



# Capacity Building Adaptations During Covid-19: Case Studies



**THE ALLIANCE**  
FOR CHILD PROTECTION  
IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

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# Introduction

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The Learning and Development Working Group of the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action is pleased to present this collection of case studies which identify promising practices and innovative ways to provide remote skills-building opportunities in the context of COVID-19.

The examples highlight how child protection practitioners have adjusted traditional approaches to training to meet the capacity building needs of frontline workers, youth and caregivers within the constraints posed by the pandemic.

Our thanks to all the individuals and organisations who have shared their own knowledge and experiences, in support of this opportunity for capacity sharing. We are particularly grateful for the honest sharing of both challenges faced, and recommendations to others looking to adapt their capacity building during Covid-19, which strongly support peer learning and the development of new capacity building initiatives.

# Summary of recommendations

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Each of the case studies in this collection includes reflections and recommendations for others who may be adapting capacity building to remote approaches. A summary of the recommendations made is as follows:

## Consider your context and your audience:

- Where possible, select technology which is already familiar and easily available to your target participants.
- Decide whether live or self-paced sessions are most appropriate for your audience. If delivering live sessions, carefully consider the most appropriate timing and make this clear well in advance, as well as through regular reminders.
- Deliver the sessions to smaller groups, to ease the full participation of all group members.

## Plan ahead!

- Invest time in working out the structure of your approach before you start designing the content. This will save time in the longer run.
- Allow time to develop and contextualize your remote capacity building.
- Consider language and translation needs from the beginning, and factor in time for testing in other languages, especially when using new technology.

## Engage your facilitators:

- Ensure a minimum of two facilitators in your WhatsApp group, online session or program. This will help to ensure participants are engaged and supported throughout.
- Train your facilitators in how to use your chosen platform, and how to support participants to use it to its full potential.

## Keep it simple:

- Streamline and prioritize your content: reduce the number of topics. Involve your target audience in prioritizing topics.
- Simplify messages so they are clear, short and succinct.
- Keep video and audio files short (under 3 minutes), especially if they will be shared to mobile devices.
- Signpost to additional content and resources. Do not try to cover everything at once.

# Acronyms

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CPHA -Child Protection in Humanitarian Action

CSO - Civil Society Organization

CPWG - Child Protection Working Group

HRS - Hurras Network

INEE - Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies

SC - Save the Children

UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

WCH - War Child Holland

WV - World Vision

CP - Child Protection

CPIE - Child Protection in Emergencies

EIE - Education in Emergencies

GBV - Gender Based Violence

PwV - Parenting without Violence

CSI - Caregiver Support Initiative

SM - Social Mobilizers

BLP - Blended Learning program



## AVSI Foundation, Lebanon, Life Skills Programming, via WhatsApp

AVSI, a non-profit organization founded in 1972, implements development and humanitarian aid projects in 33 countries, including Italy. AVSI's vision is to work for a world where the person is the protagonist of his own integral development and that of his community, even in crisis and emergency contexts. In 2019, AVSI helped more than five million people in need, including 23,872 children, through the Distance Support Program.

### Description of capacity building need and context

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In March 2020, due to the lockdown measures imposed by the Government of Lebanon (GoL) to contain the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), most of the field activities carried out by the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP\*) partners have been put on hold.

To adapt to the evolving situation and respond to the emerging psychosocial needs of the vulnerable youth, AVSI decided to propose an online Life Skills course. The pilot initially targeted youths who previously took face-to-face Life Skills courses with AVSI, having in mind how important and helpful it can be to refresh their knowledge on these skills during this specific period.

\* The LCRP is a joint plan between the Government of Lebanon and its international and national partners. It aims to respond to Lebanon's situation and challenges in a holistic, comprehensive and integrated manner through longer term, multi-year planning.

Given the need to react quickly, AVSI relied on its extensive organizational experience and on some articles, highlighting youths' needs during this pandemic to design the content.

In this framework, AVSI decided to prioritize their responses to the youths' needs of:

- Creating opportunities to talk to someone from another network than their immediate family;
- Engaging in developmental activities to help pass the time while confined at home;
- Focusing on known strengths (self-awareness) and discovering other strengths that can support them to face the unusual, current situation;
- Thinking about their emotions and how important it is to recognize them;
- Discussing the stresses of the current situation; that is, how they feel on a physical level and on a psychological level, how this affects their behaviors and how they can manage it in a healthy way;
- Thinking about time management and how to use their time efficiently;
- Thinking about their network of relationships; for instance, how their communication processes are challenged by the context of physical distancing and how important it is to be empathetic to continue communicating effectively, including answering others' needs and not reacting;
- Developing problem-solving and decision-making skills, particularly for use during the current situation; and
- Finally, reviewing each person's resilience to overcome this period in a positive way.

By participating in this distance learning Life Skills path, youths will be able to:

- Refresh and/or discover life skills in an engaging and active way;
- Deepen their knowledge about themselves, their capacities, their resources, their attitudes and their behaviors;
- Practice essential competencies to cope with and manage stressful circumstances; and
- Connect with others, having a chance to communicate, through this path, with peers they cannot see or interact with in person, and with a facilitator.

## Capacity building adaptation

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Delivering online learning courses for youths between 15 and 25 years old was quite a challenge: some youths had never experienced distance learning and/or lacked devices that allowed them to properly follow courses. Some also may have had low digital literacy and/or limited connectivity since electricity wasn't always available, and internet data packages were not always affordable. In this context where a proper educational

platform (i.e., Microsoft teams) was not accessible, using social media applications and/or communication applications became part of the solution.

Since WhatsApp was a very commonly used application between youths, was already installed on their devices and something with which they were already familiar, it was chosen as the solution to facilitate this e-course. The design was done in a way to maximize the youths' engagement in terms of both timing and reflecting and thinking about themselves.

Building the tool was a team effort that engaged all five Life Skills facilitators in AVSI Lebanon with the child protection specialist, from choosing the key messages of each session to the design of each activity. The design phase took a month and a half. As for youths' engagement, Life Skills officers contacted youths who previously took Life Skills courses. After having received the consent of 128 youths, these youths referred 38 who had never attended any Life Skills courses as well. They were siblings, relatives or neighbors interested in being part of this e-course. Common days and times available were coordinated with them. The frequency of sessions was set usually for three non-consecutive sessions per week.

An innovative and mixed modality was adopted. During the day of each session, at a precise time, the facilitator would send an introduction message to the youth group along with a visual support (picture or video) and an instruction, allowing them to think for themselves about the topic/skill to be discussed during the session. This was the "offline part" since youths were not interacting with each other but were seeing the material individually, at their convenience.

During the afternoon, at a scheduled time, the online portion of the session would begin during which all youths were connected on their phone. The interaction on the WhatsApp group happened through:

- Audio sharing
- Emoticons sharing
- Taking and sending pictures of exercises completed

The content was adapted mainly from the *Facilitator's Manual for Life Skills* published by AVSI in 2017, with inputs from the *Positive Leadership Module* and the *Positive Employability Module* published by UNICEF and SERRANO99. Since all the Life Skills facilitators were already familiar with these resources, no additional training was needed at this stage.

In terms of related costs, it was important to distribute internet recharge cards for participants to ensure they were able to access the content.

## Challenges and mitigation measures

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Life Skills programs usually need a high degree of interaction and sharing of each other's opinions, views and ways of thinking to enable learning that is grounded in experience.

An online setting imposes restrictions on participation first through lack of electricity, internet costs and network unreliability. For the internet accessibility barriers, it was possible to address this issue through distributing internet recharge cards for some groups of participants. As for the network inaccessibility during the time of the session, participants were able – even if they weren't participating during the “online part” – to review the content (the audios/pictures/emoticons that were sent) on the WhatsApp group conversations once they were connected again.

On the other hand, the online setting cannot guarantee a full interaction and a real group dynamic/teamwork for exercises during the course. Indeed, even if youths are there with their phones attending the session, the interaction is still limited since they are not on a phone call or a video call. They are only hearing the audio messages sent by the group's facilitator, answering them by registering their own audios and sending them back. The facilitator takes the time to hear everyone's audio and so does every participant in order to hear peers' audios. According to the activity proposed, there might be pictures and emoticons shared by each participant with the audios. In this scenario, participant interaction is limited to listening to audio (with no possibility of seeing each other's non-verbal communications or having a real-time conversation or doing any kind of group exercise).

This significant challenge was partially mitigated by the facilitator's presence and skills. He/She was asked to revise all the answers sent during the offline part, to always be present during the online part, to already have pre-defined recorded audios prepared that included explanations and/or the key messages and to place maximum attention on the youths' inputs.

## Conclusions and recommendations

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Life Skills are psychosocial skills helping children develop their resources and build their resilience. These skills will allow youths to:

- Think about their own attitudes and behaviors, including if/when they resort to violence, and to what extent it can be harmful, irritating or disrespectful of others;
- Be more prepared to face violence if/when they are victims of it, having developed important skills helpful in such a situation, including effective communication, problem solving, decision making, interpersonal relationships, empathy and stress management (without resorting to self-harm practices); and

- Be engaged in an activity for a duration of time during the day, thereby being less exposed to the person who might commit abuse in the nuclear family.

According to the evaluation conducted, the Life Skills course proved to be very useful to cope with the challenges of the current situation (COVID-19, lockdown, financial crisis, etc.) for the majority of the respondents (61%). The vast majority of respondents also found that the Life Skills course was useful to expand their knowledge and skills (73%).

From experience and through the evaluation of this pilot, AVSI observed that this e-path was helpful even for youths who did not previously participate in a Life Skills program. For them, it was a way of being introduced to these skills, which was both engaging and entertaining, while they needed to remain at home.

After the pilot, AVSI complemented the e-path with some activities taken from The Adolescent Kit for Expression and Innovation Adapted Resource Package for COVID-19 published by UNICEF. These activities, taken from the activities guide and the inspirational cards, were proposed after the sessions for the youths. They were self-paced and linked to the session subjects. Once completed, participants would share what they had done with other peers in the group, taking the interaction beyond the live session part of the program.

Now that the period of confinement is decreasing and people are being asked to return to “normality” while still respecting preventive measures, youths have other activities to attend during the day. In this context revising the feasibility of the “offline part” and the activities after the session might be necessary.

In addition, knowing the importance of engaging the youths from the beginning, and having in mind the importance of seeing each other’s faces and expressions in the launch phase, it could be valuable to use a Zoom meeting for the first session. In this way, facilitators would be able to interact with the youths while observing their attitudes in a more accurate way, and youths would be able to put faces to names and voices and meet, even if virtually, with new persons.



## HURRAS Network, Syria, Community Volunteers capacity strengthening, via Google Meet

Hurras manages more than 335 employees in addition to a growing number of volunteers and contracted trainers. Through their commitment to working inside Syria during the worst stages of the conflict, Hurras staff members developed exceptional practical experience and succeeded in delivering full-range and multisectoral child protection services to more than 40,000 Syrian children.

### [Description of capacity building need and context](#)

In Syria before the conflict, the community's understanding of child protection principles was weak. After the rise in hostilities and given the chronic nature of the crisis, it has become evident that strengthening child protection systems requires efforts in building local child protection committees to sustain the protection of Syrian children within an unstable context (UNICEF, 2018). Hurras Network (HRS) has been providing training to community groups and committees in North Syria since 2013 in an attempt to strengthen child protection systems and has focused on establishing and strengthening child protection networks since 2018.

With the announcement of COVID-19 emergency response in northwest Syria at the beginning of March 2020, HRS started to shift its activities to conducting them online, remotely, and taking precautionary measures in line with the World Health Organization's and health directorate's recommendations in the area. To reduce physical and group gatherings, the recommendation was to conduct training online and via online platforms, although the first confirmed case of COVID-19 was not until July of the same year.

## Capacity building adaptation

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Child protection committees in Syria consist of community members who volunteer their time in the groups to build better protection systems within their communities. Usually, the members are influencers and hold leadership roles or are particularly active in their communities. Volunteers within these committees are trained on a variety of topics, including child protection in emergencies, safe identification and referral, communication skills with children, conducting psychosocial support activities and other topics. The committee has an important role to play in awareness raising within the communities, and it became even more important, with the pandemic unfolding globally, to continue to strengthen these groups given the even more limited access available.

The information technology expert within HRS recommended Google Meet as the safest platform to use online. It was already available to the organization and therefore had no additional cost associated with its use. Google Meet offered the possibility to organize calls for up to 50 users for free.

All training records usually obtained face to face (pretest and posttest, attendance sheet, final test and final evaluation) were collected and analyzed using Formera, which tracks participants' registration, attendance, improvement rates, and knowledge gains. Formera also allows tracking of which sessions participants have attended with HRS to help in analyzing and assessing needs for capacity building in each committee.

Later in the process, it became evident that it would have been good to have additional features, such as breakout rooms. Luckily, however, Google Meet also updated its features to include beyond breakout rooms and a Q&A function.

Capacity building packages for community volunteers were already set prior to switching to an online modality, so these were adapted by facilitators to online delivery. At first the facilitators were thrown into the activities with almost no preparation, but a training on remote delivery was organized in May. While facilitators were really optimistic at the beginning about being able to switch to an online modality very swiftly, they later realized the process requires a lot of work, and they did not have all the tools necessary to keep volunteers engaged and active in this new modality. Support to facilitators is now constantly available so that they are able to troubleshoot challenges faced in maintaining participants' engagement.

## Challenges and mitigation measures

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As training participation experienced a big drop due to the shift in delivery modality, HRS immediately tried to troubleshoot by conducting a study with three groups. The following measures were put in place:

- Volunteers were introduced to the instructor informally prior to the training to help build a relationship that would encourage participation and retention.
- A brief manual was created to facilitate the download and use of the platform, as it was found that many volunteers were struggling with the use of the platform.
- It was also important to build more trust in the use of online applications given that many volunteers feared parties to the conflict could potentially spy on them. Gradually, as working online became a more “normal” experience and as volunteers grew more capable in using the platforms, their safety fears decreased.
- HRS communicated to volunteers that certificates of completion would only be awarded to those volunteers who completed the whole training series.
- A number of reminders were regularly sent to ensure volunteers did not overlook the time and date set for each training session.

Through these measures, HRS was able to increase participation by 60%.

Other training challenges included the lockdown meant women had a lot more chores to tend to due to closure of schools and therefore had limited time to participate in other activities. HRS attempted to organize training sessions in a variety of time slots, but all were not suitable for substantially increasing women’s participation. This should be further researched. In addition, weak internet infrastructure remained an issue in some parts of the country; however, this is not something Hurras has the possibility of influencing.

## Conclusions and recommendations

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The process of building capacities requires more inputs than solely the content of the training. Motivational support and other social and economic factors should be sought and considered to complement capacity building initiatives and reach better learning outcomes. This would, in turn, result in better protection outcomes for children in their communities.

It is worth noting that during face-to-face training, a lot of volunteers had a vested interest in the benefits associated with participating in the training itself (such as refreshments). The ones engaged in online training now, however, are truly committed to the protection of children.

Before engaging in an online facilitated training session:

- Take your time to prepare appropriately: staff should be trained on remote facilitation and be acquainted with troubleshooting minor technical issues;

- volunteers should receive instruction on how to use the selected platform.
- Support the volunteers through appropriate means in accessing the online platforms (i.e., provide an internet card with a suitable data package).
- Ensure the calendar of activities is clear for volunteers and send regular reminders.



