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# From Accounting to Accountability:
### Analysis of the child reintegration financing and prevention landscape

Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for
**CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT**

# Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| AfDB | African Development Bank |
| ACPF | African Child Policy Forum |
| CAAC | Children and Armed Conflict |
| CAAFAG | Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups |
| CCRI | Children Climate Risk Index (UNICEF) |
| CPIA | Country Policy and Institutional Assessment |
| CRDF | Climate-related development finance |
| CRC | Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| CRS | Creditor Reporting System (OECD) |
| CVR | Community Violence Reduction |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee (OECD) |
| DDR | Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration |
| DPO | UN Department of Peace Operations |
| DPET | Policy, Evaluation and Training Division (UN DPO) |
| EU | European Union |
| EEAS | EU European External Action Service |
| FAO | UN Food and Agriculture Organisation |
| FDI | Foreign direct investment |
| FTS | Financial Tracking Service (OCHA) |
| GCF | Green Climate Fund |
| GCR | Global Coalition for Reintegration of Child Soldiers |
| GEF | Green Environmental Fund |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GII | Gender Inequality Index (UNDP) |
| HDI | Human Development Index (UNDP) |
| HDP-N | Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus |
| HRP | Humanitarian Response Plan |
| ICRC | International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent |
| IDA | International Development Association (WB) |
| IDMC | Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre |
| IDP | Internally displaced people |
| IFIs | International financial institutions |
| IIAG | Index of African Governance (Mo Ibrahim) |
| IPCC | UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change |
| LIC | Lower income country |
| LMIC | Lower-middle income country |
| MENA | Middle East and North Africa |
| MPI | Multidimensional Poverty Index (UNDP) |
| MSME | Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises |
| MTO | Money transfer operator |
| NAP | National Adaptation Plan |
| NDC | Nationally Determined Contribution |
| NDP | National Development Plan |
| NFI | Non-food items |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| OCHA | UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| ODA | Official Development Assistance |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OECD DAC | OECD Creditor Reporting System |
| PBF | UN Peacebuilding Fund |
| PBSO | UN Peacebuilding Support Office |
| SDG | UN Sustainable Development Goal |
| O/SRSG CAAC | Office of the/Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict |
| UCDP GED | Uppsala Conflict Data Program Georeferenced Event Dataset |
| UMIC | Upper-middle income country |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | UN Development Program |
| UNFPA | UN Population Fund |
| UNHCR | UN High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNICEF | UN Children's Fund |
| UNICRI | UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute |
| UNODC | UN Office on Drugs and Crime |
| UNSDCF | UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework |
| UN University | United Nations University |
| V-Dem Index | Varieties of Democracy Index |
| WASH | Water, sanitation and hygiene program |
| WB/WBG | World Bank/World Bank Group |
| WDI | World Development Indicators (WB) |
| WWGI | Worldwide Governance Indicators (WB) |

# Chapter 1

Child reintegration is in a state of emergency. The recruitment of children by armed elements increased by 32% between 2019-2021 alone.[1] In violation of international treaties and frameworks that aim to enhance child protection and inhibit the recruitment of children, this practice has unfortunately long played a part in the doctrine of war, occurring in most of the world's conflicts. Consequently, the number of countries on the children and armed conflict (CAAC) agenda has steadily increased over the past 26 years. In 2002, for example, there were only five country situations on the CAAC agenda (as it appears in the annual report of the UN Secretary-General), and in 2021 it reached a new high of 24 situations and two regions.[2]

This increase in recruitment has also strongly affected girls, as evidenced by 121 new cases between 2019 and 2020.[3] This is worrying as it is widely accepted that the numbers available regarding child recruitment are highly underreported. While boys usually make up over 90% of children recruited, girls make up over 90% of cases of sexual violence, which is also vastly underreported. Therefore, there is a strong likelihood that these negative trends mask an even grimmer reality for the female cohort.

Annually, it is estimated that around 12,000 children exit these armed forces and groups through official channels, and thousands more through unofficial ones. Their leaving is rarely a linear progression, often going in and out of the armed group or force before leaving definitively—and the motives are as varied as the reasons they found themselves in the group initially. Occasionally, the lure of something better, such as a reintegration program, is enough to entice them into a more peaceful life. But too often, there are not enough resources to provide even the majority of these children with the full services they desperately need to re-enter civilian life and become productive citizens.

This challenging situation was identified in 2018 when the Office of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for CAAC, co-chaired by UNICEF, created the Global Coalition for Reintegration of Child Soldiers (GCR).[4] Over 12 intense months, a high-level steering group comprised of senior UN officials UN member states, World Bank, and NGO leaders oversaw a year of research executed by experts from these same areas as well as with academia. The result was a consensus that there has long been a "gap" in support and funding for reintegration programs, and that only acting together could we help reintegrate these children and former children back into society to reclaim their lives. The research and recommendations are captured in three briefing papers: *1) Gaps and Needs for the Successful Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Groups or Armed Forces, 2) Reframing Child Reintegration: From the Humanitarian Action to Development, Peacebuilding, Prevention and Beyond, and 3) Financing Support for Child Reintegration: Issues & Options Study.* This paper has taken up the recommendations found in those papers to continue to move the issue forward.

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[1] 15,551 in 2019 to 22,645 in 2021. *Secretary-General's Reports to the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict*, 2019,2021

[2] As the research for the report was completed before the 2022 Annual Report of the UN Secretary-General to the Security Council on CAAC was published, this study has used the number of countries from the 2021 report, which is 21.

[3] Calculations based on the Secretary-General's Reports on Children and Armed Conflict, 2020 & 2021.

[4] https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/global-coalition-for-reintegration-of-child-soldiers/

# How do we meet this challenge?

As the GCR research showed, the issue is complex; not one of just funding, programming, political will, or institutional impediments, but a combination of all of these. This paper has taken the position that given the right incentives, structures and cooperation, that the funding issue has the possibility to bring key elements together and create the right atmosphere for change.

The experts say that 3-5 years of support is needed to properly reintegrate most children after they have escaped the trauma of being in an armed group or force. This is a **continuum of care** that no one player is prepared to or should provide alone. It is a combination of actors from the three primary funding pillars (humanitarian, development and peace) that need to put the child at the center of their actions and better coordinate. This key institutional impediment has moved squarely into the spotlight to show that the structures of both funders and care providers unintentionally limit the ability of any one pillar to fully support these children.

Humanitarian funding plays a crucial role in supporting children (and their communities) who have been suffered due to conflict and recruitment. Indeed, the vast majority of funding for current reintegration programming comes from humanitarian sources. However, reintegrating children back into their families and communities requires a comprehensive approach that involves short-, medium- and long-term initiatives to make programming meaningful and sustainable. This requires the inclusion of activities that traditionally fall into the realm of development, for example, vocational training and mentoring.

In short, there needs to be a bridge for children to cross from pillar to pillar to take advantage of support as needed. The aforementioned "continuum of care" in which children can receive individualized support, diminishing over time, until they are able and comfortable in their role as a peaceful member of society again. The discussion centers around the so-called **humanitarian-development-peace nexus**, and this concept is gaining ground as a way to finally overcome challenges to help this vital and strategic cohort

This paper looks at the financing flows to reintegration support, puts forward concrete data drawn from thousands of sources, and makes suggestions for a way forward.

Importantly, and in parallel, data was collected and analyzed also for the root causes of child recruitment and who is doing what to address that. Without tackling these drivers, the nations and the international community are doomed to repeat the same assistance, often to the same children, who are recruited and re-recruited because the environment that caused their recruitment has not changed, and likely will not change. Successful child reintegration often requires addressing systemic issues such as poverty, discrimination, and inadequate social services. This requires a long-term commitment and investment, beyond just financial resources, to ensure that children are able to successfully reintegrate and thrive in their communities.

## The Research

What is the true state of play? This paper aims to codify that as much as possible, but the information available is often disjointed, under misleading titles, or missing altogether. A lack of comprehensive, and not just representative, data has regularly hampered the best of efforts to create effective policy, programming and resource mobilization responses. In fact, according to a recent World Bank study[5] lack of data, including lack of *inclusive* data (i.e., data that also reflects vulnerable groups) is a significant problem which means roughly 70 per cent of people in fragile contexts are not appropriately represented in data sets used to plan for and execute programming, including child reintegration.

> **Research shows that the two main sources of child reintegration funding currently are:**
>
> - **Humanitarian assistance**
>   Measured by: OCHA Finance Tracking Service (FTS), global cluster "Protection – Child protection"
>
> - **Peace finance** towards child reintegration [as measured by: OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS) purpose code 15261 '*Child soldiers Prevention and Demobilisation*'

Adding fuel to the fire, there is a yawning gap between growing needs and available financial resources from the two main sources of current reintegration assistance: **humanitarian aid**[6] measured using the OCHA Finance Tracking Service (FTS), at **USD 53 million** on average per year for ***child protection*** (of which child reintegration is just a subset) between 2017 and 2021, and **peace financing**, measured using the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) purpose code 15261: "Child soldiers Prevention and Demobilization,"[7] at **USD 8.6 million** on average per year between 2016 and 2020. Missing is a third pillar, with the potential to dramatically impact long-term support to reintegration programming, that of **development financing**. Bridging these three pillars, as mentioned above, is key to future success.

In 2022, there was a gap of between needs and available *humanitarian* financing of **USD 256 million** under the child protection cluster, through which the majority of child reintegration is funded. Similarly, available *peace* financing to assist in child reintegration activities has also declined by 62% since 2017,[8] while needs have risen. This decline echoes a trend initially identified by War Child UK in 2018 which highlighted a 34% downturn in funding (from USD 22.1 million in 2012 to 14.7 million in 2016).[9] This trend was also corroborated by the research and interviews undertaken for this paper.[10]

The alarming uptick in child recruitment is expected to increase substantially in the next several years due to a perfect storm of **four main risk amplifiers**: 1) climate change, 2) the Ukraine crisis and food insecurity, 3) continued effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and 4) a looming global economic crisis. Indeed, all countries on the CAAC agenda are slated to be impacted by climate change according to the

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[5] Corral, P.; Irwin, A. Krishnan, N., Mahler, D. G., Vishwanath, T., *Fragility and Conflict: On the Front Lines of the Fight against Poverty*. Washington, DC: World Bank. 2020

[6] Humanitarian finance towards Child protection is captured through the OCHA FTS global cluster "Protection - Child protection".

[7] Flows towards Child reintegration are captured through the OECD DAC CRS purpose code 15261: "Child soldiers" (prevention and demobilization).

[8] Based on a review of 109 activities in 21 CAAC countries reported through the OECD DAC CRS purpose code 15261: "Child soldiers (prevention and demobilization) between 2016 and 2020.

[9] War Child UK. *Closing the Funding Gap for the Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed forces and Groups*. September 2018.

[10] Two analyses by the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, in 2020 and 2021, respectively. (*Annual spotlight on child protection funding in humanitarian action*). Research undertaken by the Global Coalition for the Reintegration of Child Soldiers in 2020. (*Financing Support for Child Reintegration: Issues & Options Study*)

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Changes (IPCC) and others.[11] At the 49th session of the UN Human Rights Council, the UN Secretary-General recognized the adverse effects of climate change as a risk multiplier of conflict and that said decisive action is urgently needed.

Against this bleak backdrop, addressing growing child reintegration needs in isolation is clearly not enough. The main humanitarian sources of child reintegration will be stretched to cover an ever-increasing number of demands, both in terms of quantity and categories. For example, efforts are ongoing to break out issues of gender to offer more nuanced, targeted reintegration responses, as well as age-specific and disability-specific programming to meet the unique needs of the different groups. It is clear that existing and predictable funding of child reintegration is neither fit for purpose nor future-proof. Therefore, it is essential to deliberately **target the cycles of child recruitment by also addressing its root causes**, thereby also stemming the increasing humanitarian needs, and preventing child recruitment to begin with.

> "Taking decisive action on climate change and ending and preventing grave violations against children go hand-in-hand with preventing the emergence of conflict in the first place."
> *- Interviewee*

To start, addressing the enormous needs of child reintegration programming (roughly 12,000 new cases per year) will require a great deal of new thinking and creative, cohesive financing. As mentioned, experts say there needs to be a minimum of 3-5 years of varying support to children who exit armed groups or forces. Currently, children receive a fraction of that, if anything at all, because the funding is not at adequate levels, the architecture for a joined-up approach is missing, and pillar-type work is incentivized, amongst other challenges. There is a need for innovation across the community of practice and beyond to leverage new sources of short-, medium- and longer-term financing and establish new partnerships. In order to provide the to provide the continuum of care these children need partners need to work better across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDP-N).

Recognizing that future successes in child reintegration are predicated on more effective and efficient cooperation among the spectrum of partners constituting the community of practice, innovation is understood as how to ensure a more fit-for-purpose and future-proof approach to address child reintegration needs, whilst aiming also to break cycles of recruitment and transition more effectively from short- to longer-term financing modalities.

> "Recurring patterns of recruitment are not being broken."
> *- Interviewee*

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[11] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group 1 2021 data and UNICEF Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI); NASA https://climate.nasa.gov/effects.

# Casting a Broad Net

A total of **206 planning frameworks** were analyzed covering the 21 CAAC countries: 127 country planning frameworks from 15 stakeholders engaged in the 21 countries; 21 regional planning frameworks covering 12 stakeholders; 58 national planning frameworks, more specifically: 20 National Development Plans (NDPs),[12] 19 Humanitarian Response Plans[13] and 19 national climate strategies sourced from the Nationally-Determined Contributions (NDCs) submitted to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).[14]

## Varying Definitions of Innovative Financing[15]

**Leading Group**. Financial solutions to development challenges that remain insufficiently addressed by traditional aid flows. There are two sub-categories of innovative financing: 1) innovative sources which help generate new financial flows for sustainable development that may come from various economic sectors; 2) innovative mechanisms which help maximize the efficiency, impact and leverage of existing resources.

**OECD.** Mechanisms for raising funds or stimulating actions in support of international development that go beyond traditional spending approaches and share the following characteristics: 1) official sector involvement; 2) cross-border transfer of resources to developing countries; 3) mobilize additional finance; and 4) are operational.

**United Nations**. Initiatives that share the following characteristics: 1) official sector involvement; 2) cross-border transfer of resources to developing countries; and 3) innovation, in the sense that mechanisms are used in a new context or incorporate innovative features with respect to traditional finance.

**World Bank.** Any financing approach that helps to: 1) generate additional development funds by tapping new funding sources (e.g. by looking beyond budget outlays) or by engaging new partners (e.g. emerging donors, private sector); 2) enhance the efficiency of financial flows, by reducing delivery time and/or costs; 3) make financial flows more results-oriented, by explicitly linking funding flows to measurable performance on the ground.

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[12] Syria was excluded because the research team did not have the resources to analyze in Arabic

[13] HRPs are published by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Plans for India and Philippines were not included as there are no detailed response plans available.

[14] NDCs were published by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The NDC strategies for Cameroon and Burkina Faso were not included.

[15] OECD, Development Cooperation Report 2014

## Definition of *Innovative Financing*

Inspired heavily by the definitions employed the UN, the WBG, the OECD, and the Leading Group, this report defines innovative financing for child reintegration as:

> **A complementary source of capital to the three traditional sources of financing used by the CAAC community of practice: humanitarian, development and peace; as reimagining how existing funds could be most efficiently employed, as well as seeking out new sources such as private sector or microfinance.**

> **A way of making child reintegration initiatives more effective and efficient by linking financing to results, redistributing risk, improving the availability of working capital, engaging technology, and matching the length of investments with the needs of the children.**

## Five sources of longer-term financing

Initiatives tagged as "innovative" by some stakeholders may not be considered so by others. At present, innovative financing for development comprises many different initiatives. For example, some donors earmark resources or make them available quickly, others correct market failures or modify the risk profile of a specific sector, and yet others mobilize domestic resources. Financial engineering mechanisms or financing modalities – such as blended finance and pooled funding – are also regularly referred to as "innovative" because they leverage resources in one of the three main operating contexts: humanitarian, development, peace. Such innovation could come from the following sources:

> **Development** finance (USD 241 billion) between 2016 and 2020, OECD DAC CRS

> **Peace** finance (USD 28.3 billion) between 2016 and 2020, OECD DAC CRS[16]

> **Climate** finance (USD 71 billion) between 2015 and 2019, OECD DAC Rio Markers

> **Remittances** (USD 900 billion) between 2016 and 2020, World Bank Group (WBG) World Development Indicators (WDI)

> **Private sector/Foreign Direct Investments** (FDI) (USD 549 billion) between 2016 and 2002, Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) taken from the WBG WDI.[1]

> **Education**-specific from humanitarian resources (USD 750 million) between 2017 and 2021, OCHA FTS; from development resources (USD 17 billion), OECD DAC CRS

## Four innovative delivery modalities

> <u>Pooled Funds</u>: Pooled funds aggregate, or "pool" funds from a diversity of donors into one large portfolio.[17]

> <u>Challenge Funds</u>: Challenge funds can be defined as cost-sharing grant schemes designed to challenge the private sector or civil society to propose innovative new models to address a particular issue, usually on a replicable and sustainable basis.

> <u>Impact bonds</u>: Impact bonds use money from private investors to finance programs, who in turn earn a return if the program is successful, paid by a third-party (often private) donor.

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[16] Peace finance is sourced from the same source as development finance (OECD DAC CRS). The data is filtered to only include Peace finance. This includes all Peace finance, not just Peace finance under purpose code 15261 Child Soldiers Prevention and Demobilisation.

[17] Investopedia (2022). *What Are Pooled Funds?*

> > UN Peacebuilding Fund: The UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund is the organization's financial instrument to sustain peace in countries or situations at risk or affected by violent conflict. It invests with UN entities, governments, regional organizations, multilateral banks, national multi-donor trust funds or civil society organizations.[18]

# Research framing and diagnostic model

The research made use of a diagnostic model consisting of an identification of **8 main reintegration themes** and **9 long-term drivers of child recruitment**, spanning the child life-cycle, which are explained below. The idea was, based on the research, to pick the top themes that emerged representing reintegration programming, and another list of long-term drivers/root causes that directly impacted child recruitment numbers.

❖ **Eight reintegration themes**
   1. Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)
   2. Community support
   3. Alternative care
   4. Family tracing
   5. Participation
   6. Livelihoods
   7. Vocational education
   8. In-school education (including accelerated and higher education)

   While inherently a subjective list, they are considered to be largely representative of the main themes found in reintegration programs. They were derived from 13 key international statues, principles and protocols governing child reintegration definitions.[19]

❖ **Nine long-term drivers of child recruitment**
   1. Governance
   2. Social cohesion
   3. Food security*[20]
   4. Access to basic social services*
   5. Livelihood opportunities*
   6. Education
   7. Rule of Law
   8. Agency
   9. Marginalization
   *Will be dramatically impacted by climate change*

> "Rehabilitating and reintegrating traumatised young people is one of the wisest moves a society can take to rebuild and move forward."
>
> *- Interviewee*

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[18] UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office Partners Gateway (2022). Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund.

[19] Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC), Paris Principles and Commitments, Worst Forms of Child Labour ILO Convention, 1999 (No. 182), UN IDDRS Module 5.20 Children and DDR, AU DDR & Children Operational Guideline, CAAC Child reintegration themes, Child Protection Systems (UNICEF), Child lifecycle (UNICEF), Leave no one behind, Do no Harm principle, Human rights principles, Sustainable Development Goals

[20] Calculations, based on the IPCC and the UNICEF CCRI, the UN and WBG pathways report, the WDR 2011 report, UNHCHR Predictive Analytics initiative, and the Adelphi Weathering Risks Initiative

The eight reintegration themes and the nine drivers of child recruitment were mapped against their relevant OECD DAC CRS codes.

Diagram **1** below then maps these themes across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. The graphic is intended to demonstrate the linkages—and potential linkages—between partners who receive financing sources against each of themes related to child reintegration and those associated with the drivers of child recruitment.

As evidenced by the graphic, the majority of themes related to child reintegration are associated with the two main funding sources for child reintegration, humanitarian and peace pillars. Conversely, the bulk of the themes addressing the root causes of child recruitment are development, related to longer-term development financing, as well as some peace funding sources. The graphic depicts the potential for partners engaged across the HDP-N, in longer-term development initiatives to work together with those engaged in shorter-term initiatives addressing the immediate, humanitarian reintegration needs of children.

- A red marker: for the 8 reintegration themes
- A blue marker: for the 9 long-term drivers of child recruitment
- A green marker: for the long-term drivers of child recruitment exacerbated by climate change

**Diagram 1:** The eight reintegration themes and the nine long-term drivers of child recruitment, mapped across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus
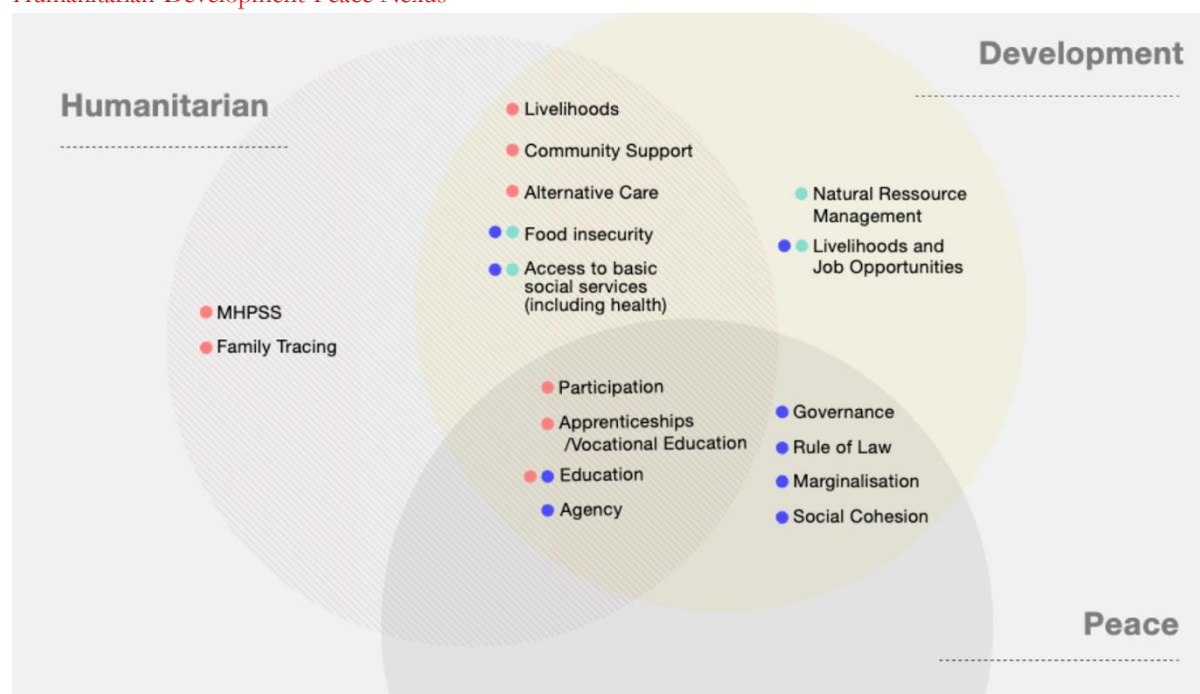


Diagram **1** outlines the eight reintegration themes and the nine long-term drivers of child recruitment. A red marker indicates a reintegration theme. A blue marker indicates a long-term drivers of child recruitment, and a green marker indicates a long-term driver of child recruitment that is projected to be exacerbated by climate change.[21] The mapping is based on the review of the sources used to develop these themes.

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[21] Natural Resource Management features here, even though it is not one of the nine long-term drivers of child recruitment. Natural resource management is very sub-region specific and in areas more recently added the CAAC agenda, namely Mali, Niger and the Lake Chad Basin, it is often mentioned as a reason why children join armed groups.

**21 CAAC countries were categorized and analyzed using four conflict typologies:**

The conflict typologies that were developed by the Global Coalition for Reintegration of Child Soldiers and appeared in the *Financing Support for Child Reintegration* report.[22]

1. **Typology 1: Total state collapse with widespread insecurity**. This is characterized by large-scale active conflict with widespread and severe impacts on the civilian population and little/no access to all areas of the country. There is protracted humanitarian crisis with majority of population reliant on humanitarian service provision and disruption of livelihoods/food production. There is little/no central Government authority and very little coordinated state provision of services.

2. **Typology 2: Severely conflict affected**. This is characterized by high levels of insecurity but with geographical areas of/or periods of stability. There are wide-scale humanitarian needs with significant proportion of population affected but at least in some areas people able to pursue livelihoods/produce food. Government/central authorities partially functional but likely to be weak in terms of capacity and possibly also state legitimacy, some service provision at national and/or local levels by regional or local service providers, i.e. local government and/or NGOs.

3. **Typology 3: Highly fragile but functional**. This is characterized by major risks of widespread conflict and/or geographical areas with persistent high levels of insecurity, including crime. There may be ongoing and significant humanitarian need in some areas and relative stability in others. Livelihoods and food production affected but can be pursued by most of the population.

4. **Typology 4: At risk.** These countries may be emerging from acute or protracted conflict, have internal dynamics that put them in danger of conflict occurring, or be in an at-risk region with insecure borders or other factors. There is no ongoing significant insecurity or conflict but tensions and risks are present in some areas. There is also no significant humanitarian crisis or needs but there may be significant levels of poverty and inequitable access to services and resources.

**Income level typologies:** The conflict typologies were cross-matched with where they fell on the general income level of the country. Not surprisingly, the most vulnerable countries were the lowest income countries, and the highest income countries were the most stable.

- Lower-income countries (LIC)

- Lower-middle income countries (LMIC)

- Upper-middle income countries (UMIC)

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[22] Global Coalition for Reintegration of Child Soldiers (2020). *Financing Support for Child Reintegration. Financing Support*.

