



BUILDING WITH BAMBOO

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE AND LEARNING ON RESILIENCE

 CONSORTIUM FOR STREET CHILDREN

LEARNING UPDATE 2
MARCH 2018



Building with Bamboo is an international learning project exploring resilience-based approaches to working with street-connected children who are exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

The project builds on findings from [Oak Foundation's Bamboo research initiative](#), which sought to understand resilience in children exposed to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

It is led by the [Consortium for Street Children \(CSC\)](#) and undertaken in collaboration with three partners from the CSC network: [CWISH](#) in Nepal, [JUCONI](#) in Ecuador and [S.A.L.V.E. International](#) in Uganda. Each partner is conducting learning and innovation activities to explore the forms a resilience-based approach to working with street-connected children might usefully take. Activities are designed and overseen by the social development consultancy [Keep Your Shoes Dirty \(KYSO\)](#) and led by Resilience Champions at each learning site.

ABOUT THIS UPDATE

This is the second of three learning updates in which we share the emerging insights from our second learning and innovation cycle (May - Oct 2017).

We present further learning which has emerged during the testing of innovation concepts developed during our first learning and innovation cycle. We also explain how we have refined these innovation concepts in response to the new insights and how we planned to take these ideas forward into the third learning and innovation cycle (Oct 2017 - Feb 2018). As before, information shared here is emergent and part of a continually evolving process of learning and implementation.

This learning update is intended for researchers and practitioners who are interested in learning more about how resilience approaches might be used in working with street-connected children.

TO FIND OUT MORE, VISIT:
[buildingwithbamboo.org](#)

OUR LEARNING PARTNERS



JUCONI, Ecuador

JUCONI delivers personalised interventions to support vulnerable children and their families to learn from their experiences, develop self-esteem and build healthy relationships.

➔ JUCONI's Resilience Champion is **Martha Espinoza**



S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

S.A.L.V.E. aims to reduce the number of young people living on the streets through counselling, care and learning. They also support children on the streets to resettle into their families and to re-enter education.

➔ S.A.L.V.E.'s Resilience Champion is **Alfred Ochaya**



CWISH, Nepal

CWISH works with child domestic workers offering rehabilitation, legal advice, counselling and family reintegration support. They also facilitate child domestic workers (CDWs) to attend school and access to safe spaces services.

➔ CWISH's Resilience Champion is **Krishna P. Subedi**

OUR APPROACH TO 'RESILIENCE'

Building with Bamboo acknowledges that the concept of resilience is impossible to universally define. However, we recognise the following key elements:

- A 'resilient child' is one who copes better with adversity than he or she might be expected to.
- Resilience may be present in individual or group contexts.
- Resilience should be seen as a process in interaction with the environment, not an inherent quality in the child, and must be viewed in the wider context of children's lives.¹

Concepts of resilience vary across different socio-cultural systems. Given this, we developed local narratives of resilience which identified the locally relevant and meaningful components of 'resilience' in each learning site.²

A resilience-based approach is one which focusses on strengths and which recognises children's agency to negotiate adversity and develop coping strategies in the context of appropriate support.

➔ **To find out more, visit: buildingwithbamboo.org**

¹ For more information on approaches to resilience, see [KYSD's literature review](#)