## Plan International, Lebanon, Life Skills Training, via WhatsApp

Plan International has been present in Lebanon since 2017 and obtained formal registration in 2019. Plan International Lebanon works in partnership with community-based, local, national, and international organizations to address the needs of vulnerable children and youth in Lebanon, enabling them to realize their rights and participate meaningfully in society.

They also advance gender equality by addressing the root causes of discrimination against girls and young women. Their key areas of work include:

- Promoting accessible, safe and quality education;
- Ensuring children are protected from all forms of violence;
- Advancing girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights; and
- Providing vulnerable children and youth with opportunities to lead change within their communities.

### Description of capacity building need and context

Lebanon is home to 1.5 million Syrian refugees and other displaced groups, of which 55% are children and adolescents under the age of 18 years. A Plan study in 2018 found that Syrian refugees and Lebanese adolescents in already vulnerable households face significant risks of school dropout, lack of access to services, physical and sexual violence, child labor and child marriage. The COVID-19 pandemic and the related restrictions exacerbate these risks for adolescents.

Life skills programs are a key intervention in Plan International Lebanon's broader programs aimed to support adolescents in crisis settings. Parenting programs can be designed to target the parents and caregivers of at-risk adolescents.

In Lebanon, the life skills and parenting programs run in parallel, which means that facilitators work with both adolescents and their parents/caregivers. This is an effective approach to providing family-level support, as important information, knowledge and skills can be reinforced. In Lebanon, life skills and parenting sessions are facilitated by implementing partners and community facilitators, and supported by technical staff from Plan International Lebanon.

Life skills programs focus on psychosocial support that builds competencies in adolescents to enable them to cope with adversity, stay safe and adopt healthy behaviors. In Lebanon, participants are involved in selecting 12 sessions out of a broader curriculum. These sessions are then delivered in weekly, two-hour, face-to-face sessions.

Parenting programs support parents and other caregivers of adolescents to practice self-care and strengthen positive parenting skills in crisis settings. In Lebanon, the weekly two-hour parenting sessions are implemented parallel to the life skills sessions.

## Capacity building adaptation

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The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 and associated lockdown prevented the face-to-face running of these programs, despite psychosocial support and parenting programming being listed as essential services by the Child Protection Working Group in Lebanon. In response, Plan International Lebanon adapted the programs for remote delivery via conference call and WhatsApp.

To fit with this new delivery method, the number of sessions was reduced from 12 to 10, and sessions were reduced from two hours to 45 minutes each. Only activities that could be delivered online were included, which shifted the nature of the sessions somewhat from skills building and behavioral change toward interactive awareness raising. Sessions were delivered once a week for a period of 10 weeks.

Existing adolescent and parent groups of 15-20 persons were divided into smaller groups of five participants maximum, and these participants were called by the facilitator to join the session. During and in between sessions, WhatsApp was used by facilitators to stay in contact with the groups or to share information. Facilitators also recorded short videos of 30-60 seconds with key messages for participants to watch before or after sessions.

During implementation, a new feature was added to the program: recorded sessions with key activities and clear instructions were provided to adolescents and parents/caregivers who were not able to join the online sessions. These sessions were shared on DVD, along with a DVD player, with families to watch and apply at home.

The groups were led by already trained community facilitators, who had been trained by Plan International Lebanon prior to COVID-19, to implement the regular life skills and parenting package. The facilitators received a one-hour online refresher training session facilitated by Plan International Lebanon technical specialists and covered the following topics:

- Online facilitation skills;
- Child and young people safeguarding, including online safety;
- Safe online identification and referral; and
- Updated service mapping.

The well-being of the facilitators is taken very seriously, and Plan staff regularly check in with them.

## Challenges and mitigation measures

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The main challenge was the limited preparation and implementation time available for the adaptation of both the content and delivery mode. Further additions to the approach were made during the implementation phase, based on learning gained from the initial weeks of the program, such as adding the recorded voice notes of key messages and providing the recorded version of sessions and DVD equipment to those unable to join live online.

Online and remote delivery of sessions can become challenging for families with limited communication means (e.g., mobile phones, TV, internet connection) and the costs associated with supporting individual families to access the online groups. Those without mobile phones must not be left without support. For some adolescents, it is necessary for parents to be home for them to access mobile phones. However, this has impacted the adolescents' privacy and freedom to express themselves and share their experiences during sessions.

Although no major cases were reported, having safeguarding and feedback mechanisms in place is key in preventing and responding to the safeguarding risks and sexual harassment and/or cyber bullying.

Prior to forming WhatsApp groups, all participants were informed about the purpose of the group, and an informed consent was obtained. A guidance tool for facilitators on how to safely and effectively use WhatsApp was produced.

When supporting at-risk adolescents, the psychosocial needs of both facilitators and supporting staff must not be forgotten. The COVID-19 crisis affects everyone, so it is key to prioritize the staff's well-being.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The experience and humanitarian response capacity of Plan International and implementing partners in Lebanon enabled a rapid adaptation process from the very onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A key success in the adaptation process was the initial consultation of adolescents, parents and caregivers about the available and preferred ways of communication, as well as the preferred day and time for them to join the sessions. This activity led to the selection of effective, accessible online modalities and a high attendance rate throughout the program.

The remote delivery modality enabled Plan International and partners to continue essential services and support with adolescents and avoid losing connection with at-risk families.

A conference call proved to be an effective tool to deliver the sessions, as it was free of charge for families. It was also the most feasible modality as even the most vulnerable families had at least one mobile phone in the household, and phone coverage was available in most remote areas.

For some groups, WhatsApp was an effective means of communication between the facilitator and the groups, as well as between group members, in between the sessions. It created a more informal and trusting space for the group to exchange information using different tools: emoji, voice note, chatting.

The success of the remote delivery may be partly due to the fact that at the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, some groups had already formed, and participants and facilitators had already met each other in person. They had worked through a few sessions together before sessions continued online.

When movement restrictions are partially lifted, Community Based Child Protection Committee members will play a key role in outreach and identification of vulnerable adolescent girls and boys for participation in the program.



## INEE, Global, Minimum Standards Online Training, via Zoom

The Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) is an open, global network of members working together within a humanitarian and development framework to ensure all individuals have the right to a quality, safe, relevant, and equitable education. INEE's work is founded on the fundamental right to education. To find out more, please visit [inee.org](http://inee.org).

### Description of capacity building need and context

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The “INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, and Recovery” is the global framework for delivering quality education in emergencies (EiE). In an effort to continue supporting EiE actors' use of the standards during the COVID-19 pandemic, INEE offered training on this global framework via Zoom. The training has been conducted in Arabic, English, French and Portuguese, and 224 participants from 63 countries have participated to date. During the training, participants develop knowledge and understanding of the INEE Minimum Standards and their purpose, while also developing skills to adapt and apply the standards in EiE program design, implementation and monitoring. The lessons learned from this experience will inform INEE's approach to capacity building well beyond the global health crisis.

### Capacity building adaptation

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With traveling and in-person meetings restricted for the foreseeable future, INEE made the decision to adapt its traditional, in-person Minimum Standards training to a remote format.

The INEE team chose the Zoom platform for the trainings, as this is the platform used most frequently by the network and allows for a high level of interactivity.

To gauge interest, INEE sent surveys to see how many members would be interested and available to participate in the first pilot training sessions. More than 400 members expressed interest in the pilot session alone. After the pilot workshops, INEE updated the training, and then a series of trainings rolled out in various languages and time zones between August and December 2020.

This training meets Level 1 of the EiE competency framework, allowing participants to:

- Learn the importance, purpose and structure of the INEE Minimum Standards;
- Begin to adapt and apply the INEE Minimum Standards for their own work; and
- Connect with EiE colleagues who are using the INEE Minimum Standards in other contexts.

How does the training work?

- The training is facilitated by two experienced EiE practitioners.
- The training is hosted via Zoom for four hours each day over three consecutive days (12 hours total). Note: A steady internet connection and access to a device with a camera is required. Google Jamboard and Google Docs are also used to support collaborative working during the trainings.
- The training is participatory and interactive, with participants expected to collaborate in group work, work on real-life case studies and share their own experiences and perspectives.

Who can take part?

- The training is open to all INEE members and is free of charge.
- The training is conducted in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.
- Classrooms are limited to ~20 participants per training to allow for a high level of interactivity.

What happens after the training?

- Participants will be expected to develop a short case study after the training to demonstrate how they are applying their new knowledge in their work. Upon successful completion of the post-training task, a certificate is awarded
- Participants are also able to access peer support after the training.

At the end of 2020 an extensive evaluation was conducted, along with a lessons learned exercise. Drawing on these findings, INEE now plans to offer the training to the INEE network on a monthly basis (including beyond the travel restrictions).

This modification was to ensure the training can be regularly available to all INEE members and become integrated into staff onboarding and ongoing professional development initiatives. INEE will also be using the lessons learned to develop and run thematic trainings in a similar way, and to provide tailored trainings for specific country contexts.

## Challenges and mitigation measures

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The majority of the challenges reported by participants revolved around technology and other remote-working challenges. Even still, many participants reported that the challenges were “really worth the effort” in the end and that the facilitators “did a very good job of compensating for the difficulties of a virtual platform.”

### Connectivity

In its remote format, the training can be offered to a variety of INEE members across the globe. However, some participants were unable to take part fully in the training due to limited network connectivity. The need for a steady internet connection and a device prevented some members from participating at all. This barrier is a significant concern, particularly in EiE settings where connectivity may be more limited. To address this issue, INEE is piloting the training in multiple formats to increase their reach, including an offline e-learning module and a peer-to-peer approach using WhatsApp.

### New technologies

Similarly, participants’ experience with the technology varied. The team predominantly used Zoom breakout rooms and Google Jamboard and Google docs to allow for interactivity (with participants taking part in brainstorming sessions, matching activities and co-developing presentations). However, the facilitators tried to avoid using other applications.

The INEE team modeled all of the approaches on day 1 of the training and provided one-on-one support as much as possible. In the future, INEE would like to provide an optional “Introduction to Zoom” session for participants who would like to learn about it before the training.

### Time restrictions

The training content was significantly condensed to allow for the remote approach; however, the course is still a considerable time commitment.

Some participants reported it was hard to be on Zoom for four hours a day and stay fully engaged, some were pulled into emergency meetings by managers and others joined after working hours (sometimes in the middle of the night). INEE adapted the training plan to include appropriate breaks and increased their repertoire of energizers. While full participation was necessary for certification, INEE tried to be as flexible as possible as emergencies arose (e.g., allowing participants to make up the time on another training).

Interestingly, at the same time, participants also requested more time to spend on the activities and to explore their fellow participants' different experiences and context-specific stories in more depth. When asked to offer feedback on how the training could be improved, participants suggested that INEE could assign offline pre-work beforehand or between training sessions, with a follow-up training at a later date.

### Country context but a global community

Lastly, one of the primary concerns has been the use of a “global approach” for training that is normally heavily contextualized for specific contexts and teams. The open application process encouraged participants from a diverse range of contexts, organizations and roles. However, there were some interesting positives to this approach. Participants frequently reported the benefit of being able to “meet and collaborate with other EiE professionals around the globe” at a time when many are feeling isolated.

In addition, interesting linkages were made across organizations and sectors, which have continued after the trainings. The sense of global community was an unintended benefit and was supported by the development of peer groups after the training. At the same time, INEE is beginning to plot contextualized trainings for specific country contexts, beginning with a pilot for the Syria Cluster in January 2021.

## Conclusions and recommendations

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To date, 224 participants have participated in the INEE Minimum Standards training from over 130 organizations and 63 different countries. Through the evaluations, it became clear that participants experienced an increase in their confidence using the INEE Minimum Standards (i.e., 93.5% of trainees reported an increase upon completion of the training). In fact, on average, participants reported an 85% increase in their confidence. When asked about positive aspects of the training, participants highlighted the applicability of the training to their work, as well as their enjoyment of connecting with colleagues in very different contexts. One participant said, “[The training] really made me see the presence of the standards in pretty much everything I do at work! I think it was both informative and very learner-centered.... (Cont on page 23)

By the end of the three days, it seems like my perspective has changed.”

INEE expressed many takeaways from this experience:

*A remote approach allows us to reach many members who otherwise wouldn't be able to access in-person trainings. We plan to continue this delivery approach, even once we resume our in-person training work. To reach as many member[s] as possible, we hope to offer our trainings in multiple formats to meet the different needs of EiE actors around the globe.*

*With careful planning and preparation, remote approaches can still allow for learner-centered trainings and effective pedagogical approaches. Building in time for collaborative working, sharing of experience and open discussion is key. A team of at least two facilitators supports this effort and ensures the training is more dynamic.*

*At a time of isolation, feeling part of a global community can be very powerful. This sense of being part of a team is still possible via Zoom. We would recommend giving the time and space for making connections and building relationships during the training and in follow-up.*



## Save the Children India, CPIE learning, via video series

Save the Children is India's leading independent child rights' non-governmental organization and works in 18 of the country's states. Beginning its journey in 2008 in India, and registered as "Bal Raksha Bharat," they have changed the lives of more than 10 million children. In India and across the world, Save the Children works on-the-ground – every day and, especially, in times of crisis.

Their pioneering programs address children's unique needs: giving them a healthy start, an opportunity to learn as well as protection from harm. When crisis strikes, they are always among the first to respond and the last to leave. Save the Children comprises the outspoken champions for children, ensuring their voices are heard and their issues are given top priority. Drawing on a century of leading expertise, Save the Children takes on the toughest challenges facing the hardest-to-reach children – especially those unfairly excluded from the world's progress.

### [Description of capacity building need and context](#)

Before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Save the Children India was planning to conduct capacity building training initiatives on Child Protection in Emergency (CPIE) for partners and Save the Children India front-line staff in various parts of the country. This set of recurring trainings is particularly important, from a preparedness perspective, to allow local partners and Save the Children India front-line staff to respond to crises as they emerge and unfold, taking into account protection outcomes for children. As the pandemic was declared and it became evident that access would be a challenge for a prolonged period of time, Save the Children decided to proceed with the development of a video series.

## Capacity building adaptation

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Save the Children decided the video series would need to be very simple and the contextualized version of the Child Protection Minimum Standards Working Group would be the foundation of the video series. Six topics were selected based on their relevance to the context and after consultation with field teams:

- Introduction to CPiE
- CPiE Rapid Needs Assessment
- Child Protection in Humanitarian Action Mainstreaming and Integration
- Child Protection System Strengthening in India
- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support and Psychosocial First Aid
- Coordination in Humanitarian Action

Over the course of about one month, the Save the Children India team developed the script for each of the six videos, and a technical agency was hired to develop the animated videos, which also include pictures from previous emergencies in the country. Each video is about five to six minutes in length and recorded in English and Hindi. The video animation cost for all six videos amounted to about 9000 USD. Save the Children also plans to translate the videos into additional languages relevant to Save the Children India's operational context.

Videos were made available on the Save the Children India website. Through internal Save the Children networks, a more compact version was developed to be circulated via WhatsApp and other social media or through an external hard drive. While these six videos are certainly not expected to replace an entire face-to-face training experience, the video series is a "ready-to-go" tool to use as a refresher and orientation in the wake of new emergencies. The videos are enriched with contextualized examples that make it easily digestible for end users building on experiences of other emergencies in similar contexts.

Save the Children also plans to use this video series as part of more intensive capacity building experiences, providing the first building block.

## Conclusion and recommendations

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The video series is scheduled to launch in mid-January 2021, and Save the Children India plans to learn more about the use of the videos in the first quarter of the year. One of the challenges experienced in the development phase was contextualization, as it took

longer than originally envisioned. The recommendation is therefore to always take this into account while planning. It is also recommended to conduct a capacity gaps analysis involving the target audience of the planned capacity building initiative.





## Save the Children International, Nepal, Parenting without Violence Program, via radio

In Nepal and across the world, Save the Children (SC) works on-the-ground – every day – and especially in times of crisis. Their pioneering programs address children’s unique needs, giving them a healthy start, an opportunity to learn as well as protection from harm. When crisis strikes, they are always among the first to respond and the last to leave. SC comprises the outspoken champions for children, ensuring their voices are heard and their issues are given top priority. Drawing on a century of leading expertise, SC takes on the toughest challenges facing the hardest-to-reach children – especially those unfairly excluded from the world’s progress.

### Description of capacity building need and context

Too many children in Nepal are subject to violence and abuse. As per the latest official data, 81.7% of children aged 1-14 years experienced physical punishment or psychological aggression, while some forms of corporal punishment, such as the use of force in relation to teaching, instruction or training, are widely accepted by the community.

SC Nepal has an established Parenting without Violence (PwV) course, which is usually delivered through face-to-face sessions to parents and children by trained para-social workers, as well as engagement with influential community members.

COVID-19 led to nationwide lockdown and movement restrictions in Nepal, which exacerbated difficulties in reaching many remote communities. This prevented SC Nepal

from delivering regular activities in the standard ways, including the PwV course, despite its increased relevance in the current context.

In response to the movement restrictions, to reach remote communities and in recognition of the large-scale appeal of radio as a form of messaging, SC Nepal adapted all sessions of the PwV course to become radio sessions.

Violence against children in the home is a global phenomenon that cuts across geographical, cultural, social, economic, and ethic boundaries. Children's first experience of violence typically happens in their homes and most often consists of physical and humiliating punishment. Physical and humiliating punishment of children is a violation of their rights and undermines their dignity, protection, development and well-being. Thus, the PwV common approach/course is designed as a universal preventive program that targets all parents and caregivers in both development and humanitarian contexts with the aim of improving positive parenting capacities to support positive behavior change.

Through implementation of this approach, fathers, mothers and caregivers, including expectant new parents, increase their understanding of child development, child rights and positive parenting, as well as ensure partner and parent-child relationships based on the principles of non-violence, non-discrimination and gender equality are strengthened. Girls and boys are empowered to express their views and feelings in the home, and they know how to seek help when they feel unsafe.

The program engages with influential stakeholders in communities, including through community dialogue and social and media campaigns, to shift that drive or sustain the physical and humiliating punishment of children in homes. The program does not directly address all types of violence against children in the home, such as sexual violence, but it does strengthen knowledge on protection risks for children, informs where and how to seek help should such support be needed by children, parents and caregivers, and identifies and refers at-risk children. Broader system strengthening and advocacy are also undertaken to increase children's protection from all forms of violence in the home.

## Capacity building adaptation

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Radio is still generally recognized as a key means of rural households in accessing information in Nepal. Recognition exists of drama as a delivery modality that has large-scale appeal to communities and as a means of implementing social and behavioral change initiatives. Good government cooperation is already established, as well as specific collaboration in adapting the PwV sessions to radio.

The script for radio drama was prepared based on the sessions of PwV, and voice overs

were then recorded. As part of the preparation, some distance meetings were held with the radio journalists and radio stations to make them fully aware of the objective and the content of the sessions.

In parallel, a team of Social Mobilizers (SMs) was established, with responsibility to carry out monitoring on the effectiveness of the radio sessions. The SMs have been in regular contact with parents and children via phone calls.

A positive response has been received from both parents and children, as the radio sessions in the form of drama proved to be very appealing. Moreover, the SMs' role has been proven quite effective due to regular follow-up with parents and children via phone calls on the objectives and key learnings of the sessions.

## Challenges and mitigation measures

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Not all communities had access to radios (or electricity in some cases), so this needs to be taken into consideration. Even more so, many communities have very poor phone connectivity or intermittent access, which make it difficult to conduct follow-up sessions with households via telephone. This issue was addressed primarily by attempting to conduct more group follow-up sessions to provide a group of households with access to one working telephone and/or via face-to-face follow-ups if possible.

## Conclusions and recommendations

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This approach was a new and positive experience for SC Nepal. It is cost-effective and has delivered the content in an appealing and consistent way. SC Nepal is planning to conduct a small study of the adapted activities, including the PwV radio sessions, that were implemented during this crisis. The purpose of the study is to know the effectiveness and efficiency of the adapted activities and thereby to inform preparations for future activities and proposals.

Recommendations for others developing remote skills-building approaches include:

- Regular monitoring and follow-up with the participants is necessary when activities are conducted through digital platforms.
- Make sure calls are at convenient hours for respondents. For example, take into account peak hours of household chores when trying to reach women. Also, ensure radio sessions are aired at a convenient time for the target audience.
- In remote areas with connectivity or electricity issues, consider providing solar-powered radios and/or reaching communities with recorded sessions.
- Promote smaller groups for interaction sessions as a means of promoting scale and reach.



## War Child Holland, Gaza, Using WhatsApp Safely Training, via text message course

War Child works to protect, educate and stand up for the rights of children caught up in war. Founded in 1993, War Child works in 17 countries to directly support more than 250,000 children and adults every year. The work of War Child Holland focuses on child protection, education and psychosocial support.

### Description of capacity building need and context

To manage their emergency response to COVID-19, War Child Holland set up a coordinating group of technical leads. From this group, capacity building priorities were identified. Given the restrictions on movement and gathering, online and remote learning options needed to be found. Developing new online learning modules is a time-consuming process; with limited capacity, alternative options were required as well as newly developed courses. War Child Holland collated and shared a list of War Child and external online learning opportunities related to the identified needs.

For field staff and partner organizations, challenges of connectivity and time availability made online courses difficult to access. Country Offices had already started to respond to this by setting up very quick responses using WhatsApp. This, however, was raising questions about both the security of the platform and the users' awareness of ways to safely engage and share information in line with child safeguarding protocols. The team in Gaza identified a specific learning need around how to safely communicate online using professional WhatsApp groups. This became the basis of the skills-building adaptation.

## Capacity building adaptation

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War Child recognized the importance of offering a range of options in a response such as this. So, along with existing online options, it sought to develop a text-based training course titled “Safe Online Communication Using WhatsApp.”

Introduced to Arist – creator of a text messaging learning platform already set up as a COVID-19 text messaging course – War Child learned more about the platform and its functions and were then offered 12 months of free use. Once a service agreement was developed and signed, work on the course could begin. Communications were developed internally to gain buy-in and raise awareness. This also helped to identify a pilot location.

Arist provides a platform to build and manage text messaging courses. The length and content of the courses can be designed based on your identified learning needs. Learners can sign up and start a course at any time after its launch and will receive a set piece of learning content each day for the duration of the course. Learners can decide at what time of day they want to receive their texts and can also be engaged in knowledge checks and feedback processes through open, multiple-choice, or fill-in-the-blank questions within the course. Internet access is required for the initial sign-up to a course, and course delivery can then be via SMS or WhatsApp.