**Diagram 2:** 21 countries on the CAAC agenda broken down by state typology and the geographic occurrence of recruitment of children by the type of recruitment (state, non-state or both state and non-state), 2021
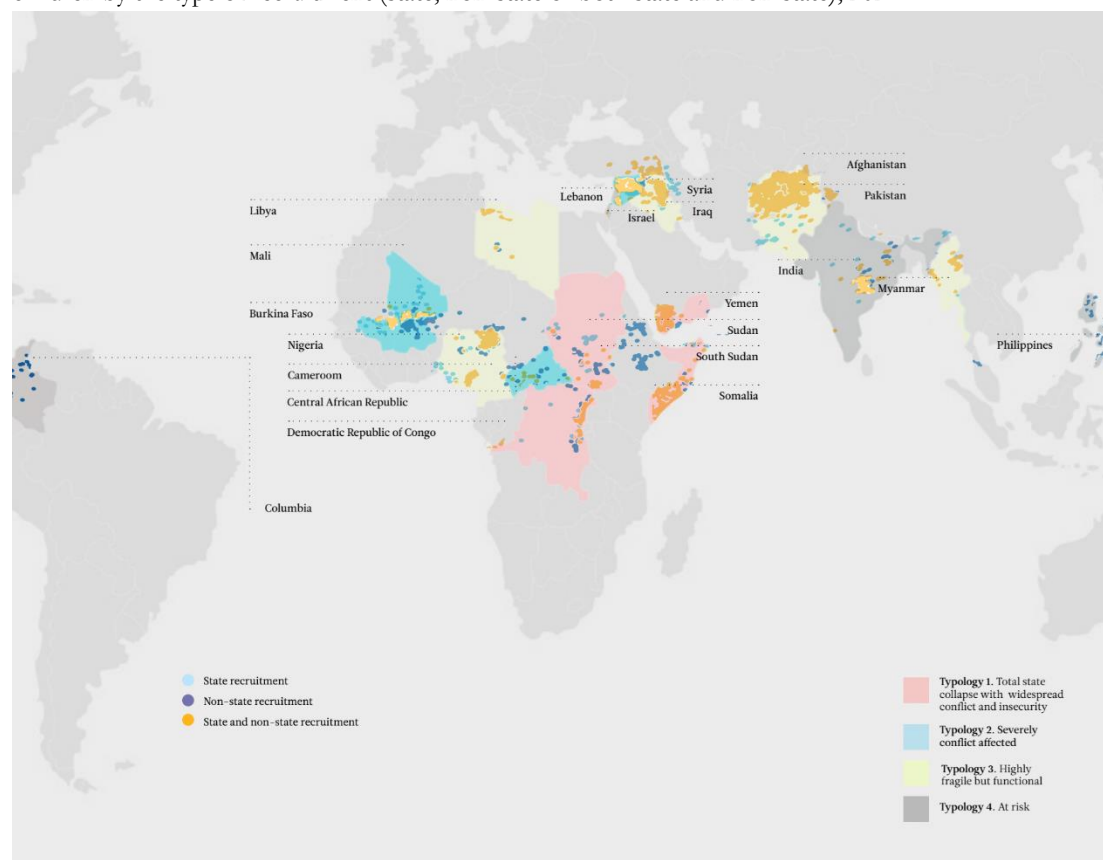


**Description:** Diagram 2 outlines 21 CAAC countries, broken down by the four state typologies. It also indicates the geographic location of child recruitment. This is broken down into state recruitment, non-state recruitment and state and non-state recruitment. It is based on calculations from adapted data from Haer & Böhmelt's dataset (2016), the Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security (data version April 29; 2021); CIESIN (2016) 'Gridded Population of the World'. UCDP (2020) 'UCDP Georeferenced Events Dataset' and UN (2020) 'World Population Prospects'. A version of this map is available in the Haer, Østby, Rustad and Arasmith's paper Children at Risk of Being Recruited for Armed Conflict 1990-2020, 2021.

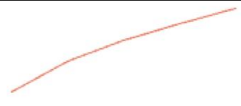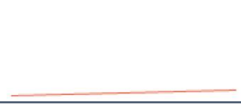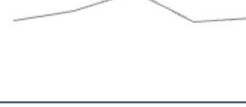# Key Findings

➢ **According to UNSG CAAC Annual Reports, recruitment and conflict have both increased significantly between 2016 and 2020:** Recruitment increased by 13 per cent since 2019 (619 new cases per year) and violence increased by 20 per cent during the analyzed period. Recruitment of girls increased by 185 per cent between 2016 and 2020 (from 185 to 538 cases).[23]

➢ **From bad to worse due to a quadruple threat multiplier:** To make matters worse, recruitment is expected to grow exponentially because of the effects of a quadruple threat on the long-term drivers of child recruitment: climate change, the Ukraine crisis and food insecurity, post COVID-19 recovery as

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[23] UNSG Annual Reports on Children and Armed Conflict, 2016-2020

well as a global economic recession that is anticipated. As a result, 33 per cent of the reasons children say they join armed groups are expected to worsen due to climate change.[24]

**Table 1:** Emerging correlations between the state typologies, child recruitment trends, conflict trends, Children Climate Risk Index score (CCRI) and performance of the long-term drivers of child recruitment

| State typologies | I<br>**Child recruitment trends (2016-2020)** (Cuummulative yearly trends, UN Secretary General's Annual Report for Children and Armed Conflict) | II<br>**Conflict trends (2015-2019)** (number of violent events, Uppsala Georeferences Event Dataset) | III<br>**UNICEF Children Climate Risk Index score (CCRI)** | IV<br>**Performance of the long-term drivers of child recruitment** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Typology 1: Total state collapse with widespread conflict and insecurity** (5 lower-income countries) | | | Worse | Worse |
| **Typology 2: Severely conflict affected** (4 lower-income countries) | | | Bad | Bad |
| **Typology 3: Highly fragile but functional** (2 lower-income, 3 lower-middle income and 3 upper-middle income countries) | | | Bad | Bad |
| **Typology 4: At risk** (4 lower-middle income countries and 1 upper-middle income country) | | | Moderate | Moderate |

Broken down by the four state typologies, this table shows the child recruitment[25] and conflict trends,[26] the UNICEF Children Climate Risk Index score (CCRI) [27] and the performance of the long-term drivers of child recruitment. [28]

> ➤ **There is a correlation between conflict typologies, child recruitment trends and the performance of the nine long-term drivers of child recruitment.** Table 1 demonstrates that:
>    - The most fragile countries (Typology 1) have the highest levels of children recruitment (I) and the worst performance of the nine long-term drivers of child recruitment (IV).
>    - On the other hand, least fragile countries (Typology 4) have lower levels of child recruitment (I) and a moderate performance of the nine long-term drivers of child recruitment (IV).
>    - Moreover, children in more fragile countries (Typology 1) are more vulnerable to climate change (III) than children in less fragile countries (Typology 4).

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[24] Calculations based on UNICEF Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI), IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, as well as 27 research papers on why children join armed groups in 21 CAAC countries (See chapter 2 – Methodology for sources).

[25] The data for recruitment trends is sources from the UN Secretary General's Annual Report for Children and Armed Conflict.

[26] The data for conflict trends is sourced from Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED).

The Conflict Intensity Score is part of the Governance component of the Bertelsmann Transformation Index. The Score ranges between 1, "There are no violent incidents based on social, ethnic or religious differences" and 10, "There is civil war or a widespread violent conflict based on social, ethnic or religious differences". The Score particularly captures the spread of violence and takes into account the mobilization of large portions of the population, the confrontational nature of politics as well as polarizations and cleavages in the society.

[27] The Children Climate Risk Index score is sourced from UNICEF's Children Climate Risk Index (CCRI). It ranks countries based on children's exposure to climate and environmental shocks, such as cyclones and heatwaves, as well as their vulnerability to those shocks, based on their access to essential services. The score ranges from 1-10, 1 denoting a "Low" vulnerability and "Extremely High" vulnerability.

[28] Calculations are based on thematic indicator trends related to the 9 main reasons why children join armed groups. The number (in per cent) refers to the number of themes related to child recruitment (out of a total of 9) that either had an indicator score below the CAAC average in 2019, a decreasing score between 2015 and 2019 (or both).
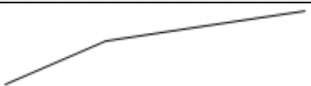
- There does not seem to be a direct correlation between climate and conflict at the moment, however child recruitment has been indicated as a potential early-warning sign of conflict.

➢ **This same correlation is also seen with income levels**. Lower-income countries have higher recruitment trends, a worse performance of the long-term drivers of recruitment and children are more vulnerable to climate change (CCRI). Upper-middle income countries have lower recruitment trends, a better performance of the long-term drivers of recruitment and children are less exposed to climate change (CCRI). See

➢ Table *2* below.

> **"Child recruitment trends can be an early warning sign of conflict."**
>
> *-Several Interviewees*

**Table 2:** Emerging correlations between the income levels, child recruitment trends, Children Climate Risk Index score (CCRI) and performance of the long-term drivers of child recruitment.

| Income Levels | I<br>**Child recruitment trends (2016-2020)**<br>(Cummulative yearly trends, UN Secretary General's Annual Report for Children and Armed Conflict) | II<br>**UNICEF Children Climate Risk Index score (CCRI)** | III<br>**Performance of the long-term drivers of child recruitment** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lower-income country (LIC) | | Worse | Worse |
| Lower-middle income country (LMIC) | | Bad | Bad |
| Upper-middle income country (UMIC) | | Moderate | Moderate |

Broken down by the three income levels this table shows the child recruitment[29] and conflict trends,[30] UNICEF's Children Climate Risk Index score (CCRI) [31] and the performance of the long-term drivers of child recruitment. [32]

➢ **More fragile countries also have the most youthful populations and the biggest expected overall population increases.** The population in the most fragile countries (Typology 1) consists of over 50 per cent of under-18-year-olds and is expected to increase by 99 per cent by 2050 (see

➢

➢

➢ *Table 3* below). The population in less fragile countries (Typology 4) is made up of 34 per cent youth and is expected to increase by only 19 per cent.

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[29] The data for recruitment trends is sources from the UN Secretary General's Annual Report for Children and Armed Conflict.

[30] The data for conflict trends is sourced from Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED). .

[31] The Children Climate Risk Index score is sourced from UNICEF's Children Climate Risk Index (CCRI). It ranks countries based on children's exposure to climate and environmental shocks, such as cyclones and heatwaves, as well as their vulnerability to those shocks, based on their access to essential services. The score ranges from 1-10, 1 denoting a "Low" vulnerability and "Extremely High" vulnerability.

[32] Calculations are based on thematic indicator trends related to the 9 main reasons why children join armed groups. The number (in per cent) refers to the number of themes related to child recruitment (out of a total of 9) that either had an indicator score below the CAAC average in 2019, a decreasing score between 2015 and 2019 (or both).

**Table 3 :** Percentage of youthful population and percentage of population increase (2020-2050), based on state typologies, WB Data, 2022

| State typologies | Percentage of youthful population (under 18) | Percentage of total population increase (2020-2050) |
|---|---|---|
| Typology 1. Total state collapse with widespread conflict and insecurity | 51% | 99% |
| Typology 2. Severely conflict affected | 47% | 102% |
| Typology 3. Highly fragile but functional | 41% | 68% |
| Typology 4. At risk | 34% | 19% |

> ➢ **However, the performance of the nine long-term drivers is closely linked to the conflict typologies.** This is outlined in Diagram 3 below. For Typology 1 (the most fragile state typology) all nine long-term drivers of child recruitment are 'currently bad' and four are 'getting worse'. In contrast, for Typology 4 (the least fragile state typology) all nine long-term drivers of child recruitment are 'currently good' and all, except one, are 'getting better'. This illustrates how more fragile typologies have worse performing long-term drivers than less fragile typologies, and possibly points to how negative conflict cycles perpetuate themselves. Moreover, long-term drivers of child recruitment such as social cohesion, education and governance are showing signs of slight improvement whereas other important drivers show little sign of improvement (jobs & livelihood opportunities, agency and marginalization remain fragile).
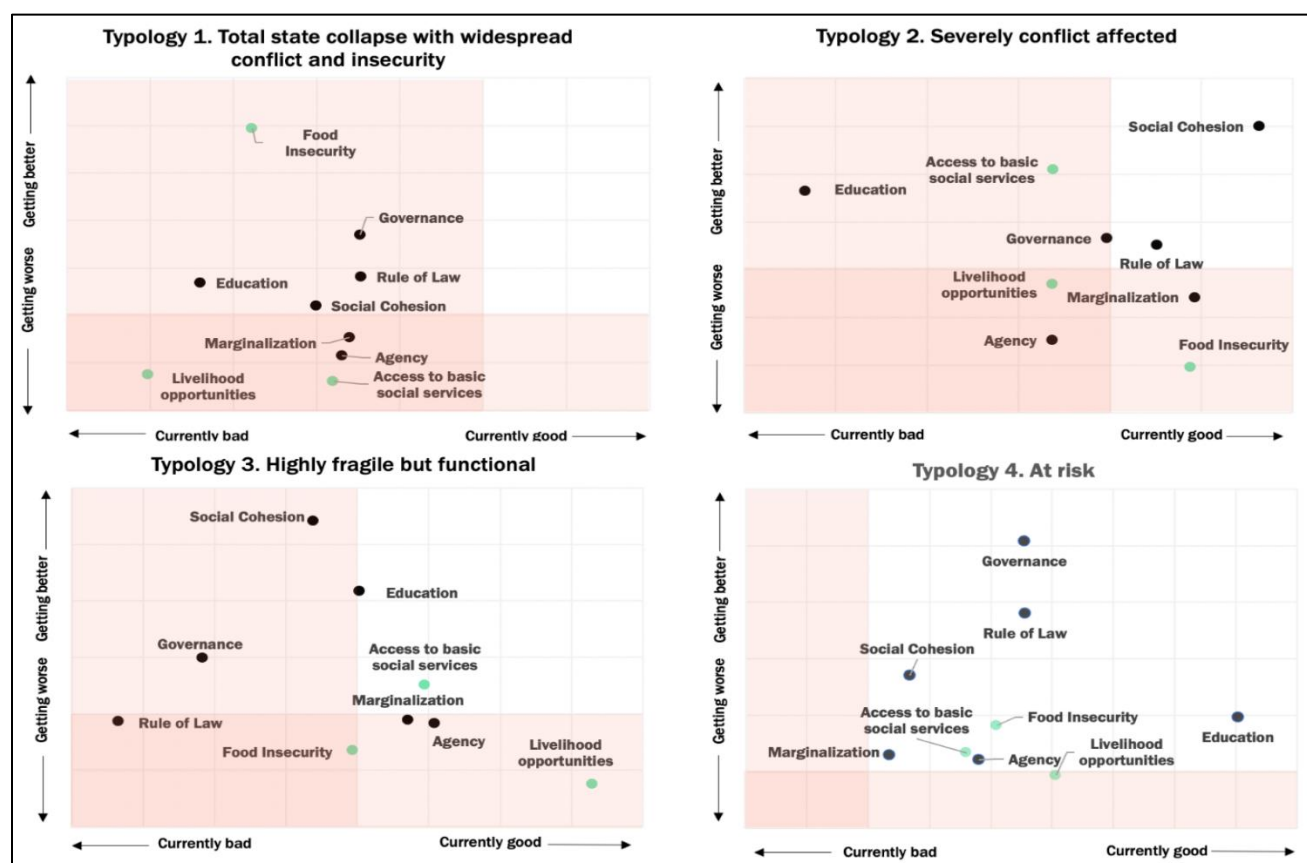
**Diagram 3:** Thematic Area Index Scores for the nine long-term drivers of child recruitment, broken down by conflict typology, 2015-2019, OAM Consult, 2022. The long-term drivers of child recruitment exacerbated by climate change are in green.

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**Snapshot of root cause performance**

The underlined upper-right quadrant (Good and getting better) includes long-term drivers whose indicator scores are higher than the average for 21 CAAC countries (Good) and which have been improving between 2015 and 2019 (Getting better).

The underlined upper-left quadrant (Bad but getting better) includes long-term drivers whose indicator scores are below the average for 21 CAAC countries (Bad) but have been improving between 2015 and 2019 (Getting better).

The underlined lower-right quadrant (Good but getting worse) includes long-term drivers whose indicator scores are above the average for the countries on the CAAC agenda (Good) but have been decreasing between 2015 and 2019 (Getting worse).

The underlined lower-left quadrant (Bad and getting worse) includes long-term drivers whose indicator scores are both below the average for the countries on the CAAC agenda (Bad) and have been decreasing between 2015 and 2019 (Getting worse).

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➢ **Climate change exacerbates 33 per cent of the long-term drivers of child recruitment (food insecurity, access to basic social services and jobs & livelihoods opportunities).[33] As all 21 countries under review are expected to be severely affected by climate change, recruitment**

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[33] Calculations based on data from the IPCC and UNICEF's CCRI.

**trends are likely to go up if long-term drivers of child recruitment are not addressed in a climate-sensitive way, and as a matter of urgency.**

# Recommendations

➔ **Leverage the HDP-N to connect the critical aspects of child recruitment trends.** The study has shown a strong correlation between child recruitment and the longer-term, often more systemic, drivers of recruitment. In order to achieve positive outcomes for reintegration, innovative cooperation and intervention methods that target the long-term drivers of child recruitment will need to be developed.

➔ **Support children affected by conflict and child reintegration efforts with a climate-sensitive approach.** The effect of climate change impacts children and increases their vulnerability in conflict situations. Climate change has a strong impact on health and livelihoods, as well as the provision of basic social services. Disruptions in these areas have long-term implications, from stunting to other illnesses and an inability to attend school, all of which negatively impact a child's future prospects and quality of life through poor health and lack of socio-economic opportunities.

> "Child reintegration can no longer be seen as just a humanitarian gesture to help a vulnerable group of children move on. It must be seen for what it is: a serious, sustainable and strategic investment in the reconstruction of a post-conflict society."
>
> *- Interviewee*

➔ **Ensure sustainable reintegration with dual prevention *and* reintegration response.** Sustainable and long-term reintegration requires a dual response that addresses immediate reintegration needs as well as the long-term drivers of child recruitment and re-recruitment, which are often systemic and institutional or situational. Effective reintegration is key to rebuilding positive self-image for children and their roles in civilian life.

> "Child reintegration can no longer be seen to effectively address the needs of children, the micro-, meso-, and macro-level need to be addressed at the same time."
>
> *- Interviewee*

➔ **Preventing re-recruitment of boys and girls into armed groups, ensuring gender-sensitive and age-sensitive reintegration.** The roles of boys and girls in armed groups are oftentimes disparate, and thus require gender specific programming. Girls' involvement often entails support roles not currently covered by reintegration programs focused on combatant children, and furthermore face significant sexual and physical abuse. Socio-legal elements can further complicate these issues and make seeking help extremely difficult for girls as their involvement may be a source of shame or legal concern. All of these factors mean that reintegration efforts will require greater specificity in order to ensure that the needs of girls associated with armed groups are met, thus better ensuring that re-recruitment does not occur.

➔ **Bridge the Humanitarian-Development-Peace-Nexus (HDP-N) to connect shorter-term child reintegration programs with larger and more long-term development interventions,** such as infrastructure projects or sector development. These projects can improve livelihoods, both bettering the child or youth's reintegration and decreasing their risk of re-recruitment. This way, children affected by conflict and former CAAFAG are assured of sustainable and continuous support throughout the child's lifecycle.

> "In some cases, it may be more a question of connecting the dots between sources of finance rather than necessarily mobilising new sources."
>
> *– Interviewee*

# Chapter 2 Financing landscape

## Traditional sources of finance for child reintegration

A vast gap between growing reintegration needs and the available financial resources current humanitarian and peace funding for child reintegration does not meet the needs of children now, much less will it in the future. This reflects the findings in the latest annual spotlight on child protection funding in humanitarian action from The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action. Similarly, although there is a continued uptick in child reintegration needs across 21 CAAC countries, available peace funding for child reintegration activities[34] has continued to diminish over the last 10 years. It fell by 62 per cent between 2017 and 2020, which was a continuation of already dwindling funds 2012-2016, as studied by War Child UK, which reported a 34 per cent drop.[35]
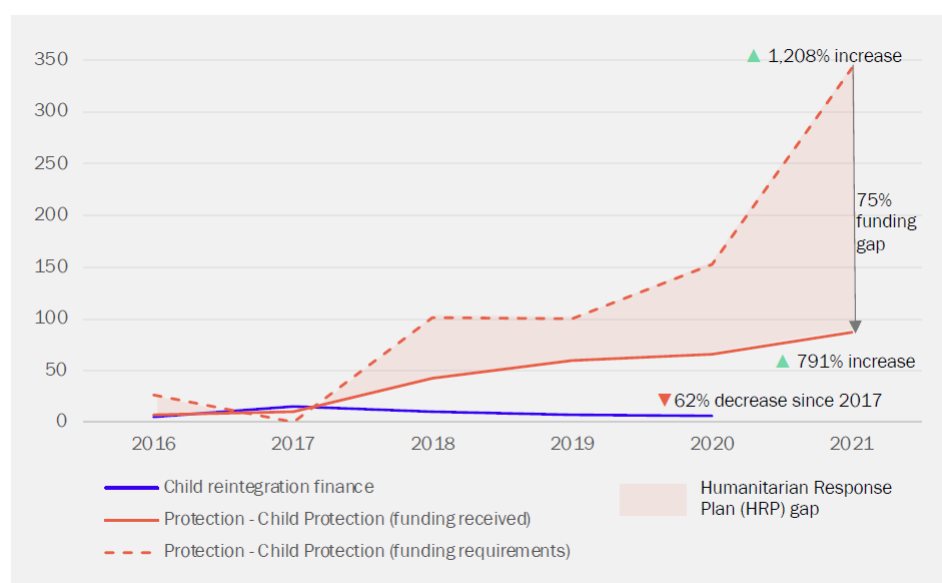


**Diagram 4:** Humanitarian (as measured by HRPs) and peace (as measured by child protection) funding for child reintegration in 21 CAAC countries, 2016-2021, in USD millions, *OECD DAC CRS database and OCHA FTS,* 2022.

**A quadruple threat multiplier -** To make matters worse, the current humanitarian funding gap for child reintegration is expected to grow exponentially because of the effects on the long-term drivers of child recruitment by: climate change, the Ukraine crisis and food insecurity, post COVID-19 recovery, and a possible global recession. In this regard, 33 per cent of long-term drivers of child recruitment are expected to worsen due to climate change.[36]

> The duration of reintegration support is far too short so linkages with long-term efforts are a major challenge.

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[34] Peace funding for child reintegration is captured through the OECD DAC CRS purpose code: 15261: "Child Soldiers (Prevention and Demobilisation)". See for example, War Child UK. (2018). *Closing the funding gap for the reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups*.

[35] War Child UK. *Closing the Funding Gap for the Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed forces and Groups*. September 2018.

[36] They are: food insecurity, access to basic social services and jobs and livelihoods opportunities. Calculations based on data from CCRI, IPCC, and 27 research papers.

**Unequal access –** The most fragile countries on the CAAC agenda (Typology 1) – which have the greatest needs – have seen the largest decrease in peace funding for child reintegration. The need in humanitarian funding for child reintegration by percentage is more or less even across the four conflict typologies (69-80 per cent), the funding needed is highest in the most fragile countries on the CAAC agenda.

**Table 4:** Trends over the period 2016-2020.

| State typologies | I<br>Child recruitment and use<br>(2016-2020) | II<br>Peace funding towards<br>child reintegration | III<br>Humanitarian funding<br>towards child protection | IV<br>HRP funding gap | V<br>Overall development and<br>peace finance, per county | VI<br>Overall climate finance,<br>per county |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Typology 1. Total state collapse with widespread conflict and insecurity | | | | 78% | | |
| Typology 2. Severely conflict affected | | | | 79% | | |
| Typology 3. Highly fragile but functional | | | | 69% | | |
| Typology 4. At risk | | | | 80% | | |
| Legend | | | Worse | Bad | Moderate | Good |
| Colours | | | | | | |

# Innovative financing sources

**Silver lining not silver bullet -** Despite alarming funding gaps for child reintegration through traditional sources, there are emerging opportunities to leverage other financing modalities. In this regard, several CAAC partners are already being innovative. Examples include the use of philanthropic financing, which is often more long-term and flexible than humanitarian financing, or the use of humanitarian funding to address both the acute child reintegration needs as well as the longer-term drivers of child recruitment in family-based programming. However, given projected child reintegration needs, much more innovation is required. This report has identified five innovative financing modalities that can play an important role in diversifying funding *and* partnerships across the HDP-N. Some partners are using blended financing modalities to address the shortfall in humanitarian financing. In 2017-2021, development, peace and climate financing have all seen an uptick in available resources (+72%, +124%, and +4%, respectively, see chart below.) These longer-term financing instruments have the potential to provide more sustainable financial sources to plug the increasing reintegration finance gap while simultaneously tackling the longer-term drivers of child recruitment.

> These longer-term financing instruments have the potential to provide longer term sustainable financial resources to plug the increasingly gap between need and assistance, while simultaneously tackling the longer-term drivers of child recruitment.

However, as evidenced by the research, no amount of blended finance can make up for a weak enabling environment characterized by silo mentalities and competition for limited resources. Ramping up blended financing instruments is

predicated on the ability of stakeholders across the HDP-N to work better together. Cooperation needs joint analysis and harmonized data collection, which takes a deliberate effort and collective investment.

**Diagram 5:** Humanitarian, development, peace and climate finance, foreign direct investment and remittances in 21 CAAC countries, 2015-2021, *OECD DAC, OCHA FTS, and World Bank, 2022*.
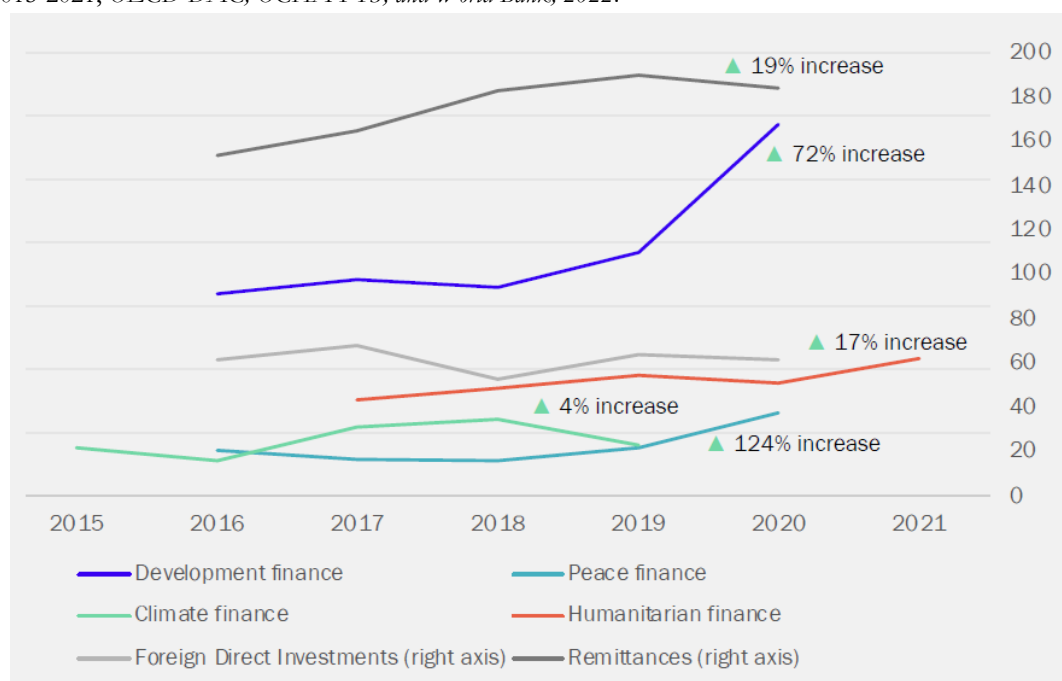


**Catalytic financing modalities** – In addition to the potential of leveraging longer-term development, peace and climate financing, *philanthropic financing* is often cited by reintegration partners as being flexible and fit for purpose with respect to bridging the gap between the HDP-N. In fact, philanthropic funds addressing the longer-term drivers of child recruitment increased by 209 per cent (USD 232 million) in the period under review. *Pooled funds*, such as the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), can also catalyze integrated programming by establishing novel criteria for joint planning and funds allocation based on priority needs and comparative advantages. Similar to philanthropic financing, this instrument is proving to be not just flexible and agile but also catalytic with respect to mobilizing additional resources for every USD invested. For example, in Mali, the multiplier effect was USD 6.6 for each USD 1 invested in Mali by the PBF.

> **SPOTLIGHT**
>
> **Using innovative financing sources, such as philanthropic ODA**
>
> Many CAAC implementing partners have highlighted philanthropic financing as an innovative funding source used to complement humanitarian financing. The advantages are that it long-term and flexible, whereas humanitarian funding is often short term and inflexible.

**Diagram 6**: Examples of the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) funding multiplier effect – Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali and Nigeria. *UN PBF and MPTF, 2021.*
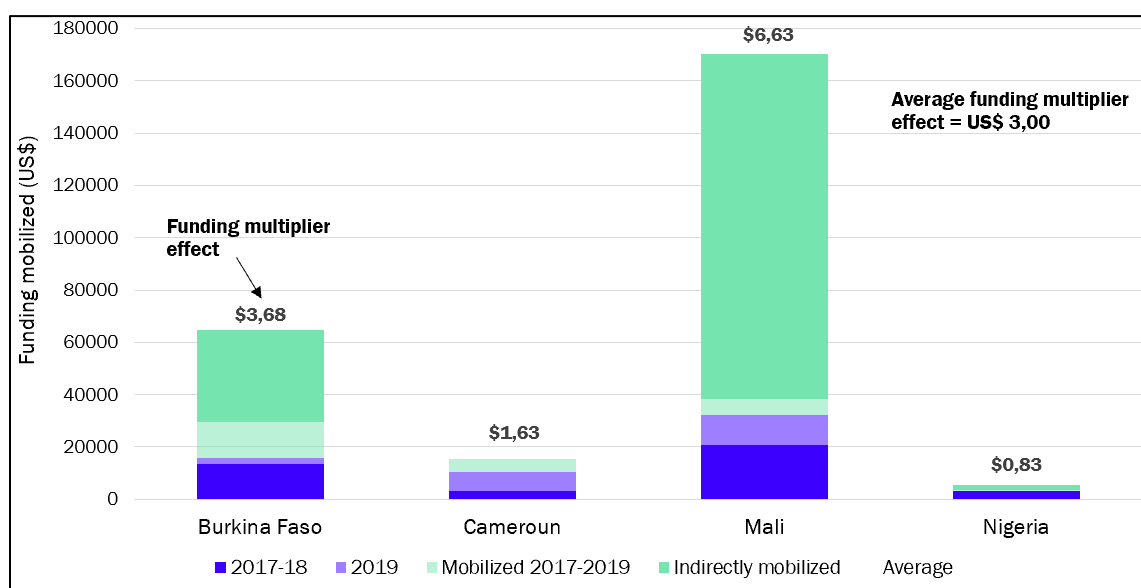


> **Incorporating children into the envelope of the UN Peacebuilding Fund -** Child reintegration activities are often overlooked by the PBF therefore only in rare cases receive its funds. While the PBF has prioritized support to peacebuilding approaches that promote inclusivity, with a specific focus on the role of women and young people, the fund does not have a specific category of child associated with armed groups or children in general, hence making it challenging to receive funds for children-focused projects.

> **Unequal access to financing** – There is an emerging inverse relationship between child recruitment and use, the long-term drivers of child recruitment trends, climate vulnerability and ODA flows in CAAC countries. The five most fragile countries of the 21 CAAC countries (DRC, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Yemen) receive just *10 per cent* of the development finance that targets the longer-term drivers of child recruitment. In contrast, the five most stable countries (Philippines, Lebanon, Colombia, Palestine and India) receive *50 per cent* of the same funds. Similarly, international climate finance commitments follow the same pattern. In fact, the five most fragile receive 11 times less in climate finance than the five most stable countries (USD 1 billion versus USD 11 billion per country). At the same time, the countries on the CAAC agenda in which children are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change receive just 4 per cent (USD 5.2 billion) of climate finance commitments to 21 CAAC countries.[37]

> **Supporting people's livelihoods** – Foreign direct investment (FDI) is a key component for growth in every developing country, especially those affected by conflict. Under the right policy environment, FDI becomes a necessary channel for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs)

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[37] The disaggregation of climate finance by child vulnerability to climate change is based on UNICEF's Children Climate Risk Index (CCRI).

development.[38] [39]  MSMEs are one of the strongest drivers of economic development across fragile states. However, MSMEs are often under-acknowledged as a critical element that can contribute to better protecting children, sparking innovation, and increasing employment; all of which contribute to strengthening a safe environment for children. They account for 65-90 per cent of *all* employment (especially the informal sector) in 21 CAAC countries and thereby impact a higher number of children and households than large businesses.

> "The language and terminology used in the child reintegration and broader child protection sector is a best difficult and at worse confusing for partners. And external partners often claim they do not understand child reintegration and child protection issue making it challenging for them to engage."
>
> *– Interviewee*

> **Leveraging people's agency** – Part of ensuring long-term, sustainable finance for child reintegration is getting access to more endogenous, or local, sources of finance. Whilst this includes national government budgets, it also includes local sources from the people themselves, especially remittances. In fact, remittance inflows into countries on the CAAC agenda were 3.5 times the amount, or USD 880 billion, of ODA received in the period under review, which greatly assisted children and families. For example, in the case of Pakistan, remittances were shown to directly mitigate food insecurity and to allow for continuation of education.[40] However, remittances sent back to CAAC countries suffer from high cost barriers (mainly fees from the transferring agency) that remain far from international targets such as the goal of 5 per cent of the amount sent or the SDG 10.3 target of just 3 per cent.

## Ownership and partnerships

> **Inadequate data -** Data on child reintegration is hampered by inconsistent reporting by donors through the OECD DAC CRS database as well as the OCHA FTS. In addition, some expenditures for child reintegration are not captured through the conventional tracking codes in the OECD DAC CRS database, and they fall within broader programs that are mapped against other codes such as education or health. This results in an incomplete picture of the current funding landscape of funding for child reintegration (i.e., peace and humanitarian funding). The lack of more nuanced CRS purpose codes or more specific humanitarian clusters means that tracked expenditures for child reintegration activities are often lacking in detail. This limits the ability of partners across the HDP-N to get an overview of the full scale of current gaps in meeting the needs of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups.

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[38] Tuluce N and Dogan I (2014). *The Impact of Foreign Direct Investments on SMEs' Development.* 10th International Strategic Management Conference. 150107–115.

[39] 'The most common MSME definition based on the number of employees is: microenterprises, less than 10 employees; small enterprises, between 10 and less than 50 employees; and medium enterprises, between 50 and less than 250 employees. (IFC, 2017)

[40] Feeley F et al. (2013). Remittance Flows to Post-Conflict States: Perspectives on Human Security and Development. Boston University Frederick S. Pardee Center for the Study of the Longer-Range Future. Boston.

> **A shared evidence base for collective action** – Working together with more stakeholders across the HDP-N requires greater investments into common data infrastructure and a shared evidence base. A core goal of a shared evidence base is to incentivize joint action guided by a common, measurable theory of change. In turn, this requires additional investments in cross-institutional learning.

# Recommendations

➢ **Blended financing –** More blended approaches should be applied to bridge current gaps in financing child reintegration across the HDP-N. A first example is to use pooled funds, which can combine funding from various sources (development, peace and climate) to address gaps in humanitarian funding. Remittances and FDI can also be used. A second example is to work with new partners. Philanthropies have already been leveraged by some partners, but development banks remain important potential financing sources. They could repurpose part of their loans and grants towards the long-term drivers of child recruitment. Addressing these drivers will also help decrease investment risks, making it a win-win. Pooled mechanisms, joint programs and the UN PBF can be used to blend these innovative financing sources.

> "Enhanced data analysis and information management will also further inform advocacy efforts conducted by Office of the SRSG CAAC and its United Nations partners and support national and regional entities engaged in the protection of conflict-affected children in developing or enhancing their capacities, including in the framework of mediation and prevention efforts."
>
> - OSRSG CAAC Study on the evolution of the Children and Armed Conflict mandate 1996-2021

➢ **The UN Peacebuilding Fund –** Partners should consider engaging in dialogue with the PBF/PBSO on whether opportunities exist for increasing support for child reintegration under one of more of their existing priority areas, e.g., by creating a focus area on children or children associated with armed groups specifically. This would increase the ability of partners engaged in child reintegration activities to access the flexible financing the PBF offers. In turn, peace funding from the PBF could also act as a bridge between short-term humanitarian funding for child reintegration and longer-term development financing, addressing the repeating cycles of recruitment and re-recruitment.

➢ **Mainstreaming climate-related security risks for conflict-affected children in climate finance architecture –** Climate finance that successfully addresses the specific needs of children ultimately requires intentionality in the design process. This could include the use of special modalities and Requests for Proposals to kickstart pipelines of projects with dual climate and child benefits. These projects need to address both the immediate reintegration needs of children as well as the root causes of child recruitment that are projected to be exacerbated by climate change. Other options include leveraging the convening power of the OSRSG CAAC to bring together diverse stakeholders across the HDP-N engaged in child reintegration activities with a specific aim of creating platforms for children affected by armed conflict and climate change. Such platforms could support exchange, innovation, and mainstreaming priorities into key partners' country-level programs to set goalposts for project development. Another important entry point for mainstreaming climate-related risks into child reintegration programs are National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The former is supported by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Green

Environmental Fund (GEF) and thus requires the OSRSG CAAC to engage in dialogue with those partners, while the latter could be done in collaborations with the UNDP.

| Term | Description |
|---|---|
| **NAP -** National Adaptation Plan | The national adaptation plan (NAP) process was established under the Cancun Adaptation Framework (CAF). It enables Parties to formulate and implement national adaptation plans (NAPs) as a means of identifying medium- and long-term adaptation needs and developing and implementing strategies and programmes to address those needs.[41] |
| **NDC -** Nationally Determined Contributions | Nationally determined contributions (NDCs) are at the heart of the Paris Agreement and the achievement of its long-term goals. NDCs embody efforts by each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.[42] |
| **GCF -** Green Climate Fund | The Green Climate Fund was established by 194 countries party to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2010. It is designed as an operating entity of the Convention's financial mechanism and is headquartered in the Republic of Korea.[43] |
| **GEF -** Global Environment Facility | The Global Environment Facility (GEF), established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, is a catalyst for action on the environment. Through its strategic investments, the GEF works with partners to tackle the planet's biggest environmental issues.[44] |

➢ **From accounting to accountability** – The most obvious solution to ameliorating data quality on reintegration financing is to encourage donors to increase and improve their reporting to the OECD DAC CRS and OCHA FTS databases. This could, for example, include increasing the level of detail in both project titles and project descriptions. Another solution is to engage in talks with the OECD and OCHA to introduce a child reintegration *marker* that can be applied across various CRS purpose codes and global humanitarian clusters. In turn, this would greatly increase knowledge on the subject, and allow stakeholders to gain a fuller understanding of the scale and scope for funding of child reintegration. As part of this process, the OSRSG CAAC should engage with partners across the HDP-N to establish good practices on how to track activities relating to children in armed conflict and CAAFAG, both through the OECD DAC CRS database as well as the OCHA FTS.

➢ **How to break silos -** Breaking the existing silos in programming and investment is dependent on overcoming **6 structural limitations**:

1. There are *disparate methodologies* deployed by partners with respect to development of theories of change, data capture and analysis. This undermines the ability to share lessons learnt and best practices.
2. *Short-term programming cycles* prevent partners from building on gains over time. Longer term, multi-year programming is needed to address systematically and comprehensively address the

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[41] UNFCCC, *National Adaptation Plans*, available at: https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/workstreams/national-adaptation-plans
[42] UNFCCC, *Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)*, available at: https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs
[43] UNEP, *Green Climate Fund,* available at: https://www.unep.org/about-un-environment/funding-and-partnerships/green-climate-fund
[44] UNEP. *Global Environment Facility*, available at: https://www.unep.org/about-un-environment/funding-and-partnerships/global-environment-facility

long-term drivers of child recruitment, as well as continue to meet shorter-term humanitarian needs.

3. *Competition over the same resources* creates a disincentive to working together. As prospective partners compete during resource mobilization processes, it is followed by an unwillingness to share data and other intellectual property.

4. *High staff turnover* exacerbates the challenges of coherent data collection mechanisms. In the current situation of inadequate data collection processes, operational experiences and lessons learnt are often lost when staff exit from their role.

5. *Inadequate investments* in coordination, communication and joint learning undermines the ability for partners to work together towards collective outcomes. Whilst the HDP-N encourages collective action to create progress, underinvestment/under prioritization of coordination, communication and learning frustrates the operationalization of activities spanning the HDP-N.

6. *Limited ownership* of local, national and regional counterparts results in local governance structures and institutions remaining weak despite investments. Capacity building and co-creation are urgently needed to ensure local entities are front and center of the development process.

➢ **Increasing local ownership** – Despite inadequate data on expenditures for child reintegration programming, there is also a dearth of data on national government spending for child reintegration. This requires the commission of new studies on national government spending on child reintegration by the countries on the CAAC agenda. It could include benchmarks of current successes and failures in regard to national government financing of child reintegration programmed specifically using the four conflict typologies outlined in this paper.
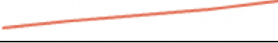
| State typologies | Child recruitment (2016-2020) | Performance of the long-term drivers of child recruitment | 9 main long-term drivers of recruitment | 8 main reintegration themes | Long-term drivers exacerbated by climate change (33 per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | I | II | III | IV | V |
| | | | | Prioritisation of the: | |
| Typology 1. Total state collapse with widespread conflict and insecurity | | Worse | Worse | Worse | Bad |
| Typology 2. Severely conflict affected | | Bad | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |
| Typology 3. Highly fragile but functional | | Bad | Bad | Bad | Bad |
| Typology 4. At risk | | Moderate | Bad | Bad | Bad |

**Diagram 7:** Recruitment trends, performance of the nine long-term drivers of child recruitment and prioritization, broken down by conflict typologies as reported in 266 planning frameworks

> **There is a significant correlation between state typologies, child recruitment trends, the prioritization of the mine long-term drivers of child recruitment and their performance -** More fragile countries (Typology 1) have higher recruitment trends, lower prioritization and worse performance of the long-term drivers of child recruitment. Less fragile countries (Typology 4) have lower recruitment, higher prioritization and better performance of the long-term drivers of child recruitment.

> **There is also a correlation between income levels and the prioritization of the long-term drivers of child recruitment**. Lower-income countries have a worse prioritization of the long-term drivers (73 per cent) than upper-middle income countries (79 per cent). See Table 5 below.

**Table 5:** Correlation between income levels and the prioritization of the long-term drivers of child recruitment, in key partner country strategies in 21 CAAC countries (broken down by typology)

| Income Levels | Prioritization in planning of the nine long-term drivers of child recruitment |
|---|---|
| Lower-income country 11 countries from Typology 1 (5 countries), Typology 2 (4 countries) and Typology 3 (2 countries) | Worse (73 %) |
| Lower-Middle income country 7 countries from Typology 3 (3 countries) and Typology 4 (4 countries) | Bad (74 %) |
| Upper-Middle income country 3 countries from Typology 3 (2 countries) and Typology 4 (1 country) | Moderate (79 %) |

> **The long-term drivers of child recruitment** are mainly prioritized by development-orientated partners, notably the EU (92 per cent), UNSDCF (86 per cent), IFIs (82 per cent) and National Development Plans (NDPs) (94 per cent). However, UNICEF (83 per cent) also has a relatively good prioritization of the long-term drivers of child recruitment.

**Top partners prioritizing the nine long-term drivers of child recruitment**

*Mainly development partners and UNICEF*

1. **EU** 92 per cent
2. **UNSDCF** 86 per cent
3. **UNICEF** 83 per cent
4. **IFIs** 83 per cent

> **The reintegration themes** are mainly prioritized by humanitarian-orientated partners, notably the UNICEF (42 per cent) and Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) (68 per cent). IFIs and Donors have poor prioritization of reintegration themes.

**Top partners prioritizing the eight reintegration themes**

*Mainly humanitarian partners*

1. **UNICEF** 42 per cent
2. **Humanitarian (HRP)** 68 per cent
3. **Regional organisations** 21 per cent
4. **EU** 20 per cent

> **Children affected by armed groups** are also mainly prioritized by humanitarian partners, notably UNICEF (89 per cent), Save the Children (75 per cent), World Vision (67 per cent) and Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) (68 per cent). They are poorly prioritized by development and peace partners. CAAFAG are also mainly prioritized by humanitarian partners, notably UNICEF (61 per cent), Save the Children (50 per cent) and Humanitarian Response Plans (52 per cent). They are never covered by NDCs.

> **There are discrepancies between the prioritization of the nine different long-term drivers of child recruitment.** Long-term drivers of child recruitment such as Governance (95 per cent), Livelihood opportunities (87 per cent) and Education (83 per cent) show high levels of prioritization. Long-term drivers of child recruitment such as Rule of Law (68 per cent), Social cohesion (54 per cent) and Agency (48 per cent) lower levels of prioritization.

> **Despite the effects of climate change on the long-term drivers of child recruitment** (33% are predicted to be exacerbated by climate change)[45], NDCs have a very low prioritization of reintegration themes (0 per cent), long-term drivers of recruitment (16 per cent) and key demographic groups (0 per cent).

> **More fragile countries are more at risk of climate change**. Moreover, more fragile countries, where children are already more vulnerable to climate change have a worse prioritization of the long-term drivers of child recruitment exacerbated by climate change, compared to more stable countries.

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**Top partners prioritizing the key demographics in planning**

*Mainly humanitarian partners*

| Children affected by armed groups | CAAFAG |
|---|---|
| 1. UNICEF 89 per cent | 1. UNICEF 61 per cent |
| 2. Save the children 75 per cent | 2. Save the Children 50 per cent |
| 3. World Vision 67 per cent | 3. EU 40 per cent |
| 4. HRPs 68 per cent | |
| 5. EU 60 per cent | |

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**SPOTLIGHT**

**Targeting both child reintegration and the long-term drivers of child recruitment – Lapis hindi Bala ("Pencil not Bullet"), Philippines, 2022-2025, Bangsamoro Authority**

This project simultaneously targets the long-term drivers of child recruitment and the reintegration themes. It aims to improve education and provide long-term programmes and livelihoods through renovating Madrasahs (Arabic Institutions), distributing bags with complete school kits to every Mortis (Student) and vulnerable children and providing cleaning materials, teaching kits and school equipment. Targeting education and livelihoods is also a way of improving the reintegration of children and this program simultaneously provides psychological support.

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[45] Calculations based on data from the IPCC and UNICEF'S CCRI.

# Recommendations

> **Engage in cooperation with stakeholders across the HDP-N to leverage the comparative advantages of different stakeholders** and ensure long-term and sustainable funding and approaches. This should address both the immediate reintegration needs of CAAFAG and the long-term drivers of recruitment and re-recruitment. Partnerships between stakeholders focused on reintegration themes and stakeholders focused on long-term drivers of recruitment should be explored.

> **Address definitional ambiguities regarding child reintegration and drivers of child recruitment (especially establishing that a child is anyone under 18 years)** to facilitate cooperation between actors across the HDP-N space. There is a need for a common approach related to definitions and a common theory of change transcending partner work across the HDP-N in line with child protection systems (i.e., focus on response and addressing root causes simultaneously). Work should be done with partners who already collect an abundance of data, such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Interviews with the Committee have shown that engaging with these partners to agree on common definitions can improve data streamlining and sharing.

> "It is important to have every partner agree on the age of a child."
> *- Interviewee*

> **Engage with partners that have a strong prioritization of the nine long-term drivers of child recruitment** especially, the EU, UN Country Teams, UNICEF and IFIs (92 per cent of the long-term drivers of child recruitment).

> **At a national level, increase cooperation and innovative financing between development and humanitarian plans to fill gaps in national planning frameworks.** These already have significant overlap in their prioritization of long-term drivers of child recruitment, but differences in their prioritization of reintegration themes and key demographic groups.

> "The government is often a key partner to making the HDP-Nexus work."
> *- Interviewee*

> **Leverage the current strategic priorities of national governments and their partners through more inclusive and holistic interventions**. Designing innovative interventions that bring together country and regional planning frameworks will ensure national ownership, alignment of national and international partners, and more effective achievement of development results. This alignment can then be used as a starting point for further action in new neglected areas, such as climate smart solutions.

> **Improve the climate and child focus intersectionality of partner planning frameworks.** There needs to be a greater intersection between climate change activities and the reintegration needs of children. For example, climate planning frameworks (NDCs) rarely cover the key demographic groups (children affected by armed conflict and CAAFAG) and could increase their focus on actively assisting these groups. On the other hand, humanitarian planning frameworks affecting children could work

better to improve their climate focus, which could also be a potential innovative financing source for reintegration activities.

> **Include the perspective of governments at a subnational level and national non-governmental stakeholders when assessing reintegration-related climate needs.** An inclusive and participatory approach is needed to ensure the pressing needs of communities are reflected in national climate strategies that also aim to tackle the root causes of recruitment. Close collaboration between national governments and the humanitarian and development sector in the design phase of national climate strategies can facilitate the incorporation of long-term drivers of recruitment in government priorities.

> **Increase the prioritization and financing of long-term drivers of recruitment exacerbated by climate change**, namely food insecurity, access to basic social services and jobs & livelihoods. These do not only have a poor prioritization and poor performance but are also expected to worsen as climate change becomes more prevalent.

## SPOTLIGHT

### Peacekeeping Operations –
### Extending Community Violence Reduction (CVR)
### in the Central African Republic

With its establishment in 2015, MINUSCA received a mandate to support the establishment and implementation of Community Violence Reduction programs. The mission, in partnership with IOM, soon operationalized this task through a pilot initiative funded by UN assessed funds/core budget. With the Peacebuilding Support Office supporting the program through the PBF from January 2016 on, activities in Paoua, Bambari and Bangui were scaled up significantly. The success of these projects in reducing violence at the community-level have triggered catalytic funding from large donors such as the European Union and the World Bank. This increased the scope and sustainability of the program, which is guided by the national government, and includes a national strategy, ensuring cohesion and national ownership of the efforts. At the same time, CVR helped advancing the women, peace and security agenda by including their voices in the design of bottom-up responses to violence. Thirty-nine per cent of the 4,014 CVR beneficiaries in CAR in the 2019-2020 budget cycle were female. This case study shows how a peacekeeping operation can kickstart processes through seed funding and how PBSO can follow to nurture broader peacebuilding and sustaining peace initiatives.

# Conclusions

## Context

❖ **Number Rising –** Child recruitment and use, and conflict, have both increased significantly between 2016 and 2020. Recruitment increased by 13 per cent since 2019 and conflict increased by 20 per cent. Recruitment of girls increased by 185% between 2016 and 2020.[46]

❖ **Four Threat Multipliers -** Recruitment is expected to grow exponentially because of the effects of a quadruple threat on the drivers of child recruitment: climate change, the Ukraine crisis and food insecurity post COVID-19 recovery and a possible global economic recession. In this regard, 3 of the 9 root causes of child recruitment are expected to be severely impacted by climate change. [47]

❖ **Correlation between State typologies, child recruitment trends and tackling the nine long-term drivers of child recruitment** - The most fragile countries also have the highest child recruitment trends, and the worst performance on addressing the nine long-term drivers of child recruitment. There is also a correlation between income levels, with lower-income countries having the highest child recruitment trends and the worst performance on addressing the nine long-term drivers of child recruitment.

## Strategies

❖ **Varying Definitions –** Among the partner planning frameworks reviewed, there was no consistent list of definitions used (notably "child" and "youth"). As such, strategies will have inconsistent inclusion of children, making assessment more difficult. It will be important to address definitional ambiguities regarding child reintegration and the long-term drivers of child recruitment to facilitate cooperation between actors across the HDP-N space.

❖ **Partner planning frameworks have comparative advantages in term of prioritization -** The 9 long-term drivers of child recruitment are mainly addressed by development-oriented partners. However, UNICEF, which straddles that divide, also prioritizes some of the long-term drivers of child recruitment in its overall work. The 8 reintegration themes are mainly prioritized by humanitarian-oriented partners, in various humanitarian response plans, and by UNICEF. IFIs and donors generally have poor prioritization of the 8 reintegration themes.

## Financing Landscape

❖ **Gaps between reintegration needs and available financing**– Current financing for child reintegration, largely humanitarian and peace funding, does not meet the needs of children that are

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[46] UNSG Annual Reports on Children and Armed Conflict, 2016-2020

[47] Calculations based on UNICEF Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI), IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, as well as 27 research papers on why children join armed groups in 21 CAAC countries

expected to grow exponentially in the coming two decades. Whilst humanitarian funding dedicated to child reintegration has increased by 791 per cent since 2016, it still does not meet the reintegration needs of children. Humanitarian funding in general increased at a greater pace, by 1,208 per cent, but left a 75 per cent funding gap in 2021 of USD 256 million. From funding from peace and security sources, money for child reintegration activities[48] has been diminishing since 2012. This gap is expected to become exponentially worse due to the quadruple-treat of climate change, the post COVD-19 recovery, the war in Ukraine and food insecurity and a possible global recession.

> "The best approach to funding is mixed source funding, to ensure continuity and responsiveness"
> *– Interviewee*

❖ **Innovation in financing –** Despite alarming funding gaps for child reintegration through usual sources, there are emerging opportunities to leverage other financing modalities. The use of philanthropic financing, which is more long-term and flexible, has proven effective for some. Also, the use of humanitarian funding to address both immediate child reintegration humanitarian needs as well as the longer-term drivers of child recruitment has also been used but on a very small scale. In the period under review, development, peace and climate financing have all seen an uptick in available resources. These longer-term financing instruments have the potential to provide more sustainable financial resources to fill the increasing reintegration financing gap, while simultaneously tackling the longer-term drivers of child recruitment.

> "Humanitarian funding on its own is not enough to solve the problem."
> *– Interviewee*

❖ **Blended financing means sharing more and better data -** As evidenced by the research, no amount of blended finance can make up for a weak enabling environment characterized by silo mentalities and competition for limited resources. Ramping up blended financing instruments is predicated on the ability of stakeholders engaged across the HDP-N to work better together at the national and international level. Cooperation means more joint analysis, and harmonized data collection which requires collective investment and a common theory of change. Many interviewees mentioned that the lack of data leads to a lack of accountability. However, despite this, there are anecdotal experiences of good data sharing across partners, including government. The most opportune solution to inadequate data on financing for child reintegration is to encourage donors to increase and refine their reporting to the OECD DAC CRS and OCHA FTS databases. This could include increasing the level of detail in both project titles and project descriptions. Another solution is to engage in talks with the OECD and OCHA to introduce a child reintegration *marker* that can be applied across various CRS purpose codes and global humanitarian clusters. In turn, this will greatly increase the accuracy of the findings employed in this chapter, and allow stakeholders engaged across the HDP-N to gain a fuller understanding of the scale of funding for child reintegration in CAAC countries. As part of this process, the OSRSG CAAC should engage with HDP partners to establish

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[48] Flows towards child reintegration are captured through the OECD DAC CRS purpose code 15261: "Child soldiers" (prevention and demobilization).

best practices on how to track humanitarian activities relating to children in armed conflict and CAAFAG, both through the OECD DAC CRS database as well as the OCHA FTS.

❖ **More inclusive data for a comprehensive picture** – The most vulnerable children need to be deliberately counted when data is collected. Only then can services be provided to them and the full range of child experiences taken into account in planning. Reintegration programming should also reach out to these groups and include the design of disability-specific, gender-specific and age-specific solutions for children who are often less likely to be counter. A practical and needed first step would be to ensure that there are adequate numbers of child protection officials and workers who can be trained in national structures for eventual deployment. Communities should also be involved and a cadre of local child protection experts, who would receive relevant training, could help ensure that all children are counted and planned for in reintegration and other programming.

# Next steps

The challenges to push a system of international assistace that has existed for decades to evolve are numerous. Humanitarian and development funding in particular have been kept separate for a number of reasons that no longer make sense in today's world in a vast of circumstances, it has just become the default. Such evolution also creates an enormous opportunity to make funding more fit-for-purpose and futureproof, and incentivizes actors to work better together.

A primary challenge will be to address siloed implementation and disparate data collection and analysis methodologies. The research revealed that there were few consistent definitions used between implementers and even fewer metrics with which to assess progress and success. However, with pooled funding and shared goals, the hurdles will be smaller and the incentives greater. There is a need now for a common approach related to key definitions and a common theory of change transcending partner work across the HDP nexus and in line with child protection practices.

The Report indicates that a sea change is needed in regard to funding for child reintegration and other issues that have the capacity to effect real change at a macro level and break cycles of conflict. One of the key recommendations from the report is to have **five pilot projects** that would test out new ways of working and collaborating at the country level over five years. This would be predicated on the establishment of a pooled fund or other innovative funding mechanism, and the creation of a shared matrix of common theories of change to which all stakeholders aspire to achieve. The idea is to demonstrate the funding coming from sources across the HDP-N are needed in order the best serve these children. The idea is *not* to create burdensome new projects or parallel structures, but rather to "join up" existing efforts to cover the continuum of care, and fill the gaps where necessary in order to test the methodology.

To lay out the end goals more clearly, below is a graph to demonstrate what the pilots would hope to achieve.

| Situation today | Possible situation in future |
|---|---|
| Different goals for programs and projects | Common theory of change that focuses on addressing child reintegration needs while maintaining focus on drivers of recruitment and re-recruitment, hence prevention |
| Disparate measurement tools and markers | Common metrics that promote cooperation among partners across the HDP Nexus |
| Overreliance on short-term and unpredictable humanitarian funding for child reintegration projects | Continuum of care for children over 3-5 years – maximising impact of humanitarian funding |
| Short-term programs that do not address the long-term needs of children | Blend of short- and long-term financing to ensure continuity of care and sustainability of results |
| Poor communication and coordination between actors engaged in child reintegration | Increased number of and more cohesion amongst implementers, and amongst funders |
| Siloed interventions by key partners engaged in child reintegration | Demonstrating a Proof of Concept for bridging the HDP nexus, which can have implications for many other programmes |
| No room for error or failure, difficult to test new ideas | A process that builds in learning in safe and adaptable ways, and a system to capture them and share |

## Piloting new concepts

Currently, innovative financing to leverage better outcomes for former CAAFAG and other children in conflict is recognized as needed, but there are differing ideas on what would work best, and where. Using **adaptive learning and management**, it is recommended that pilot projects are needed to apply these findings and recommendations in real-world situations to develop good practices. An iterative process in which it would be safe to try new ways of working and one that encouraged learning would keep programs relevant and maximally effective.

This research points to the need for piloting new ideas in a collective fashion, and across the HDP-N. As pilots, it will be important to garner the broadest representative sample so that numerous variables could be tested. The first phase of the project encompasses countries from 1) the four conflict typologies identified in the research, 2) different geographic regions and 3) different economic statuses. The idea is to test out a unifying theory of change that would assist stakeholders on the ground in their future work on child reintegration, and potentially other issues if the new cross-HDP-N model were to work. With that in mind, five countries have been highlighted that meet these criteria: Central African Republic, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Philippines, and Iraq.

The countries were chosen because they span all four conflict typologies, are geographically representative of CAAC countries and have various income levels. They were also chosen because they are countries that show signs of political willingness to address the CAAFAG issue, and also have the presence of reintegration partners who are engaged across the HDP-N.

| Pilot country | Conflict typology | Country Income level | Geographic region |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Central African Republic** | Typology 1 - Total state collapse with widespread conflict | Low-income | Sub-Saharan Africa |
| **Democratic Republic of Congo** | Typology 2 - Severely conflict affected | | |
| **Iraq** | Typology 3 - Highly fragile but functional | Upper-middle income | Middle East |
| **Philippines** | Typology 4 - At risk | Lower middle-income | Asia |
| **Colombia** | | Upper middle-income | South America |

The next step in putting together such a project will be to consult with various stakeholders and develop common aims that the project hopes to achieve. A central coordinating body will oversee the project to ensure its original mandate is achieved, but decisions on programming and project spends will be taken by stakeholders on the ground in the five countries. A knowledge management unit will also be established to collect, analyze and share back lessons with the pilots as the project progresses. At the end of the five years, it is hoped that significant knowledge will have been gained regarding the utility of various financing mechanisms and modalities in certain contexts, and that a raft of new actors from across the HDP-N would have joined together in efforts to provide these children and their communities with the most effective reintegration support possible.

## Parting Words

In conclusion, the challenge of reintegrating children affected by armed conflict requires a multifaceted approach that involves diverse stakeholders and a range of strategies. While efforts to reintegrate children are essential, it is equally important to focus on preventing their recruitment and use in the first place. This requires a sustained effort to address the root causes of armed conflict, such as poverty, inequality, and lack of basic services.

Finding better and more diverse sources of funding is crucial for sustainable reintegration programs that can meet the needs of children and their communities. It is important to ensure that funding is available not just for immediate needs but also for long-term support, such as education and livelihood opportunities, which are critical for successful reintegration.

Finally, successful child reintegration requires close collaboration among humanitarians, development actors, and peace and security actors to support national and local governments and communities. By working together, reintegration programs will be more responsive to the unique needs of children affected by armed conflict and are implemented in a coordinated and effective manner.

Child reintegration is a complex and multifaceted challenge that requires a comprehensive approach. By working across pillars with better and more diverse sources of funding, focusing on prevention, and ensuring that stakeholders work together, we can help ensure that children affected by armed conflict have a chance to heal, recover, and rebuild their lives.

# ANNEXES

## Eight child reintegration themes[49]

1. **Alternative care:** These refer to arrangements, whether temporary or permanent, that may be required to support and protect children in the absence of normal family support structures. Arrangements in this regard should be consistent with UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children[50].

2. **Apprenticeships and vocational training**: For older children and youth, a return to formal education may not be possible. In such cases opportunities to undertake vocational training activities, including skills training and apprenticeships may provide appropriate alternatives. However, it is important that these activities are suited to local conditions and markets, and in line with national legislation on minimum working age and safe working conditions. In addition to technical training, the inclusion of life skills training and mentoring are helpful in promoting social reintegration.

3. **Community support:** Engagement with communities is vital for all aspects of support to reintegration and prevention. Working with communities to help them better understand why children might join armed forces and groups, explain the developmental effects of child recruitment, and identify how to protect children and support those who return and are being reintegrated.

4. **Education:** Education in this context is usually referring to formal education which may include primary, secondary, or tertiary levels. For children a return to education is often a critical component of enabling their successful transition and reintegration. Evidence suggests that the higher a child's level of education, the more likely his/her reintegration is to succeed. To support education efforts, it is sometimes necessary to set up "catch up" arrangements including basic literacy.

5. **Family tracing:** Family tracing is the process through which children are reunited with their families and communities whenever possible and in their best interest. It is not simply a matter of returning a child to his or her family, but requires preparation, mediation, and follow-up. It should be based on the guidance in the [Inter Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children](.).

6. **Livelihoods:** Attaining or reattaining a sustainable livelihood is an important component of both social and economic reintegration. In any environment impacted by conflict this can be a complex process but particularly so for those who have been involved in armed groups who may lack skills (see vocational training below) or may face stigma. For children this may be further complicated by issues related to age entry into the labor market etc.

7. **Mental health & psycho-social support:** Psychosocial support usually refers to the actions that address both psychological and social needs of individuals, families, and communities. It should support and promote the restoration of social cohesion and infrastructure. The IDDRS standards state that mental health and psychosocial support activities should build on children's natural resilience and family and community support mechanisms and encourage coping and positive development. (see IDDRS Module 5.20).

8. **Participation:** Being recognized, accepted, respected, and heard in the community is an important part of any reintegration process. This can be a complex issue for children in general and sometimes

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[49] For a detailed description of the themes, see Glossary.

[50] https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/673583?ln=en

especially for those who have been associated with armed groups. Reintegration support should strive to generate capacities for participation in civilian life and decision making and ensuring opportunities for participation can also be an important component of prevention efforts. Particular attention needs to be paid to groups who may be the most excluded from decision making processes and gender aspects of participation should be considered (adapted from IDDRS Module 5.20).

# Nine long-term drivers of child recruitment[51]

1. **Access to basic social services (including health):** Ability to access basic social services offered and guaranteed by authorities to assure the well-being of populations. Basic services include education (although its own area), healthcare (including HIV/AIDS and malaria control), Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).
2. **Agency:** Strongly related to Amartya Sen's capabilities approach. It focuses on peoples 'capacities' to make choices (including their hopes and aspirations for the future) as well as their ability to act upon those choices (resources). Key indicators include Civic liberties (personal integrity rights, impartial enforcement, private and political liberties) as well as economic well-being.
3. **Education:** Access to different levels of education (primary, secondary, etc.) and trends impacting the educational sector, enabling better access or disrupting it. Education is strongly correlated with demography and economic transitions facilitating a migration to higher-value jobs in the industry and service-sectors. Key indicators include 'early childhood education', primary education, secondary education, literacy rates, etc.
4. **Food insecurity:** Related to initiatives with the aim of preventing food insecurity, including both development interventions strengthening food production but also humanitarian food aid.
5. **Governance:** Refers to formal governance structures and institutions and the management of those. It also considers the ability of authorities to govern a specific territory. It considers all types of governance: economic, political, and social. Examples are public policies (macroeconomic policies, public finance management, anti-corruption, revenue mobilization) and local governance.
6. **Livelihood opportunities:** Existence of economic opportunities that guarantee the ability to generate revenue covering basic needs. Indicators include unemployment rates. Also includes the impact of climate change on certain livelihoods (such as farming and pastoralism).
7. **Marginalization:** Strongly related to social cohesion, it encompasses the existence of marginalized populations and systemic discriminations involving specific parts of the population, based on gender, ethnicity, political and economic characteristics. Indicators include gender inequality, existence of ethnically motivated conflict, economic inequalities and purposeful exclusion policies.
8. **Rule of law:** A well-functioning judicial apparatus, exercising within a codified structures allowing citizens to access impartial and efficient judicial proceedings for settlement of disputes and other matters. It includes legal and judicial development (justice, law and order, prisons, police, etc.).
9. **Social cohesion:** Refers to the strength of relationships and the sense of solidarity between groups. Social cohesion exists at 2 levels: Horizontal (between groups, e.g., displaced communities and host communities to prevent non-state conflicts from emerging) and vertical (between individuals and the state/institutions/authorities to prevent inter-state conflicts).

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[51] For a detailed description of the themes, see Glossary in Chapter 2: Methodology.

## Child Reintegration Partners engaged across the HDP-N (partial list)

| Partner | | Humanitarian | Development | Peace |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| IFIs | World Bank | | X | X |
| | IMF | | X | |
| | Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) | | X | |
| | Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) | | X | |
| | African Development Bank (AfDB) | | X | |
| | Asian Development Bank (ADB) | | X | |
| Regional organizations | African Union | | X | X |
| | ECOWAS | | X | |
| | ECCAS | | X | |
| | EAC | | X | X |
| | LCBC | | X | X |
| | ASEAN | | X | X |
| | Allianza del Pacifico | | X | |
| | EU | | X | X |
| | European Commission | X | X | X |
| | European External Action Service (EEAS) | | X | |
| UN | UNICEF | X | X | |
| | UNSDCF | | X | |
| | Dept of Peace Operations (DPO) – DDR | | | X |
| | Dept of Peace Operations (DPO) – DPET | | | X |
| | UN Committee on the Rights of the Child | X | | |
| | UNDP | | X | |
| | UNFPA | | X | |
| | UNICRI | | X | X |
| | UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) | | | X |
| | UNODC | | X | |
| NGOs | Save the children (STC)[12] | X | | |
| | War Child UK | X | | |
| | International Rescue Commission (IRC) | X | | |
| | World Vision | X | | |
| | Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) | X | | |
| | Geneva Call | X | | |
| | King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre | X | | |
| | All Survivors Project | X | | |
| | Human Rights Watch | X | | |
| | Plan International | X | | |
| | Watchlist of Children and Armed Conflict | X | | |
| | Whitaker Peace and Development Initiative | X | | |
| National govts[52] | | X | X | X |
| Research | UN University | X | X | X |
| | Colombia University | X | X | X |

[52] This includes relevant CAAC stakeholders from 21 CAAC countries as well as representatives from donor countries such as the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Luxembourg Ministry for Development Cooperation.

# Glossary of terms

**Child:** Every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.[53]

**Children associated with armed forces or armed groups (CAAFAG):** Any person below 18 years of age who is or who has been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys and girls, used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes.[54]

**Child life-cycle approach:** Accounting for the changing needs of children, which evolve during different stages of their lives. For example, the deprivations will be different for a 9-month-old infant than for a 14-year-old adolescent. This requires giving children at least five years of support. [55]

**Child protection:** The prevention of and response to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence against children.[56]

**Child protection system:** "Certain formal and informal structures, functions and capacities that have been assembled to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children. A child protection system is generally agreed to be comprised of the following components: human resources, finance, laws and policies, governance, monitoring and data collection as well as protection and response services and care management. It also includes different actors – children, families, communities, those working at sub-national or national level and those working internationally. Most important are the relationships and interactions between and among these components and these actors within the system. It is the outcomes of these interactions that comprise the system."[57]

**Child reintegration**: The process through which children transition into civil society and enter meaningful roles and identities as civilians who are accepted by their families and communities in a context of local and national reconciliation. Sustainable reintegration is achieved when the political, legal, economic and social conditions needed for children to maintain life, livelihood and dignity have been secured. This process aims to ensure that children can access their rights, including formal and non-formal education, family unity, dignified livelihoods and safety from harm.[58]

**Dual prevention and reintegration response:** To effectively break the cycle of recruitment, programs targeting children associated with armed forces or groups focus on both, addressing short-term reintegration of the affected children as well as addressing the long-term drivers of child recruitment to prevent future re-recruitment.

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[53] See Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), article 1.

[54] The Paris Principles (2007): The principles and guidelines on children associated with armed forces or armed groups. Available at https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/The-Paris-Principles-En-1.pdf

[55] UNICEF Iraq CO (2011). Concept, Methodology and Next Steps for Child-Centred Equity Analysis.

[56] Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2019 Edition.

[57] United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2021). Child Protection Systems Strengthening.

[58] The Paris Principles (2007): The principles and guidelines on children associated with armed forces or armed groups. Available at https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/The-Paris-Principles-En-1.pdf.

**Eight short-term child reintegration themes:** Family Tracing, Participation, Livelihoods, Education, Apprenticeship and Vocational training, Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), Community support and Alternative Care.[59]

**'Handshake' between partners:** The cooperation between various partners, stakeholders, and donors across the HDP-N, to address common goals.

**Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDP-N):** Term used to capture the interlinkages between the humanitarian, development, and peace sectors. It specifically refers to attempts in these fields to work together to meet peoples' needs more effectively, mitigate risks and vulnerabilities, and move toward sustainable peace.[60] In the context of child reintegration, it consists of bridging the gap between short term humanitarian financing and projects and long-term development financing and projects, through capacity building and cooperation, to ensure a sustainable approach to child reintegration. This is strongly linked to the dual prevention and reintegration response.

**Income Group:** This typology includes three categories: "Lower Income Countries" (10 countries), "Lower Middle-Income Countries" (6 countries) and "Upper Middle-Income Countries" (3 countries).[61]

**Nine long-term drivers of child recruitment:** Governance, social cohesion, food insecurity, access to basic social services, livelihood opportunities, education, rule of law, agency, marginalization.[62]

**Recruitment:** Compulsory, forced and voluntary conscription or enlistment of children into any kind of armed force or armed group.[63]

**State typology:** This typology includes four categories: "Total state collapse with widespread conflict and insecurity" (5 countries), "Severely conflict affected" (4 countries), "Highly fragile but functional" (7 countries) and "At risk" (5 countries).[64]

**Three long-term drivers of child recruitment exacerbated by climate change:** Food insecurity, Access to basic social services and Livelihood opportunities.

## Financial terms

**Challenge funds:** Challenge funds can be defined as cost-sharing grant schemes designed to challenge the private sector or civil society to propose innovative new models to address a particular issue, usually on a replicable and sustainable basis.

**Child reintegration finance:** Financial flows that specifically target the reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and groups. A specific focus is on the eight short-term child reintegration themes.

**Climate-related development finance (CRDF):** Bilateral development finance that targets climate objectives, tracked through the OECD DAC Rio Markers. The Rio markers provide an indication of the degree of mainstreaming of climate considerations into development co-operation portfolios. It has a

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[59] For a detailed description of the themes, see Glossary in Chapter 2: Methodology.

[60] UNSG High Level Panel on Internal Displacement (2020). The Triple Nexus (H-D-P) and Implications for Durable Solutions to Internal Displacement.

[61] For a detailed list of the 21 countries across the three income groups, see Chapter 2 Methodology; Based on the World Bank classification available at https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519;

[62] For a detailed description of the themes, see Glossary in Chapter 2: Methodology.

[63] The Paris Principles (2007): The principles and guidelines on children associated with armed forces or armed groups. Available at https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/The-Paris-Principles-En-1.pdf.

[64] For a detailed list of the 21 countries across the three income groups, see table; Global Coalition for Reintegration of Child Soldiers (2019). *Financing Support for Child Reintegration*. Available online: https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Financing-Aug14REV.pdf

three-tier scoring system: **Principal** (2) when the objective (climate change mitigation or adaptation) is explicitly stated as fundamental in the design of, or the motivation for, the activity. **Significant** (1) when the objective (climate change mitigation or adaptation) is explicitly stated but it is not the fundamental driver or motivation for undertaking it and **Not targeted/climate components** (0) meaning that the activity was examined but found not to target the objective (climate change mitigation or adaptation) in any significant way. The Rio markers apply to activities as a whole, and in marking the full value of the activities the markers are considered descriptive rather than strictly quantitative.

**Foreign direct investment (FDI):** Net inflows of investment to acquire a lasting management interest (10 percent or more of voting stock) in an enterprise operating in an economy other than that of the investor.[65]

**Impact bonds:** Impact bonds use money from private investors to finance programs, who in turn earn a return if the program is successful, paid by a third-party (often private) donor.

**Innovative financing:** Several definitions to innovative financing exist. At its core, innovative financing involves a wide range of mechanisms to (a) use existing resources in innovate ways to increase impact, (b) access new sources of finance. It is defined by the OECD as mechanisms for raising funds or stimulating actions in support of international development that go beyond traditional spending approaches and share the following characteristics: 1) official sector involvement; 2) cross-border transfer of resources to developing countries; 3) mobilize additional finance; and 4) are operational.[66]

**Innovative delivery modalities (financing delivery architecture):** The ways in which innovative financing is leveraged, to provide more long-term efficient and reliable financing. These innovative delivery modalities include Challenge Funds, Pooled Funds, Impact bonds and the UN Peacebuilding fund.

**OCHA FTS:** database for humanitarian funding flows between donors (government and private) and operational humanitarian actors (UN agencies, the Red Cross Movement, NGOs and CSOs).[67]

**OECD DAC CRS database:** Databased used to track ODA flows from Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member countries.[68]

**Official development assistance (ODA):** government aid designed to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries. Loans and credits for military purposes are excluded. Aid may be provided bilaterally, from donor to recipient, or channeled through a multilateral development agency such as the United Nations or the World Bank. Aid includes grants, "soft" loans and the provision of technical assistance.[69]

**Pooled funds:** Pooled funds aggregate, or 'pool', funds from a diversity of donors into one large portfolio.[70]

**Protection - Child protection cluster:** Child Protection is an Area of Responsibility (AoR) within the Global Protection Cluster. As the designated Lead Agency for the Child Protection AoR, UNICEF coordinates the Child Protection AoR and is also the Provider of Last Resort. With the CP AoR strategy, the CP AoR aims to ensure the efforts of national and international humanitarian actors to protect children are well coordinated, achieving maximum quality and impact.[71]

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[65] The World Bank Group (WBG). (n/d). Metadata Glossary.

[66] OECD (2014) Development Cooperation Report.

[67] Financial Tracking Service (2022). Humanitarian aid contributions.

[68] OECD (n/d). Annex – Creditor Reporting System (CRS) Profile.

[69] OECD (2022). Net ODA.

[70] Investopedia (2022). *What Are Pooled Funds?*

[71] Global Protection Cluster (2022). *Child Protection*.

**Remittances:** Sum of personal transfers and compensation of employees sent by migrants to relatives or friends in their home country.[72]

**Traditional financing:** Funding from traditional partners, namely governments and institutional partners. In the case of financing for child reintegration, the main sources of traditional financing are humanitarian and peace financing.

**UN Peacebuilding Fund:** The UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund is the organization's financial instrument to sustain peace in countries or situations at risk or affected by violent conflict. It invests with UN entities, governments, regional organizations, multilateral banks, national multi-donor trust funds or civil society organizations.[73]

# Data collection limitations

The report consistently tackled three cross-cutting methodological limitations:

**First** - The quality and availability of financial data was poor. At times even when they did exist partners were not able to share them due to restrictions employed to safeguard beneficiaries and partners.

**Second** - Systemic flaws such as multiple definitions employed by partners often resulted in no common rules for aggregating and analyzing data.

**Third** - There are a myriad of theories of change employed by the CAAC related to addressing child reintegration needs and breaking the cycles of recruitment.

To help mitigate these data limitations and triangulate and validate, the research employed multiple data points gleaned from past and ongoing partner work and research. This included combining qualitative and quantitative data available through online and internal partner sources. Specifically, the findings were validated based on insights gleaned from 60+ interviews with representatives from stakeholders engaged in child reintegration across policy, program and research spheres in the 21 countries.

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