

# Building Your Child Helpline

A user-friendly guide to starting or scaling-up a child helpline

## Acknowledgement:

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## Preface

Dear Reader,

Child Helpline International is here to offer support and advice as you begin the process of starting or scaling-up a child helpline in your country. It is an exciting and challenging partnership process with children, and we hope that this manual will help you develop a model that best suits your local and regional needs. As a global network, Child Helpline International is able to tap into the wealth of experience of its member child helplines across the world, and we are happy to share some of that with you here.

Child Helpline International was launched in September 2003 in Amsterdam to help develop and strengthen child helplines for children and young people worldwide. Child Helpline International is the global member network of child helplines, working to protect the rights of children. As of the end of 2010, Child Helpline International's network consisted of 147 full and associate members in 133 countries worldwide. As a network, Child Helpline International is able to strengthen its member child helplines by offering them a platform to communicate, network and share their expertise with other child helplines and policy-makers. Child helplines are in the unique position of being privy to children's true voices, as they themselves choose to express them. Realizing the potential of this wealth of information, Child Helpline International collects data from all of its member child helplines worldwide on the numbers and nature of contacts they receive. Child Helpline International uses this data to advocate globally for children and their rights, as set down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC), and to help pave the way to consolidating and strengthening national child protection systems. In 2010, over 14 million children contacted the child helplines in the Child Helpline International network.

The experiences of our members, as well as other important partners and contacts, have made it possible for Child Helpline International to present this revised version of 'Building Your Child Helpline'. The aim of this compilation is to share with you some of the processes that have been effective in starting or scaling-up child helplines worldwide. Child Helpline International hopes you will be able to draw from the different accounts and lessons learned presented here as you plan your own child helpline. Case studies can be found throughout the manual to illustrate different methods used.

This compilation has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter briefly explains what a child helpline is, draws attention to the key elements of a child helpline and attempts to answer some of the questions you may have regarding particular activities of a child helpline and about getting started and scaling-up. The second chapter outlines the operations of a child helpline. The third chapter provides an overview of the structure of a child helpline and the implications this has. The fourth chapter outlines the suggested processes and steps to help you get prepared for launch or scale-up a child helpline in your country. The annexes at the end of the manual contain draft manual from several child helplines. Please feel free to adopt this material to your own specific situation.

Your experience in getting started and taking off will contribute towards a better understanding of effectively reaching out to more children. Child Helpline International values your comments and suggestions and all feedback is more than welcome: [info@childhelplineinternational.org](mailto:info@childhelplineinternational.org)

Best of luck with starting or scale-up your child helpline,

Child Helpline International



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## Chapter 1. What is a child helpline?

“Can a child contact the child helpline through the post or internet?”  
“Is a child helpline only for a specific target group?”  
“Do children come to the child helpline centre?”  
“Is there an age limit?”

These are some of the many questions asked when starting a child helpline. This section attempts to answer some of these questions and to define the core elements of a child helpline. It provides you with an opportunity to reflect on your understanding of a child helpline by:

- discussing what the key elements of a child helpline are;
- outlining the main objectives of child helplines;
- answering some frequently asked questions.

The conceptual understanding of a child helpline is an important step; it guides the development of the child helpline and its philosophy.

### 1.1 Key elements of a child helpline?

A child helpline is a telecommunication and outreach service, including the web, on behalf of children. A child helpline provides direct services, including, but not limited to: counselling, referral and active listening. The core principle of a child helpline is the protection of children. A child helpline provides emergency assistance and links children to long-term services. A child helpline is preferably accessible to children and young people around the clock and free of cost, enabling children to contact someone in any emergency situation; it provides children and young people with an opportunity to express their concerns and talk about the issues directly affecting them. A child helpline is founded on the belief that children and young people have rights, and that they themselves can best identify their problems if they are equipped with the proper tools.

#### *Structure of a Child Helpline*

Child helplines receive phone calls, text messages, e-mails and other means of communication from children. These communications are made to contact centres, often located in anonymous premises. Contact centres can be large centres with several telephone lines and computers, or they can be small centres with only one or two telephone lines. A country can have one or more contact centres, depending on the size and the spread of the population. While child helplines may vary, one constant remains: qualified child helpline staff and volunteers attend to the calls/contacts in shifts. The different characteristics and precise context of your country will partly determine the structure of the child helpline you propose to create or how you intend to scale it up.

Here are examples of different types of activities a child helpline may undertake, depending on the specific context in which it operates:

#### *Counselling and Referral*

Different types of contacts require different responses by different child helplines. In developed countries, most child helplines will respond to a contact by counselling the child or by guiding the



child into making a decision by him or herself. When the child has specific problems or needs which the child helpline is not equipped to address, the child helpline will then often refer the child to the appropriate services within the child protection system. Existing child protection services then have the responsibility to follow up and attend to the specific needs of the child. The following case is an example of counselling and referral:

#### **Case study Argentina:**

A 16-year old boy calls Línea 102 from a public telephone, pleading for someone to listen to him and help him find a solution to his problems. He is tired of dealing with the same issues everyday with his family. He relates various episodes of emotional and physical abuse, ranging from hurtful words to being physically abused. The boy expresses an interest in finding out more about becoming emancipated, and the counsellor explains that Línea 102 can help by referring him to the appropriate legal service. The boy agrees and the case is referred to the regional body dealing with the emancipation of minors.

#### *Direct Intervention*

In some countries, child helplines respond to calls from children by counselling the child and referring the child to the appropriate services. Especially in countries where child protection systems are not particularly well developed, the child helpline will, in response to a contact from a child in danger or in an emergency situation, intervene directly. A child helpline team member will go out, meet the child and help the child to safety when needed. In such cases, the child helpline has to first take immediate action to get the child out of the dangerous or emergency situation at hand, and then take the usual steps of making sure that the child is linked to the appropriate services for long-term assistance. The following case is an example of direct intervention:

#### **Case study Austria:**

On a cold winter night at 1 a.m., a 17 year-old boy calls the child helpline and announces that he wants to commit suicide. He feels that everything in his life is wrong - he is in trouble at school, has problems with his parents and his girlfriend has just ended their relationship. He tells the counsellor that he is on a bridge and is ready to jump. The counsellor talks to him for several minutes as he successfully traces the call. Suddenly, the call is disconnected. Only in such emergencies can the child helpline recall incoming telephone numbers on display. The counsellor tries to call the young man, but his mobile phone is disconnected. The counsellor immediately calls the local police and gives them the youth's location. An hour later, the police call the child helpline with an update: they have conducted a search operation in the district concerned. Divers have found the young man in the river - still alive. They have taken him to the hospital, and thankfully he has no injuries, except for a slight case of hypothermia.

#### *Outreach and Awareness-Raising*

A child helpline is not only about responding to calls. For children to contact the child helpline, they first need to know about the service and understand what the child helpline can do for them. Children also need to know how and where to access the child helpline. Outreach and awareness-raising activities are therefore key components of a child helpline. However, these activities are not only about informing children about the child helpline service and how to access it; outreach is also proactive. Outreach and awareness-raising activities take the child helpline service to children and ensures accessibility of the child helpline to even the most marginalised children.



## *Partnership with Social Services*

The case studies presented here all make one thing very clear: no child helpline can work alone. A child helpline has to work closely with the existing social services, both public and private. It is impossible for children to know about all the services available, especially in an emergency situation. A child helpline can thus be seen as a vital focal point for child protection, helping to link children to the services available. The child helpline can thus provide both a listening ear as well as referral to professional services when needed. The following case is an example of effective partnership between a child helpline and child protection services:

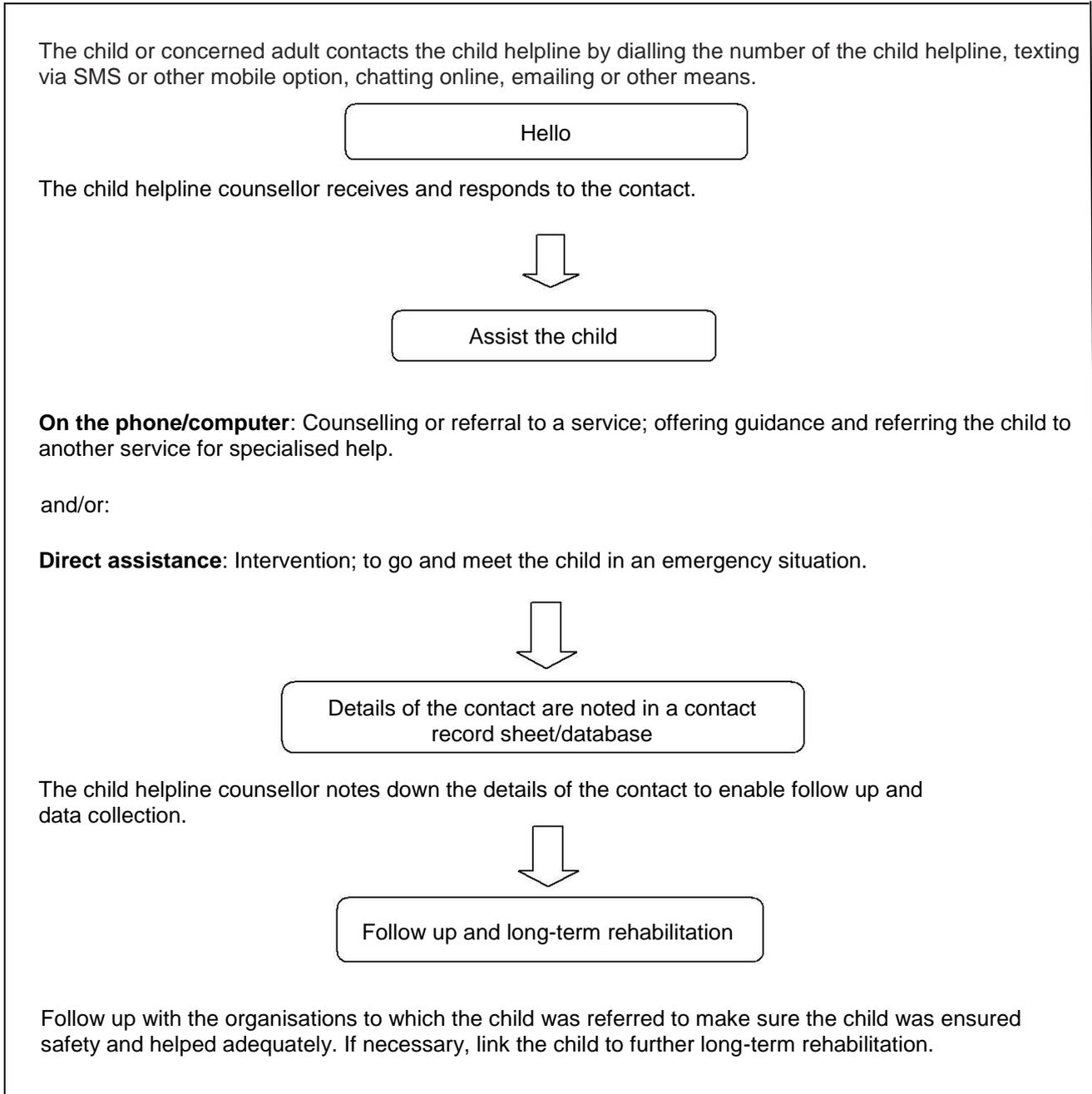
### **Case study China, Hong Kong:**

The headmistress of a school phones the child helpline reporting that extensive marks have been found on a five year-old girl. She is convinced that the girl's mother is responsible. The child helpline's social workers go to the school that very day to investigate and interview the girl and the mother. The social workers collect information about the family's background and support network, the mother's emotional well-being, the trigger factors for the beating and its intensity and frequency. Due to the severity of the beatings, the police are summoned and the girl is escorted to the hospital for a medical examination. A multi-disciplinary case conference is held in the hospital with the doctors, the nurse, the headmistress, the girl's teacher and the police. Eventually, the case is classified as genuine physical abuse and a Care or Protection order is applied to safeguard the girl. Arrangements are made to move the girl to a foster home for further protection. As part of the terms for reunification, the mother must also successfully complete a course in positive child management skills and must demonstrate an improvement in her emotional status.

The flow chart below describes the usual process that takes place from the moment a child helpline is contacted:



**Figure 1.1. Child Helpline Contact Flow**



### *Summing Up*

We hope that the above has given you a clearer idea on what a child helpline is or can be. Here are the key elements that define a child helpline again, in list and bullet form:

- 1. Accessibility:** In order to be accessible to children whenever they require assistance it is preferable that a child helpline is:
  - Operational 24-hours a day;
  - Available to children free of charge, preferably via an easy to remember 3 to 4 digit number, similar, for example, to those of the police and ambulance services;



- Nationally available, so that any child can seek assistance from any part of the country, and especially from rural areas or slums;
- Accessible to children and young people through any relevant media, which may include:
  - *Telephone* - landlines, mobile phones, SMS/text messaging and fax messages;
  - *Internet* - emails, web-posts, bulletin boards, chat rooms and library visits;
  - *In person* - outreach and walk-ins;
  - *Postal service* - letters and free post;
  - *Other* - radio counselling, television counselling and happy/sad boxes.<sup>1</sup>
- An outreach service, creating awareness amongst children in the streets, public areas, schools and other such place, and, where necessary, teaching children the child helpline phone number and how to dial it.