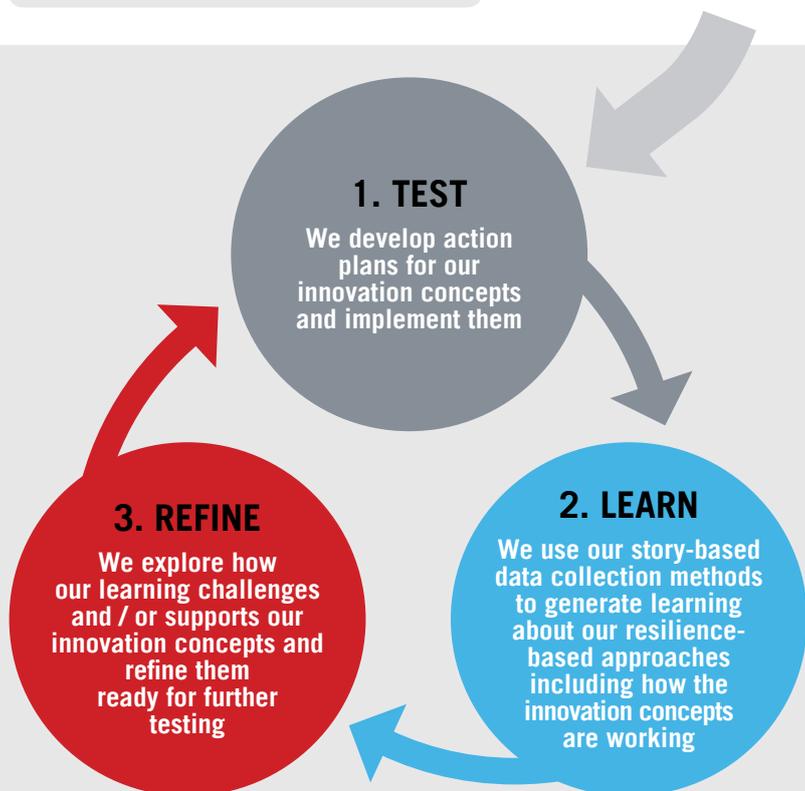
² For more information on local narratives of resilience, see [KYSD's thinking paper](#)

OUR LEARNING APPROACH

To prepare



Learning & innovation is organised around 3 cycles taking place over a year



Learning & innovation cycle 2 – local learning and design to refine our resilience-based approaches

The combination of **local learning and design processes** that we are using to **inform and refine our resilience based programme practice** is highly experimental. Taking the insights as a starting point, the process involves **continually learning about and subsequently adapting our resilience-based programme approaches at each learning partner to make them more effective** in terms of promoting resilience and well-being amongst street-connected children. This process enables us to **develop increasingly situated programme approaches** in each place, which means programmes are more relevant to the particular local challenges and contexts. During learning and innovation cycle 2, Resilience Champions tested the innovation concepts they had developed during learning and innovation cycle 1, then used the learning to refine them for further testing during learning and innovation cycle 3.

Within learning and innovation cycles 2 and 3, we use this process to adapt our resilience-based approaches to respond to the learning and make them more effective.³

³ The approach presented here and in the accompanying description is informed by elements of the Evidence-Based Design approach to policy and programming developed by UNIDRIR and The Policy Lab. For further reading see:
 - www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/a-framework-document-for-evidence-based-programme-design-on-reintegration-396.pdf
 - www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/a-prototype-for-evidence-based-programme-design-for-reintegration-en-610.pdf



Street-connected children showing their drawings from art lessons, JUCONI Ecuador



Child domestic workers and CWISH's staff participating in story telling sessions



Street-connected children participating in S.A.L.V.E's drama activities

EMERGING LEARNING

The Resilience Champions distilled a series of key insights from the data collection which were used to refine their resilience-based approaches with street-connected children as they moved forward into the third and final learning and innovation cycle. As such, the insights below extend and build on previous learning, deepening our understanding about resilience-based programme delivery and trajectories, local notions of 'resilience' and connections between increased resilience and child well-being in each place. These insights have been generated in collaboration

with Resilience Champions in response to stories gathered from programme staff and children about their experiences of delivering and participating in resilience-based programme activities at each learning site. This section shares these insights, together with some quotes and stories from Resilience Champions' and children's experiences.

1 THE PROCESS CHILDREN GO THROUGH TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO THE CHALLENGES THEY FACE IS AN IMPORTANT WAY IN WHICH THEY DEVELOP RESILIENCE.

We know that our activities help strengthen children's abilities to find solutions to their problems and develop strategies to deal with the challenges they face. This happens by providing space for them to share their experiences, and encourage them to discuss how they can address the difficult situations they face, for example, to protect themselves against abuse, and discuss them with each other, staff members, parents and other caregivers and actors in their support network, e.g. teachers. These processes seem powerful in terms of promoting children's resilience for dealing with the adverse situations they find themselves in.



We don't impose our ideas. We don't tell people how to be resilient or say "this is wrong". Instead, we spend time with people. We are friendly and playful. We model behaviour and allow children and family members to develop their own solutions and strategies.

Martha, JUCONI, Ecuador

⁴ During discussions about emerging learning presented here, the terms 'parent' and 'family' were generally used to refer to situations in which biological familial relationships existed. Consequently, our use of these terms throughout the 'Emerging Learning' section reflects this. However, we recognise that other care-givers may be present, that households may not be always based on biological familial relationships and that resilience may be developed in other non-family / household contexts.



Alisa (12yrs) began to realise that the situation of other CDWs was often worse than her own situation and they were more vulnerable than her. She was able to reflect on some of the positive things in her life. This helped Alisa feel more positive and develop a better relationship with her aunt (employer).

Krishna, CWISH, Nepal

2 SHARING EXAMPLES OF OVERCOMING ADVERSITY AMONGST STREET-CONNECTED CHILDREN IS POWERFUL FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE.

Creating opportunities for street-connected children to spend time with peers who are in similar situations is helpful. However, it is the process of sharing the adverse experiences they have gone through (and how they manage them) which is most powerful for promoting resilience. Such example sharing allows street-connected children to recognise that others may be in worse situations, learn about different coping strategies, find something to aspire to and/or take strength and ideas from.



Miriam* (17yrs) grew in confidence after joining S.A.L.V.E's music activities. When she joined the group she was too shy to even speak but after some time she was able to speak up and even express her feelings to staff and her parents.

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

3 STREET-CONNECTED CHILDREN'S INCREASINGLY POSITIVE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR AFTER PARTICIPATING IN OUR PROGRAMMES IS RECOGNISED BY THEIR PEERS, THEIR FAMILY/HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS MORE WIDELY.

Children who participate in our activities increasingly demonstrate a boost in self-belief, confidence, hopefulness and control over their emotions. This is, in turn, helping children to better express and share their feelings with others, including programme staff, parents, caregivers, employers and peers.



Donald* (14yrs) got involved with our resilience-based activities at S.A.L.V.E. The staff worked closely with him and he formed a strong bond with one staff member in particular. This person was always there for Donald and continued to help him even when Donald pushed him away.

Alfred, S.A.L.V.E. International, Uganda

4 POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ORGANISATION STAFF AND STREET-CONNECTED CHILDREN ARE KEY TO BUILDING RESILIENCE BUT THEY HAVE TO BE REAL AND THEY HAVE TO BE CONSTANT.

Trust between the organisation and the child is absolutely essential for establishing a relationship that can help promote resilience. This kind of trust develops from being a constant and persistent presence in a child's life, one they can believe in, rely on and through which they feel safe and supported. They are the key to everything we do and can do to build resilience within children, families, households - and even communities.

*All names have been changed

5 A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STREET-CONNECTED CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIP OF ALL.

Children develop stronger relationships with parents as a result of a more family oriented approach to building resilience. This involves taking time with both street-connected children and their wider family members to explore the problems, the complex issues which have led to them and developing solutions together.



Pablo* (10yrs) felt very lonely. His mother worked everyday and even at weekends he said it was like she weren't there at all. Pablo spent most of his time on the street. And then JUCONI got involved. We worked with him and his mother and he started to notice a change in her behaviour. He said: "I used to have a hug from my keyworker but now I have a hug from my mother!"

Martha, JUCONI, Ecuador



Daniel* (12yrs) was addicted to drugs and went to a rehabilitation centre for a year. During this time he developed hope and wanted to finish his studies. However, he ended up living with his old friends back in the same community and got involved with drugs again.

Martha, JUCONI, Ecuador

6 IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER AND ADDRESS SOCIAL VULNERABILITY ALONGSIDE PERSONAL VULNERABILITY TO PROMOTE RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AS WELL AS RESILIENT FAMILIES.

The most difficult cases are often when there is a combination of internal psychological vulnerability in a child or parent combined with a challenging family and community environment. Despite best efforts, children can end up back in the same situation because of the negative environment that surrounds them.

7 ACTIVELY IMPROVING COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION AND NETWORKS BETWEEN NON-FORMAL AND FORMAL ACTORS IS HELPFUL FOR PROMOTING RESILIENCE AMONGST STREET-CONNECTED CHILDREN WE WORK WITH.

Working with actors at the community level and encouraging better relationships between these actors helps to build resilience outcomes for street-connected children. This is because they share together and develop a better understanding of the challenges children face and how they can support them.



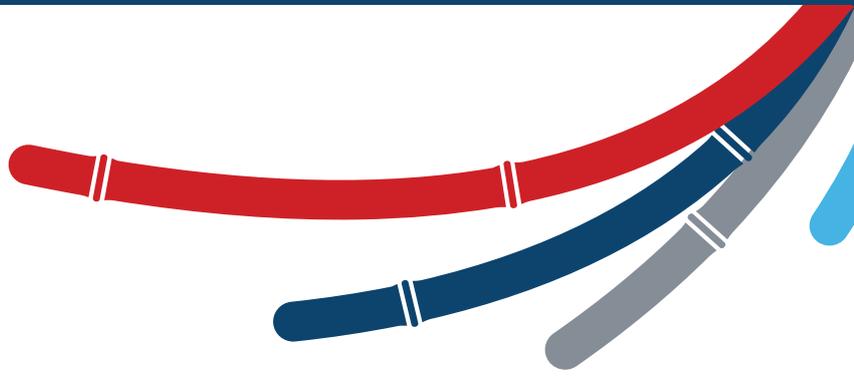
Before, employers would not visit the school on 'parents day' but now they sometimes visit to see how the CDW is getting on. On these occasions, the teacher can ask the employer how the CDW is getting on at home and they can discuss any positive changes in the CDW's behaviour since they started to join our classes. This can help employers become more supportive about CDWs attending school, such as allowing them to go more often or buying the items they need for school.

Krishna, CWISH, Nepal

REFINED INNOVATIONS

In response to emerging learning from learning and innovation cycle 2, the Resilience Champions refined their innovation concepts for further testing during learning and innovation cycle 3.

	JUCONI, ECUADOR	S.A.L.V.E. INTERNATIONAL, UGANDA	CWISH, NEPAL
What is the innovation concept?	Strengthening staff capacity to recognise trauma in children and other family members.	Strengthening staff capacity to build better child-parent relationships.	Strengthening staff capacity to use positive feedback approaches with children.
What is involved?	A basic training package on trauma identification with a small group of staff.	A series of activities which encourage staff to reflect on the components of a positive attachment and why it is important, so that they can be carried through into their work with children and parents.	Workshop activities with staff to explore ideas which can help them concentrate on giving positive feedback to children in gentle ways that don't overwhelm them.
How has the innovation concept been refined?	Shifting from individual trauma to vulnerability, and building staff capacity to recognise both personal and social vulnerability in order to build the resilience of communities and support children to protect themselves.	Working more consistently with families over time to better develop trusted relationships between staff and families as well as children, in order to better equip staff to support family resilience.	Shift towards improving communication and collaboration with and between other actors and networks in children's lives, such as teachers, school administration, employers and public duty bearers, to promote the development of positive relationships with CDWs more widely.
Why have we refined the innovation concept in this way?	Because we are more aware of the negative impact that personal and social vulnerabilities can have on the the capacity of children and families to develop resilience and that they may not manifest as 'trauma' but be present in more complex, interconnected ways.	Because we know that improved relationships between children and parents mean that children get more support from their parents, which in turn builds the resilience of the whole family unit.	Because we know that positive relationships based on trust form a good basis for working with children to build their resilience, but that this also needs to be consistent in all the relationships present in their lives, not simply those that they have with CWISH staff.
What are we hoping to achieve with the refined innovation concept?	Staff who recognise and understand the impact of social vulnerability on families, and the connections between children's behaviour and their wider environment in order to boost both children and community resilience.	Staff who are better equipped to improve relationships between parents and children, leading to increased family resilience and reduced dependence on S.A.L.V.E.	Non formal / formal actors who have better awareness and skills to use positive feedback approaches with CDWs and promote more trusting relationships with CDWs they support, enabling CDWs to better protect themselves.



WHAT'S COMING NEXT?

Building with Bamboo runs until the end of June 2018. Our third learning and innovation cycle runs from October 2017 to February 2018. After each cycle we will publish a learning update and host an accompanying webinar. At the end of the project we will publish a full learning paper.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

➔ Join our online Community of Practice:
buildingwithbamboo.org

Read our blog to stay updated on the project and to hear about future learning updates and webinars. You can also register for free to access learning resources and online discussions.



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