

Regional workshop on

Promoting Children's Resilience

a way to combat child sexual abuse



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- a world which respects and values each child
- a world which listens to children and learns
- a world where all children have hope and opportunity

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Vulnerability and resilience exist side by side in children experiencing and surviving sexual abuse and exploitation. They become like trees on windy islands battered by storms, bent over but clinging on determinedly, adapting to life.

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I Introduction

“Child sexual abuse is a fundamental breach of trust and an invasion of the child's most intimate zone, a violation of the child's physical and psychological integrity and a transgression of moral norms of the child and the society the child grows up with. It harbors fear, shame and feeling of guilt in children due to the tendency of hiding the abuse by most of the societies and putting blame on the child thus lowering his or her self-esteem”, according to Turid Heiberg. In Save the Children's report¹ based on 13 country studies, 13 to 27 per cent of children have been exposed to sexual abuse and millions of children are sexually exploited by sex industries. Children were found to be sexually abused not only by strangers but most often by persons they know and should trust such as father, brother, stepfather and caretakers. Various forms of violence against children are interrelated and the same child may experience sexual abuse and violence in several settings by different perpetrators while growing up. Although children of all ages may be abused, several studies have pointed out that the average age of sexually abused children is getting lower.

Heiberg continued by recalling that findings from research studies all over the world show that children living in unsafe settings without protective environment and children with disabilities are more likely to be sexually abused. Poverty and belonging to a disadvantaged ethnic group may also put children at risk. But it should be noted that there is no automatic link between the poor family and the level of violence. Substance and drug abuse, war and conflict situations and natural calamities also increase the risk of child sexual abuse and exploitation. However, we have to be cautious in singling out particular groups of children as being at risk since it may underestimate the occurrence of violence and sexual abuse while stigmatizing the particular groups of children.

The effects of sexual abuse are not uniform in children because vulnerability and resilience tend to exist side by side. Children of different ages, from babies up to late adolescence, have obviously different strengths and situations. Experience has shown that children who survive sexual abuse, violence and natural calamities, bounce back because of their resilient nature. With child-friendly and supportive environment from family, communities and caretakers abused children show a large degree of resilience and show a determination and capacity to deal with adversity. They are not passive victims but competent and resilient survivors; they know what is needed for their protection. So they may ask adults to stop the violence and

¹ Heiberg T, 2005, 10 Essential Learning Points: Listen and Speak out against Sexual Abuse of Girls and Boys, Save the Children.

sexual abuse. Still some children may be more resilient than others in overcoming the negative effects of abuse.

Save the Children and its partners in South and Central Asia were able to highlight the issue of child sexual abuse at the grassroots level, to the policymakers and also to the United Nations. Series of conferences and workshops were held, and researches were undertaken on the issue. Awareness raising programmes were carried out at the grassroots level among guardians, teachers, communities, school and out-of school children while at the same time adopting various mechanisms to combat child sexual abuse and exploitation. As a result some societies and communities that used to deny the existence of the problem of child sexual abuse have admitted the problem.

Now a need for sharing experiences among Save the Children network working in different parts of the region in diverse situations was felt. Thus Save the Children Sweden, Regional Office for South and Central Asia in collaboration with Save the Children Norway in Nepal organized a 'Regional Workshop on Promoting Children's Resilience'- as a way of preventing, minimizing or overcoming the damaging effects of child sexual abuse, violence and other adversities in life. The workshop was organized in Kathmandu from 13-16 March 2007. The workshop was attended by 25 participants coming from 5 different countries in South Asia each bringing with her/him a different cultural tradition as well as experiences in working with children. Apart from Save the Children and its partners in the South Asian region, the workshop participants included experts on the issue of children's resilience. The expert presentations are shared in this report in as much detail as possible while the country presentations are presented in brief. Gunnar Anderson, Country Representative, Save the Children Norway in Nepal, welcomed the participants and briefly discussed the importance of building children's resilience and capacities of parents and caregivers to promote resilience in children.



Objectives

The regional workshop was held with the following specific objectives:

- Enriching knowledge on resilience in children who have experienced trauma from sexual abuse and violence;
- Learning good practices including ways of promoting children's resilience so that they can be put in practice in our fight against child sexual abuse and exploitation;
- Sharing the experiences of Save the Children and its partners in the South Asia region on the promotion of children's resilience among survivors of child sexual abuse, conflict and natural calamities;
- Preparing a draft strategy and action plans for incorporating learning from the workshop into existing programmes.



Expert Views on Resiliency

Turid Heiberg's presentation provided the launch pad for the workshop theme connecting child sexual abuse and the factors promoting children's resilience. She presented 10 Key Quality Elements (KQE) necessary for promoting community protection systems and resilience in children. Dr. Violeta V. Bautista dwelt in depth on resilience in children in difficult circumstances with specific reference to findings from research on resilient children in the Philippines. She presented definitions of resilience, discussions on child sexual abuse and strategies to facilitating the flow of resilience among children. Lastly Dr. Rajaram Subbian presented the project model for children affected by armed conflict in Sri Lanka and dealt mainly on how family can promote resilience in children.

3.1 Child sexual abuse and promoting protection and resilience: Turid Heiberg

"Resilience is a universal capacity which allows a person, group or community to prevent, minimize or overcome the damaging effects of adversity." The quality of resiliency in children provides the ability to recover from trauma, respond to stress and maintain a sense of meaning, hope and identity. However, as Michael Rutter stresses, resilience at any one time is a combination of personal and environmental factors that protect a child. It is thus not a fixed attribute but a dynamic quality in the intersection between social and intraphysic processes. A number of personal characteristics have been identified in children who have shown resilient behavior during crises in their lives. These include social competence, a reflective rather than impulsive way of reacting, good problem solving abilities, positive self-esteem and a belief that one can have control over one's own environment. A major external factor supporting resilient behavior is the presence of emphatic, caring persons in a child's life that provides abused children the determination and the capacity to deal with adversity.

After the presentation the participants were divided into six groups and each group was given a set of Key Quality Elements to analyze and see if those elements could be improved. The improvements in the elements worked out by groups are presented below in italics.

1. The caregivers take the responsibility of providing the child a secure base by being available to the child, ready to respond, to encourage and to intervene when necessary.

For a child to know that an attachment figure (primarily biological parents, grandparents, other caregivers, teachers, and so on) is available gives him or her a strong and pervasive feeling of security and a sense of value to continue the relationship.

The trained caregivers including parents, teachers and peers can help promote resilience in children. Reliable reporting systems at school, community, and informative legal systems can also help build children's resilience.

2. Children are portrayed as important citizens, who have opportunities to impact their destiny.

Affirmation and support from significant others such as family members, teachers, friends, or even people the child meets only once or few times is important in building self-confidence among children. These relationships provide tremendous supportive environment to the child. Providing opportunities such as social skills also help the child in learning appropriate social interaction as well as getting a sense of hope for a meaningful future.

It is important to educate and involve children in discussions and get their inputs in matters affecting their lives. Children decision-making bodies should be formed and supported.

3. Children are aware that their rights are being protected and assisted.

The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child states the rights of the child and that the authorities should be responsible to grant those rights to the child. Apart from providing services, it is also the duty of the state to inform children about their rights including their right to protection.

Apart from the children, stakeholders and duty bearers should also be sensitized to the rights of the child so that they could help in the realization of those rights.

4. Children and young people are involved in age-appropriate tasks and decision-making and are represented in community level by child protection bodies.

Many children are taking responsibility for the upkeep of their families by earning. Many children possess valuable knowledge and insight into what is needed to provide a proper child protection system in the community.

Children and young people are involved in age appropriate tasks/activities and given opportunities to participate in community level child protection bodies to influence the decision-making process affecting their lives. However, the participation of children in community level child protection bodies should be ethical and meaningful.

5. In schools, institutions, villages, and in police stations, persons whom children trust are identified. They are the people children can safely and confidentially report and talk to.

A community-based response system; whether it is a free-phone, postal service or letterboxes in schools, must be child-friendly and easily accessible to children. Those dealing with children's issues should be trained and guided by ethical standards ensuring confidentiality and communication in the best interests of the child.

Apart from phone and postal services, there should also be a provision for counselors and psychologists trained in dealing with cases of child sexual abuse and violence in schools. Also schoolteachers should be trained in psychosocial support.

6. Community based child protection bodies are actively promoting a safer, child-friendly community to reduce violence against children and support parents and other caregivers to protect children.

One of the ways of reducing risks of child sexual abuse is to support caregivers in their ability to be observant of risks in the environment where the child lives by ensuring support to the caregiver and to the child in case of abuse. Also the child and the family need to be supported and protected especially when the perpetrator is a member of the family. Communities can identify places and situations where there are more risks of sexual abuse and take action to reduce the risk as much as possible. Parents and adults can organize for children to confide in, seek advice from and consult in case of danger and abuse.

Village watchdog committees should be trained on issues of child sexual abuse and violence and where to approach in case of abuse or handle it themselves. Furthermore, there should be networking among these organizations with referral services or linkages with other organizations that provide services.

7. Community child protection systems encourage open discussions of violence and sexual abuse against children in communities as well as debates in local media with a view to creating more understanding of the issues involved.

The family and the community consider sexual abuse of their children a shame and misfortune. It is better if the family and the society know how child sexual abuse takes place and what are its effects on children and how can children be protected from abuse and violence.

Some communities in South Asian region have some sort of child protection systems. But instituting a common framework for these systems at the national and at the regional level is necessary. The framework should be flexible and should include children, parents, community and religious leaders and representatives from grassroots level, governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

Media should be made aware of the child protection policy and should be sensitized about maintaining the victim's privacy.

8. Government agents (social workers, health workers, law enforcement agents) are mandated to intervene and investigate suspected cases of child abuse. A mandate should be accompanied by improved capacity for follow up.

Peer group supports should be encouraged since these groups can put pressure on local authorities to take action against perpetrators and provide necessary support to survivors. Police and community actors should also be sensitized on contact and non-contact forms of child sexual abuse including verbal abuse and fondling. Government should be made accountable for making necessary provision of resources for combating child sexual abuse.

9. Community-based child protection systems have functioning and formal (i.e. mandates, reporting) links with other levels in the national child protection system.

In the national child protection system the government should be made fully responsible for leadership, coordination and resources for the operation of the system. Sometimes a child may need to be removed from his or her home to prevent the abuse at home. So a multi-sectoral community-based approach is needed to respond to child sexual abuse cases.

Government should take the lead in child protection system in collaboration with civil societies and grassroots level organizations. Child protection system should be formulated in consultation with doctors, lawmakers, psychologists, and local level community organizations. Most importantly children should be involved in the process of making child protection policy and their opinions should be valued.

10. Perpetrators are dealt with through a range of public reactions designed to give children maximum protection and prevent reoccurrence of abuse.

There is a need for strong political commitment from the authorities to prevent child sexual abuse. There must be initiatives to follow up young perpetrators and rehabilitation programmes for different types of abusers. It is particularly important to prosecute organized criminal activities against child sexual abuse.

There is a need to identify the root causes of the abusive behavior of perpetrators and take action to prevent such behaviors by working with men and boys and by creating alternative opportunity for moral development. There is also a need to handle young perpetrators through the provision of special homes instead of punishing them under the criminal law.

IV Understanding and Facilitating Resilience among Victims of Child Sexual Abuse: Violeta V. Bautista

Violeta Bautista enriched workshop participants with her presentation on 'Understanding and Facilitating Resilience among Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Natural Disasters: A workshop for Child Caregivers'. Her presentation focused on what resilience is and what are the traits shown by resilient children who have experienced abuse and trauma. She also presented findings from the Philippine research on resilient children. She then invited participants to enter into structured learning experiences which were designed to facilitate and promote resilience.

She opened her session with a ritual that helped the participants to connect with resilience both at the level of cognition and emotion. The symbols used in the ritual are presented in the box:

Symbols depicting conditions of abused children and their associated meanings

- **Thorns**: difficulties children are facing all over the world
- **Three masks**: different responses children have to those difficulties
 - The blue mask**: negative emotions that children experience during adversity such as shock, confusion, pain and suffering, bitterness, and anger.
 - The green mask**: children's growing acceptance of their situation and their ability to cope with painful reality that concerns them.
 - The yellow mask**: children's triumph over threats and challenges that life has posed to them.
- **Pot of green plants**: the growth in the lives of resilient children
- **Burning light**: resources within and outside every child that makes his or her survival and growth against all odds a possible reality.

She started by asking the participants to walk three steps and then take three steps back. This reminds that children have setbacks. Then she asked each participant to put her/his hand over her/his heart. This signifies that there must be heart in this work.

She then ran sociometric exercises which helped to bond the group closer in preparation for exercises that require more personal sharing.

Touching Base with Our Understanding of Resilience

To start the discussion on resilience, she asked each participant to write down what they mean by resilience or make a painting or a drawing which represents their understanding of resilience.

Instructions:

- Without having to be guided by your learnings from the previous sessions in this workshop, write down on paper your understanding of what resilience is among children.
- Represent your understanding of resilience in a painting or a drawing. It can be abstract, impressionistic or realistic.
- Form groups of 7, assign a person to report on your group's learning about resilience, show your painting and share to the group your thoughts on resilience as represented by your painting. Surface questions you may have about the nature of resilience among children and take note of them as well.
- Share your group's learning on the subject for 5 minutes.

Time Allotment: 1 hr and 10 minutes

- Individual reflection and painting: 20 minutes
- Sharing within small groups: 20 minutes
- Sharing to the big group: 30 minutes

The participants then shared to the group their views on resilience as depicted in their paintings. Then each group shared with the big group.

Group 1: Children should have the freedom of expression. Children should be heard. Children need empathy, love and care. They need the support of supportive people. Children have the capacity to adjust. They have power. They have hopes. They can recover sooner than adults. When children are together they have the power to speak up.

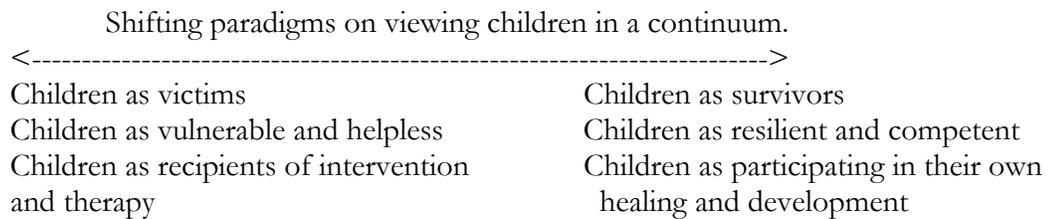
Group 2: Resilience is to go through all the turmoil in life. It is the journey through life with some light moments. As one grows there are pitfalls but he/she still grows. It means going through difficulties and overcoming them.

Group 3: The child is going through hard times. Then the child goes through happy times. Outward appearance is not resilience. They have more energy. The child is in a trauma but has hopes.

Interpretations by some of the participants of their paintings:

- Sun as it gives them hope.
- Name of the picture: Resilient after bomb blast. The picture shows sun and the sea. Sea is the inspiration from the shores of Norway. Black and blue says that children go through all sorts of problems and still they stand tall. There is a diamond that represents positive self image, internal diamond and the colours are important.
- Flower- The colours red and yellow symbolizes health and means that children have the ability to go forward.
- Sea, octopus, mountains- symbolizing life going through various processes.
- Smiling face is a symbol of love.

Taking off from the participant’s sharing, the idea of resilience as a key to shifting one’s paradigm to viewing children was presented.



To round up the discussion, she presented the evolving definitions of resilience in the Asian and western context.

4.1 Defining resilience

There is no agreement on the definition of resilience. Resilience is considered an individual trait, condition or capability. Resilience is thus defined as the remarkable capacity of individuals to withstand considerable hardships, to bounce back in the face of great adversity, and to go on to live relatively normal lives (Gilgun, 1996; Silva, 1996; Turner, et al., 1993, Vanistendael, 1995). In 1984, Garmezy et al. operationalized resilience as, "manifestations of competence in children despite exposure to stressful events." In 1994, Masten defined resilience in this manner: "Resilience in an individual refers to successful adaptation despite risk and adversity." She further says, "Resilience refers to a pattern over time, characterized by good eventual adaptation despite developmental risk, acute stressors, or chronic adversities." According to Gordon (1995), "Resilience is the ability to thrive, mature, and increase competence in the face of adverse circumstances. These circumstances may include biological abnormalities or environmental obstacles. Further, the adverse circumstances may be chronic and consistent or severe and infrequent. To thrive, mature, and increase in competence, a person must draw upon all of his or her resources: biological, psychological, and environmental." Resilience is also defined in relation to environmental

factors that help to promote it; it is a process of interaction between individual and environmental factors resulting in good outcome despite adversity.

Resilience is not only an inner strength or capacity but also a “competence” to move forward after recovery. Resilience is being competent despite exposure to severe or chronic adversities. Competence may however, change over time. So the definition of competence for a child living with the family may not be the same as the definition of competence for a street child. Whether seen as one's inner strength or competence or both, a person is at the center of experience; his or her will to do and be something is emphasized as part of resilient character.

Resilience is thus complex. It takes personal characteristics and environmental factors to create resiliency. Resilience does not just come from the person but it also draws on biological (temperament) and psychological (internal locus of control) characteristics of the person. Environmental factors including opportunities and atmospheres also play a significant role in fostering resilience in children.

Some Definitions of Resilience

- Inner capacity of human beings to surmount difficulty or to recover from loss (Rossi, 1995).
- Resilience is a universal capacity which allows a person, group or community to prevent, minimize or overcome the damaging effects of adversity. It is a competence and inner strength to work well, play well, love well, and expect well despite the presence of considerable adversities (Garmezy, 1993; 1979).
- The latent capacity to resist distraction and the capacity for positive construction in spite of difficult circumstances (Vanistendael, 1995).
- The human capacity to face, overcome and be strengthened or even be transformed by the adversities of life (Grothberg, 1995).
- The capacity to withstand, recover and grow from negative experiences (Banaag, 1997).
- Good outcome despite high-risk status and sustaining competence under threat (Losel, 1994).
- Successful adaptation to stressful life events (Werner and Smith, 1982).
- Successful outcome under condition of adversity (Gilgun, 1996).
- Resilience is not a fixed attribute within an individual but is seen as the result of a dynamic interaction between risk and protective factors which result in adaptive outcome (Turner, 1993).

4.2 Clarifying Our Understanding of Resilience

To further bring home important aspects of resilience, the following pointers were presented:

1. Resilience is a condition or a process that can only be manifested or activated in the face of serious life problems. Resilience develops across time. A person becomes more and more or less and less resilient. A child who looks very alert, bright and competent and who has not yet been exposed to any significant life problem cannot yet be described as resilient.

2. Resilience is remarkable. Resilience is the remarkable capacity of individuals to withstand considerable hardship, bounce back and go on to live relatively normal. Therefore, when you see it in operation, you cannot help but feel admiration and even awe at the child manifesting this condition.

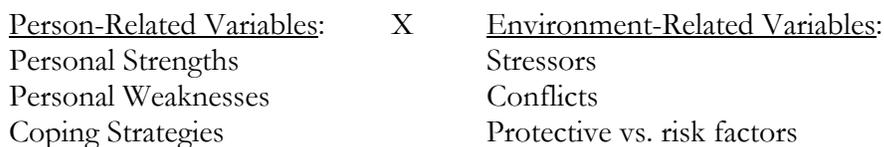
3. Resilience is not only related to recovery and survival but also the ability to bounce back to old condition without wounds or scars. Vanistendael (1995) points out that resilience is an opening to new growth, a new step in life, in which the scar remains, but is integrated into a new life at another more profound level.

4. Resilience is sometimes seen as an outcome. Traditional definition of resilience is associated with social competence or good outcome that results from the child's process of negotiating stressful and even traumatic experiences (Luthar, 1993). As an outcome it can be viewed both as a set of behaviors such as high grades, being sociable and internalized capacities such as capacity to stay with the pain, adapt to new situations, etc.

5. Resilience has both personal and behavioral manifestations. This view of resilience deals with two problems. One is the question of what constitutes a good outcome. Would a child who copes with his or her tragedies by pimping for his female best friend be considered as an empirical indicator of resilience? Our hesitation to regard this behavior as indication of resilience tells us that resilience is more than coping. It is social competence that affirms basic, foundational values of a civil society.

Another problem concerns evaluation of the child when his or her internal state and behaviors contradict. An intelligent child who saw the whole family die in a flood and is getting just passing marks in school but is able to accept the death of his or her parents and put trust in foster parents may be more resilient than an equally intelligent child who despite the tragedy is getting very high grades in school but every single night struggles with thoughts of suicide.

6. Resilience is the outcome of a non-mathematical combination of person-related and environment-related factors as shown in the following diagram:



7. Resilience is a continuum and not a discrete condition. It is more accurate to speak of children being high, average or low in resilience rather than children being or not being resilient. A child may even attempt to kill herself but her ability to continue with her studies and get high grades despite persistent suicidal ideas is in itself a sign of resilience.

8. Resilience is dynamic. It changes across situations and across time. Gilgun (1996) believes that resilience varies across situations. A child traumatized by a recent hurricane may be functioning well whenever she is at home but may be falling apart when in school.

Since there are many factors that can come into the formation of resilience, it is possible that one regards the experience as having ebbs and flows: it may then be that in the life of a child who had been exposed to trauma, there may be times when she will do well and there may be times when she would look like she is falling apart or deteriorating.

9. Resilience can be nurtured or its growth facilitated. If resilience is the result of a dynamic interaction between innate and learned factors, then conditions can be designed so that the child can develop and acquire attitudes and life skills that favor resilience.

10. Resilience is contextual. The individual characteristics and environmental factors that lead to resilience in one context may not lead to resilience in another. For instance, academic resilience may be related to a certain set of individual characteristics and environmental factors. However, these same factors and characteristics may not equal emotional resilience. Different kinds of resilience are related to different kinds of support.

4.3 The University of Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Study (UP-CIDS): Working with Abused Children from the Lenses of Resilience and Contextualization

In the 70's researchers were getting tired and dispirited over repeated stories of children's psychological oppression and marginalization due to difficulties in their lives. They then started to pay more attention to less dominant stories of children who were seemingly stress resistant and children who do well despite the odds. The 80's ushered in a new set of studies that focused on understanding the phenomena of resilient children. These studies dealt with stories of hope, health, well-being, competencies, coping and resilience rather than with stories of sickness, disease, failures and pathology. So a group of researchers took to probing into the lives of Filipino children on their experience with resilience.

Main Objectives of the study:

- Identify indigenous psycho-social interventions that are being used to nurture resilience.
- Find out if resilience is a frequently occurring condition among abused children;
- Determine how resilience is experienced and manifested among Filipino children and how child care givers are able to understand and nurture the condition among children oppressed by life circumstances.

The study was undertaken in coordination with six participating agencies which deal with abused and exploited children. These agencies were Alay Pag-asa, Women's Crisis Center, Visayan Forum, Bahay Tuluyan, Molave Youth Home and Virlanie Foundation. Twenty-five children associated with these agencies were interviewed individually and were asked to tell their life stories. Some of these children suffered physical and emotional abuses, some

were street children, some were in juvenile detention centers and some lived in shelters. The caregivers in these organizations were also interviewed. Their narratives were content analyzed to find particular forms and traits of resilience among survivors of abuse.

The study findings were presented as 14 Resilience Themes:

1. Acceptance of difficulties and adjustment to the demands of difficult situations.

The capacity to adjust to difficult situations that deviate from their usual experiences is characteristic of children surviving abuse. Instead of complaining about problems these children adjust to new situations and move on with their lives.

- Gina (15) was well loved and cared for in childhood. At 14, she was raped by her adopted father and became pregnant. Then her mother tried to return her to her biological family but they refused to take her back. She was then sent to a home for unwed mothers and delivered a baby whom she gave up for adoption. She ended up in a home for street children. She said that she has accepted her fate. Now she is studying hard so that one day she could stand on her own.
- Nena's (18) mother died of cancer when she was eight years old while her father died when she was ten. Then she lived with an aunt, but was raped by her uncle. He tried to give her some money to prevent her from telling her aunt but she declined it. She ran away from there. She moved from house to house when she learnt that her uncle was looking for her. She even attempted suicide but was saved by her sister. Finally she ended up in Women's Crisis Center where she got counseling and joined Survivors Support Group and realized that she was not alone. Now she is a working student. She even filed a rape case against her uncle and despite pressures did not drop the case. Most importantly she has learned to set aside her grief and moved on with her life. She even became president of her school's English Club.

2. Competent functioning in the presence of major problems: Possessing life skills

- Ligaya (10) grew up in the streets, living by begging and taking care of her sick brother and mother who contracted STD. But once she realized that her mother's talks of taking care of her and her brother were nothing but empty promises, she decided to leave her mother. She then moved to Bahay Tuluyan and brought her sick brother as well. Despite negative life experiences Ligaya uses life skills to cope with the demands of life. According to those around her, Ligaya deals with problems by being street smart, responsible, assertive, resourceful, and hardworking.

3. Learning from life's adversities: Experience is the best teacher

- Jen-Jen (16) learned from bad experiences. He was befriended by a group of friends who were involved in theft and robbery. Under their pressure he stole money and jewelry from the employer but was caught and brought to the police. He endured several difficulties at the police center. Then he was sent to the home for children in conflict with the law. In the jail, he decided to be careful and stay away from bad influences. He even became a model for good behavior among the residents there.

4. Capacity to be self-reliant and self-governing

Resilient children may have best friends, teachers, counselors but they are in charge of their lives. They make their decision on the basis of what they think is best for them rather than what others think is best for them.

- Marjo (17) was a working student. He did all kinds of work to earn and support his family. He sorted out garbage, helped his mother sell rice cakes, and worked as a stevedore at the market. He also worked for a construction company doing heavy work. He stays away from drugs and bad groups. He and his brother used to sleep outside the home to avoid abuse of his drunken stepfather. He said he did not want to give trouble to his mother. He helps her with household chores whenever he could find time.
- When Selma (13) was just six years old, she was molested by her mother's boyfriend's brother. At seven she was again molested by a cousin who also forced her to smoke, drink and watch pornographic films with him. When she was in grade four, she lost control of herself and did nasty things inside the house. Then she told her uncle and aunt what the cousin was doing to her. They then punished him. Later she was also raped by her own father and harassed by her brother. Now she said enough is enough and is planning to file a case against them. She wants to be a lawyer and know more about what is right and what is wrong.

5. Forbearance (pagtitii) and shrugging off problems: Taking things in stride

Resilient children try not to make big thing out of problems. They know that in certain situations bearing the pain for the time being is the best option in dealing with problems as the following expressions from children showed:

- Marjo: "When my stepfather batters me I just cry. I go home when he is already asleep. When I am sick, I just lie down and ignore my pain and exhaustion."
- Linda (16): "I just bear with the abuses of my employer but I curse him silently."

6. Finding happiness amidst difficulties

- Ligaya is a vibrant girl; she is admired for her capacity to be happy despite her difficulties. She delights in simple activities such as chatting, drawing pictures, singing, showing people directions and eating out at Jollibee, a hamburger fast food chain. She smiles and laughs easily.
- Mario (13) is a physically abused child but he has a good sense of humor. He makes people around him laugh. He grew up with his relatives since he was three years old because his mother left him there when she went to work in Singapore. His relatives used to beat him. He would just go up his favorite tree to escape, be alone and think. Later his mother left him at Alay Pag-asa. There he worked at the canteen to buy a walkman. He loves to sing. He jokes about the split soles of his old shoe saying that

it is hungry for rugby. He is just waiting for his mother's return in December so that they could go back to Mindanao together.

7. Ability to maintain sanity in the face of traumatic experiences

- Despite being raped several times since she was six, Selma has kept her sanity and happiness intact. She wants to see her father imprisoned. She is also critical of her mother who abandoned her at an early age and left her with relatives. But she copes with problems and simply calls her abusers crazy and laughs at them. But it does not mean that she is not affected by her tragedies. Her caregivers hear her crying at night.
- Evelyn (16) was left by her mother with relatives when she went to work abroad. She has fainting spells whenever she remembers painful moments or even when she is happy. She says that she hates her mother who does not care for her anymore but loves the staff at Visayan Forum because they care about her more than her own mother.

8. Keeping a good and wholesome character in spite of deprivation

Resilient children despite their sufferings, relate well with people, are respectful, helpful and do not seem to be bitter at heart. Randy's mother died upon his birth and his father blamed him for her death. He was raised by his grandmother who taught him diligence and hard work. At 12, he was mistakenly sent to jail for being a snatcher. Despite experiencing rejection, torture and imprisonment, Randy is kind, caring and helpful. There is no malice and meanness in him.

9. Ethical mindset: A firm sense of what is right and wrong

Most of the children who showed mental, physical and social stability despite abusive experiences also showed a sense of what is ethical and moral. Selma experienced so much oppressive abuses but she refused to be used by her father to make more money from her rapist, who had once given him money as part of out of court settlement. When her father has used up all the money he wanted to get more money from her rapist. She ran away from home at one time to avoid being used in such a way by her father. When her father sexually abused her, she filed a court case against him too. One's own father being a sexual offender is unacceptable to her.

Mario and Linda shows the same ethical mind set, believing in the precept “thou shall not kill although” and being guided by such belief in moments when they felt like killing those who brought trouble in their lives.

10. Recovering from past wounds: Moving on with life

Nena continues to fight against the memories of having been molested and the pressures from relatives to drop the rape case she has filed against her uncle. She is determined to

finish her studies. She still cries while telling her story. But she is now able to find meaning and happiness in her present life and looks at the future positively.

11. Therapeutic construction of reality: Weaving meaning from abusive experiences

Selma tries to make sense of tragedies in her life by saying that her abusers are simply out of their minds. Marjo recalls pleasant experiences with his stepfather and sees goodness in him before he took to drinking and started to be abusive. Through more positive and therapeutic framing of their realities, these children were able to deal with the demands of their challenging life situations.

12. Ability to be other-centered: Sensitivity to other people's views and feelings

Despite the difficulties they went through, abused children are concerned about the welfare of others who care for them. Marjo does not dare to do anything that will harm his stepfather because he does not want to add to his mother's troubles. Randy's father refused to bring him up because his mother died at his birth and his father blames him for that. Randy tries to understand his father's point of view and says that he cannot blame his father for hating him because he truly loved his wife.

Anita (16) came to Manila to work as a housemaid. When her employer showed fondness towards her, his wife increasingly became jealous, which led her to getting Anita to drink orange juice laced with sodium hydroxide. Her friend took her to the hospital where she stayed for six months. Her friend said that even in pain, Anita would be asking her whether she was alright and had taken food or not.

13. Ability to see situations as temporary: "This too shall pass..."

Children who showed resilience, when asked about their dreams and aspirations often respond with hope as expressed in the following narratives:

"I know that eventually my family would be all together again."

"My mother would return and she would take me with her."

"I want to become a civil engineer so that my life could be better."

14. Ability to resist temptation: Working on self-restraint

Ton-Ton was physically abused by his parents and ran away from home. He used solvent, and was involved in prostitution. But now he is staying at Bahay Tuluyan and stays away from both bad habits. Even though he still gets tempted to engage in prostitution especially when he is short of money, his future dream of having a meaningful life stops him. He is concerned about his responsibility of being a role model for other children at the center and in the streets.

In conclusion, the study confirmed the resiliency of abused Filipino children though the degree of resilience varied among the children interviewed. Some children were more resilient than others. The stories of resilient children who have lived with abuse all their lives and have had no models of competent adults and yet have managed to deal with problems, suggest that resilience may be something intrinsic among human beings. The same stories

also suggest that resilience can also be developed as children learn from their experiences. Resilience seems to be a process that has ebbs and flows, its highs and lows. At some point children may feel that they cannot take the pain anymore. But once in good care, they show resilience and adapt to the new situation quickly. This is quite encouraging for organizations that take care of such children.

4.4 Facilitating the flow of resilience among abused children

Non-governmental organizations working in the field of child rights and support services can institute programmes that will enhance children's capacity to be more resilient. Extensive sharing with children and caregivers has shown that there are four major factors/sources that can affect the flow of resilience. Chok Hiew used the terms “ I Have”, “ I Can”, “ I Am” and “ Will” to represent each of these factors/sources of resilience among children.

- I Have: the external supports and resources available to the child, such as the innovative programmes and strategies of helping organizations and the child care giver; How do we build and/or strengthen these external supports?
- I Am: factors are the child's internal personal strengths such as traits, feelings, attitudes, and beliefs. All of these help shape the child's self-concept as well as personality.
- I Can: the child's interpersonal strengths such as traits, feelings, attitudes and beliefs; With the “ I CAN” skills, the child becomes more competent in dealing with the challenges of life.
- I Will: factors are the child's willingness, capacity and commitment to do or to participate in matters affecting him/her.

These are the factors that make the child capable of participating in the process of recovery and reintegration.

The commitment and the vision of the organization reflected in its strategies and interventions play a big role in developing resiliency among abused children and in ensuring the continuity of such programs. Facilities and services that will help the caregivers' work are mainly dependent on the support of the organizations. A clear program direction for both the children and the caregivers should always be the agenda of the concerned organizations.

A sensitive child rights worker is the important mediator between the organization and the child. His or her support and sensitivity give the child guidance and encouragement to be more resilient. The caregivers show skills and competencies in handling many demands of helping abused children. The children also reveal that they are sensitive to the way they are being treated by their caregivers. They recognize good and bad traits of caregivers. For instance, some of the good traits caregivers show are sensitivity to the abused child's actions and needs, being non-reactive even when the child shows emotions of anger and resentment,

developing rapport with children by doing the things they like, and simply showing genuine affection, care and concern. Good caregivers simply establish filial relations with children such as aunt, mother so that the child feels secure and a sense of home.

Most importantly, the child himself/herself is a great resource of psychological hardiness. Knowing the particular traits--attitudes and skills of more resilient children--will help us understand a child's predisposition or potential to be more resilient. For instance, some of the traits of more resilient children are self-talk (talking to oneself help them survive in difficult times), learning from one's own experiences, and the ability to deal with painful emotions.

4.5 Structured learning exercise

The Child Care giver is the most important external resource of the child next to his/her family. How do you strengthen the child care giver? The Child care giver is aware and deals with his /her own issues so they do not get in the way of helping the child.

Violeta invited the participants to join in Structured Learning Exercises (SLEs) which demonstrate how resilience can be facilitated among children. These SLEs are grouped into those that focus on enhancing capability of the care giver to support the children, those that enhance the children's competencies, those that bring forth awareness and development of the children's traits and attitudes, and those that surface the children's dreams and aspirations for the future.

To enable the participants to appreciate what it means to enhance the caregiver's personal attributes and skills, they were asked to undergo two exercises, one with the title "*What Are Your Blocks to Personal Effectiveness?*" and the other "*People Important to Me*". The first exercise asked the participants to answer a questionnaire which helped them to become aware of personal issues that can come in the way of their work of caring for abused children. The second exercise asked them to identify important people in their lives and the roles that they have played in their lives. These latter exercises when given to children, help caregivers identify the people who contribute to the growth of the children's resilience.

First SLE: *What Are Your Blocks to Personal Effectiveness?*²

Directions: Rate each of the next 22 statements in terms of how true each is to you on this 5-point scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Completely untrue of me	mostly untrue of me	somewhat more true of me	moderately true of me	describes me perfectly

1. I find myself clinging to people I'm close to because I'm afraid they'll leave me.

² Jeffrey E. Young and Janet J. Klosko (1993). *How to Break Free from Negative Life Patterns*.

2. I worry a lot that the people I love will find someone else they prefer and leave me.
3. I am usually on the lookout for people's ulterior motives. I don't trust people easily.
4. I feel I cannot let my guard down around other people or they will hurt me.
5. I worry more than the average person about danger, that I will get sick or that some harm will come to me.
6. I worry that I (or my family) will lose money and become destitute or dependent on others.
7. I do not feel I can cope well by myself, so I feel I need other people to help me get by.
8. My parents and I tend to be over-involved in each other's lives and problems.
9. I have not had someone to nurture me, share himself or herself with me, or care deeply about what happens to me.
10. People have not been there to meet my emotional needs for understanding, empathy, guidance, advice, and support.
11. I feel like I do not belong. I am different. I do not really fit in.
12. I'm dull and boring. I don't know what to say socially.
13. No one I desire who knew the real me –with all my defects exposed could love me.
14. I am ashamed of myself, I am unworthy of the love, attention, and respect of others.
15. I am not as intelligent or capable as most people when it comes to work (or school).
16. I often feel inadequate because I do not measure up to others in terms of talent, intelligence and success.
17. I feel that I have no choice but to give in to other people's wishes; otherwise they will retaliate or reject me in some way.
18. People see me as doing too much for others and not enough for myself.
19. I try to do my best; I can't settle for good enough. I like to be number one at what I do.
20. I have so much to accomplish that there is almost no time to relax and really enjoy myself.
21. I feel that I shouldn't have to follow the normal rules and conventions other people do.
22. I can't seem to discipline myself to complete routine boring tasks or to control my emotions.

<i>Common Blocks</i>	<i>Statements</i>
Abandonment	1. 2.
Mistrust and abuse	3. 4.
Vulnerability	5. 6.
Dependence	7. 8.
Emotional deprivation	9. 10.
Social exclusion	11. 12.
Defectiveness	13. 14.
Failure	15. 16.

Subjugation	17. 18.
Unrelenting Standards	19. 20.
Entitlement	21. 22.

The participants were reminded that if adult caregivers are important in the nurture of children’s resilience, then it follows that the adult caregivers should give time to the nurture of their own persons. It has also pointed out that adults who are burdened with personal issues such as those identified in the exercise “What Are Your Blocks to Personal Effectiveness” are less effective in their work of child care. Participants were also cautioned that unresolved personal issues can operate in the manner of counter-transference functions and can even cause harm to children. Counter-transference was then explained as the process whereby a caregiver’s needs and feelings are unconsciously transferred from the caregiver’s own past relationships to the present relationship they have with the children.

To help the participants experience what it is like to facilitate the nurture of competencies among children, they were asked to join in an exercise with the title “Learning to Connect”, which gave them an opportunity to find a partner and listen and respond to each other’s sharing. However, she stressed that the principle of trust and confidentiality must be maintained in this exercise.

Some of the participants spoke out about the blocks they face to their personal effectiveness:

“Social exclusion is something I face daily. It is a negative experience. I know I am different from other girls and I was excluded from my family.”

“I expect to be the best. It is a problem of entitlement.”

“I set very high standards for myself- Unrelenting standards.”

“I tend to be dependent on people I get close to- dependence.”

“We have been socialized as women to be dependent-dependence.”

Second SLE: *People Important to Me*³

- Think about the people that are important to you, those who are helpful to you and those whom you like.

³ Chapter 9 from the Handbook for Social Workers on Basic Bio-Psychosocial Help for Children in Need of Special Protection by De Castro et. al.

- Choose one who is most important to you. Imagine that he/she is facing you. Engage the person in conversation, telling the person why he/she is important to you. At first the person you are talking to will be an observer. Be relaxed and let ideas and feelings flow in this activity. Soon get the person to respond to you. Then it is your partner's turn to imagine you to be the most important person to you. Continue the same process until you both have no more to say to each other.
- Some questions for processing:
 - ◊ How did you feel while talking to the person?
 - ◊ Why is the person important?
 - ◊ What role has this person played in your life?
 - ◊ Do you think this person think that you are important?
 - ◊ If the person is present here with you what would you do to express your gratitude to him/her?

This exercise can also be given to children as it will help caregivers identify the people who contribute to the growth of the children's resilience.

Some of the participants expressed that the exercise was intense. Some of them did not think that they could talk so much. The interaction was very honest and made them feel good.

The participants then went through three more SLEs with the titles "*Superman*", "*My Coat of Arms*", and "*Let Us Dream, Shall We?*"

SLE: Superman

The exercise, "Superman", gave the participants the opportunity to become aware of their personal traits as they are perceived by people around them. Bond paper was attached to the back of the shirt of each of the participants. The instruction was for all the participants to go around the room and write down on the bond paper attached to each of the participant's shirt what they believe are the person's inner strengths based on their observation of the person in and outside of the workshop. After fifteen minutes of this activity, the participants were asked to study the traits written "at their back" and to reflect which of those they think were true of them and which of those were not. Which of those comments surprised you or made you wonder? Do find the person who gave you intriguing/surprising description and ask her to elaborate on why she thought of you in such a manner.

SLE: My Coat of Arms

The SLE, "My Coat of Arms", was an art activity which allowed the children to touch base with their sources of resilience. The participants were told that coat of arms was a shield with drawings which were used by families in the olden days to represent main characteristics of their families. The instruction given to them was to draw their personal coat of arms with the following sections: What is loveable about you, what you are very good at, what you consider important in life, and how you would like people to remember you. The participants showed their Coat of Arms to the group and shared their significance as well.

The “Superman” and the “My Coat of Arms” exercises were designed to enable children to become more aware and appreciative of their positive characteristics.

SLE: Let Us Dream, Shall We⁴

The last exercise, “Let Us Dream, Shall We?” invited the participants to call forth their dreams and aspirations. The participants were given the following instructions in this exercise: If you were to dream about what kind of person you would be ten years from now,

- How would you be feeling about yourself?
- What would you be doing?
- What would other people be thinking and feeling about you?

Then they were asked to capture these feelings, thoughts and actions in symbols, and to put such symbols in a painting. Then the participants were asked to share it with a group of four. This exercise was explained to the participants as one that brings home to children the importance of visions of the future as a way to enhancing their resilience. Share it with a group of four other members.

All the SLEs were followed with sharing and processing sessions.

Violeta ended her presentation with following words, "we can trust and respect the child more as an initiator and participant in his or her own growth and development. We can engage in reflection and active study on how to better facilitate the flow of resilience. We can continue work that targets the care of children when they are in their low resilience mode. We should not mistake resilience as a substitute for social change. We can be hopeful in our work."

Building resilience in children affected by armed conflict: Rajaram Subbian

Rajaram Subbian presented a model for building resilience among children affected by armed conflict with his experiences from Sri Lanka and Uganda. The model, which grew out of his project, specifically emphasized the role of family and other circles of support in promoting resilience in children. The project targeted building the capacity of stakeholders particularly teachers, family members, religious leaders, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, probation officers, children's institutions, child club leaders, health workers, and police by sensitizing them to child sexual abuse and violence and strengthening peer supervision, family counseling, networking, referral and reintegration services.

The project tools included meetings, discussions, baseline study, interviews, and workshops with stakeholders including children, skills training, and family counseling, and partnership

⁴ Chapter 9 from the Handbook for Social Workers on Basic Bio-Psychosocial Help for Children in Need of Special Protection by De Castro et. al.

with governmental, non-governmental and community-based organizations working with children.

The project outcome included increased sensitivity in schools, with more child focused programmes, interest in stakeholders in reaching out and working with families, child clubs, effective networking and peer support among family counselors and social workers. Also children's school attendance increased. There were more teacher-parent contacts, increased coordination between police and non-governmental organizations in dealing with cases of sexual abuse and child labor, improved care in remand homes and other children's homes.

The project, however, was not without challenges. There was continued conflict and concern for physical safety in bringing multiethnic and multi-religious participants for training, and prevalent animosity and mistrust among the locals.

5.1 Family Resilience

Family plays a great role in the lives of children. Family dynamics include leadership, decision-making, role-playing, communication, flexibility, cohesion and support system. Each family maintains its own homeostasis. Whenever there is a deviation from normalcy, it tries to bring back the balance at any cost. Thus family is the best resource available for children whenever there is a problem. But not all children are that lucky to be able to depend on family in times of adversity. In many cases family can be a source of abuse too. For instance, children in chaotic families, characterized by lack of leadership, dramatic shifts in roles, and lack of discipline, are provided with environments that are not conducive to the development of resilience.

Children have access to a range of social and personal resources, which provide protection in distressed conditions. But the lack of these resources can increase children's susceptibility to harm and may have low resilience.

The extended family such as friend, teacher or parent of a friend can also provide significant supportive networks for children. Similarly caring and cooperative environment of the school and the community can enhance self-confidence and resilience in children. In some societies faith in God is a source of strength whenever in trouble. The effective support system includes the family, caregivers, friends and professional support services and they all help to promote resilience in children.

Protective factors that promote resilience in children

<u>Factors promoting resilience in children</u>	
<u>Individual characteristics</u>	<u>Family environment</u>
Intelligence	Close relationship to caring parent figures
Appealing, sociable, easy-going disposition	Supportive family relationships
Self-efficacy, self-confidence, high self-esteem	Connections to extended family networks
Problem-solving ability	

Positive self-esteem
Faith in God

Extra-familial context

Positive role models
Bonds to pro-social adults outside the family
Connections to pro-social organizations
Attending effective schools

Promoting self-esteem of children in impoverished and stressful situations is helpful in fostering resilience in them. This can be done by showing them in a concrete manner what their strengths are. Specific and directed praise and encouragement for their competencies and accomplishments are also helpful.

5.2 15 elements of resilience in children- Source: Grothberg, E.H. (1998).

I have

People around me I trust and who love me, no matter what
People who set limits for me so I know when to stop before there is danger or trouble
People who show me how to do things right by the way they do things
People who want me to learn to do things on my own
People who help me when I am sick, in danger or in need to learn

I am

A person people can like and love
Glad to do nice things for others and show my concern
Respectful of others and myself
Willing to be responsible for what I do
Sure things will be all right

I can

Talk to others about things that frighten me or bother me
Find ways to solve problems that I face
Control myself when I feel like doing something not right or dangerous
Figure out when it is a good time to talk to someone or take action
Find someone to help me when I need it

Country experiences

The country level presentations by Save the Children network and their partners in the region dealt mainly with environmental factors that raised awareness to prevent and protect children from child sexual abuse and exploitation while at the same time dealing with survivors mainly through counseling, linkages and referral services. Their presentations did not deal with individual traits of resilient children or survivors of abuse and exploitation. Since these organizations work with girls and children to prevent them from sexual abuse and exploitation, their presentations emphasize the need for strengthening supportive environment for children's protection in case of abuse and exploitation.

6.1 Sri Lanka

SERVE is conducting a School Based Social Work Programme to prevent sexual exploitation of children. It works in 17 schools through professional social workers and has established 11 'Home Away from Home' centers. In these centers, children can avail themselves of services of professional social workers and play and enjoy themselves.

LAMUN is a child-to-child programme to combat commercial sexual exploitation of children. The programme aims at raising awareness among children about commercial sexual exploitation of children and training them so that they can better protect themselves and others close to them, and prepare them to report to the concerned authorities and get the perpetrator punished. There is also a documentary made on the lives of commercial sexual workers and shown in cinemas so that there is awareness on the issue among the viewers. Because of these efforts there is increased reporting of child sexual abuse cases. Even the teachers and religious leaders appreciated the effort and committed their support.

There are at present 25 adult social workers assigned to schools under the programme. The social workers provide children with necessary guidance and counseling. The programme also conducts awareness raising activities for teachers, parents, community leaders and student leaders. The counseling and guidance help to enhance resilience of children and move on with their lives despite difficulties in their lives. Social workers also try to make school environment child friendly. SERVE feels that the success of the program demands coordination and dedication among stakeholders. There is thus a network of children, parents, teachers and community leaders.

Social workers maintain constant contact with police and the National Child Protection Agency to follow up and take cases forward. The program is not without challenges. The main challenge is the recent circular by the government that forbids non-governmental organizations to work in schools. Another major challenge is the inadequate funding for the programme.

6.2 Nepal

The three major non-governmental organizations working against child sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation of children, CWISH, CWIN and Maiti-Nepal shared their experiences and main programme components, best practices, lessons learned and challenges while working on the issue of child sexual abuse and exploitation.

This was followed by two presentations of Shakti Samuha and Safer Society, which are initiated and implemented by girls who themselves have experienced sexual abuse and harassment.

CWISH works with child domestic workers. These children are vulnerable to sexual abuse especially when they are far from their homes and the employers do not provide them with education and information and access to support services. Many child domestic workers suffer from sexual abuse silently for fear and for the lack of support but it does not mean that they are resilient. So CWISH is working to raise awareness on child sexual abuse among child domestic workers and provide them protection skills as well as rehabilitate survivors of child sexual abuse. CWISH also realized there is lack of capacity among organizations to respond to child sexual abuse cases effectively. So it has been providing integrated services as follows in coordination with governmental and other non-governmental organizations. Its direct intervention programmes with children help to promote children's resilience.

Some of the challenges faced by CWISH while implementing its programs are the lack of mechanisms to report non-contact forms of sexual abuse, and the inability to let the boys express their problems of sexual abuse because of the need to maintain masculinity. Their suppressed feelings may be expressed in their violent behavior.

<p>Interventions promoting children's resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Psychological care and support Individual counseling, group counseling and distance counseling• Social reintegration of survivors of child sexual abuse• Reducing vulnerability through education and protection skills to children• Building relationship between children and support services• Publish columns in national daily newspaper answering anonymous questions sent by children regarding child sexual abuse.	<p>Developing supportive environment to promote children's resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legal aid and medical support including referral services• Conducting awareness campaigns among stakeholders and creating pressure groups• Sensitivity training to police, local community based organizations and governmental and nongovernmental organizations and setting code of conduct in those organizations.• Helping to strengthen forensic service of government hospital.
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CWIN, a pioneer child rights organization is a leading organization in advocacy, protection and promotion of the rights of the child. It directly works with street children, child workers and children at risk including child survivors of trafficking, sexual abuse and exploitation, and children affected by armed conflict. In 1993 CWIN helped to fight against pedophiles in coordination with police. Despite many threats it received from pedophile rings, CWIN continued to fight and rescued many children. It also rescued number of young girls from

forced prostitution and fought a court battle. There was a landmark verdict with the penalty of 12 years of imprisonment to the perpetrators. The survivors are now attending schools.

Lessons Learned by CWIN

- Due to stigma attached to survivors of sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation, their social reintegration is a great challenge. On the other hand lack of progressive laws and the poor implementation of available laws encourage perpetrators to continue to abuse and exploit children.
- Emotional support and professional psychosocial counseling is essential for survivors and should be promoted.
- Empowering children to organize themselves can help them resist sexual exploitation and abuse. Child clubs also play an important role towards raising public awareness on prevention of commercial sexual exploitation.
- Awareness and support for family of survivors of child sexual exploitation and abuse are essential. The issue of security of both family and child survivors is vital while proceeding for legal action against perpetrators.
- Survivors should be provided with skill, empowerment and knowledge for their self-reliance and social reintegration.
- A dialogue on sex and sexual abuse should be initiated between children and parents/guardians so that the silence surrounding sexual exploitation can be broken.
- Strong solidarity of like-minded organizations and strong network is essential to deal with the problem since the network of perpetrators is very strong and at times they can influence the law enforcing agencies.
- There is a need to sensitize law enforcing agencies and work towards institutional and human resource development within the government system in order to make child sexual abuse and exploitation a pressing agenda to be dealt at the national level.
- There should be strong political commitment to address the issue. The government should work in close cooperation with children's groups, and civil societies to effectively act against child sexual abuse and exploitation.
- Considering the rapid exposure of urban children to the Internet, the government should formulate laws to protect them.

Maiti Nepal is working to prevent commercial sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of girls and women. Its working strategies include prevention, rescue, rehabilitation and social reintegration of survivors. Maiti has found mobilizing youth facilitators, trained peer supporters and youth advocates is helpful in improving resilience in children.

Working strategies and tools used by Maiti Nepal

Prevention	Social reintegration
Transit homes	Family counseling
Prevention homes	Family reunion and follow-up
Advocacy	Vocational training
	Life skill training
	Employment for survivors
Rescue	Rehabilitation
Coordination with security agencies in Nepal and India	Child protection and rehabilitation shelters
Rescue and repatriation of survivors	Counseling
	Medical and legal support
	Formal and non-formal education
Family identification	

A resilient survivor of trafficking shows resilience after seeing the difficulties other people went through in their lives.

When I was 11 years old, I was a domestic worker. The son of my employer sexually abused me again and again. I could not stay there anymore. I tried to find a job in a restaurant. But instead I was trafficked to India in the lure of getting a job there. I was among 126 girls brought back to Nepal from India in 1996. I stayed at one of the NGOs. There I was depressed. I just wanted to be alone and stayed quiet all the time. I felt like killing my abusers. I even planned in my mind how to kill. Then the volunteers tried to find out why I kept silent all the time. They took me to a hospital where I saw a person in deathbed. I was taken to the old age home where I saw the difficulties old people went through. Seeing lots of people in difficulty changed my psychology. I realized despite all the hardships, people survive. I was just 14 and I didn't want to live. I thought about my future. I got the strength and positive feelings and came back to the organization and met the volunteer after my self-realization. I thought of living for others and for the cause.

I took three years' beautician's training. I discussed the matter with the volunteer and thought of sharing, learning and helping each other. I met many people in trouble like myself. I was involved in many activities of Shakti Samuha and started to overcome all negative feelings. Now I am trying to empower other girls.

The lessons: This story provides a good example of self-realization of one's own capacity. The survivors feel empowered when they can share their experiences with others who are sensitive to their cause and problems. It gives them strength when the survivors learn that their situation is not because of their fault but because of the trafficker, the attitude and behavior of society. The story also depicts how love, care and affection from well-wishers can help in making them more resilient. The involvement in a cause to save others from the trouble they went through give them strength and good feeling. They enjoy participatory approach.

Shakti Samuha

Shakti Samuha (Empowered Group) was established in 1997 as a mark of unity and strength by Nepalese girls and women who have survived trafficking and other forms of violence committed against girls/women. Shakti Samuha was officially registered as an organization in 2000 and has since become a powerful and well-respected organization in Nepal and among international women's networks as the first organization of trafficking survivors in South Asia. There are 250 girls and women affiliated to Shakti Samuha right now. They have undertaken a movement against girls trafficking and empowering girls and women to take charge of their lives.

Safer Society

A 12-year old girl develops resiliency with peer support

A 12-year old girl was kidnapped by a man and hidden in a room in the town. Her parents searched for her but could not find her. They then came to Safer Society, established by a group of girls in 1996 for fighting against the practice of child marriage and for creating a safer environment for girls in their community. The parents asked the group to help them find their daughter. With the help of police they found her and got her freed. They complained with the police and got the man punished. But the girl suffered psychologically because of the negative attitude and behavior towards her from the society. She was shy and had low self-esteem. Even the teachers in the school made fun of her. The Girls' group

started talking to her and counseling her. At the same time they made the community people understand her case. They also talked to the teachers. Because of their moral support the girl became resilient. Now she is a very active member of the group and the community also does not look at her negatively anymore.

Save the Children Norway in Nepal supports the project ‘Safe Environment for Girls’ and the project is implemented in 19 VDCs of Surkhet district with core group of girls with the objective of creating safer spaces for girls and to develop a positive societal perception of girls’ potentialities. These girls identify unsafe spaces, and negotiate with their communities for a safer environment so that girls can realize their full potentials. They negotiate for safer access and safety in public places.

Group members receive training on child rights, child development, life skills to mitigate violence and sexual abuse, gender issues, HIV and AIDS, and social problems. They organize 20-30 activities a year including holding a quiz contest, street drama, writing poems and essays, workshop, identifying hazardous and safe places, declaring alcohol free locality, etc.

Safer Society is now working in 42 villages. They publish a magazine dealing with girls' issues and broadcast radio programme on girls' issues in 70 districts.

6.3 Bangladesh

Save the Children Sweden Denmark-Bangladesh works in partnership for rights based programming on the issue of child sexual abuse. It provides support to partners for capacity building, undertakes advocacy, networking, research and documentation.

<p>Major interventions to address child sexual abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising among children and adults within schools and communities through child clubs, groups and forums • Providing life skills, CRC and leadership training • Formation of peer groups and rights training • Psychosocial support for sexually abused children including shelter and drop-in centers • Care for caregivers • Network of psychosocial support group of 45 members with different backgrounds • Children's advocacy at local level • Make accessible age-specific information about sex and sexuality for children. • Promotion of child protection policy 	<p>Methods/Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer to peer approach • Different community-based child protection groups • Plays, art, dance therapy • Work with religious leaders • Press conference, dialogue with media, and talk shows • Working with men and boys • Working with corporate sector
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Save the Children Sweden Denmark-Bangladesh has found psychosocial support groups effective in addressing child sexual abuse and promoting resilience in children. Also community based protection system is a good way of utilizing local resources for prevention and protection for children as well as identifying problems at local levels. A child providing moral support and playing the role of a counselor and trainer for another child (peer to peer approach) is also a good way of promoting resilience in survivors of sexual abuse.

Getting reported cases of child sexual abuse that takes place inside the homes is still a challenge. People's general understanding of child sexual abuse only as rape is also problematic. There is also lack of coordination and overlapping between government and nongovernmental organizations in addressing child sexual abuse issues.

Breaking the Silence (BTS) works only on one issue, i.e., to protect children from child sexual abuse. According to BTS, silence is the biggest obstacle to prevent child sexual abuse. So it works to raise awareness among children, caregivers, stakeholders as well as policymakers. It empowers school and out of school children by giving them life skills. It also provides one to one counseling to survivors, and also provides referral and linkage services. BTS has found that giving life skills to children, sharing real life case studies, peer-to-peer support and sharing are some of the best practices to promote resilience in children. The challenge, however, is the silence maintained by family members over sexual abuse taking place at home and school, the two places where BTS found most sexual abuse cases. BTS tries to avoid using the word 'sex' during life skill sessions due to the sensitivity of school authorities over the use of the word.

6.4 Pakistan

Save the Children Sweden (SCS) has identified the following major child protection issues in Pakistan: Child sexual abuse and exploitation, child trafficking, physical and psychological punishment, child labor, child marriage, war, natural disaster, and traditional practices. Child domestic workers, child soldiers, trafficked children, and refugee children are the most vulnerable groups of children in Pakistan.

The major tools used by SCS to promote resilience in earthquake areas are:

- Capacity building
- Establishment of Child Development and Learning Centers/Child Friendly Spaces
- Formation of child clubs
- Formation of child protection committee
- Knowledge dissemination and skill development through resource centers
- Production of child friendly natural disaster focused materials
- Developed pre-disaster management skills in children

Child Development and Learning Center sensitize children on their rights and issues through role plays, play therapy, and arts and crafts. It also helps in awareness raising about life skills, exhibits things made by children and holds competitions among children. Some of the good

practices are community based child protection, and self sustained Child Development and Learning Center with the provision of immediate relief management in disasters.

Lessons learnt in promoting resilience in children:

- The person dealing with children should be energetic and child friendly to develop trust in children.
- The tools should be developed according to the need and context of the society where the program is being implemented.
- Children should not be made dependent on the worker.
- Reflective listening is very important. It is very effective to listen to children.
- Showing genuine feelings of concern and emotions is also very effective.
- Creating characters and letting the child speak about them and their problems help children to express easily.
- Children should be helped in setting norms and the limits. They should be given options and opportunities and let them speak and choose the best option for them.

Sahil works exclusively against child sexual abuse in Pakistan since 1996. Sahil's works include awareness raising through training, and mass media, counseling, legal support, resource center, research and publications, and juvenile rehabilitation program with jail administration. The program provides psychological counseling for sex offenders and drug addicts below 18 years of age, health services, legal aid, and recreational activities. Sahil works with school management committees. Teachers and parents are very important to work with in Pakistan. It is very important to be culturally sensitive to talk about child sexual abuse. 15 schools have received books on how to teach child sexual abuse. Sahil works through mass media including print media, radio, and showing cartoon animated documentary in cinemas. Sahil has also conducted national and international research on child sexual abuse.

Good practices according to Sahil's experience are:

- Community based approach
- Mass media awareness campaigns
- Child friendly newspaper award
- Volunteers network and the best volunteer award

Lessons learned:

- Consistency is the key to address tabooed issues
- Government collaboration is essential to reach masses
- Cultural sensitive approach helps develop feelings of ownership in the community
- Creativity in project design is very important.

Some of the challenges Sahil faced are: society's reluctance to accept the issue, social stigma, cultural taboos, religious misinterpretations, perceived image of NGOs, and weak legislation and compromises with legal system.

6.5 India

RAHI Foundation is actually a support center for adult women survivors of sexual abuse. From its experiences in working with adult survivors it has provided following suggestions for promoting children's resilience:

- Children should be given information on how to protect themselves from child sexual abuse.
- They should be provided training on assertiveness and their rights. They should be given life skills.
- Adults as part of the support system for children should be empowered and be able to deal with their own biases and abuses.
- Advocacy workers also need self-care and training to be able to deal with the issue of sexual abuse; they also need support network as well as psychosocial support.
- Adults should be able to create conditions where children can express themselves.
- Conditions should be created for child molesters to come for treatment.

The inability of adults to understand the dynamics of abuse is a challenge. When adults especially the mother does not believe the child, the child feels bad and takes the blame on oneself. We should try to understand why child molesters succeed and counter them. They succeed because of silence and denial surrounding child sexual abuse and they look normal like everybody else.

Tulir - Center for the Prevention and Healing of Child Sexual Abuse - is working in Tamil Nadu and rest of India against child sexual abuse in coordination with governmental and non-governmental organizations, professionals, schools and communities.

Tulir believes in empowering children for self-protection and orientating them to their rights and also capacity building of adult stakeholders. Children should be provided with age-appropriate, non-threatening information. Opportunities should be provided to children so that they can develop their personality and boost their self-esteem and skills especially on decision-making, assertiveness and asking for help.

As methods interactive orientation sessions, participatory workshops for children, parents and teachers should be organized. Tools such as role plays, discussions, workbooks, and simple information brochures should be used in the sessions.

The methods and tools used by partners to combat child sexual abuse and exploitation are very similar in the whole South Asia region although the way they are applied may differ according to the local contexts. These tools basically relate to environmental factors that promote resilience in children.

VII Forward strategy

The participants were asked as to what they would do individually, what their organization would do and to give suggestions as to what could be done at the regional level to take forward the knowledge gained from this workshop. The following is a list of suggestions given by participants for the way forward. The suggestions given individually and country wise were presented here concisely to avoid duplication of suggestions.

Individual Level

- Gain more knowledge and information on child sexual abuse, concept of resilience and ways of promoting children's resilience.
- Share the knowledge and information with colleagues, family, and friends.
- Use the knowledge and information to overcome one's personal barriers.
- Apply the knowledge in one's own life and make efforts to make own child resilient.
- Use techniques learnt from the workshop to deal with one's own stress and trauma.

Organizational Level

- Sensitize people, groups and societies in meetings, workshops and training about children's resilience so that they too start focusing on the issue.
- Share the knowledge and information from the workshop and techniques of promoting resilience with coworkers within the organization, social workers, counselors and others who work with children in our programs.
- Work with organizations working with children and child clubs to promote resilience in children.
- Facilitate workshops for counselors to provide them with tools, techniques and strategies to promote children's resilience.
- Raise the issue with the media.
- Network with other organizations working on the issue.
- Apply the tools and methods learnt at the workshop to reduce trauma and tension in our programs for children in disadvantaged situation and child survivors.
- Explore more techniques such as dance therapy and play therapy to foster resilience among children.
- Conduct further research studies on child sexual abuse and resilience in children.
- Focus on resilience in the recovery and psychosocial support programs for children.
- Work with children's organizations and child protection committees to increase awareness on children's resilience.
- Involve more governmental and non-governmental organizations working with children so that they incorporate activities in their existing programs to promote resilience among children.

Regional Level

- Help the countries in collecting and sharing knowledge and information on methods, tools and strategies of promoting resilience in children.
- Exchange and share Behavior Communication Change Materials and Tools.
- Form a resource group in the region coordinated by the regional office.
- Organize Training of Trainers on Resilience.
- Document research and good practices on children's resilience.
- Organize awareness raising activities and undertake media and performing arts campaign.

Following are some of the specific activities the country-affiliated programmes and partners would be undertaking in their respective countries:

SRI LANKA

SERVE: Sensitize Child Clubs regarding resilience, share knowledge with SERVE staff, create a section in the library on this subject, work closely with partner organizations on child sexual abuse and building resilience in children affected by Tsunami and armed conflict.

PAKISTAN

Sahil: Include the learning in the training programs for community members, juvenile rehabilitation programs, and in counseling manual for juveniles. Integrate the issue of resilience for street children and child domestic workers.

Save the Children Sweden-Pakistan: Integrate resilience promotion in all our programs and projects as well as in our training programs for partners.

NEPAL

CWISH: Share strategies, tools, interventions with other organizations working with children in crisis. Strengthen our psychosocial counseling by integrating aspect of resilience.

Sakti Samuha: Share the concept of children's resilience in the program areas.

Daywalker Foundation: Use the tools and dance therapy and organize training of trainers.

Radio Nepal: Broadcast the issue of resilience in Radio Nepal.

Maiti Nepal: Use the tools to promote resilience among trafficking survivors.

Save the Children Norway-Nepal: Share the knowledge from the workshop with concerned staff. Organize a meeting with partner organizations and incorporate this in our existing psychosocial services. SCN will build linkages with Tullir, Rahi, Sahil and other such organizations working with children and adults affected by child sexual abuse. Organize exchange visits, workshops and trainings.

INDIA

Elaan: Conduct training and collaborate with other organizations, create a resource database, work with national and international network.

Tulir: Work towards a more systematic way of incorporating resilience in our work. Work with peer-to-peer groups. Help with the development of a Manual for Training of Trainers.

Rahi: Form a coalition or be part of any coalition working on promoting children's resilience. Coordinate and conduct workshops, offer training and mentorship to other organizations on running peer education programs with young people, start a program for mothers/caregivers on child protection and offer services to survivors affected by child sexual abuse.

Sangini: Share knowledge about children's resilience techniques with people of different sexual orientation.

Save the Children India: Integrate activities to promote resilience with our child protection committees and child clubs in our programs.

BANGLADESH

Nari Maitree: Focus on promoting resilience of sexually abused children in our programs.

Bangladesh Protibondi Foundation: Learn about ways to foster resilience of children with disabilities and their families.

Save the Children Sweden-Denmark-Bangladesh: Share the workshop learning and experience with colleagues within the organization and partner NGOs. Incorporate some of the tools in our existing programs. Strengthen Child Protection Committees based on the learning from this workshop.

Save the Children Norway will be part of an international knowledge and practice-sharing network on social issues related to child sexual abuse and exploitation and resilience in children.

Save the Children Sweden Regional Office for South and Central Asia: Continue to advocate for National and Community Child Protection Committees that will provide psycho-social support with focus on children's resilience. Undertake a field-based research in the region to understand factors that have contributed to children's resilience.

FINAL COMMITMENTS BY COUNTRY GROUPS

BANGLADESH: Incorporate methods and tools of promoting resilience in our programs.

INDIA: Workshop to build a National Coalition on Child Sexual Abuse and Promoting Resilience in Children.

NEPAL: Share information within the organization and with our partner organizations.

PAKISTAN: Incorporate the issue of resilience in our training programs.

SRI LANKA: Sensitize members of child clubs on resilience.

VIII Conclusion

In South Asian region the word 'resilience' itself seems to be new although the existing programmes are already trying to promote resilience in children by creating a supportive environment to children at risk and to the survivors of sexual abuse and exploitation. In a strict sense although resilience seems to be related only to survivors who have been exposed to some kind of trauma, resilience is nevertheless related to strengthening environmental factors to lessen the vulnerability of children to abuse and exploitation.

The workshop has helped Save the Children and its partners in familiarizing with the concept of resilience and ways of promoting it. In consonance with the shift in focus in combating child sexual abuse and violence children are no longer viewed as passive victims of sexual abuse and exploitation but as resilient actors and our interest is in promoting resilience among survivors of child sexual abuse and violence. The stakeholders including parents, caretakers, teachers and the government are responsible for creating child-friendly environment to promote resilience among survivors of abuse so that they overcome fear and anxiety and are able to move on with their lives. In conclusion, the workshop has succeeded in providing optimism and hope while working on the grim issues of child sexual abuse, violence and exploitation. It definitely helps stakeholders to tackle the problem in a more positive way. However, the resilient behavior in survivors should be recognized and proper ways of promoting it should be followed.

Some Reflections on the Workshop Experience:

The Workshop was attended by delegates coming from five different countries in South Asia. It was also facilitated by three resource persons each bringing with him/her a different cultural tradition as well as experiences in working with children. The very easy and warm way by which Turid facilitated the sessions and interacted with her co-facilitators and participants set the psychological climate for the entire workshop.

This varied cultural and professional backgrounds of both participants and resource persons contributed to productive and highly engaged discussion on the subject of child sexual abuse and the challenge of promoting resilience among child victims. They realized that the life themes revolving around narratives of child sexual abuse victims in India are also present in the narratives of similar victims in other countries in the same South Asia Region as well as in the Philippines, a country in South East Asia Region.

Most of the participants in the workshop were women. The presence of a few male participants helped to widen the range of discussion. There were points in the discussion when the exchanges became passionate attesting to the reality of the concerns being brought up. The exchanges surfaced the need for gender sensitivity among both female and male child workers working on child sexual abuse cases. The open and equalitarian approach of Rajaram in his sessions put into action and modeled to the group a gender sensitive way to working with stakeholders in resilience projects.

The ritual and getting to know you exercises facilitated by Violeta helped to loosen up the participants and prepare them for more personal sharing which were required by later discussions and processing of SLEs on facilitating the flow of resilience. It is remarkable how the participants bonded and became open to each other sharing personal experiences, both those that point to successful case work and those that point to frustrating cases. But the more arresting narratives were those shared by women participants who were themselves survivors of child sexual abuse. Their lives which they were able to freely share were vivid expositions on the nature and development of resilience among children exposed to life's adversities. These women have not only moved on but have themselves become leaders in their respective communities mobilizing sectors of society in the work of combating child sexual abuse.

The sharing sessions related to work being done among sexually abused children in different countries which took place on the first day created a lot of interest in varied work being done on the subject. It started also the more informal sharing of experiences both on the personal and organizational level which took place not only in workshop sessions but also during meal times and break times. Such sharing sessions also surfaced concerns of child workers in their respective areas. Since two of the countries that were represented by the participants were recently hit by natural disasters, there were many needs related to crisis work in such context which surfaced in the sharing. It is unfortunate though that the Workshop did not have enough free time to accommodate initial learning sessions on such a concern.

The participants welcomed the discussion on the concept of resilience. Though the concept is new to many of them they recognized that the experiences covered by the concept resonate with their own personal experiences as well as with those of the children that they have worked with. The concept as it were, opened a new window and brought in fresh air into their very challenging and sometimes even frustrating work with abused children. They welcomed the invitation of the resilience paradigm to view children from the lenses of optimism and hope and not only from the lenses of risks and pathology.

The participants who already have been working with children from the resilience paradigm were pleased to know that many of the things they were already doing are in line with what researches are saying regarding ways to facilitate resilience. The CWISH group based in Nepal and the Save the Children in Pakistan noted how their strategies resonated with what was being presented by the facilitators.

The facilitators themselves saw the convergence in what they were sharing with regards to approaches to nurturing resilience. They all see the importance of a multi-systemic approach which targets not only the care of the individual child, but the nurture and education of the people and institutions around them such as the family and what Rajaram refers to as extra familial context which includes the schools, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, law enforcement groups particularly the probation officers, children's institutions, child clubs and their leaders, and health groups.

The participants exhibited interest to pursue more in-depth learning both on the theoretical as well as practical aspects of resilience. Some participants even expressed interest in

conducting researches that would contribute to the development of the data base on the subject in their respective countries. Other more practice oriented participants expressed interest in attending training programmes that would develop their competencies in promoting resilience among children.

The girls from Shakti Shamuha and Safer Society coming forward and sharing their own personal experiences of having been trafficked and their struggles towards recovery and reintegration with society further dramatized the plight of child victims of sexual abuse as well as the reality of resilience in their very persons.

The very personal and powerful sharing and exchanges which took place in the workshop made it possible for the participants to come to a level of making concrete commitments to helping promote resilience in their respective countries and areas of responsibilities. Many participants also in informal meetings outside the workshop sessions promised to get in touch with each other through the net so that they may be able to continue to learn from one another as well as encourage each other in their varied work with child victims of sexual abuse. These echo what has been expressed in the “looking ahead” session of the Workshop proper. The fact that such wishes continue to be expressed in meetings outside formal workshop groups indicates the seriousness of the commitments that were made.

Looking at the commitments made by the participants from different countries, it is good to see that they touched on different levels that one can be engaged in a concern such as those surfaced by the resilience workshop. It is clear that salient aspects of the resilience workshop will be integrated in the work being done in the groups represented by the workshop participants. A commitment that bears watching is that made by India to organize a Workshop that would build a National Coalition on Sexual Abuse and Promoting Resilience in Children. If this were to take place, the spread of the paradigm and its related strategies in India will be greatly facilitated.

It needs to be noted here that the participants as well as facilitators welcomed the non-obtrusive though efficient and helpful presence of the Save the Children Staff who organized and managed the Workshop. The collegial and supportive ways of the staff led by Shoma made it possible for everybody to feel at ease, open and safe in sharing their opinions as well as recommendations.

In summary, the Workshop proved to be a collegial meeting among people committed to helping abused children. It provided not only theoretical and practical knowledge but also edifying experiences of learning from one another’s personal life stories.

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