**2. Focus on Child's Rights:** A child helpline should focus on protecting the rights of children and should adhere to the principles outlined by the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC).<sup>2</sup> To keep child protection at the core of their services, most child helplines have developed the following policies:

- *Age of the child:* The majority of child helplines aim to reach out to children up to the age of 18 and in some instances up to 25 years old;
- *Target group:* While a child helpline is accessible to all children, the focus is generally on those children who are denied their rights and who are excluded from the benefits of society. This is especially true for street children, child labourers, abused children, victims of child trafficking, children with various disabilities, child addicts, children in conflict with the law, children in institutions, children affected by HIV/AIDS, children affected by conflicts and disasters, child refugees and children whose families are in crisis. A child helpline can also have contact with adults who have concerns about children.
- *Child Protection:* Child helplines are at the centre stage of child protection. A child contacting a child helpline is often making a first brave step towards sharing his or her concerns. Child helplines should have appropriate policies and systems in place to ensure that children are respected; □the child helpline's infrastructure (including the call centre's physical set up, recruitment, employment and volunteer mechanisms, privacy agreements with staff, training systems, work-from-home policies. etc.) should both reflect and enable these policies. Furthermore, a child protection policy should have a set of objectives relating to the purpose and scope of the policy. Its implementation should cover areas such as: making people *aware* of the policy; measures to prevent risks to children; the procedures in place for reporting concerns about children's safety and for taking action. The policy should also cover areas of responsibility and monitoring for good implementation of child protection plans. Additionally, a child protection strategy can and should incorporate the principles of child participation, as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In April 2005, in the wake of the December 2004 tsunami, Plan Sri Lanka, in consultation with Child Helpline International, implemented a psycho-social support project for school children. The Happy-Sad letter box was introduced in sixty-eight schools in the tsunami-affected divisions of the Hambantota district to promote the mental health of school children affected by the tsunami. The box, made of simple carton, allowed children to confidentially post letters expressing their views, questions, problems or concerns. It also helped to introduce the idea of a 'child helpline' in their society.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Article 12, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>



- **Child Participation:** Child helplines encourage and enable children to make their views on issues that affect them known, and also work to structure the child helpline's services around the suggestions given to them by the children who use them. Strategies that promote children's participation in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the child helpline are essential. Children should have an equal opportunity to express their views, to access information, to form associations, to participate in decision-making and to take action for their rights, in accordance to their age and level of development. Child participation is not only a fundamental right of all children, but decisions informed and endorsed by children are often also more effective and sustainable, serving to better protect children. A child calling a child helpline is a child expressing her right to participate; the child knows that someone will be there to listen to her needs. Decisions affecting the child should be taken on the basis of the active participation of the child. Child helplines can involve children in several ways: in the development and design of a child helpline; in the operation of a child helpline; in awareness raising activities; in the use of online technologies; in decision making and in monitoring and evaluation. A children's participatory policy should include:
  - a statement of how you see the participation of children in your child helpline;
  - a set of principles or guidelines to ensure that children's participation is meaningful, responsible and genuine;
  - a recognition of the local context that informs the policy, such as taking into account the cultural and political environment (political stability, levels of conflict, attitudes towards children); social, economic and geographic factors (diversity of population, size of country, resources available); etc.

**3. Linking children to resources and providing emergency assistance:** If children are to be provided with adequate care and protection, a functional child protection system should be in place. Child helplines need to work with other child protection services to improve the lives of children at ground level, as well as in the policy-making arena. For this reason, Child Helpline International and child helplines work jointly towards the institutional development of the child protection system at all levels. This institutional development includes working with police, state officials, social workers, teachers, the health care sector and others. The end result is not only a better understanding of the needs of children by all organisations involved, but also that the appropriate action and follow-up is taken to improve the situation of the child concerned.

A child helpline responds appropriately to emergency situations by providing intervention during a crisis period in the child's life. This period could last from the time of the call to such time that withdrawing assistance would not put the child back into crisis. After providing the emergency assistance, the child helpline then refers the child to other organisations for long-term rehabilitation. Childline Kenya is an example of a how a child helpline can and should collaborate with government agencies and child protection networks to weave a safety net for children. Working with CHI, Childline Kenya strengthened its referral system.

#### **Case study Kenya:**

When a child contacts Childline Kenya to report sexual abuse, Childline Kenya calls the Nairobi women's hospital to report the case. A special doctor is appointed to deal with the case and acts as a liaison between the child helpline and the hospital. Due to financial constraints, the hospital is unable to provide ambulance services. Childline Kenya therefore has an agreement with 'Goal Kenya', an international NGO, to provide children with ambulance and transport services to the hospital.



## 1.2. Objectives of a child helpline

Some key objective for a child helpline can be extrapolated from Child Helpline International's own key objectives.

They include:

- To operate in the spirit of the Convention of the Rights of the Child with a special focus on the protection and 'listening' rights of the child.
- To reach out to every child in need of care and protection by responding to calls/contacts and emergencies received.
- To ensure access of telecommunication services to the most marginalised areas (urban as well as rural).
- To advocate services for children where they are currently inaccessible, inadequate or non-existent.
- To strive for quality services for children in need of special care and protection and to ensure that the best interests of the child are secured.
- To provide a platform of networking amongst organisations and to provide linkages to support systems which facilitate the rehabilitation of children in need of care and protection.
- To create a family of NGOs and government organisations working within the framework of a national vision and policy for children.
- To learn from the experiences of other child helplines and the data that has been generated and jointly determine strategies to reach out to children more effectively.
- To provide an opportunity for child-to-child interface, which will build up a network of young people who can advocate for issues concerning themselves thereby placing young people at the centre stage of advocacy and policy development.

## 1.3. Principles, Standards and Practices for child helplines

Child Helpline International is committed to assisting member child helplines deliver quality services across the board. Elements informing the organisational responses of child helplines include professional standards, the values and mission of the organisation, staff development, support and training, and ongoing service review. This overview of child helpline standards describes how direct child helpline service responses should be designed to reflect Child Helpline International's core values and meet relevant professional industry standards.

Child Helpline International's Framework and Standards are to be used as a blueprint for the development of child helpline services and as a guide to enhance service and ensure on-going quality improvement. They can be used as a guide to inform clients and careers/ guardians about what to expect from their country's member child helplines and as a checklist for ensuring quality of service.



## Guiding Principles for Child Helpline Standards

All child helpline services:

- Encourage active participation by the child, young person or family in all aspects of service response and review;
- Are strengths-based, goal-focused and child-centred, including encouraging self-advocacy and self-determination;
- Are collaborative and meet client developmental needs;
- Involve mutual learning;
- Are responsive to client feedback through evaluation and continuous improvement systems, and;
- Are actively promoted to the community in a way that focuses on early intervention in families.

A range of professional approaches - including psychology, social work, social sciences, community development and family therapy - deliver child helpline services to the community.

The standards support:

- The promotion of optimal quality of life for children, young people and families;
- An approach that recognises the unique physical, emotional, social, cultural and spiritual dimensions of children, young people and their families;
- Informed decision making by individuals throughout their engagement with the child helpline;
- Continuity of care through integrated services and the development of inter-sectoral links between the child helpline and other organisations;
- Services that emphasise comprehensive, coordinated, collaborative and individualised care;
- Accountability to all stakeholders.

All child helpline practices are based on the active participation of children, young people and families in processes that value their individual development and support them in addressing their needs. Practices are shaped by ethical and legal responsibilities; Being aware of the ethical duty in caring for children and young people is recognised as paramount across all facets of child helpline practices.

Information gathered during the course of child helpline service delivery is managed under the relevant codes and policies in each country and/or region. These may include:

- Organisational Codes of Conduct;



- Professional Codes of Practice;
- Charter of Service User Rights;
- Organisational Privacy Statements; and
- Compliance with relevant national, state or regional legislation.

## 1.4 Frequently Asked Questions before starting a child helpline

In this section we try to answer some of the questions which we often receive from governments, organisations, individuals or countries who wish to set up a child helpline.

### 1. My country has poor telephonic infrastructure. Can it still have a child helpline?

While child helplines in developing countries do tend to look to telephones to get access to children in distress, they often also have an outreach component to reach children who cannot call the child helpline due to lack of telephone infrastructure or non-familiarity with phones. There is a plethora of alternative methods for reaching children, such as free post, roving vans, confidential boxes at trusted community centres and much more. Innovative and cost effective technologies like wireless looping, satellite technology or a dedicated radio station for children could also be explored as ways to reach out to and help children in areas where there is limited telephone infrastructure. In most countries where the infrastructure for fixed telephone lines is poor or non-existent, mobile phones are a rapidly growing market. Cost-free calls from mobile phones to the child helpline is therefore another important component for child helplines to strive for.

### 2. What is outreach?

Outreach - a cost effective awareness exercise - is an important aspect of child helplines. It is a medium through which the child helpline reaches out to children who need help but do not or cannot contact the child helpline, be it due to lack of established telephonic infrastructure, non-familiarity with phones and internet or any other reasons. Outreach ensures accessibility of the child helpline to even the most marginalised groups of children. Outreach can involve offering the child helpline's services in the home, on the street and through individual meetings with children, for example. Outreach can be school-based, in the form of school visits, or community-based, in the form of visits to children's clubs, street corner meetings, individual meetings with children, open houses with children or children's festivals and fairs. Additional target outreach areas could be public places where children are present, such as railway stations, bus stops, shopping malls and slums. Outreach is aimed at reaching out to children, making children aware of the child helpline's services and encouraging them to contact the child helpline for help with their problems. Outreach also allows a child helpline to get in touch with children across the board, and especially those children who would otherwise have no way of knowing about the child helpline and its services. Outreach allows child helpline's to introduce themselves and foster trust and communication with different groups of children.

### 3. How do child helplines spread awareness about their service?

Child helplines have several options to spread awareness about their services, depending on the target group. Children and adults can be reached by outreach (school- or community-based), distribution of promotional materials and through the media. The message should be tied to the target group. As a child helpline it is important to be present at those places where the target



groups can mostly be found. Nowadays, with children spending a lot of time online, the internet is a good place to spread awareness about a child helpline's service. By developing interactive websites and joining online social networks and Virtual Worlds (e.g. Habbo), child helplines are able to reach out to children who would otherwise be isolated. It is not advisable to have a big awareness campaign while your child helpline is still in a trial phase – the influx of contacts garnered would strain services that are still being tested and ironed out. For counsellors and volunteers it is also advisable to allow a period of testing and trial before increasing demand on the services. Bear in mind that if the demand is too great in the early phases of a child helpline's existence, and the child helpline cannot adequately respond to all contacts, children may lose faith and not use the services in future.

#### **4. We don't have enough resources to start a child helpline. What can we do?**

Because of their unique nature, child helpline services often do not fit neatly into mainstream child protection or child welfare funding systems. However, child helplines across the world have established many mechanisms to fund their services, drawing from both traditional sources of funding and creating their own innovative sources. It is therefore important to manage your organisation in such a way that it promotes the best chances for successful fundraising. In order to fundraise you will first need to identify key individuals within your child helpline who will assist in searching for potential benefactors. A clear mission statement and goals are also needed in order to formulate a visible and comprehensible case for support. Good fundraising also includes drawing up a list of key stakeholders and why you think they would want to invest in a child helpline. Nowadays new media and communication technologies are useful tools for both awareness and fundraising. Keep in mind also that as a child helpline, you can never work alone. Child helplines build on and work together with the existing social services in a country. Preparing a resource directory of existing child protection services in your area will let everyone at the child helpline know about existing services. By networking with existing organisations you can build on the services already available for children in need to weave a tight, well organised web of child protection. Documenting the contacts your child helpline receives and the types of assistance young people need will help to identify and advocate for those services which are currently inadequate or non-existent.

#### **5. We will be/are operating in an economically developing country. How do we proceed?**

In countries where formal child protection services are inadequate, non-existent, porous or weak, the child helpline will often have to offer different services to prove its credibility. The child helpline will have to intervene in emergency situations to make sure children are brought to safety and linked to the appropriate services for long-term follow up. Outreach will also be an important aspect of a child helpline operating in a developing nation. An efficient and quality referral system is always critical to ensuring the needs of children are properly dealt with. A child helpline which knows what services a child needs, and works in close cooperation with the provider of those services, can better guarantee the welfare and safety of the children who contact it for help. These service providers are key stakeholders. They consist of public and private entities within the child protection system and include the media, government agencies, non-governmental organisations and bilateral and multilateral entities. All of these agencies and organisations together contribute to a protective environment that shields children against abuse, exploitation and harm. Child helplines should work towards formalising informal agreements with different service providers and child protection agencies to ensure consistency in the quality of referrals and follow-up of individual cases.

#### **6. What is a child hotline or a child warnline?**

The terms helpline, hotline or warnline are sometimes used interchangeably in different countries. The most commonly used term, hotline, is defined as a telephone line that gives quick and direct access to a source of information or help. Child Helpline International's understanding and use of



the term child helpline is: a service provided to children, or to adults contacting the child helpline on behalf of children, through counselling, referral or intervention, via telephone, mobile SMS/text messages, email, internet chat rooms, free posts or outreach. A child helpline is a service especially for children.

## **7. Who contacts a child helpline?**

Those who contact a child helpline could be the children themselves or concerned adults such as parents, relatives, police, paediatricians, school teachers and others, contacting a child helpline on behalf of a child in need of care and protection. However, a child helpline should encourage children to be the primary users of its services. A child helpline should be trusted by children and children should identify it as being *their* service.

## **8. Should a child helpline also cater to young adults?**

International conventions on children define a child to be under 18 years of age. However, high risk groups of children often also include young adults on the street and older youth who are affected with HIV/AIDS or are addicted to narcotics and other substances. Child helplines therefore often also cater to young people between the ages of 18-25 years.

## **9. Do children actually contact child helplines by themselves?**

Yes! Contrary to what many people believe, children do contact child helplines by themselves. Many children call in more than once to share their problems. Child helplines work to develop trusting relationships with children to ensure that children perceive the child helpline as their own. As a result, children perceive child helplines as safe, trustworthy entities who are there for them, and results in children contacting child helplines voluntarily and of their own volition. Outreach in schools and communities is an integral component of child helpline services in this regard.

## **10. Why do children contact a child helpline?**

Children contact child helplines for a range of services, from information requests and advice on family or peer relationships, legal matters or sexuality to refuge from abuse, bullying or suicidal feelings. Children may also contact a child helpline simply because they are lonely and would like to speak to an adult. Data collected annually from Child Helpline International's member child helplines worldwide shows that the exact reasons why children contact a child helpline can differ from region to region. Over the years, however, most contacts have consistently been about abuse and violence (including physical, emotional and sexual abuse, as well as bullying and neglect) or were information requests (a child often first 'tries' a child helpline with a simple request for information, in order to test it and see if the response is trustworthy). In Europe and the Americas, many children also contact a child helpline to talk about family and peer relationships. In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the data shows that children often contact child helplines with psycho-social and/or mental health issues. In Africa, issues around legal matters tend to be relatively high on the list of reasons why children contact a child helpline.

## **11. How can children contact a child helpline?**

For many years, the main medium to contact a child helpline was a fixed telephone line. Nowadays, with new technologies constantly emerging, more and more child helplines offer online counselling via chat and email, as well as services such SMS-counselling for mobile phones. Interestingly, evidence from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) shows that over the last ten years, the digital divide between the developing and developed countries has been shrinking in terms of fixed telephone lines, mobile subscribers and internet users.



Phenomenal growth rates, particularly in the mobile sector, have reduced the gap that separates the developed countries from the developing ones. Several child helplines are starting to provide SMS-counselling services to increase access to child helplines for children, such as the deaf and hearing impaired, who would otherwise be left out. 2008 data collected by Child Helpline International from its member child helplines showed an enormous increase in the number of contacts received via SMS/mobile text messages (420,000) in comparison to the year before (150,000). Evidence from the Dutch Kindertelefoon's impact assessment (*'Experiences with the Kindertelefoon, A comparative analysis between support by chat and telephone services'*) shows that today's children are more willing to write an email or instant message than pick up the phone. With online and SMS/mobile text counselling the number of 'prank' calls often seen with conventional phone contacts also tends to go down, an especially important factor as prank calls can lead to high burnout amongst counsellors. What is more, the subject matter disclosed by children via these somewhat more anonymous channels is often of a more serious nature, with sexual abuse cases and potential suicides being raised in emails or chat sessions more often than via the telephone. There is no doubt that child helplines recognise and acknowledge the important role the internet plays in everyday life, and increasingly in children's lives. Next to providing online counselling via chat and email, child helplines are also adapting to the world of children by upgrading their websites with special tools such as online games and web self-services, to make these websites more interactive and attractive to children.

## **12. Should a child helpline have one, nationwide number?**

Yes, it should. Children in vulnerable circumstances, especially street children or trafficked children, move around from one place to another. A common, nationwide number for your child helpline is thus very important. One short, easy to remember number also helps children to more readily identify with the service. The number should be no longer than 3 to 4-digits and where possible toll-free for both the child and the child helpline (so that neither has to incur excessive and service-limiting costs). In the European region, the toll-free harmonised number 116 111 has been reserved allocated to child helplines in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, The Netherlands and United Kingdom. In South Asia the harmonised number 1098 is used by child helplines in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal. In Africa and the Middle East, the harmonised number 116 is used by child helplines in Guinea Conakry, Iraq, Lesotho, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe. In the future, it is expected that these harmonised numbers will be allocated to more child helplines in the respective regions. Apart from the fact that these numbers are easy to remember and toll-free, they show that a child helpline is part of a larger network. For children it means that all children use the same number to call their local child helpline.

## **13. Is it necessary to have a toll free number?**

Yes, it is. The concept of a child helpline is rooted within the child rights framework. Children have a right to demand care and protection. They should not be denied access to care, protection and information for lack of funds to pay for the call. A toll free child helpline number ensures that children can access help in any emergency or non-emergency situation and are not made to pay for seeking help. Both calls from landlines and mobile phones should be toll free, as should SMS and mobile texts. Ideally, calls and texts should be toll free also for the child helpline to help minimise costs and ensure that no child is denied full and uninterrupted service because of budgetary limitations. In 2009, Child Helpline International reviewed the toll free statuses of its members' child helplines. The review showed that while 76 child helplines were toll-free for both the caller and the child helplines, 35 child helplines had to pay for the cost of incoming calls. Thirteen child helplines did not have a toll-free (landline) number at all. Most disturbingly, eight child helplines had lost their toll-free status for the child helpline itself, and two had lost it completely. Maintaining toll free status can often be difficult in shifting political landscapes and with changing laws as different parties and officials move in and out of office. Child Helpline International works to help its member child helplines advocate with governments and



telecommunications authorities to make sure child helplines remain high on their agendas.

#### **14. Will the child helpline ‘damage’ family ties in my society?**

As mentioned throughout this manual, a child helpline is not built according to a ‘one size fits all’ formula. Child helplines operate in tandem with the existing child protection system and infrastructures in their respective countries. The operations of a child helpline are also adapted according to the cultures, norms, perceptions and regulations in each country. A child helpline is not a foreign body imposed upon a local system; on the contrary, it is there to help guide children to safety and security by creating links and partnerships on a local level. Before establishing a child helpline, it is advisable to carry out a needs assessment study amongst children, adults and partner organisations. Results of such a study can help a child helpline best adapt its awareness campaigns, operations and activities to serve children and young people.

##### **Mozambique launches a national child helpline:**

On 19 November 2009, Linha Fala Crianca, the Mozambique national child helpline, was launched. The launch coincided with the World Day Against Child Abuse. Linha Fala Crianca uses the toll-free number 116. Child Helpline International advocates for the allocation of the toll-free 116 number to child helplines in the Africa region. On 19 November 2009, various Mozambican cities were decorated with 116 banners across major avenues to mark the birth of 116 in Mozambique. Children celebrated the launch of Linha Fala Crianca by partaking in various activities ranging from games such as Zola (South African snake), traditional dances and poems and songs. The Minister of Women and Social Services also attended the occasion. Other organisations represented were Plan International, Save the Children, French Embassy, REDE CAME and REDE Crianca, among others. The toll-free number 116 was allocated to Linha Fala Crianca with the support of governmental institutions, including the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Women and Social Services and the telecommunication regulatory body of Mozambique; and is accessible from any mobile or landline number operational in Mozambique.

#### **15. If there are too many calls, how will we cope?**

Running a child helpline is not something that one organisation can do alone. Protecting and supporting children is everybody’s responsibility; the partnership model is crucial, particularly in a developing country where resources are scarce. A child helpline works in a partnership model when it collaborates and networks with many partners. Each partner holds joint ownership and responsibility for reaching out to children in need of care, assistance and protection. In addition, a child helpline is advised to start with a pilot project, in one city rather than nationally, and to operate within specific working hours and days rather than 24/7 right from the outset. This testing phase will allow the child helpline team to assess demand versus the capacity, and to adapt the services accordingly.

#### **16. In our country some taboo issues, such as sexuality, still exist and are never discussed. What can we do?**

In countries where indigenous norms or religious sentiments are prevalent, some taboo issues are not discussed in the open. Hence it is difficult for child helplines to create awareness around these issues. Based on the experiences of Child Helpline International member child helplines in such countries, it is suggested that child helplines start with a more generic approach, focusing on issues such as school-related problems, domestic violence, street children and the like. Once the reputation of the child helpline is established, and the local community becomes less wary, it can begin broaching some of the more taboo topics.

#### **17. How important is confidentiality?**

Given the sensitive nature of conversations and possible intervention outcomes, confidentiality is



a serious matter for child helplines around the world. Confidentiality is also one of the reasons why children feel they can trust the child helpline with their difficult matters. Confidentiality is important in the work of child helplines. The reality, however, is that the level of confidentiality offered to callers will depend in part on a country's child protection safety net. Where child protection services are an integral part of the government (such as in Europe, most of North America and parts of Asia), absolute confidentiality is a key ingredient of most child helplines. In other countries, where child helplines ARE the child protection system, child helplines in certain circumstances may need to know who is calling, and from where, in order to be able to directly assist a child. Regardless of the difference, the basic principle of a child helpline should be to always safeguard the well-being of the child above all. In this light, many child helplines have mechanisms in place that allow confidentiality to be broken when deemed appropriate and necessary by high level staff members at the child helpline. This is especially true when a child's immediate safety is threatened.

## **18. What is the meaning of the term 'Allied Systems'?**

Allied Systems are the organisations that a child comes into contact with. This includes a country's child protection system, including for example the police, health care, judiciary and education systems, transport authorities, labour, media, telecommunication, corporate sector, elected representatives and all of us! A child helpline needs to be in close contact with these Allied Systems to ensure a child friendly environment all around. The successful establishment or expansion of a child helpline depends on the willingness of partners to start or support a child helpline. Creating strong partnerships at the outset is essential to guaranteeing the launch of a new child helpline. A stakeholders meeting is a vital first step towards initiating or scaling up a child helpline. It provides the platform for convening key stakeholders to develop a joint plan of action to move forward. At stakeholders meetings, local and regional stakeholders, such as local telephone companies for covering the cost of calls (sponsorship), government for providing a toll free number and police for being able to properly refer children, are brought together to discuss the best way to set up a child helpline.

## **19. What are some of the common problems associated with running a child helpline?**

Child helplines, like any organisation or complex service, can run into problems, but nothing that cannot be overcome. One issue child helplines often face in their earlier stages of operation is a particularly large number of silent/bogus/prank/fun calls. When a child helpline first starts up, it is only natural that many children will test call. The challenge is to convert these testing callers into potential service users. Child Helpline International and its member child helplines have decided to look into this issue more carefully, by collecting best practices and involving academic institutions to do some research into the phenomenon of test calls. Another challenge in the initial stages of a child helpline's life is to directly reach out to children. Child helplines need to devise grassroots outreach and awareness campaigns to get their services kick started and off to a good start. Finally, another prevalent issue faced by child helplines, in both the initial phases and throughout a child helpline's existence, is a lack of or inadequate services available for children. This can range from a lack of night shelters to refer girls to, to a lack of funds for an expensive medical operation. The challenge is to network and fundraise locally, not only to generate resources, but also to build partnerships with all systems involved.

## **20. As a network what can Child Helpline International do for child helplines?**

Child Helpline International provides support and assistance to those wanting to start a child helpline and to existing child helplines that want to scale up from local to national coverage. Child Helpline International's overall purpose is to support and strengthen potential and existing member child helplines by offering them a platform to communicate, network and share their expertise with other child helplines and policy-makers. In addition to regional and international consultations, newsletters, manuals, online social media and other such platforms for



communication, Child Helpline International provides guidance and support to its members through theme-based trainings, workshops, stakeholders meetings and peer-exchanges. Every year Child Helpline International also collects, analyses and collates data from its member child helplines worldwide and uses it to advocate for child protection and child helpline related issues at all levels of governance.

A stakeholders meeting is a vital first step towards initiating or scaling up a child helpline. Key stakeholders are brought together to develop a joint plan of action towards the launch or expansion of the services of a given child helpline. Stakeholders meetings also help ensure that all parties have a common and clear understanding of the purpose of the child helpline within the child protection system. An action plan is a tangible end-product of a stakeholder meeting. It designates responsibilities, deadlines and decides which medium is best to ensure the launch of a child helpline. While action plans are most often used towards a launch, some existing child helplines use stakeholders meetings to plan for the expansion of their services as well.

After the stakeholders meeting, Child Helpline International stays in touch with the focal point (usually the government and/or NGO) in the country. Child Helpline International extends its support and consultation through regular contact, depending on the individual situation. Moreover, Child Helpline International provides documents to facilitate the establishment a child helpline. These documents include: Needs Assessment Study Reports from other child helplines; examples of different child helpline structures; samples of mapping and resource directories; training manuals for counsellors; and more.

#### **Maldives launches a national child helpline:**

Maldives launched its 24 hour toll-free Child Helpline 1412 on 19 November 2009 to mark the World Day for Prevention of Child Abuse. Vice President Dr. Mohamed Waheed Hassan Manik highlighted the importance of child helpline services in Maldives and urged the general public to report any incidences of violence against children. A pledge was signed by key government ministers to develop and implement firm policies to prevent violence against children. Memoranda of Understanding were also signed with the Department of Gender and Family Protection Services, Dhiraagu, Wataniya and Care Society. The launch received tremendous responses, focus and support from media channels throughout the country and from the public. Maldives has been in the process of setting up child helpline services since 2007, in consultation with Child Helpline International and assistance from UNICEF Maldives. The Government of Maldives partnered with Telecom Service Providers, Dhiraagu and Wataniya, key NGOs and government stakeholders in establishing child helpline services. Approximately 41% of Maldives population consists of children. The establishment of the child helpline ensures safety and accessibility to services for children throughout the country.



## Chapter 2. The operations of a child helpline

The previous chapter provided an overview of the key elements of a child helpline and addressed some of your initial concerns regarding the starting of a child helpline. This chapter looks at the operations of a child helpline in more detail and attempts to answer the following:

*What does a child helpline do and how does it do it?*

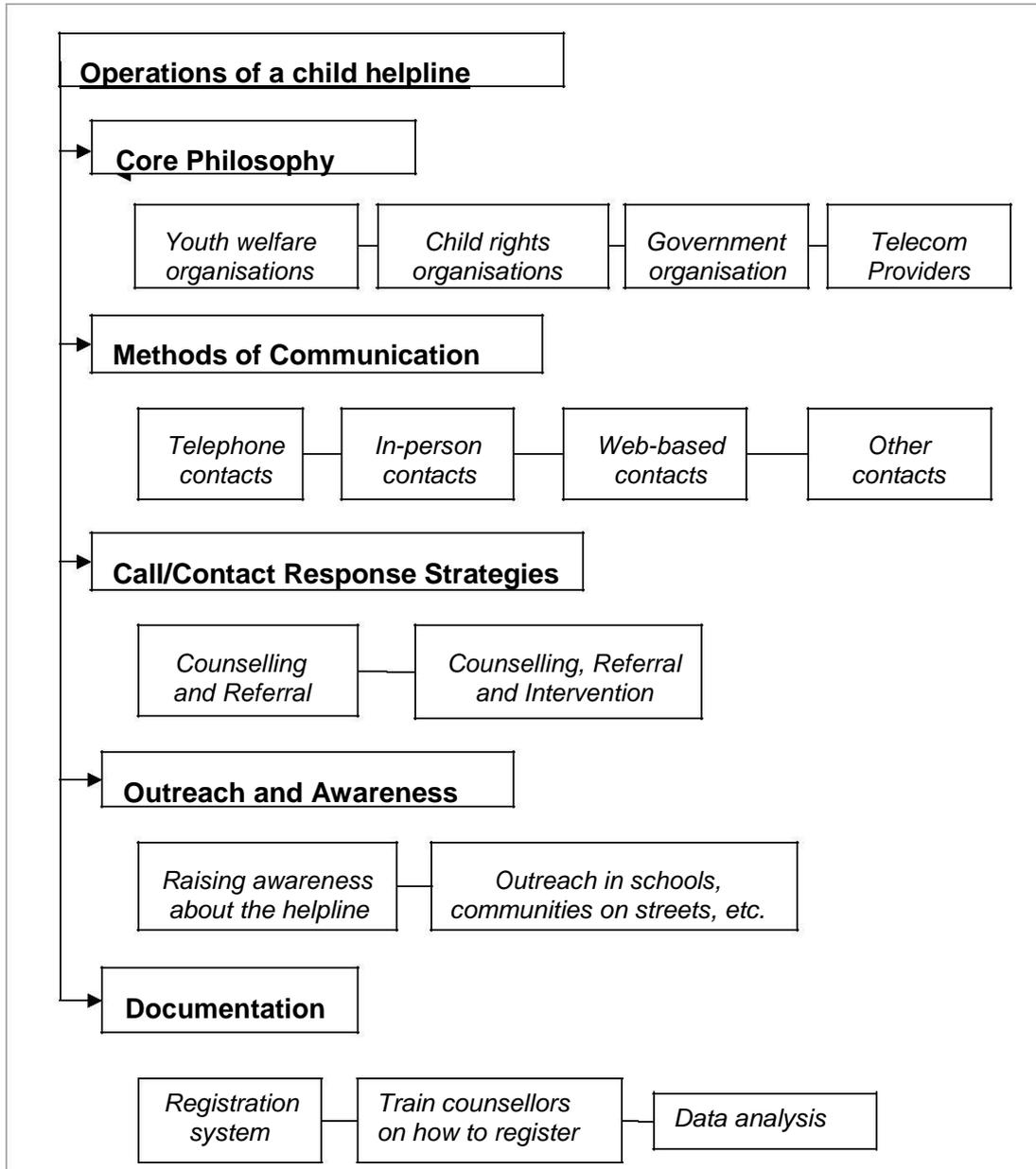
A child helpline is a telecommunication and outreach service designed for children and young people aged 0-25 years. It is accessible to all children whenever they require assistance or just need someone to talk to about issues that are affecting them. A child helpline places children and their protection as its core principle, providing (emergency) assistance and linking children to long-term services.

The work and operations of a child helpline can be looked at in five segments:

1. **Core philosophy:** in order to provide quality services to callers, child helplines work with other organisations, networks and government organisations.
2. **Methods of communication:** Child helplines make use of different communication methods to reach out to children, such as landline phones, mobile phones, emails, internet chat rooms, outreach, SMS/mobile texts and more.
3. **The call/contact response strategy:** The two main strategies adopted by child helplines are counselling and referral strategy; and counselling, referral and intervention strategy.
4. **Outreach and awareness:** Children and adults must know about the availability of child helpline services in order to make use of them and validate the need for a child helpline. The child helpline can use different strategies raise awareness for itself, including outreach.
5. **Documentation:** The child helpline believes in the importance of an effective system of documenting contacts.



Figure 2.1 An overview of a child helpline's operations



Each of the factors in the flow chart above is explained in detail in the following paragraphs:

## 2.1 Operations of a child helpline – Core philosophy

The successful establishment or expansion of a child helpline depends on the willingness of partners to start a child helpline. Creating strong partnerships at the outset is essential to guaranteeing the launch of a child helpline. A stakeholders meeting, the vital first step towards initiating or scaling up a child helpline, provides a platform for convening key stakeholders to develop a plan of action to move forward. It brings together local and regional stakeholders, such as local telephone companies for covering the cost of calls (sponsorship), government organisations for providing a toll free number and the police for being able to properly refer children, in order to discuss the best way to start or scale up a child helpline.



A cross-cutting approach enables child helplines to protect children by adapting the tools most used by children themselves. To this end, formal and informal partnerships with various organisations are critical. This includes working with telecommunications regulators and operators; Information and Communication Technologies companies; UN Agencies; relevant child protection agencies; schools; youth welfare organisations and many other players. By collaborating with other organisations, child helplines are able to determine the best way to reach out to all children, especially those most prone to falling through the cracks of the child protection system (such as street children; victims of sexual abuse and violence, trafficked children; immigrants and refugees; the disabled; and others).

Partnerships with other organisations can be formalised with a working agreement; a document signed by all entities involved wherein they agree to cooperate with one another without renouncing their independence.

#### **Signing of Memorandum of Understanding Indonesia:**

Since 2006, the Indonesian child helpline TESA 129 has operated in five pilot project areas (Banda Aceh, Jakarta, Surabaya, Makassar and Pontianak). During a strategic planning workshop in Jakarta (August 2009), key stakeholders signed a Memorandum of Understanding to enhance coordination amongst partners of the child helpline and thus improve the quality of referral and intervention services. By doing so, top officials from the Social Department, the State Ministry of Women Empowerment, the Department of Communication and Information Technology and Plan Indonesia showed a strong commitment to supporting the TESA 129 child helpline in expanding its services to reach all Indonesian children.

To assist you in writing a working agreement, please find attached:

- Annex XIII – Two templates of a Memorandum of Understanding

## **2.2 Operations of a child helpline – Choosing your method(s) of communication**

Most people think that child helplines only use telephones to listen and reach out to children. Although the telephone is the most common method of communication, for child helplines based in countries where children have little access to phones, complementing means of communication are used. These alternative methods include outreach, face-to face intervention, letters, postcards, radio and television programmes and more. With the advancement of technology, counselling via emails, confidential internet chat rooms and SMS/mobile text message has also become increasingly popular in countries where internet use is high amongst children. There is no 'one size fits all' method for how a child helpline listens and reaches out to children. Often child helplines choose a combination of communication methodologies to reach out to children. The methods of communication that child helplines use can be categorised as:

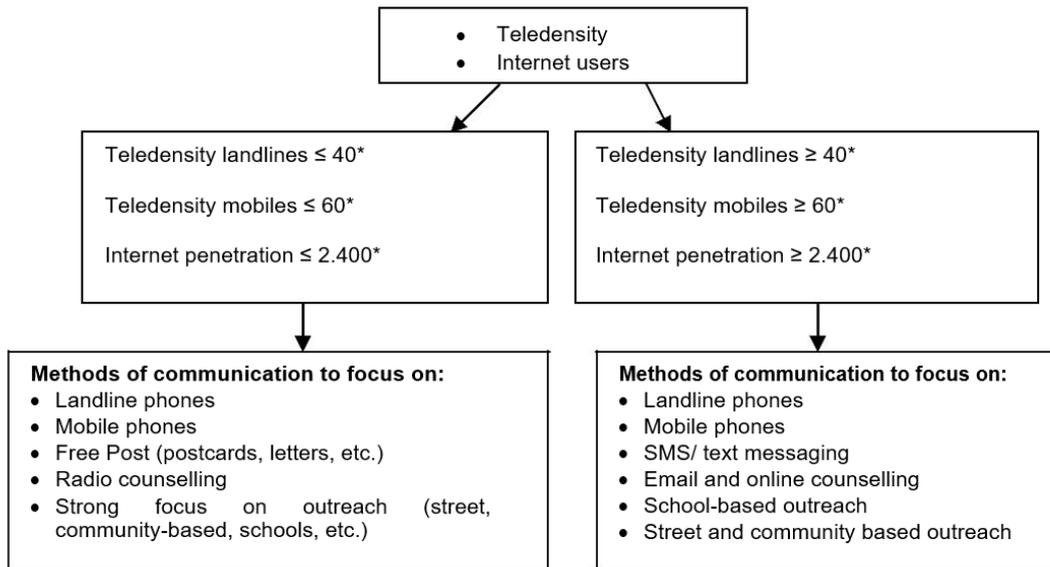
- Telephone-based contacts: landline/fixed phones, mobile phones, fax, SMS/text messaging;
- Web-based contacts: emails, internet online counselling/chat, web-post/bulletin board, online library;
- In-person contacts: outreach, walk-ins, face-to-face interventions
- Others: postal/mail collection boxes, radio counselling, TV counselling.



This section presents some factors for a child helpline to consider when choosing (an) optimal method(s) of communication. The factors include:

- The landline and mobile teledensity (main telephone lines per 100 inhabitants and cellular subscribers per 100 inhabitants);
- Internet penetration (internet users per 10,000 inhabitants).

**Figure 2.2 Choosing the optimal communications methodology**



\* The teledensity figures cited in the chart above are based on the highest regional average figures quoted by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). See <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics/> for more details.

It is important to note that once a child helpline has chosen the method(s) of communication to reach out to children and young people, it does not end there. A child helpline can and should continually adapt its services as conditions change over time. For example, child helplines who have seen an increase in mobile and internet use amongst children in their country or region have had to look into implementing online means of communication in order to stay relevant and readily accessible to those children.

*\*Tip: If you are still unsure as to which method(s) of communication to choose for your child helpline, it may help to ask these simple questions:*

- *‘Can the children in my country, including the marginalised children, access telephones easily? If they can, will the children call from home, from their own personal mobile phones or from public telephones?’*
- *‘Do the children in my country, including marginalised children, use the internet? If so, is it a large majority or just a small percentage of children who have access to computers?’*

It is important to find out from children themselves which method of communication is most prevalent amongst them, and which are their usual preferred methods of communication. The purpose of a child helpline is to be accessible to all children everywhere. There is no point in having an internet-based chat service if children in your country do not use this means of



communication. Similarly, there is little reasoning for not having such a service if children report using it regularly and as one of their main means of communicating.

## 2.3 Operations of a child helpline – Call/contact response strategies

The two main strategies adopted by child helplines are:

- Active listening, counselling and referral strategy; and
- Active listening, counselling, referral and intervention strategy.

### What do these terms mean?

*Active Listening:* A structured form of listening and responding that focuses attention on the client.

*Counselling:* A structured form of listening and responding which facilitates wise choices and decisions by actively listening to the client.

*Referral:* Providing information to a client about other sources of help both by providing information and/or also contacting other sources to assist the client.

*Phone-Based Interventions:* Contact between a caller and child helpline that occurs strictly via the telephone with no face-to-face contact. The contact may include active listening or counselling, sharing of information and referral to community resources. Any face-to-face contact that occurs as a result of the phone contact or in follow-up to the phone contact should be counted separately as a face-to-face contact.

*Face-to-Face Interventions:* Contact where the child helpline physically meets the client or child concerned.

To determine a suitable call/contact response strategy for your child helpline, you will need to know:

- The Human Development Index (HDI) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of your country, which reflect, to a large extent, the economic situation of your country;
- The status of your country's child protection system.

The stage of a country's **economic development** is an important factor in determining the optimal call/contact response strategy for the child helpline. The table below highlights some of the key indicators of a country's economic development:



Key indicators of a country's economic development	Economically developing	Economically developed
<b>1. Human Development Index (HDI)<sup>4</sup></b>		
What is the HDI of your country?	Below 80	Above 80
<b>2. Gross Domestic Product (GDP)</b>		
What is the GDP in your country?	Under US\$10,000	Above US\$10,000
<p>HDI measures a country's average achievements in three basic aspects of human development: longevity, knowledge and a decent standard of living.</p> <p>GDP per capita is often used as an indicator of standard of living in an economy.</p>		

A country's stage of development is not the only factor to consider. The strategy chosen by a child helpline is also closely linked with state of a country's **child protection system**<sup>5</sup>. Where child protection services (including social services) are underdeveloped, the child helpline will have to fill in the gaps and usually has a counselling, referral and intervention model. In countries where the child protection system is well developed, a child helpline reinforces the links within the child protection system, with a focus on a counselling and referral strategy. In choosing a suitable call/contact response strategy for your child helpline, you should therefore consider carefully the status of your country's child protection system, the services available (including public services and the NGO network) and the accessibility of these services to children. The figure below shows the optimal strategy for child helplines based in developing and developed countries, taking into consideration the country's child protection system.

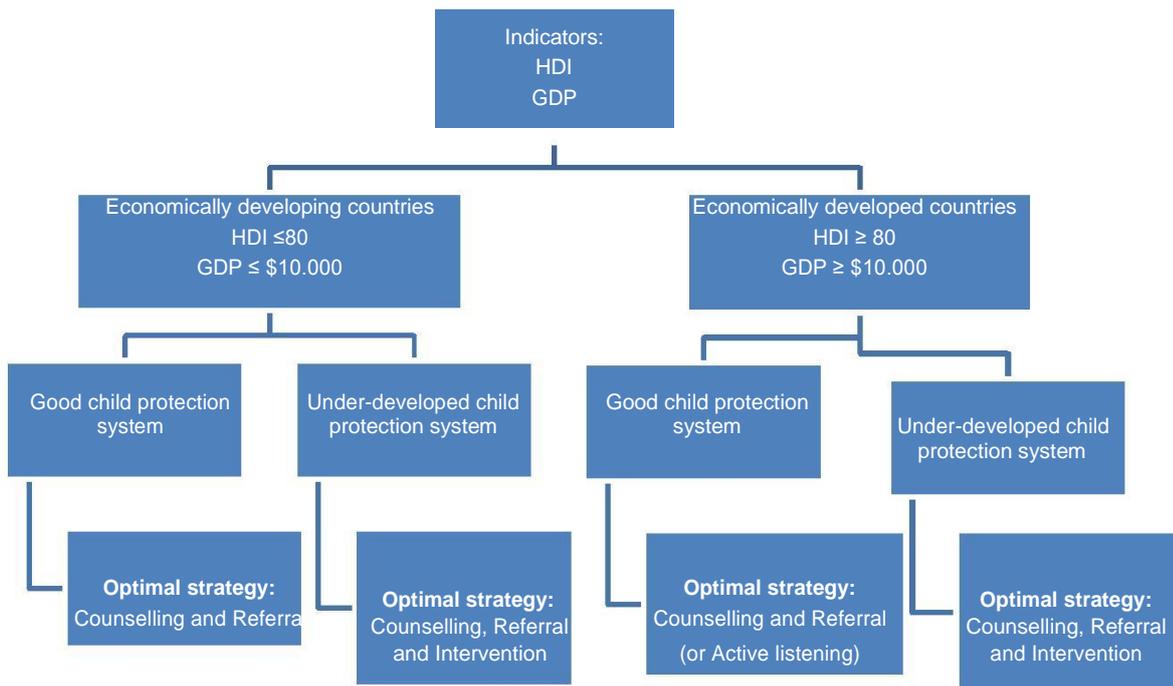
<sup>4</sup> **HDI** is a summary composite index that measures a country's average achievements in three basic aspects of human development: longevity, knowledge, and a decent standard of living. Longevity is measured by life expectancy at birth; knowledge is measured by a combination of the adult literacy rate and the combined primary, secondary, and tertiary gross enrolment ratio; and standard of living by GDP per capita (PPP US\$).

- **Human development classifications:** All countries included in the HDI are classified into 3 clusters by achievement in human development: high human development (with an HDI of 0.800 or above), medium human development (HDI of 0.500–0.799) and low human development (HDI of less than 0.500).
- **Income classifications:** All countries are grouped by income using World Bank classifications: high income (gross national income per capita of \$9,386 or more in 2003), middle income (\$766–\$9,385) and low income (\$765 or less).

<sup>5</sup> **Child protection system** is a group of services designed to promote the well-being of children by ensuring safety, achieving permanency and strengthening families [or primary caregivers] to successfully care for children. Most become first involved with the child protection system due to a report of suspected child abuse or neglect. The child protection system is not a single entity; it is an inter-dependent network of organisations including public agencies (departments of social services, child and family services, etc.), community-based organisations providing children-related services, such as foster care, residential treatment, mental health care, substance abuse treatment, parenting skills classes, employment assistance, financial, housing assistance, etc. Child protection systems and their specific procedures vary widely by country



**Figure 2.3 Determining the optimal call/contact-response strategy**



This figure shows the two different strategies that child helplines adopt across the world, determined by the country's stage of economic development and the state of its child protection system. The first strategy of counselling and referral is mostly adopted by economically developed countries, whilst the second strategy of counselling, referral and intervention is mostly adopted by economically developing and underdeveloped countries.

## 2.4 Operations of a child helpline – Awareness and outreach

A child helpline should be accessible to all children, including but not limited to school children, street children, child labourers, abused children, children with various disabilities, children in conflict with the law, children in institutions, children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and children affected by conflicts and disasters. A child helpline therefore needs to use different types of awareness-raising and outreach strategies to reach out to such different target groups of children. This section briefly presents the different ways in which child helplines can make their services known to different groups of children.

**Awareness:** The experiences of Child Helpline International's member child helplines worldwide show that children do contact child helplines directly. In fact, many children contact a child helpline more than once (sometimes repeatedly) to share their problems. For children to contact a child helpline, they need to be aware of its existence, including the child helpline's contact details (number, website, etc.), the service it offers and other relevant information. Thus, in addition to answering and responding to calls and contacts, a child helpline's work also needs to include awareness-raising activities. Different awareness-raising strategies have been used by child helplines in different regions, including the use of media (newspapers, radio and television), public conferences, special events such Children's Day and more. It is important to note that the awareness strategy chosen by a child helpline can have an impact on the:

- *Target beneficiaries contacting the child helpline:* If a child helpline uses a television campaign to promote awareness of the child helpline, it will only reach children with



access to televisions. To reach marginalised groups of children, other awareness strategies are required.

- *Reasons why children contact the child helpline:* Some child helplines intentionally organise awareness campaigns during thematic national events, such as National Child Abuse Prevention Week. These child helplines subsequently receive a larger number of abuse-related calls after their awareness campaign.

#### **Sweden, BRIS**

Of the many activities aimed at raising awareness of a child helpline amongst children and young people, the so-called idol or 'celebrity card' campaign used by Swedish child helpline BRIS stands out as one of the more visible. The idea is simple and straightforward: Every year the child helpline asks several national celebrities to participate by sending in a photo of him or herself as a twelve-year-old and briefly describing problems they might have had at that age. Almost everyone has gone through some tough times during their childhood. These cards aim to provide both support and to show children that they are not the only one having such problems – even celebrities had them. BRIS has produced these cards annually since 1998 and they have proven to be very popular amongst the young recipients. The cards are handed out to all children starting sixth grade. In other European countries, child helplines have picked up on this idea and have started using it for their national awareness campaigns as well.

**Outreach:** This is a medium through which the child helpline reaches out directly to children by meeting and speaking with them. In economically developed countries, where the majority of children attend school, outreach conducted by child helplines is often school-based and is aimed at reaching out to children in schools, making the children aware of the child helpline's services and encouraging them to call the child helpline when in distress or in need of assistance. Through school-based outreach, the child helpline can also reach those children who are often more difficult to connect with, such as deaf children and children with learning difficulties. In economically developing countries, street and/or community outreach is often used by child helplines to reach out to children who need help but do not or cannot contact the child helpline, be it due to lack of established telecommunications infrastructure or unfamiliarity with phones and other means of communication.

#### **Case study ISPCC Ireland, and CHILDLINE India**

In Ireland, the child helpline ISPCC provides a one-on-one real time mobile text support service to children and young people from the deaf and hard of hearing community within Ireland. Based on the success of the regional pilot, this project has been scaled up to a national level.

When it comes to school-based outreach, CHILDLINE India conducts several activities. CHILDLINE has developed a number of products that they hand out to the children in schools, such as labels that children can stick onto their notebooks. The child helpline also teaches classes on issues that children encounter and guide children on how they can contact the child helpline. CHILDLINE India also organises drawing competitions to get an idea of children's perception of the child helpline, and when feasible have the child helpline's contact information printed on the cover of school books. Recently CHILDLINE India has started to appoint children as CHILDLINE ambassadors to spread the message of CHILDLINE in their respective schools.



*A quick way to choose the optimal awareness and outreach strategy (or strategies) for your child helpline, will be to ask the following questions:*

- *Which group of children do you want the child helpline to reach out to?*
- *Where are these children gathered and what is the best way to reach out to them, making them aware of the child helpline so that they can contact the child helpline in times of need?*
- *If the child helpline chooses a particular campaign, will it effectively reach out to the children the child helpline is trying to assist? Do these children have access to the medium being used to raise awareness (televisions or schools for example)?*

Child helplines around the world have utilised innovative awareness and outreach strategies. For more information on different strategies successfully implemented by Child Helpline International's member child helplines around the world, please contact Child Helpline International at: [info@childhelplineinternational.org](mailto:info@childhelplineinternational.org)

## 2.5 Operations of a child helpline – Documentation

An important part of the daily operations of a child helpline is the careful and meticulous registration of the calls and other types of contacts that reach the child helpline. While record-keeping and data collection can sometimes seem like a chore (or an ancillary or secondary function to working at a child helpline), they actually form the foundation of a child helpline's work. Good records ensure that continuity can be provided to long-term callers; good records can also be used for fundraising purposes as they will help highlight the demand on the service and the nature of contacts received (in other words, showcasing the issues about which children contact the child helpline). Records also provide excellent material for advocacy, as an analysis of reasons why children call the child helpline provides real and meaningful information about children's issues for key decision and policy-makers. Furthermore, records can identify ongoing training needs for counsellors who need to know how to work with any emerging trends.

When designing data collection systems it is important to think about the sort of information that will be useful. How will the information be compiled and what will be done with the information once it is collated? Recording information just 'for the sake of it' or 'just in case' can be a disincentive to filling in forms.

In general there are two principle types of data that should be collected: Firstly, information relating to a specific client, for example the gender, age and the reason for contacting the child helpline. This allows child helpline staff to more easily identify a client in the future and improve or build upon the support offered. Secondly, general details regarding the nature of the contact(s) received should be recorded. This can include for example the length of a call or email conversation, the time of the day when contact with the child helpline was made and other such details. This information can help highlight trends and can be used to streamline and improve the child helpline's operations. An example might be beefing up the number of counsellors present during peak contact times during the week, or finding ways to make contact response time more efficient.

One of the Child Helpline International's core activities is the collection and analysis of the information that member child helplines have on their contacts with children. This data is Child Helpline International's most valuable resource and the core feature of all the advocacy efforts of Child Helpline International as a network and of the individual child helplines. Data collected from



child helplines is instrumental in demonstrating the value of child helplines to policy makers, and in identifying real issues that children face in their lives, as reported to child helpline by children themselves. For example, in 2009 abuse and violence accounted for 14% of all contacts made to member child helplines worldwide. This shows that children use child helpline services to report on abuse, and also that abuse and violence against children is a major theme that continuously needs attention from policy makers and practitioners. Child Helpline International data shows more in-depth insights by differentiating all major reasons for contact into subcategories. All of this data and analysis can be found in Child Helpline International's flagship data publication *Connecting to Children*.

Child Helpline International, in cooperation with child helpline member Kek Vonal (Hungary), has developed a data collection software package that is adaptable to the varied needs of child helplines throughout the world. The result is an application that can be easily updated and is streamlined with Child Helpline International's annual data questionnaire, making data collection easier for individual members and Child Helpline International alike. This data software package was created at the recommendation of child helpline members, and to assist new child helpline members in their data collection.

For further details on this data package, please contact the Child Helpline International:  
[info@childhelplineinternational.org](mailto:info@childhelplineinternational.org)



## Chapter 3. Structure of a child helpline

Over the years, Child Helpline International has worked closely with various organisations in various countries to start child helplines. The questions often arise: “What will our child helpline look like?” and “what is the best structure for our child helpline?” The response invariably is that there is no one type of structure that can be used globally. Each child helpline has to evolve its own structure based on the needs of the children in each country, the state of the nation’s child protection system, the cultural context and other such factors. Even so, there are some key elements which can guide you towards the most suitable structure for your child helpline.

This chapter outlines the factors which can help inform the structure of your child helpline, including: the needs of children in your country; the Human Development Index (HDI); the existing child protection system; the cultural context/languages spoken and more.

Based on these factors Child Helpline International has created a reference checklist to determine the following:

- *Optimal number of contact centres:* Calls and contacts are answered and responded to in contact centres by the child helpline team. Countries may need to have one or several contact centres in different locations around the country. This will depend on various factors, such as the needs of children in the country, teledensity spread and more.
- *The governance framework:* To ensure sustainability of the child helpline, it is essential to have a broad-based governance structure.

### **Semantics: ‘Call Response Centre’ or ‘Contact Centre’?**

*In section 2.1, we mentioned that child helplines today use many different methods of communication in addition to telephones listen to and help children. While many traditional child helplines used to be solely telephone based, receiving and responding to calls from children in what was known as ‘call response centres’ (similar to traditional phone operator stations), today we tend to speak of ‘contact centres’, equipped with more than just telephones. Child helplines today respond to walk-in cases, letters, emails, internet chats, SMS and text messages and more. In this manual the term ‘contact centres’ is therefore used instead of the more traditional ‘call response centres’.*

## 3.1 Contact centres

### 3.1.1 Functions of a contact centre

Contacts<sup>6</sup> are answered and responded to in contact centres by the child helpline team (paid staff and trained volunteers). The task of the contact centre is to respond to every contact that comes in to the child helpline, preferably 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, and to provide the necessary assistance. The contact centre staff answers and responds to contacts, provides

<sup>6</sup> Contacts: All types of communication made to a child helpline. This refers to all forms of communication including those made via telephone, online, SMS, post/mail and face-to-face contact. It includes test calls, but does not include group work with young people.

Silent call: phone call where the caller remains silent for the whole duration of the phone call.

Test call: phone call where the caller will contact the helpline several times to ensure that the child helpline can be trusted. If reassured, the caller will often progressively expose their reason for contact.



emergency assistance and where necessary follows up on cases. The contact centre staff is sometimes also involved with creating awareness of the child helpline's contact information through extensive outreach.

The key functions of the contact centre include:

- Responding to all contacts, case interventions and follow-up;
- Conducting regular phone testing;
- Documenting all calls and maintaining registers;
- Feeding data into the computer database;
- Organising monthly meetings with all the team members;
- Preparing and implementing a monthly plan for outreach to make children aware of the service.

The number of counsellors working at any one time depends on the demand on the child helpline from the public. This needs to be reviewed periodically. As the child helpline becomes established and more widely known, demand may increase. Where possible, it may be necessary to increase the number of counsellors available accordingly. Another issue to be taken into consideration is the peak time for contacts at the child helpline. If there are high levels of school attendance, there might be relatively few contacts during school hours, with a higher volume of contact after school hours. At a minimum, there should always be two people on shift at any one time. At least one shift supervisor should always be present. The role of the supervisor is generally not to respond to contacts but to be available to assist and support counsellors taking calls/contacts.

Many child helplines recruit and train volunteers to be part of the contact centre team. In countries with some resources, volunteers could be paid at least a token amount or stipend.

For further details about running the contact centre and information on staffing, rotas and shifts please refer to the *Counselling Practice Guide* produced by Child Helpline International.<sup>7</sup>

### **3.1.2 Determining the optimal number of contact centres**

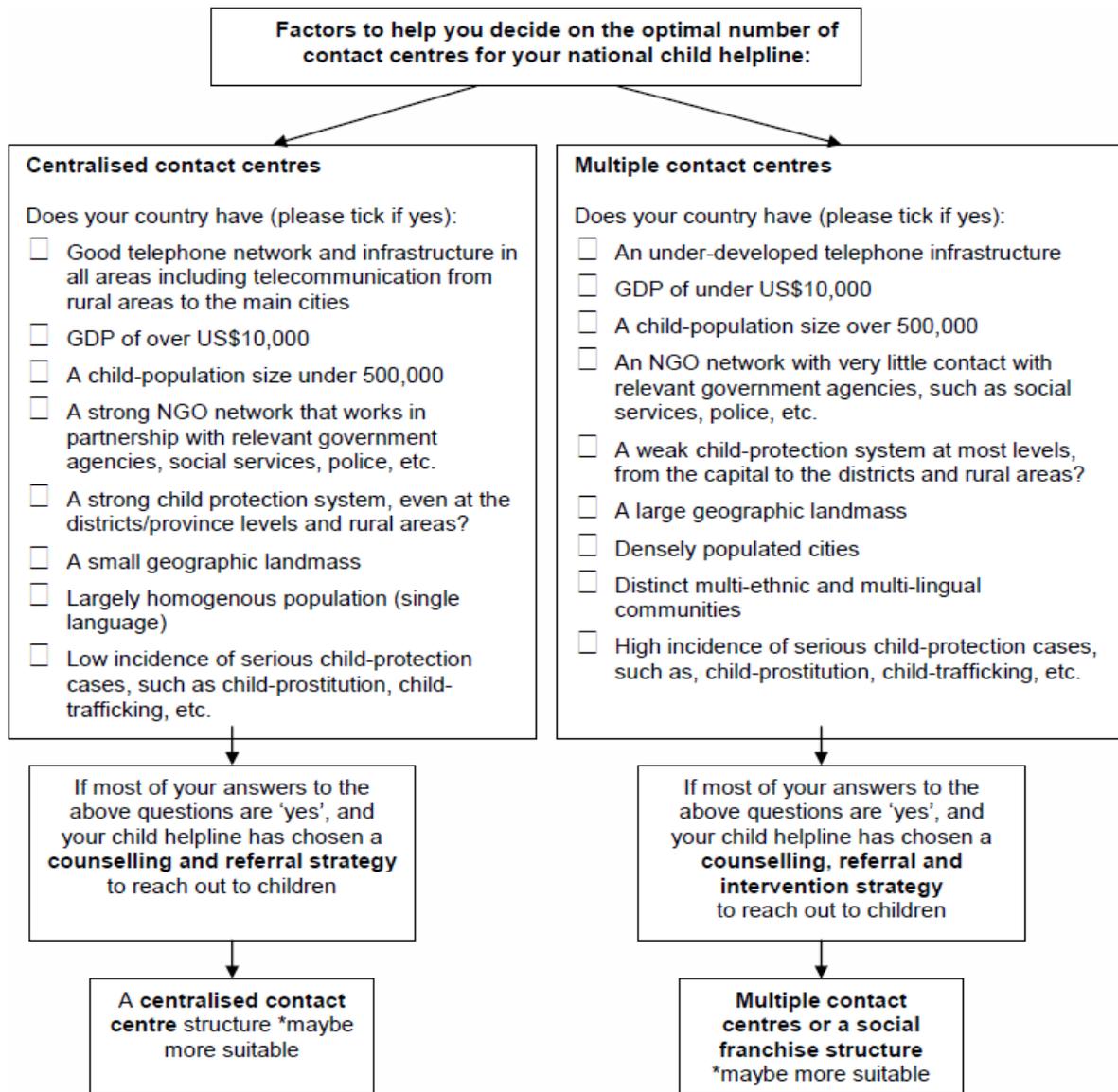
Most child helplines around the world have multiple contact centres. Historically this has evolved either due to the availability of volunteers, telephone technology, size of the country and the linkages within a country's child protection system. However, an analysis of the contact centre framework indicates that the optimal number of contact centres can be determined according to various factors, as outlined below:

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<sup>7</sup> A copy of the 'Counselling Practice Guide' is available in English, Spanish, French and Arabic and can be requested from Child Helpline International through [info@childhelplineinternational.org](mailto:info@childhelplineinternational.org)



Figure 3.1



\* Please note there can be exceptions. Even if the child population of a given country is small, a large landmass may still require multiple call centres to ensure adequate response to all children, for example. See below for more concrete examples. If you have any questions, please email: [info@childhelplineinternational.org](mailto:info@childhelplineinternational.org)

### Choosing a centralised contact centre:

If your child helpline has a counselling and referral strategy, and it is based in a country with high teledensity, with a well-developed child protection system, then one centralised contact centre is often sufficient. However as seen in figure 3.1, more contact centres may be required if the country is multilingual, with each region/district speaking a different language (or dialect). This is the case in Switzerland, where three official languages are spoken in distinct parts of the country. Switzerland's national child helpline - 147 Pro Juventute - has one contact centre per region, where the staff speak the same language as the children using the service. It should be noted that if a country has a multi-ethnic population then the child helpline counsellors need to be multilingual, and it is very helpful if the major ethnic groups in the country are represented within the staff and volunteers as well. This is imperative for child helplines with a counselling and referral strategy in which most communication takes place over the phone/internet. With little in-



person contact, communication can go a lot smoother and be much more effective if the child can speak in his/her native language.

## Choosing multiple contact centres

Child helplines with a counselling, referral and intervention strategy require multiple contact centres. The specific number of contact centres is determined by the following criteria:

- **The country's telephone network:** Different countries have different telephone technologies. For example, some countries are on electronic exchange whilst others are on manual exchange<sup>8</sup>. Even within countries, due to modernisation and privatisation trends in the telecommunications sector, different telephone systems are often used for mainlines and mobile networks. For example, some countries have mobile networks on CDMA whilst others use GSM technology<sup>9</sup>. This distinction will impact the number of contact centres. To illustrate: if a country has an electronic exchange it can have one call centre for the whole country, but if a country has a manual exchange, the contact centres should be regionally located and the child helpline would therefore need multiple contact centres. The child helpline needs to liaise with the Telecom Regulatory Authority in its country to determine the feasibility of the number of contact centres. Please contact Child Helpline International if you want further technical details.
- **Child population:** A country's child population, size and density (number of children in any given area) are important factors to consider as well. In a densely populated city such as Mumbai, India, with a population of 16 million, multiple contact centres are necessary in to respond to children in a timely manner. However, in Albania, for example, with a total national population of 3 million, fewer contact centres are needed.
- **The geographic landmass:** For countries with a large landmass, multiple contact centres are necessary. This is because if a child calls requiring immediate intervention, the child helpline team may take too long to reach the child if the one contact centre is located far away. This is true even for large countries with low child populations. Mongolia, for example, has a population of only 3,041,142 (July, 2009 est.) but a land area of 1,564,116 sq km and will thus require multiple contact centres to provide adequate coverage.
- **The ethnic and cultural diversity of the country:** Child helplines based in countries with multi-ethnic and multi-lingual communities have different needs from child helplines based in homogenous countries where one language is mainly spoken. Multiple contact centres are important in countries with ethnic/cultural diversity in order to cater to the specific needs of children from different ethnic backgrounds and ensure access to child helpline services for all children.
- **The level of child protection needed:** The child protection situation of a country is also a determining factor for the number of contact centres needed. Although Cambodia and Honduras are relatively small countries with a small child population, these countries have high incidences of child-trafficking to neighbouring countries. Hence, the priority for countries like Cambodia and Honduras to have multiple contact centres is as high as a large country such as Mongolia or a densely populated city like Mumbai.

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<sup>8</sup> In the field of telecommunications, a telephone exchange is a piece of equipment that connects phone calls. It is what makes phone calls 'work' in the sense of making connections and relaying the speech information.

<sup>9</sup> There are different digital communication technologies used to provide wireless communication services; they include CDMA (Code Division Multiple Access), GSM (Global Standard for Mobile) and TDMA (Time Division Multiple Access).



### **Mongolia - Friends 1979 child helpline launched in May 2005**

At the invitation of Mongolia's National Authority for Children (NAC), Child Helpline International conducted a visit to Mongolia in July 2004 to help facilitate the establishment of a national child helpline. During this visit, NAC organised a stakeholders meeting to encourage key partners in child protection to discuss their perceptions about a toll-free, three-digit national child helpline for Mongolia. As a result of this stakeholders meeting, a collective plan of action was formed to determine a structure for Mongolia's national child helpline. The concept of a child helpline was certainly not new to Mongolia. In 2004, there were a total of nine disparate child helplines operating in the country. Child Helpline International and the Mongolian team discussed the possibility of establishing one national child helpline that would reach out to many more children in the country. The key stakeholders in Mongolia worked extremely hard to get the new national child helpline off the ground and on 11 May 2005, the child helpline was launched. This new national child helpline uses multiple contact centres but is better able to coordinate activities and provide support across the board than many individual child helplines working individually.

## **3.2 Social franchise model**

It can be very expensive for a child helpline to have multiple contact centres, especially in countries where resources are scarce. Child Helpline International therefore strongly recommends partnerships between NGOs and relevant government agencies to effectively and most efficiently respond to and intervene in cases. CHILDLINE India evolved a 'Brand add-on model' or 'social franchise model' for an effective intervention model. This model encourages countries to set up child helplines out of existing facilities and integrate the child helpline as an additional component to their services. An advantage of this model is that it recognises the importance of local and regional expertise within a national structure. The 'social franchise model' allows the child helpline to be adapted to the cultural context. Organisations forming partnerships to implement the service are committing to the core beliefs of the service and agree to function under a uniform national brand. This facilitates better quality of intervention, utilisation of resources and creates a joint sense of ownership to the service.

The most important features of the 'social franchise model' are:

- There is a common brand image presented to the public. The logo, phone number, colour scheme and awareness campaigns are the same at national level.
- The organisations implementing the service must adhere to common quality standards such as transparency and willingness to participate in periodic networking and facilitation meetings.
- The organisations involved focus on issues related to the Child Rights Agenda. This agenda must be reflected in all the activities of the organisation.
- The overall structure of the child helpline service in the organisations is the same. However, implementations differ based on the cultural context of different regions.
- All organisations forming partnerships to implement the child helpline service commit to the core beliefs of the service and sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), outlining their roles and responsibilities.

To assist you in drafting a Memorandum of Understanding, please find attached:

- Two templates of MOUs in Annex I



### 3.3. Governance<sup>10</sup> framework – proposed structure of a child helpline

A child helpline's management and organisational structure goes beyond its contact centres, counsellors and volunteers. To ensure the long-term sustainability of the child helpline, it is essential that it has a broad-based, forward-looking governance structure. A suitable governance structure for a child helpline is dependent on various factors, including the economy of the country, the role of the government and the history of the non-profit sector where the child helpline is based. For example, in transition countries the government tends to take on a greater role. In countries where the non-profit sector is very active, NGOs can take a lead role in the governance of the child helpline. In other countries, partnership between the government and NGO sector is reflected in a child helpline's governance structure. This is seen in the child helpline in India for example, where the NGO sector is dynamic and the government is supportive of NGO partnerships. There is no one type of governance structure that will be suitable for all child helplines in the world. However, because child helplines play an integral role in a country's child protection system, it should be noted that for the effective functioning of the child helpline, it is important to involve the government in some capacity. Ultimately, child protection is the responsibility of the state.

For further details on governance issues related to the work of child helplines please refer to

*Good Governance and Accountability - a guide to strengthening your child helpline*, produced by Child Helpline International. The guide can be requested from Child Helpline International in English, French, Spanish and Arabic at [info@childhelplineinternational.org](mailto:info@childhelplineinternational.org)

#### 3.3.1 The child helpline's Advisory Committee/Board

Due to the nature of a child helpline's work, it is recommended to establish a multi-disciplinary Advisory Committee or Board. Suggested members to have on the Advisory Committee or Board include: government representatives, telecommunication representatives (government and private companies), NGOs, NGO networks, donor organisations, sponsors, bilateral and multilateral organisations and representatives from agencies within the child protection system such as the police, railway authorities and other support organisations.

The role of your Advisory Committee or Board will include:

- *Mission*: making sure that there is a clear sense of mission shared throughout the child helpline, a good mission statement and appropriately planned and evaluated programs and services;
- *Values*: defining values and setting the standard for professional conduct through its own behaviour as well as in the policies it establishes for others to follow;
- *Resources*: ensuring the child helpline has adequate resources (human, material, and financial) by hiring the executive director, monitoring the financial health of the child helpline, ensuring the acquisition of sufficient resources and assisting in resource mobilisation;
- *Outreach*: promoting the child helpline in the community and serving as a link with members, donors, beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

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<sup>10</sup> Governance refers to the actions of a board of directors of an organisation with respect to establishing and monitoring the long-term direction of the organisation.



### 3.3.2 The child helpline's Coordinating Team

If there are multiple contact centres, the child helpline governance structure should ideally have a team to coordinate the activities of the different contact centres. The primary role of the coordinating team is to ensure effective networking, providing documentation inputs and trainings for organisations associated with the child helpline. The child helpline's coordinating team is able to find solutions for the issues or problems faced by team members in responding to calls/contacts, thus ensuring the effective functioning of the service.

The key functions of the coordinating team include:

- Facilitating the coordination of the child helpline at the country level through regular meetings of the child helpline partners and visits to the organisations;
- Ensuring connectivity to the child helpline's number by following up with the telephone department;
- Organising ongoing training of the child helpline's field staff;
- Organising regular networking meetings with outreach organisations;
- Conducting trainings with the Allied Systems such as the police, doctors, nurses, probation officers and others;
- Ensuring that there is sufficient and relevant awareness material about the child helpline;
- Compiling monthly reports on the contacts received, highlighting key innovations, publishing a newsletter/annual report, contact-related publications and reports and updating the resource directory.

The members of the team should be comprised of at least one coordinator at the country level who can lead the process, preferably with 5-7 years of experience in the field and a degree in social work. Depending on the size and complexity of your country you may need more than one coordinator.

#### **Togo – launch of Allo111**

The launch of Allo111 child helpline in Togo took place after the training of counsellors in November 2008 by LifeLine/ChildLine Namibia and was co-funded by Child Helpline International and UNICEF. The Minister of Social Welfare graced the launch of Allo111 on 14 January, 2009. It is the first child helpline in Togo and aims to address all problems facing children and young people, including neglect, abuse and violence, exploitation and more. But Allo111 will also inform and educate the citizens on the rights of children to protection, participation and provision as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The network providers Togocel, Moov and Togo Telecom jointly made the toll-free number 111 available at no cost, giving access through their networks.



### 3.3.3. Staffing Levels

At a minimum, there should always be two people on shift at a call/contact centre at any one time. There are three reasons for this. First, the counsellor taking the call/contact may need assistance in referring the child to other services while at the same time being able to maintain contact with the child. Second, as phone and online counselling can be stressful, having a colleague present during a difficult session can offer much needed support. Third, having two counsellors present means that standards are maintained and that there is a safe working environment. Although it can seem difficult to provide two counsellors at all times, both counsellors do not have to be engaged in contacts. One counsellor can answer incoming contacts while the other carries out routine work (such as administration activities) and remains available if needed. A shift supervisor should always be present when there are many counsellors, volunteers or paid staff on duty at the same time. In such cases, the role of the supervisor is generally not to answer contacts but to be available to assist and support counsellors in their work.

Child helplines should organise a rota or schedule to make sure that the contact centres are appropriately staffed. This can be either a 'fixed' rota, where counsellors work predetermined regular shifts (for example every Monday evening) or 'floating' schedules, where counsellors put their name down to work available shifts which suit their preference every week or month. A fixed rota tends to be easier to manage, and works particularly well for paid staff where regularity is important. It also fosters the development of close relationships between counselling colleagues. However, there can be a few problems with fixed rotas. Fixed rotas can feel restrictive and, especially where close relationships develop, can make it more difficult for newcomers to join, as 'cliques' may already have formed. While floating rotas are more flexible and provide an opportunity for counsellors to meet a variety of colleagues, it is sometimes more difficult to provide support and supervision to counsellors when they are less well known. Additionally, counsellors may not develop a feeling of being part of the group. One way to address this is to develop a hybrid system which adopts aspects from both rota systems. A hybrid system can involve a mixed rota where some counsellors cover regular shifts, while others 'fill in the gaps'. Regardless of the shift system used, the persistent challenge is to make sure that shifts are filled. It is almost always necessary for someone to be responsible for the rota and to find replacements when counsellors cancel (if they are ill, for example) or are on leave.

The length of time that a counsellor spends on shift depends on the demands on the service, (and on the local context). Where volunteers have to travel long distances to reach the office they may prefer to work fewer, longer shifts. This can have implications on who can become a counsellor, as volunteers may not be able to allocate long periods of time to the service. The length of a shift also depends on how busy counsellors are. Working at a child helpline where the phone rings constantly can be especially draining. In this case, a shift of 3 or 4 hours may be the most that counsellors can manage without the quality of their counselling being seriously affected. If 3 or 4 hour work shifts are not possible, sufficient breaks should be allowed (coffee and meal breaks, time to stretch or take a short walk). Another factor which effects shift length is demand. Where longer shifts are used, it may be appropriate to have extra counsellors coming on duty for shorter periods of time to help provide additional cover when demand is high (when school lets out in the afternoon, for example, during holidays or following disasters or emergencies).

Some child helplines use a switchboard system. In this system, contacts are answered by one person who then allocates the client to an available counsellor. This is a useful system where the child helpline is very busy, as contacts can be screened and prioritised. Another benefit is that quick queries can be dealt with at the switchboard rather than tying up a counsellor. Sometimes, however, children find the transfer of contacts from switchboard to counsellor difficult to tolerate in situations of intense stress or need. There is a risk that they will hang up. It should also be remembered that working a switchboard can be very demanding for the person answering the incoming lines when there are many test calls and tense, stressed clients waiting for assistance.



## Chapter 4. How do I build a Child Helpline?

The experiences of Child Helpline International's member child helplines have shown that systematic planning before initiating or scaling-up the service of a child helpline is essential for its smooth functioning. There is, unfortunately, no standard blueprint for building a child helpline; the service requires adaptation to the specific social, cultural and economic contexts of a given country. However, certain processes can help effectively plan child helpline services, be they new services or scaled-up ones. It is advisable to launch new services first as a pilot, in one or two cities or districts, rather than going through initial teething problems already on a national scale.

This chapter explores the first steps to follow before launching a child helpline. These steps include:

1. Mapping the local hotlines and helplines in your area and visiting them;
2. Organising a stakeholders meeting;
3. Listening to children through a Needs Assessment Study;
4. Exploring the region through a Resource Directory and Mapping;
5. Determining the structure of your child helpline;
6. Preparing a business plan;
7. Mobilising resources for the child helpline;
8. Training the child helpline team;
9. Launching the service.

Many of these steps may be undertaken simultaneously.

### 4.1 Mapping the local hotlines and helplines in your area and visiting them

Before organising a stakeholders meeting it is important to find out if there are local hotlines or helplines in operational in your country (especially hotline/helplines working with children and young people). There may be smaller, more specialised or thematic services already existing that could be part of a nation-wide structure. It is important that these services are visited and invited to the stakeholders meeting so that they can share their experiences with setting up a child helpline in your area and possibly be part of the national child helpline (if they work with children).

### 4.2 Organising a stakeholders meeting

A stakeholders meeting is the first step towards initiating or scaling up a child helpline. The purpose of this meeting is to get key stakeholders together to discuss their perceptions about a child helpline and determine a collective plan of action to take this idea forward. When scaling-up a child helpline, emphasis is placed on the scale up of a local child helpline to national coverage.

It is important that all major stakeholders are present at this meeting. These stakeholders can



include: local hotlines and helplines, NGOs, regional/national child right networks, academic organisations, telecommunications ministers and companies, UNICEF, donors and sponsors, government officials and child rights activists. In countries where small local child helplines exist, and in the case of scaling-up, child helplines would also be invited to participate in the stakeholders meeting.

The agenda for your stakeholders meeting should broadly include:

- Sharing the experiences of an existing child helpline from the region;
- Understanding the global perspective of child helplines;
- Reflecting on country-specific problems affecting children;
- Determining a plan of action to take the idea forward;

The stakeholders meeting can be facilitated by Child Helpline International, with Child Helpline International staff helping to lead an interactive process to present the concept of a child helpline, and building on international experiences from the network. A visit from Child Helpline International would also include meetings with telecom companies and the telecoms regulatory authority to ensure toll-free lines, and meetings with key stakeholders such as UNICEF, Plan offices and donors to promote the child helpline concept.

#### **Stakeholders Meeting to Support Building a Child Helpline in Iraq:**

Supported by UNICEF Iraq Office, a stakeholders meeting and visit were held in Amman, Jordan on 3-5 August 2008 with ten representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and affiliated departments, the telecommunication sector and UNICEF. Participants from the three governorates of Erbil, Duhok, and Suleimaniya discussed the perceptions of child helplines and the steps already taken towards building a child helpline in Iraq. The meeting resulted in a set of action points to take the project forward in Northern Iraq. The three-day meeting included a visit to the Jordanian Family Support Line, run by the Jordan River Foundation, to see how child helplines in the region practically operate. To date, the child helpline team has implemented many of the steps agreed upon during the brainstorming meeting. Child Helpline International has supported them throughout the process towards launching a child helpline in Iraq. In July 2011, the child helpline launched in Erbil, a pilot area in Northern Iraq.

To assist you in planning for your stakeholders meeting, please find attached:

- A tentative agenda for a stakeholders meeting in Annex II
- A list of tentative invitees for a stakeholders meeting in Annex II
- Proposed points for a possible plan of action in Annex III

### **4.3 Listening to children via the Needs Assessment Study**

Each country is unique and has its own set of needs and services already available and its own set of child-related issues and problems. A Needs Assessment Study (NAS) is an extremely important process in understanding children's perceptions regarding a child helpline and in



building consensus amongst other stakeholders about the service. The NAS is usually conducted with the help of city/district level organisations and involves both children and adults as participants.

The key objectives of a NAS include:

- Planning an organisational structure for the child helpline, based on the needs of the children and opinions of the community.
- Identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the child protection system in a country to ensure effectiveness of the child helpline therein. A strong child protection system in a country guarantees a protective environment in which all entities work together coherently to protect the rights of children to survival, growth and development. Entities enabling a protective environment include government agencies (national and local governments from the ministries of Social Welfare, Education, Health, Justice, Planning and Telecommunications), children and youth representatives, Parliament, magistrates, media, national and international NGOs, communities, multilateral and bilateral agencies, human rights activists and the private sector.
- Determining the focus of awareness strategies. For example, if the NAS reveals that street children/child labourers are the primary target group for your child helpline, then awareness strategies would have to be through outreach on the streets, railway stations and the like.
- Developing a networking strategy with allied systems. The NAS is also conducted amongst allied systems to determine their perceptions on the problems faced by children. This helps to facilitate the development of an effective strategy for networking.
- Identifying a volunteer base. The NAS introduces the concept of child helplines to children and concerned adults.

It is important to mention that Child Helpline International will continue using data to build and strengthen child protection systems. Data from children contacting child helplines forms the backbone of the network and is ultimately used to inform, shape and form policy at all levels. Child Helpline International can set baseline figures of how child protection systems should ideally work within countries in various stages of development. With Child Helpline International's data, the network can effectively shape child protection systems throughout the world to make children's safety nets stronger and safer. Child helplines are in a unique position to fill in the gaps of existing child protection safety nets everywhere.

NGOs that are interested in participating in the work of the child helpline can conduct needs assessment studies in the geographic areas they work in. An important feature of these studies is that children should be encouraged to participate as researchers themselves, for example by interviewing their peers. This gives children ownership and ensures their full engagement and involvement in the processes.

A child helpline seeking to involve children in the development and design of its child helpline can:

- Use a questionnaire. Child Helpline International can provide a needs assessment which can be translated into local languages and adapted to local situations;
- Use a variety of participatory tools with children such as, for example, focus group discussions. Focus groups can be conducted with children from different backgrounds.



Discussions should be conducted together with key outreach workers who know and understand the context in which the children live. Time should be spent with each group of children. Games, drawings and discussions should be used to solicit information from children about their specific needs for a child helpline. Children can also be involved in mapping their environments and the issues they and their peers face. They can then present their findings and conclusions to the relevant stakeholders involved in with the child helpline.

Child Helpline International has developed a guide on *Child Participation Practice in Child Helplines*. The guide aims to inform how children are and can be involved in different activities, at different levels and at different stages of the child helpline. The guide can be requested from Child Helpline International at [info@childhelplineinternational.org](mailto:info@childhelplineinternational.org)

Many organisations looking to set up or scale up a child helpline will have limited resources at hand. It is therefore especially important to carefully design the projects and services to get the most impact in relation to available resources (financial, human, time and effort). Gathering the information needed using a NAS will help the organisation make informed decisions about the project.

At this stage, in addition to defining the geographic area to be surveyed, and deciding on the sample (if sampling is necessary), the following key processes can be used to conduct a NAS:

### 1. *Determining the objectives of the study:*

The first step is to clearly define the objective of your Needs Assessment Study. Some of the questions asked of children in the NAS could include: the types of problems faced by children, their current coping strategies, whether they would dial a child helpline, when they would do so and what kind of assistance they would seek. Similar questions would determine the objectives for concerned adults.

### 2. *Deciding on the research design:*

A research design can be either qualitative or quantitative. As the objective of the child helpline study is clear-cut, experience has taught us that sample surveys work best. A stratified random sample is the ideal mechanism. Stratification is based on different criteria for different groups.

- *Children:* stratify for age and condition, children living with families, children going to school (private, municipal, non-formal), child labourers (according to occupation) and runaways, for example.
- *Adults:* stratify for the public at large, government functionaries (police, health, civil services, etc.), educators and thematic experts.

### 3. *Data collection:*

The interview questionnaire should ideally not be distributed but rather personally administered, especially with children. After the interview questionnaire has been administered to all the relevant participants, the data collected is organised. Children themselves should be involved in administering the questionnaire/conducting interviews where possible. You can involve street children in the NAS for example by asking for their input in the formulation of the questions, as well as the collection of data/interview process amongst their peers. This will also allow you to reach groups of young people (such as street children) you may otherwise not have enough contact with yourself. Remember also that children trust their peers and may be more willing to give truthful and complete answers when the interview is administered by other children.



#### 4. Data analysis

The analysis of data refers to the ways in which data can be arranged to provide the information. It is preferable that children are involved in understanding and looking at the findings of the study. Data analysis could include:

- Data coded on the computer;
- Data fed into a computer package;
- Data presented in tabular form using tables and cross tables.

#### 5. The report:

It is important to generate a clear report containing the problems, possible solutions, evidence gathered and the methods used to gather it. The report is written to help formulate the child helpline's plan of action. Children should be part of the team that writes up the report and could also be involved in the presentation of the report to government officials, for example.

For samples of NAS reports please contact Child Helpline International at: [info@childhelplineinternational.org](mailto:info@childhelplineinternational.org)

To assist you in conducting the NAS, please find attached:

- A draft sample survey for children and adults in Annex IV
- A fact sheet on tips for data collection with children, adults and with children as researchers in Annex V

### 4.4 Exploring the region

It is important for child helplines to make optimum use of existing resources in the region, and it is therefore essential to explore the resources available.

Two processes that have been effective in this respect are:

- The compilation of a resource directory;
- A city mapping of resources.

These processes will be explained in more detail below.

#### 1. A resource directory:

A resource directory is a comprehensive list of services available to children in the region. This includes a listing of child related organisations along with counselling services, addiction centres, contacts of child specialists, shelters, hospitals, police stations, local donors, ambulance services, concerned adults and sponsorship agencies. A resource directory is a compilation of all available resources for children. It will help you to formulate a clear situational analysis of the area which



will not only identify gaps in services, but also allow strategies to be developed to link the child helpline to available services. City/district resource directories should then be collated nationally to provide an overall national picture of the services available for children in your country. This will also be an important resource when advocating for national policy changes. The resource directory needs to be updated periodically. The resource directory needs to include all organisations working on behalf of children. Additionally, it needs to include information about local administration, such as information about council offices at city level.

The resource directory should include the following services:

- Residential services for children;
- Boarding homes for girls/boys;
- Street children related services:
  - Contact points;
  - Day contact centres;
  - Day/Night shelters
- Specialised services;
- Specialised/thematic hotlines;
- Disability related services;
- Child Guidance Clinics;
- Sponsorship services for children;
- Adoption services for children;
- Vocational training services;
- Drug addiction (substance abuse) related services;
- Phone counselling services;
- Women-related services;
- Police stations;
- Hospitals and ambulance services;
- Blood banks;
- Local administration;
- Any other.

An effective resource directory necessitates the systematic compilation of all organisations in the



country. An academic organisation could also be asked to help with the creation of a comprehensive resource directory. Compilation of a national resource directory involves the following processes:

✓ **Identifying existing sources of information about services through:**

- Existing directories of services;
- State social welfare departments;
- Newspapers;
- Word of mouth.

After these sources have been explored a list of organisations in the city is prepared, and NGOs dealing with specific groups of children are given the responsibility of listing services available for those groups of children.

✓ **Visiting an organisation to explain about your child helpline and assessing its willingness to be involved:**

The child helpline or academic institution visits all organisations working with children. It is recommended that representatives from the child helpline or academic organisation meet with all staff members of the organisation during the visit. The purpose of the visit is to understand the intervention strategy of the organisation, to explain the concept of child helplines and to discuss the involvement of the organisation in your child helpline and further ways of collaboration.

✓ **Collating data collected on services for children in the city/district:**

Data obtained is fed into a specially designed computer programme and a hard copy of the resource directory is prepared in the following format:

Name of the organisation :

Address :

Contact person :

Telephone/Fax/E-mail :

Working hours :

Objectives :

Intake policy :

Age, sex, documents required, other information

Target group :

Services available :

Infrastructure :



Capacity :

✓ **Sending a draft copy of information collected to the organisations:**

Every organisation mentioned in the resource directory should be sent a draft copy of their entry, which they should verify and send back (to the academic organisation if applicable). Organisations listed in the directory must always update the child helpline in case of changes in policy or services.

✓ **Compiling the final resource directory:**

The academic institution makes any final changes and prints copies of the final version of the resource directory. It is then distributed to the contact centre, coordinating team, outreach organisations and interested parties or organisations.

It is important to remember that:

- To be effective, the resource directory must be:
  - User-friendly and easy to refer to;
  - Constantly updated;
  - Translated into the regional language(s).
- The resource directory can help you turn your child helpline into a truly collaborative effort. This can be done by:
  - Holding regular meetings with organisations listed in the directory;
  - Sending the child helpline's newsletter to all outreach organisations;
  - Sending a monthly letter to organisations listed in the resource directory about cases which have been referred to the organisation.

**USA - National Runaway Switchboard (NRS)**

NRS conducts an annual update of its 13,200 member referral agency database. It is critical that the database be diverse to meet callers' needs and that agency service profiles (hours of operation and 24 hour contact information) are accurate for crisis line staff and youth and families in crisis. To this end, NRS developed a custom automated process where they contact the agencies by email and ask them to verify or update their agency profiles on the NRS' system. Agencies are provided with a secure password protected website to view and make changes to their profile with the ability to print the final profile for their records. For those agencies without email addresses, NRS faxes them a copy of their agency profile and ask them to update the information. NRS follows up all rejected email and fax contacts by phone to ensure that they obtain correct contact information. If they do not reach an agency after four attempts they will suspend the agency from their database until proper contact is made and services/contact information is confirmed. Crisis line staff who find a resource that appears to be out of service are able to send an automated message to the resources database coordinator for follow up. NRS takes advantage of this annual contact point to offer the referral agencies the opportunity to enter into a three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NRS. This is another automated process that pre-enters agency information into a standard form.

To assist you in compiling a resource directory, please find attached:

- An example layout of a resource directory in Annex VI

*2. Mapping exercise:*

To help familiarise your child helpline team with available resources and services in the region, a



detailed map of the city/district should be prepared. This map plots those geographic locations where there is a high concentration of children and the available resources such as organisations, hospitals, shelters and the like. This mapping helps to define specific target outreach areas for the child helpline team. City mapping should be carried out periodically, as a regular exercise with the team, in order to capture and reflect changes on the ground and additions in available resources. A good mapping will help in the preparation of a plan of action. The city mapping exercise is based on the results of the previous two exercises - the resource directory and Needs Assessment Study.

The following points are marked on a map of the city/district:

- Areas from which the calls/contacts are expected;
- Areas where marginalised children are likely to be found (traffic lights/slums). Marginalised children include street children, runaways, beggars, domestic helpers and other such groups;
- Resources available in the city/district. If all these resources cannot be plotted on the map, information about the same should be collected;
- Administration offices – such as the municipal office;
- Prominent areas in the city/district such as bus stands, railway stations and parks;

The more detailed the map, the more focused the child helpline's interventions can be in reaching out to children in need of care and protection.

To assist you in preparing your city map, please find attached:

- A format of the city map in Annex VII

It is recommended that this exercise continues to be updated after the launch of the child helpline. Data inserted has to be checked and verified to ensure it is up to date. In addition, the operation of the child helpline will support the gathering of such data, identifying the gaps, and determining the location of new partners or areas where children gather.

The sample mapping below is taken from the Egyptian child helpline 16000. Through the contacts received by the child helpline the team was able to determine the areas where street children gather in the city of Cairo, Egypt. This information is then used in planning outreach programmes targeting this specific vulnerable group.





## 4.6 Preparing a business plan

As an emergency service for children, user fees cannot not be charged. Resource mobilisation is therefore a key component to getting your child helpline started. A business plan must be prepared to present to donors. The business plan does not need to be complicated, but it needs to be clear, reasonable and attainable. A comprehensive business plan starts with an introduction offering information on the country's situation, the need for a child helpline and the vision and mission of the child helpline. The business plan explains what has been planned to build the child helpline and what you will be doing in the coming months. The proposed strategy and structure will also be outlined. This will be further explained in the objectives or strategic goals of the child helpline, which describe all the activities a child helpline will undertake and how children can benefit from these activities. The business plan will conclude with a timeline and a budget.

To assist you with preparing a business plan, please find attached:

- Example of the index of a business plan, including a draft proposal and annual budget for the child helpline's Coordinating Team and a call centre in Annex VIII, IX and X.

## 4.7 Resource mobilisation

With the business plan, as explained in the previous section, you can now approach donors.

The three avenues for resource mobilisation in the first phase include:

- Approaching the telecom department to allocate a toll-free number;
- Approaching the local government authorities for financial, infrastructural and related support;
- Approaching bilateral organisations, donors, corporate houses and the media.

Making use of the experiences within the child helplines network, Child Helpline International has developed a fundraising guide which gives examples of good practices in fundraising and resource mobilisation. You can request the guide in English, French, Spanish and Arabic from: [info@childhelplineinternational.org](mailto:info@childhelplineinternational.org)

### 4.7.1 *Approaching telecom departments and private telecom companies*

It is important to involve the telecoms regulatory authority in your country (or the department responsible for telecommunication), as well as private telecom companies such as mobile telephone companies, at the initial planning stages of your child helpline. These key stakeholders should be informed about the progress being made regarding the needs assessment study and the resource directory. The telecoms regulatory authority and the private telecom companies should also be invited to the stakeholders meeting.

The telecoms sector can greatly assist a child helpline by providing a toll-free number for children to contact the child helpline free of charge (and that is free of charge for the child helpline as well). This number should preferably be a short, easy to remember 3- or 4-digit number. The telecoms regulatory authority can also financially assist the child helpline by covering all incoming contacts and by providing technical assistance and equipment.



In most countries the regulatory authority needs to receive an official written request for a toll-free number. This request can be supported by letters of commitment from the private telecom companies. