs of CAAFAG

- CAAFAG empowered for participation in release, registration and assistance
- Emergency case management in place
- Interim alternative care in place
- Family Tracing and Reunification services accessible

- Actors capacitated to design DDR programmes with CAAFAG inputs
- Delivered information campaigns targeting CAAFAG to build awareness
- Training on Child Protection and the CP Response to military and civilian personnel provided
- Involved parents, guardians, families and community leaders in awareness-raising activities
- Support to ensure CAAFAG mothers are not separated from their children provided

LEGEND:
- Outputs
- Key Activities
- Impact and outcomes

## Figure 5: Outcome 3

The third outcome in the CAAFAG ToC is shown in Figure 5. Outcome 3 focusses on the reintegration of all girls and boys who have been released from AFAG. One of the two intermediary outcomes under Outcome 3 ocusses on reintegration services with a child and family perspective, the second focusses on the community perspective.



**Outcome 3**

All girls and boys who have been released from armed forces or armed groups are reintegrated into their communities

**Output 3.1**

Provide reintegration assistance and support addressing child/family needs and perspectives

- Community–oriented approach to during the reintegration applied
- Resources available to train CAAFAG, their supporters, dependents and community members
- Community-based programming for CAAFAG that includes access to education and, through allied sectors, livelihoods is delivered
- Access to medical assistance, care and follow-up provided
- Engagement with health actors has led to confidential age and gender appropriate SRHS

**Output 3.2**

Provide reintegration assistance and support addressing community needs and perspectives

- Community groups able to deliver social programmes for affected children
- Safe, ethical, and empowering community mental health practices accessible
- Establishment of formal/ informal self-help groups among former CAAFAG encouraged
- Parenting skills programmes provided
- Mother and child health education for girl mothers or pregnant girls in place

LEGEND:
- ⬤ Outputs
- ⬤ Key Activities
- ⬤ Impact and outcomes

# THE UNDERLYING RESULTS LOGIC

UNICEF can commit and deliver on supporting children to return safely to their families and communities. However, if we work systematically with others and forge new partnerships, UNICEF can also transform programmes into initiatives that promote integration and social development, while also strengthening systems, reconciliation, peace-building and overall development. Redefining programme expectation also has the potential to reduce discrimination between and among beneficiaries, spanning programmatic frames from humanitarian response to development, allowing for more focus on prevention of recruitment as well as establishing a common agenda across organizations and mandates. [9]

To achieve this, both preventive actions (Outcome 1) and responsive actions (Outcome 2 or release and Outcome 3 on reintegration) are required. Broadly speaking, the work in CAAFAG is organised as captured in Figure 6.

## Figure 6: Model of the CAAFAG method of working
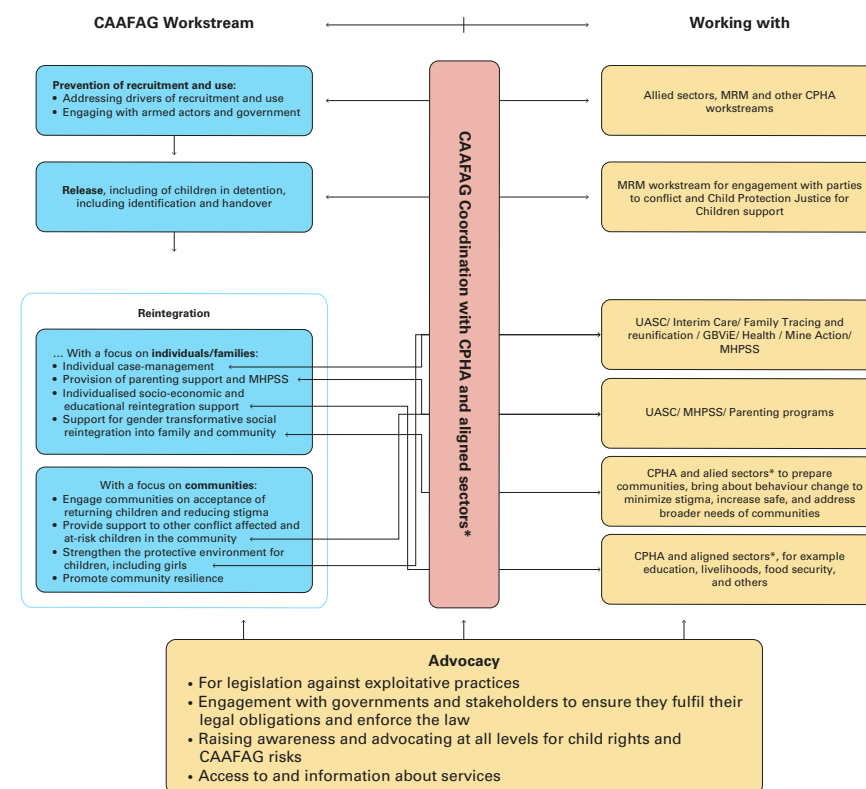


\* Alied sectors and partners have mainstreamed CP in their response and mitigation and include Education, Health, Nutrition, Social Protection, Livelihoods, WASH, Shelter and Settlement, Camp Management and others. They can be part of UNICEF, the wider UN family, and civil society

9      Krueger, A & A. Løk, Child Frontiers, (2020), From where we are to where we could be, Strategic consideration on children associated with armed forces armed groups, programming consultation

The programming of CAAFAG monitoring is based on the following results logic:

1. **Advocacy and Systems Strengthening**: Where child recruitment and use, and related exploitative practices, such as child marriage or other gender-based violence, that are not yet prohibited by national law, engage with national governments can lead to the adoption of such legislation. Where they are prohibited, an engagement with authorities and stakeholders (including, where appropriate, armed forces or groups) can lead to these parting taking concrete steps to fulfil their legal obligations to implement and enforce the law. Supporting the capacities of government and other local actors can strengthen them to prevent and respond to child recruitment and use by armed forces or groups.

2. **Behaviour change**: Raising awareness and advocating at all levels about child rights and the risks associated with child association with armed forces or groups, including gender-based violence, and children's rights to legal protection against such practices, will support the changing of behaviours of children, families, community leaders, as well armed forces and armed groups.

3. **Access to and information about services**: Children, families and communities affected by armed conflict should have access to a core set of protection services and regular, accessible, age-appropriate information about such services. These will help them resist and avoid recruitment and enable them to better care for those released from AFAG.

4. **Preventing and responding to family separation**: Unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) are at greater risk of recruitment, use and other exploitation and abuse. Children associated with armed forces or groups are often unaccompanied upon their release. Without creating stigma, key community members and groups should identify and support any children who are vulnerable to family separation, recruitment or re-recruitment. Social support and assistance programmes for prevention should encourage family unity where in children's best interests, and UASC programming should account for the situation of formerly associated children. (*See the UASC Theory of Change and accompanying documents for more information*.)

5. **Release of associated children**: Children who spend any time with an armed force or group face serious risk of harm or death. All children associated with armed forces or groups should be released immediately and without any preconditions, even during active armed conflict.

- **Identification and age verification**: Systems for screening of individuals who are joining armed forces or groups to prevent their recruitment, as well as ongoing safe, confidential, non-stigmatizing identification of children who are associated with armed groups, including through valid age verification processes can prevent child association and help determining when there are children within the ranks of armed forces or groups. Paying particular attention to identifying children, including girls, who serve in non-combat roles will help identify and support additional children as they may be hidden or treated as wives or dependents of combatants. Systems for confidential identification of children who have escaped or left armed forces or groups independently or through informal release processes should also be developed because they enable children to access the services they need without fear or stigma.

- **Child detention**: Children should not be detained or otherwise processed through a justice system solely for association with an armed force or group. Rather, they should be treated as victims of human rights violations. Children who are over the age of criminal responsibility and who are alleged to have committed crimes while associated with an armed force or group may be subject to criminal processes but only in accordance with international juvenile justice standards and with due consideration of the coercive

environment under which they were living or may have been forced to act. Alternatives to detention should be encouraged and services should be provided to support children to process and recover from their experiences and to gain the skills or education that they may have missed.

6. **Interim care for CAAFAG**: Many children who have exited an armed force or group should be able to safely return to their families and communities or be integrated into family-based care soon after release. Interim care should be provided for those whose families need to be traced or who otherwise cannot immediately return to their families. Family-based interim care should be prioritised above institutional care such as transit/interim care centres. (*See the UASC Theory of Change and accompanying documents for more information.*)

7. **Family tracing and reunification**: Preparations to return children to their communities or origin or to reunify them must mitigate risks and threats of rejection, isolation, discrimination, violence and re-recruitment. Before reunification, caseworkers should assess families' and communities' willingness and ability to accept a child and determine, in consultation with the child, whether reunification is in the child's best interests. Where family rejection or other serious concerns exist, alternative family-based care should be sought. Cross-border tracing and reunification require

additional strategies to ensure release documentation will be honoured by all relevant parties. (*See the UASC Theory of Change and accompanying documents for more information.*)
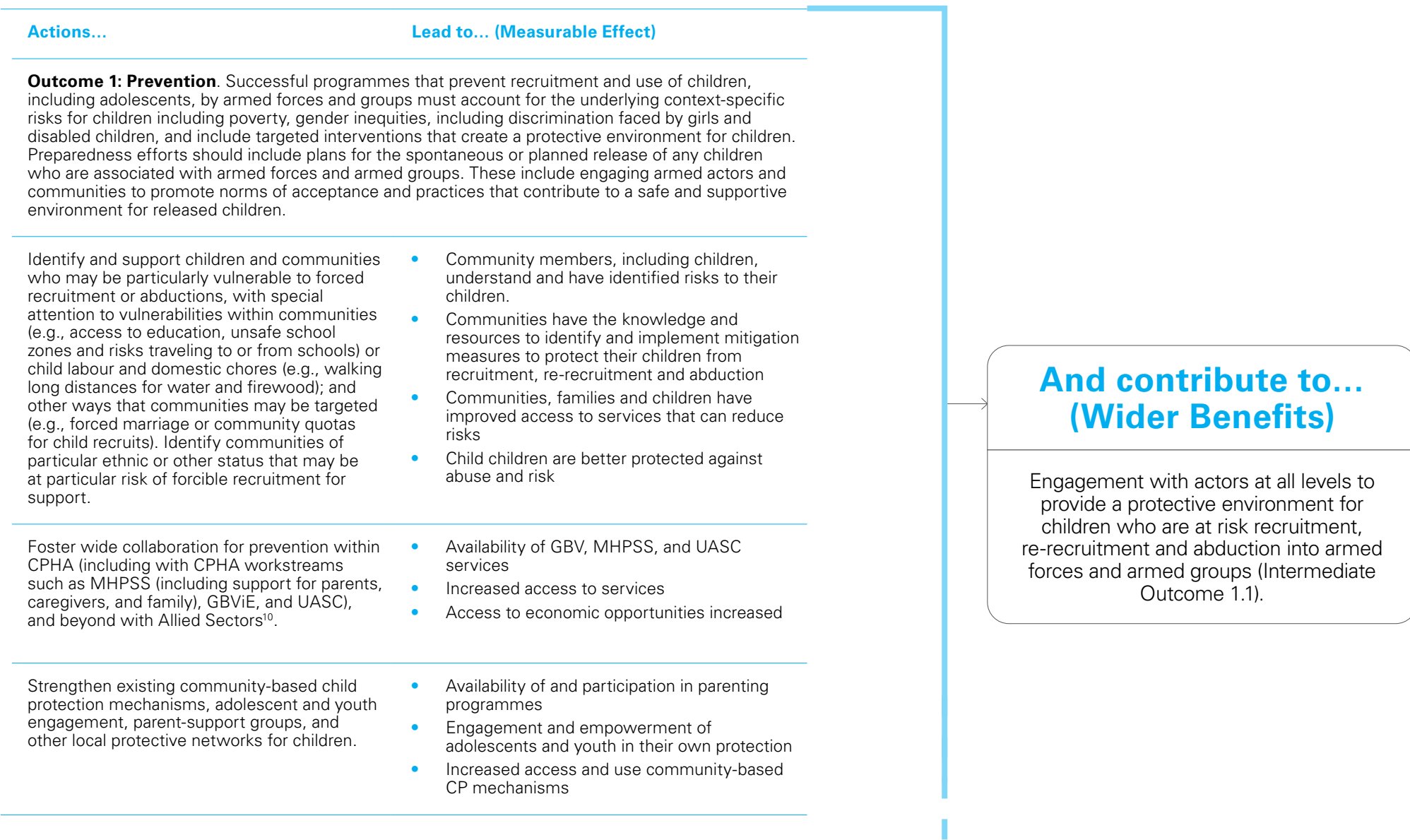
8. **Reintegration or integration**: Reintegration or integration activities aim to help (a) children to transition from a military to a civilian environment and to develop productive lives within communities and (b) family and community members view and treat formerly associated children the same as other children. The reintegration process should both (a) be individually focused and community-based and (b) build on the strengths and resilience of children, families and communities. Recognizing that in most situations there are conflict-affected children within the communities of reintegration who are also at risk or in need of support, programmes should be designed to benefit the broader community so as to avoid inadvertently incentivizing association in order to access services. Processes should, however, consider the individual needs of children based on gender, age, disability and setting.

9. **Girls associated with armed forces or groups**: Prevention, release and reintegration services should work in close collaboration with Allied Sectors and with other CPHA Workstreams, especially with MHPSS, GBViE, and UASC. Especially the collaboration with MHPSS and GBViE are important given the specialised responses and services girls (formerly) associated with armed forces or groups may face, particularly if they were sexually abused, are pregnant, or have children.

The three tables presented below in which specific activities are listed for each of the intermediate outcomes in the CAAFAG ToC. The actions identified are drawn from the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, the Operational Guide to the Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS), the Paris Principles, and the recently released UNICEF GBViE Resource Pack. Taken together, these actions represent some of the core priorities for child protection specialists working with CAAFAG to consider when addressing the needs of boys and girls with a specific focus on girls' experiences with armed forces and armed groups. Close collaboration with the GBV, MPHSS, and UASC workstreams are essential.

## Table 1: Outcome 1 Prevention intervention logic

| Actions… | Lead to… (Measurable Effect) |
|---|---|
| **Outcome 1: Prevention**. Successful programmes that prevent recruitment and use of children, including adolescents, by armed forces and groups must account for the underlying context-specific risks for children including poverty, gender inequities, including discrimination faced by girls and disabled children, and include targeted interventions that create a protective environment for children. Preparedness efforts should include plans for the spontaneous or planned release of any children who are associated with armed forces and armed groups. These include engaging armed actors and communities to promote norms of acceptance and practices that contribute to a safe and supportive environment for released children. | |
| Identify and support children and communities who may be particularly vulnerable to forced recruitment or abductions, with special attention to vulnerabilities within communities (e.g., access to education, unsafe school zones and risks traveling to or from schools) or child labour and domestic chores (e.g., walking long distances for water and firewood); and other ways that communities may be targeted (e.g., forced marriage or community quotas for child recruits). Identify communities of particular ethnic or other status that may be at particular risk of forcible recruitment for support. | • Community members, including children, understand and have identified risks to their children.<br>• Communities have the knowledge and resources to identify and implement mitigation measures to protect their children from recruitment, re-recruitment and abduction<br>• Communities, families and children have improved access to services that can reduce risks<br>• Child children are better protected against abuse and risk |
| Foster wide collaboration for prevention within CPHA (including with CPHA workstreams such as MHPSS (including support for parents, caregivers, and family), GBViE, and UASC), and beyond with Allied Sectors[10]. | • Availability of GBV, MHPSS, and UASC services<br>• Increased access to services<br>• Access to economic opportunities increased |
| Strengthen existing community-based child protection mechanisms, adolescent and youth engagement, parent-support groups, and other local protective networks for children. | • Availability of and participation in parenting programmes<br>• Engagement and empowerment of adolescents and youth in their own protection<br>• Increased access and use community-based CP mechanisms |

### And contribute to… (Wider Benefits)

Engagement with actors at all levels to provide a protective environment for children who are at risk recruitment, re-recruitment and abduction into armed forces and armed groups (Intermediate Outcome 1.1).

10  Allied sectors and partners have mainstreamed CP in their response and mitigation and include Education, Health, Nutrition, Social Protection, Livelihoods, WASH, Shelter and Settlement, Camp Management and others. They can be part of UNICEF, the wider UN family, and civil society.

Map, advocate for and support laws, policies, and national plans of action by both state and non-state actors to end and prevent the recruitment of CAAFAG and to ensure the safe reintegration of boys and girls including the children born as a result of association with armed forces or armed groups

- Mapping of laws, policies and national plans of action available
- Advocacy campaigns & meetings where changes / additions are relevant have been held

Ascertain the scale and scope of the problem as early as possible, including by collecting information on: the armed actors who are or who may be recruiting and using children, the number and percentage of children believed to be in the ranks of armed forces and groups (including according to gender, age and disability) methods and incidents of child recruitment, protective and risk factors, as well as drivers for recruitment and use.

- Situation Analysis report available that examines the context, impacts on children and how these vary based on gender, age and disability
- Assessment that identifies entry points for engagement and programming to prevent recruitment and use as well as to better support children who have experienced the violation.

Analyse information collected to better understand the various roles and experiences of boys and girls within armed forces or groups, the challenges they face in accessing DDR or other release and reintegration programmes, the challenges they face in family and community reintegration, and the strengths of systems and opportunities to support them.

Assess how awareness can be raised among military commanders about the need to include children as beneficiaries of DDR and ensure their active leadership and participation in the design and implementation of DDR programming.

- Assessment reports that are inputted into new and existing action plans

## And contribute to… (Wider Benefits)

Engagement with actors at all levels to provide a protective environment for children who are at risk recruitment, re-recruitment and abduction into armed forces and armed groups (Intermediate Outcome 1.1).

Assess community perceptions of their roles and responsibility towards CAAFAG and community capacities to meet the needs of returning children

- Community assessments available
- Responses to enhance community capacities

Identify social norms that impact girls' reintegration, including economic participation, and design communications interventions to sensitize communities to the needs and rights of girls and their children and that promote norms of acceptance and support

- Communication interventions and materials available
- Social norms studies / analyses conducted

Where child recruitment and use, and related exploitative practices, such as child marriage or other gender-based violence, that are not yet prohibited by national law, engage with national governments for such legislation.

- Legislation forbidding child recruitment and use, child marriage, gender-based violence, and other related exploitative practices is in place

Where legislation again child recruitment and use, and related exploitative practices, is in place, engage with authorities and stakeholders (including, where appropriate, armed forces or groups) to take concrete steps to fulfil their legal obligations to implement and enforce the law.

- Legislation that is in place is implemented and enforced by authorities and stakeholders including armed forces and groups

Support the capacities of government and other local actors to prevent and respond to child recruitment and use by armed forces or groups.

- Government and other local actors' capacities are enhanced to prevent and respond to child recruitment

## And contribute to… (Wider Benefits)

Preparedness including assessment and planning to initiate efforts that support the effective release, demobilization and reintegration of boys and girls (Intermediate Outcome 1.2).

## Table 2: Outcome 2 Release intervention logic

| Actions… | Lead to… (Measurable Effect) |
|---|---|
| Outcome 2. Release and emergency response. This covers a broad array of activities aimed at meeting the needs of boys and girls who are released from armed forces and armed groups. Any response mechanisms designed to assist CAAFAG need to strike a careful balance between seeking to identify children in order to meet their needs and not further stigmatizing them. | |
| All measures should be taken to ensure CAAFAG see themselves as eligible for release and are empowered to participate safely in release, registration and early assistance programmes, through widespread—but careful and non-stigmatizing—outreach, with methods informed by children themselves. | • Advocacy and information campaigns / outreach for CAAFAG done |
| Emergency case management, interim alternative care, and Family Tracing and Reunification need to include the following: <br> • The presence of accessible CP staff at all times during the process <br> • Safe and private accommodation for CAAFAG where accommodation is required, either transit/ interim care or any residential care sites, including measures to safeguard boys and girls in residential settings/ interim care sites <br> • Access to immediate health services, including reproductive health care, and menstrual hygiene maintenance (MHM) friendly toilet and washing facilities <br> • Nutrition and health care for infants and young children where necessary and support to girl mothers to care for their children <br> Legal aid and civil documentation | • CP staff is accessible <br> • Safe and private accommodation is available and required facilities have been assessed / put in place <br> • Measures have been put in place to enhance security / safety <br> • Girl mothers supported materially to enable them to care for their children |

### And contribute to… (Wider Benefits)

Release is the first step in the process of recovery and social integration for CAAFAG. Formal or informal registration is undertaken and temporary assistance is provided to help meet immediate needs (Intermediate Outcome 2.1).

When designing DDR programmes and informal release and identification mechanisms, actors should consult CAAFAG to design services, assistance and programmes that respond to their specific concerns and needs, including safety issues when separated from the armed force or armed group, being forced to leave children behind; concerns about community rejection; etc.

- DDR programmes and informal release and identification mechanisms designed together with CAAFAG inputs

Deliver information campaigns targeting CAAFAG to build awareness of their eligibility for release and reintegration programmes and related services.

- Information campaigns prepared and rolled-out

Provide training on Child Protection and the CP Response to military and civilian personnel, including, where relevant, personnel working in disarmament and demobilization sites or who are involved in identifying former CAAFAG.

- Trainings provided to military and civilian DDR personnel or who are involved in identifying former CAAFAG;
- Parents, guardians, families and community leaders involved in awareness raising activities

Involve parents, guardians, families and community leaders in awareness-raising activities on release and identification processes to reduce exclusion and/or exploitation and other harm to children in the process.

Ensure that girl mothers who are combatants or otherwise associated with armed forces and groups will not be separated from their children during demobilization.

- Measures put in place to ensure girls affected by AFAG, who are mothers, are not separated from their children unless it is determined to be in their children's best interests.

All measures should be taken to ensure CAAFAG see themselves as eligible for release and are empowered to participate safely in release, registration and early assistance programmes, through widespread—but careful and non-stigmatizing—outreach, with methods informed by children themselves.

- Advocacy and information campaigns / outreach for CAAFAG done

## And contribute to… (Wider Benefits)

Release is the first step in the process of recovery and social integration for CAAFAG. Formal or informal registration is undertaken and temporary assistance is provided to help meet immediate needs (Intermediate Outcome 2.1).

## And contribute to… (Wider Benefits)

The importance of attention to CAAFAG in both formal and informal release process is enhanced (Intermediate Outcome 2.2).

Emergency case management, interim alternative care, and Family Tracing and Reunification need to include the following:

- The presence of accessible CP staff at all times during the process
- Safe and private accommodation for CAAFAG where accommodation is required, either transit/ interim care or any residential care sites, including measures to safeguard boys and girls in residential settings/ interim care sites
- Access to immediate health services, including reproductive health care, and menstrual hygiene maintenance (MHM) friendly toilet and washing facilities
- Nutrition and health care for infants and young children where necessary and support to girl mothers to care for their children

Legal aid and civil documentation

- CP staff is accessible
- Safe and private accommodation is available and required facilities have been assessed / put in place
- Measures have been put in place to enhance security / safety
- Girl mothers supported materially to enable them to care for their children

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When designing DDR programmes and informal release and identification mechanisms, actors should consult CAAFAG to design services, assistance and programmes that respond to their specific concerns and needs, including safety issues when separated from the armed force or armed group, being forced to leave children behind; concerns about community rejection; etc.

- DDR programmes and informal release and identification mechanisms designed together with CAAFAG inputs

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Deliver information campaigns targeting CAAFAG to build awareness of their eligibility for release and reintegration programmes and related services.

- Information campaigns prepared and rolled-out

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Provide training on Child Protection and the CP Response to military and civilian personnel, including, where relevant, personnel working in disarmament and demobilization sites or who are involved in identifying former CAAFAG.

- Trainings provided to military and civilian DDR personnel or who are involved in identifying former CAAFAG

## And contribute to… (Wider Benefits)

The importance of attention to CAAFAG in both formal and informal release process is enhanced (Intermediate Outcome 2.2).

## Table 3: Outcome 3 Reintegration intervention logic

| Actions… | Lead to… (Measurable Effect) | And contribute to… (Wider Benefits) |
|---|---|---|
| **Outcome 3: Reintegration**. This should be considered a long-term effort, particularly for CAAFAG whose ability to reintegrate is compromised by on-going discrimination, stigma, and isolation. Reintegration efforts must work at a variety of levels, providing health (including reproductive health) services, supporting, where relevant, the provision of educational, vocational and livelihood opportunities for boys and girls affected, alongside community-based approaches to facilitate their acceptance, support and empowerment and to support other at-risk and conflict affected children. | | |
| Adopt a community–oriented approach during the reintegration phase; conduct on-going discussions with key community members about returning CAAFAG and how they can accept, support and empower these children | • Discussion with community member on safe return are on-going | Reintegration efforts that support individual children and their direct caregivers/families to reintegrate successfully and sustainably. It is essential to take steps to identify the needs of children and support them without singling them out or provide services for CAAFAG alone, which will stigmatise them (Intermediate Outcome 3.1). |
| Allocate resources to train CAAFAG, their supporters, dependents and community members on how to care for and cope with children born during, or as a result of, girls association with AFAG. | • Resources are available. | |
| Establish additional community-based programming for CAAFAG that includes attention to: <br><br> Access to Education <br><br> &#9633; Support CAAFAG to access education <br><br> &#9633; Promote equality of access for girls to vocational training in all types of occupations, including those which have traditionally been limited to men and boys. <br><br> Advocate to Allied Sectors for access to Economic integration, livelihoods, training, access to land and cash | • Access to education and vocational training for CAAFAG, including a special focus on the needs of girls <br> • Economic empowerment, livelihoods support and cash assistance available to former CAAFAG and other at-risk children and families | |

Support CAAFAG who have been injured or disabled with appropriate medical assistance, care and follow up.

- Referrals to the health sector as needed for medical services

Engage with health actors to advocate for confidential age and gender appropriate reproductive health services to be available to former CAAFAG, including services for infertility, fistula and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, as well as risks and results of early pregnancy and induced abortion or miscarriage or birth without adequate medical care, are available.

- Linkage Allied Sectors for released CAAFAG to relevant services including for reproductive health and services for survivors of GBV
- HIV testing, treatment and support services are available to all released CAAFAG.

Support community groups to deliver social programmes for affected children that build on their resilience and capacity.

- Community groups supported (including, where relevant, financially) and social programmes delivered

Encourage the establishment of formal/informal self-help groups among former CAAFAG and supporters.

- Presence of self-help groups for former CAAFAG and supporters

Encourage safe, ethical, and empowering community mental health practices to deal with CAAFAG specific suffering or trauma, ensuring these practices do not reinforce traditional gender norms or practices.

- Referrals to MHPSS services where needed

Provide parenting skills programmes to mothers, fathers and caregivers

- Parenting skills enhanced

Provide mother and child health education for girl mothers or pregnant girls

- Mother and child health education provided to released CAAFAG mothers and pregnant girls

## And contribute to… (Wider Benefits)

Reintegration efforts seek to mobilize CAAFAG's community support networks and build systems of social support in the community and in families. This approach reduces the risks of stigmatization and reprisals against children affected, while child protection systems are strengthened, in the long run (Intermediate Outcome 3.2).
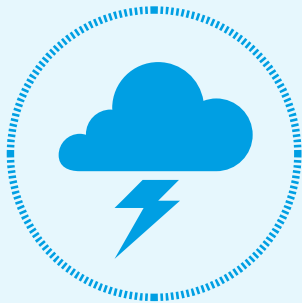
# HIGH-LEVEL ASSUMPTIONS

- It is in the best interest of children associated with armed forces and armed groups for their association to end;

- The majority of children associated with armed forces and armed groups want to be reunited with their parents or guardians, families, and/or communities;

- Together with key partners the UNICEF CAAFAG workstream is able to create viable alternatives for children at risk, or previously associated with armed forces and armed groups to address the experiences of children during their period of association and to prevent primary or secondary association;

- Donors will continue to fund CAAFAG prevention and response activities;

- International humanitarian and development partners are willing to together to prevent association of children with armed forces and armed groups;

- Governments are committed to supporting CAAFAG and their families and communities.

# RISKS AND (TAKEN FROM THE CPHA OVERARCHING TOC)

Working in fast-changing, often violent, unstable and/or unpredictable humanitarian context inevitably comes with risks. These specific risks compound the risks any international organisation faces independent of the context where it works. The following table shows the major risks identified as well as the risk management measures.

Table: Risks and CPHA risk management measures

| Risk | CPHA risk management measures |
| --- | --- |
| Structural barriers or siloed mindsets that hamper meaningful and sustainable multisectoral work. | Provide innovative and practical packaging of key interventions for countries to implement, with explicit articulations of roles/responsibilities of each sector (including this Theory of Change).<br><br>CPHA will also step-up efforts to advocate for political commitment, including for required budget allocations, an intersectoral mindset and advocacy, including the CCCs and Pillar 4 of the minimum standards of CPHA, towards enhanced protection for children. |
| Humanitarian actors are unable to reach out to, or reach consensus with, key partners, including national government actors, while developing and implementing approaches | National governments and other key partners need are involved in all steps of planning, implementing and response by the humanitarian sector and CPHA strives to create long-term relationships and cooperation agreements with all relevant actors in national governments. |
| Children in need may be in areas under the control or influence of armed non-State actors (ANSAs) which where it may be difficult to reach them. | Children should not miss out on the support services they need because of the actor in control/influencing the area and humanitarian actors need to secure access to children, women, and families at risk even in areas where the government is party to conflict or where armed non-stater actors are in control, through advocacy and the upholding of international treatment and conventions. |
| Social Behaviour Change interventions are not sustainable due to small scale or unsystematic approaches. | CPHA and its partners will provide technical assistance and advocacy on including national SBC frameworks and action plans in a national development plan.<br><br>CPHA will work closely with SBC to advocate for political commitment and donor support to primary prevention programming. |

Administrative data systems, case management monitoring systems and other information systems are weak in many humanitarian contexts and will hamper programme delivery and reach.

Strengthening data systems is a regular component of CPHA programming. This will include support for more disaggregation of data, including information on children with disabilities, as well as support for strengthened incidence monitoring, prevalence monitoring, and programme monitoring.

CPHA will also invest in the development of agile, innovative, quick and cheaper alternatives to current impact monitoring tools to be piloted and used in humanitarian contexts.

Weakened global financing for child protection will be compounded if the sector fails to deliver on the measurable results.

CPHA needs to more strongly demonstrate its own value for money, to maintain the confidence of potential donor that the requested resources for the sector will help achieve the planned child protection results in emergencies.

On-going efforts to enhance the evaluability of CPHA will contribute to stronger evaluations which will generate evidence pointing to the benefits of investing in CPHA.

Human resources are sometimes limited, coordination is poor, and there is little or no access to humanitarian settings

CPHA will diversify partners across sectors, build resilience to cope with humanitarian situations, advocate for and work towards the CCCs and manifest leadership in coordination / advocacy globally and on the ground.

Politicization of mechanisms including the CAAC agenda, designed to enhance compliance of parties to conflict with international humanitarian and human rights law

CPHA will continue to advocate through the children and armed conflict agenda and relevant stakeholders for enhanced engagement with all parties to conflict to prevent and end grave violations against children, and for the development of multisectoral and multiyear programmes and advocacy to enhance the protection of children in situations of armed conflict.

Pandemics, including COVID-19, erode child rights, and the restriction of access (warranted and unwarranted) and services inhibits the delivery of child protection interventions in humanitarian action.

CPHA, through concerted efforts with EMOPS and other relevant Programme Group sectors, will continue to work with partner Governments and the international community to support pandemic preparedness, fast and flexible child protection response strategies based on international human rights standards and principles, and adequate budget allocations including access to vaccines in humanitarian contexts.

Political backlash by host governments to UNICEF's advocacy for the inclusion of migrant, refugee and IDP children in national education, health, social protection and child protection systems

Pursue a combination of norms-based (CRC applying to all children in a country) and pragmatic advocacy (building stronger systems for all, strong investment into PF4C) and build coalitions with partners (such as the UNHCR Blueprint).

A growing narrative against human and child rights, together with misinformation and securitisation, undermine the priority given to rights violations in humanitarian settings and undermine the acceptance of (government) programmes among community members.

UNICEF will, through concerted efforts of DOC, HR, EMOPS, CPHA, and others, continue to contribute to increased public understanding of human and child rights in humanitarian settings, including through formal education.

CPHA will work with others to support advocacy towards duty bearers to provide correct information and re-enforce the priority that should be given to rights violations.

CPHA will advocate for public understanding of CCCs and the accountabilities they bring.

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Suggested citation: **CAAFAG Theory of Change Narrative**