The Arist platform provides a range of templates and guidance for the development of a course, as well as some suggested flows. For example, as in this case, War Child started with key messages and then used a case study to consider the application of these ideas. War Child’s Gaza team drew on their recent experience of using WhatsApp to develop a case study to incorporate into the course. Organizational guidance on using WhatsApp in professional settings was also used as a key resource in the development process.

Following development of the content, a process of review, translation and testing has been taking place. Using the platform, the course owner will be able to monitor engagement and responses to the knowledge check questions.

## Challenges and mitigation measures

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Arist is a relatively new platform, and this project has brought up some new requirements that had not yet been fully explored by them. While it has been possible to translate the course into Arabic for the Gaza pilot, certain components had to remain in English to enable the required functionality. For example, learners must text the word “start” in English to begin and then “next” in English to request each subsequent day of the course. In response to this issue, War Child is developing guidance to support learners and clarify the steps they need to take.

An additional challenge has arisen in the reliance on mobile service providers for delivery of the messages. In particular, for delivery to international mobile numbers, this is connected through the United States. Arist recommends using WhatsApp, rather than SMS, for international (non-US) phone numbers. This is largely an acceptable alternative; however, it does create a data or WiFi need that does not exist with the SMS option. The Arist team has been and continues to be committed to finding solutions, and War Child expects most of the challenges will be resolved in the near future.

As with the development of any learning intervention, time is required to develop the content. In this case, refining content down to short, simple messages that would fit into the text messaging structure was key. Review and testing proved more time consuming than anticipated, but this step was also particularly important given the newness of the approach.

## Conclusions and recommendations

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The pilot and launch of the course is not yet complete, so conclusions and recommendations are not yet fully available. What is known so far is that this approach has real potential as a low-tech solution that can potentially help us to reach large numbers of learners in remote communities. Arist reports that text messaging courses are accessible to 90% of the world's population and reports a 94% completion rate for their courses.

In addition, this approach provides a real opportunity to drill down into the key messages and essentials of content related to the topic at hand. As the delivery method has strict character count limitations, those developing the course are forced to be very clear on its purpose and key learning points.

The following recommendations have also been identified from the War Child experience:

- Consider languages and translation from the beginning and be sure to include time to test in any translated languages;
- Spend time on the templates and think very clearly about the structure of your course before you start developing content. Making sure the template and storyboard are right will save time in the long run and will ensure detailed content development is aligned with the course objectives and format; and
- Find a balance between being on top of new developments and approaches and managing the risks of working with a new platform. For War Child, the free use of the platform for 12 months reduced the level of risk associated with using a new, unknown approach. This path has not been without challenges, so it is important to

this before embarking on a new project like this one. Remember that technical hiccups may delay you or present unexpected questions and challenges.





## War Child Holland, Lebanon, Caregivers Support Intervention, via WhatsApp

War Child works to protect, educate and stand up for the rights of children caught up in war. Founded in 1993, War Child works in 17 countries directly supporting more than 250,000 children and adults every year. The work of War Child Holland focuses on Child Protection, Education, and Psychosocial support.

### Description of capacity building need and context

War Child Holland (WCH) has an established Caregivers Support Initiative (CSI), a psychosocial support methodology that addresses the well-being of caregivers. It has traditionally been delivered face-to-face, in Lebanon and other locations, and aimed at both mothers and fathers.

The program is designed to help reduce stress and improve the well-being of adults who are raising children. More specifically, the aim is to help parents and other caregivers reduce their own stress and find greater support so that they feel better emotionally and have more energy to be the kind of parents they wish to be. Through the program, War Child also aims to:

- Strengthen parenting indirectly by reducing parental stress and improving parental well-being; and
- Strengthen parenting directly through training in effective parenting techniques.

The COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the socioeconomic situation in Lebanon, meant that

support for parents remained a high priority in WCH's programming. In an assessment with caregivers and children, most caregivers expressed that they were feeling very stressed and not able to deal with the uncomfortable feelings, nor with their children. This identified an immediate need to provide support to caregivers, alongside the work being done directly with children. Gathering and distancing restrictions put in place in response to COVID-19 prevented the CSI program from running face-to-face, so the WCH Lebanon team undertook an adaptation to enable remote delivery.

## Capacity building adaptation

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The CSI face-to-face program manual was used as a basis for the remote program design. War Child consulted with the community and caregivers to identify the highest priority topics to include in a remote version, which by its nature and due to time restrictions of caregivers could not include every aspect of the face-to-face version.

Fifteen mp3 audio files were developed on seven agreed-upon priority topics and based on the content in the program manual. WhatsApp groups were created for cohorts of caregivers, who then received two audio files, one topic per week, and were encouraged to interact with the group and facilitators by reflecting on the week's content, asking questions and providing feedback.

War Child had previously completed an assessment on readiness for the use of devices and internet, so they were able to quickly select WhatsApp as a preferred approach for the target audience. Furthermore, since the Lebanon team had extensive knowledge of the existing CSI program and were leading detailed research into the approach, they were able to quickly and creatively come up with a remote adaptation.

A high priority in the adaptation was providing a self-paced approach, which learners can engage with at a time of their choice. This flexibility is particularly important for those with caregiving responsibilities who find fixing a set time for a session is very challenging. The use of WhatsApp groups as cohorts ensured the opportunity to interact with others and with facilitators who remained available despite the remote and offline context.

Feedback from participants has been very positive (see one example below). In terms of content, participant feedback has highlighted its relevance, and they expressed particular appreciation for the relaxation techniques shared. In terms of approach, the fact that parents can listen at any time is highly commended. In addition, drop-out rates from the WhatsApp groups are very low.

*The first two recordings were describing what I was going through, as if you knew what I am struggling with. I tried the techniques and was impatiently waiting for the other audios. (CSI participant)*

## Challenges and mitigation measures

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Three main challenges have been identified:

- First, access to internet. In some areas, caregivers were not able to download the material. Alternatives were put in place, such as providing internet cards or downloading the materials in MP3 and delivering them to caregivers.
- Second, due to the challenging socioeconomic situation in Lebanon, high needs for basic assistance emerged and affected the caregivers' well-being. Multiple responses were put in place to address this, such as interagency referrals, advocacy with donors to shift temporarily and respond accordingly.
- Third, some of the caregivers were facing specific challenges in parenting that needed the support of the case management team. The CSI cannot address high-risk cases, but linking with internal and external case management services has been crucial for early detection.

## Conclusions and recommendations

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The specific context in Lebanon supported the intervention. The COVID-19 response in Lebanon included joint efforts between the coordination bodies led by UNICEF and Ministry of Health to ensure complementary well-being packages between the international non-governmental organizations responding to the pandemic. A lot of interagency-level work was taking place related to caregivers and adapting remotely, which complemented this initiative.

Integration with other programs supported the reception of the program. The CSI was delivered to parents of children who are participating in War Child's remote distance learning. It was not intended or used as a standalone intervention.

Use of offline methods was also crucial. Designing the approach to allow for offline and self-paced participation closely met the target audience's need for flexibility with timing of their engagement. War Child intends to build on this experience and continue to provide offline options for other interventions happening remotely.

There may be a positive gender aspect associated with the remote delivery approach, wherein fathers are more able to participate than during a face-to-face delivery at set times. This will be further investigated by War Child in the evaluation of the program.

Recommendations for others developing remote skills-building approaches include:

- Focus on the key elements: Quick and straightforward messages;

- Select topics with high relevance to the audience and context.
- Use simple language;
- Keep it short - audio recordings were not more than three minutes each;
- Follow up with learners; and
- Signpost to other resources and sources of support.



## World Vision International, Global, CPHA Simulation-based training, via Zoom and Teams

World Vision (WV) is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organization founded in 1950 dedicated to working with children, families and communities in close to 100 countries to help them reach their full potential by addressing the causes of poverty and injustice. WV's nearly 40,000 staff and volunteers support worldwide implementation of child-focused, community-based multi-sector initiatives, including education, health, economic development, microfinance, child protection, peacebuilding, climate change, food security and water and sanitation.

### [Description of capacity building need and context](#)

In early 2020, WV launched its first global Child Protection in Humanitarian Action Blended Learning Program (CPHA BLP), aiming to enhance the knowledge and skills of WV staff in CPHA programming through mixed capacity building methodologies. The CPHA BLP is a foundational training program that covers the knowledge on core child protection (CP) interventions in humanitarian settings. The course is designed based on the sector's standards, the Alliance CPHA competency framework, the common approaches defined in the inter-agency guidelines and tools so that the trained participants are not only the CPHA champions within WV, but they are also qualified as sector specialists externally.

The program targeted a total of 25 participants, prioritizing the technical staff who work in fragile or humanitarian settings. Participants enrolled in the course were expected to

complete the seven modules of distance learning and attend the various virtual meetings as well as a 5-day face-to-face workshop. With the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and the large-scale response activities, the duration of the training was extended from the initial seven months (March – September 2020) to 11 months (March 2020 – January 2021). The planned face-to-face workshop was redesigned and delivered through a four-and-a-half-day virtual workshop, including online simulation.

## Capacity building adaptation

Despite the strong desire of the participants to attend in-person training, it became evident that it was impossible to run a global face-to-face workshop due to the COVID-19 restrictions. The facilitation team therefore had to transform the face-to-face component to synchronous online sessions.

To make the e-workshop engaging and interactive, as well as to meet participants' expectations, this adaptation required a good degree of preparation work, including: converting face-to-face simulation to online simulation through developing five scenario-based videos, providing step-by-step guidance and an observation checklist for facilitators for the role-play and remote facilitation and an update of the agenda to suit online delivery and different time zones. A dry run was organized with all facilitators to test the different technology platforms and to walk through the workshop agenda. Considering the language barriers for some participants, the five videos used for the simulation and discussions are accompanied by a script to ensure the learners will be able to follow the narrations.



A dry run was organized with all facilitators to test the different technology platforms and to walk through the workshop agenda. Considering the language barriers for some participants, the five videos used for the simulation and discussions are accompanied by a script to ensure the learners will be able to follow the narrations.

Prior to the e-workshop, multiple communications were done to prepare the “virtual deployment” of the participants to a fictional country, “Zuzuland,” in which the simulation would take place. A separate email was sent to all supervisors of the participants to secure their support on special work arrangements and internet access for the learners. Information, such as “Participant Joining Instruction” and two videos on the background of the emergency scenarios, was sent as pre-reading materials.

This is particularly important to ensure participants understand what is expected of them and to be ready to engage in the different tasks throughout the four-and-a-half-day event. In addition, participants were grouped and placed in five fictitious non-governmental organizations as the Child Protection Advisors. A pre-workshop assignment was given to each group with support from a facilitator. This proved to be a critical step in allowing participants and their facilitator(s), who have never met before

to form collaborative relationships ahead of the online workshop.

The simulation scenario unfolded throughout the four-and-a-half-day workshop. Each day’s session was about three hours online with different simulation exercises injected in between sessions (i.e., a fictional Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) meeting, CP rapid assessment in a disaster-affected community and a meeting with a European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations representative). Facilitators had to observe individuals’ behaviors and reactions using the adapted CPHA competency framework. After each simulation, facilitators for the five groups who also role-played in the simulation supported participants in reflecting on the scenario in a short debriefing session. It is worth highlighting that the participants’ engagement, however, extended beyond the formal three-hour session as they were also required to complete some “homework assignments” on the documents/tools to be used in the simulation on the following day. Groups were organized to conduct their tasks on MS Teams and requested to use a tracking sheet to record “who is doing what” within the group to ensure the workload was fairly balanced among the members.

## Sample of the Agenda

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
TIME	2 Nov (Monday)	3 Nov (Tuesday)	4 Nov (Wednesday)	5 Nov (Thursday)
11:15-11:30 am	Registration and Warm up	Registration and Warm up	Registration and Warm up	Registration and Warm up
11:30 - 11:45 am	Opening, objectives, housekeeping and ground rules (15 min)	Need Analysis & HRP (45 min)	Feedback from the facilitators (30 min)	CP MEAL (45 min)
11:45 - 12:00 pm	Introduction of scenario, 'deployment briefing' & CPHA competency framework (25 min)		Simulation Exercise - Case Management Task Force meeting (45 min)	
12:00 - 12:15 pm	Humanitarian Funding & Donor Relationships (30 min)	Simulation Exercise (45 min) - Assessing CP Needs		Break
12:15 - 12:30 pm			Break	
12:30 - 12:45 pm	Group Reflection on the CPWG meeting (15 min)	System Strengthening in Humanitarian Action (75 min)		Group Reflection on Meeting with ECHO (15 min)
12:45 - 1:00 pm			Cluster Approach and External Engagement (45 min)	
01:00 - 01:15 pm	Briefing on Homework (15 min)	Briefing on Homework - (15 min)		Briefing on Homework (15 min)
01:15 - 01:30 pm			Briefing on Homework (15 min)	
01:30 - 01:45 pm	Briefing on Homework (15 min)	Briefing on Homework - (15 min)		Briefing on Homework (15 min)
01:45 - 02:00 pm			Briefing on Homework (15 min)	
02:00 - 02:15 pm	Briefing on Homework (15 min)	Briefing on Homework - (15 min)		Briefing on Homework (15 min)
02:15 - 02:30 pm			Briefing on Homework (15 min)	
02:30 - 02:45 pm	Briefing on Homework (15 min)	Briefing on Homework - (15 min)		Briefing on Homework (15 min)

## Challenges and mitigation measures

Delivering training online for a global audience presents timing challenges in trying to cater to a broad range of time zones. Limiting the synchronous component of each day to three hours mitigates this to some extent, but the additional post-session debriefing and “homework assignments” were problematic for some participants who had to work on these tasks at inconvenient times of the day or night. Although, it can also be considered as an important learning experience for those having to work in emergency

or fast-paced contexts. For future iterations, possible mitigation options could include either running the online workshop at regional level or spreading the session over more days/in different weeks so that group work can be completed at more convenient times on days when they are free from the formal sessions.

All facilitators were given a role in observing participants during the simulation exercises to assess their technical and behavioral competencies. However, this was very challenging in an online environment, particularly for behavioral competencies. There was not enough time or spaces to allow participants to demonstrate their different competencies during the short simulations. Facilitators also expressed concerns about being biased or one-sided in their observations. The virtual settings made it difficult for some learners to take the simulation as seriously as they would in a face-to-face setting, thus affecting the quality of learning. It was suggested to form the groups and assign facilitator(s) to each group as early as possible to increase opportunities for virtual engagement and individual observations.

Participants were most interested in the face-to-face training when they signed up for this program. When this was not possible, many of them felt disappointed or even demotivated, thinking that their learning objectives would not be met. It was also a significant challenge for the facilitation team to design and develop a virtual workshop that still included all key CPHA topics within much shorter sessions (from a full-day workshop to a three-hour session). The lead facilitator had to invest extra effort and time to adapt the workshop while considering virtual logistic arrangements, technology requirements for different activities, coordination with external speakers and virtual preparation with the global facilitation team. In spite of that, it is important to recognize the synchronous e-workshop provided us an opportunity to learn using virtual facilitation and management, which became increasingly important in the context of COVID-19.

## Conclusions and recommendations

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Regarding the organization of the workshop more broadly, it was fairly difficult to organize it at global level considering time differences across the globe. For future programs, it would be easier to consider organizing this type of workshop at a regional level. If resources do not allow, it is recommended to plan for the e-workshop over several weeks (i.e., a two-day session in one week and a three-day session in the other week) to address the timing challenges.

Building the workshop around a fictional emergency context, including simulation exercises throughout the sessions, has proven to be successful as it presents another option for training methodology apart from presentation and breakout group work, which tends to be predominant in online workshops.

The use of the video animations to introduce the simulation scenario, and the evolving changes or updates in an unfolding emergency context throughout the week, allows learners to apply different knowledge and skills to the specific problems/situations, as well as to take actions based on their decisions.

If videos are developed for simulation or discussion sessions, it is important to consider the length and the use of videos. Those videos containing the background information of the scenario should be shared with participants (along with scripts) prior to the workshop as pre-reading materials. Some may need to view the animations more than once to familiarize themselves with the newly created fictional context. For videos that will be used within the sessions, it is recommended to keep them under five minutes. Please remember to count the minutes in your script before making the videos in a software.

As noted above, virtual observation of participants' competencies, particularly behavioral competencies, is very difficult. Assigning facilitators to support and coach individual participants at the beginning of any training program of three months or more is advisable. Meanwhile, additional and innovative ways to conduct observations in online settings need to be explored further.

As for face-to-face simulation, it takes a little while for learners to get acquainted with the fictional environment and become comfortable playing a role. This takes even longer in virtual settings, which should be factored in when planning for the workshop. In the online environment, it is even more important that instructions are crystal clear. Developing detailed session plans and scheduling a "dry run" of the sessions with all facilitators using the platforms you have selected will help the facilitation team to identify and work out potential problems and points of confusion. It will also ensure smooth transition between the main room and the breakout rooms in Zoom. Sufficient time needs to be factored in to develop clear instructions as well as the full rehearsal.



## Amane, Morocco, Child Protection Capacity Building via E-learning

Amane is a Non-Governmental Organization founded in February 2009 based in Rabat, Morocco. Its mission is to combat all forms of violence against children, including gender-based violence. Amane focuses on three main areas of intervention:

- Capacity building of child protection actors to improve prevention and care for vulnerable children and survivors of violence.
- Sensitizing the general public on issues of violence.
- Advocacy with power holders to improve mechanisms to protect children against all forms of violence.

### Description of capacity building need and context

From March to June 2020, an extremely strict lockdown was put in place, including the closure of schools, a ban on going out, the closure or slowing down of the main public institutions, and a ban on public gatherings. In this context, Amane could no longer organize face-to-face training sessions for child protection professionals or sensitization sessions for children.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), however, were able to rapidly adapt to maintain their relationship with vulnerable people. They played a crucial role in information sharing, detection of child protection cases and referral to essential services. They also had to organize very quickly for the management and distribution of basic necessities such as food basket, distribution of masks, provision of internet connection to ensure access to online school, or contacting public services, foster care and emergency shelters. Amane, therefore, decided to support CSOs with capacity building initiatives.

## Capacity Building Adaptation

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At the beginning of the lockdown, a telephone survey was conducted among child protection actors working in different regions of Morocco to identify their capacity building needs and to understand the technical contribution Amane could make.

The capacity building needs that emerged from these questionnaires were as follows:

- Understanding the consequences of COVID-19 on child protection and knowing how to deal with children during the pandemic, especially those in foster care and shelters.
- Learning to conduct remote interviews with child survivors of violence.
- Learning to manage 'child protection professionals' distress during the lockdown, especially those working in child protection shelters and care homes that remained open (such as charitable associations hosting orphans and children from vulnerable families). With these associations, the professionals worked even harder during this period because children stayed home without going to school.
- Adapting tools to provide capacity building remotely.

In addition to other projects carried out by AMANE, capacity building activities for CSOs working in child protection took place as part of the project called "Strengthening the protection of children against violence during the COVID-19 health crisis in Morocco". This project was conducted in partnership with UNICEF and had the overall objective of mitigating the risks of violence against children, particularly gender-based violence, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The capacity building program included the five steps detailed below. They were all conducted online, mainly through the Zoom platform:

**Individual e-learning training** via Amane's e-learning platform available in Arabic and French.

The training covers the following topics: Violence against children, in particular, gender-based violence (GBV); consequences of GBV; the impact of COVID-19 on the protection and wellbeing of children and social workers' practices; identification of GBV signs; listening to and supporting a child victim/survivor of GBV. At the end of each module, participants had to validate it through an online test.

**Training in small groups** of 20 professionals per region via the Zoom platform: 60 professionals from 30 CSOs in 10 Moroccan cities were trained. The key concepts of the individual online training were reviewed and then applied through case studies and role-playing in groups. This training was spread over two months, at the rate of 5

sessions of two hours and 30 minutes. At the end of this training program, each CSO receives a reference guide containing the main aspects covered during the training. This training was evaluated through a pre/post-test to measure the knowledge acquired by the participants and through a general evaluation of participants' level of satisfaction in the following areas: content, methodologies, resources and logistics.

**Cascade training.** In the second phase, CSOs were trained and equipped to facilitate sensitization sessions on violence for children and parents/adults, at a rate of 2 sessions of 2 or 3 hours per group. At the end of this training program, each CSO receives a facilitator's guide for sensitization sessions.

**Individualized support** for child protection professionals in the preparation, organization, and evaluation of sensitization sessions for children and parents/adults.

**Information and discussion workshop** between CSOs and institutional partners on the reporting and monitoring cases of violence by region. The purpose of these workshops was to improve the knowledge of CSOs regarding the care system and the referral of child victims of violence to facilitate the networking of local child protection partners. At the end of these regional workshops, a detailed list of child protection actors was created to establish a referral system.

## Challenges and Mitigation Measures

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Amane observed lower participation of professionals in online training. Several reasons can be provided to explain this. Due to this project's short timeframe, the professionals had little time to complete the individual training modules on the platform before the start of the group theoretical online training (7 to 10 days). Also, experience with previous users of the platform has shown that most of them carry out these trainings during their personal time.

Therefore, it is advisable to allocate the necessary time for online training depending on working hours and to think about a follow-up approach, especially when it is a small group.

- Technical difficulties/lack of mastery of digital tools: platforms, filling in online tests, connection problems or low internet speed.

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Difficulty in assessing the impact of training for several reasons:

- The low rate of completion of pre/post tests and online evaluation questionnaires.
- Amane has used the same evaluation methodologies used for face-to-face training, even though it is aware that skills could not be assessed in a similar manner at the end of online training. It would be useful to have guidelines on how to evaluate distance training courses.

- Limited duration of the training and its remote format: it was difficult for Amane to evaluate the real impact of the concepts discussed. It would be useful to share feedback on the evaluation of skills acquired during a distance learning program conducted over a short period of time.
- On several occasions, the participants disconnected themselves to be able to respond to professional emergencies; others had to use their own phones with a connection that was sometimes very unreliable.

## Conclusions and recommendations

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- At the end of the small group training, several participants attended the individual e-learning training retrospectively. This reverse approach would be interesting to experiment in the future. Small group training could encourage participants to deepen their knowledge through individual e-learning.
- Choice to use two approaches: capacity building of professionals and cascade training with simplified tools to facilitate sensitization sessions for children and parents. CSOs were often the only organizations to have direct contact with these audiences at the height of the lockdown due to the closure of state services or their focus on managing COVID.
- Online training allows for rapid mobilization over a reduced timeframe and is affordable (no travel costs, accommodation, meals) for a large number of CSOs spread across the country.
- Since the training is short, it is important to select the main message to be communicated and adapt it to the online format. It would be useful to get more information on adapting the content of the modules to an online training format.
- The online training provided an opportunity to create a network and promoted experience sharing among professionals working in different regions who would not otherwise have the opportunity to meet.
- The attention and appreciation given to local CSOs have affirmed the importance and relevance of their work.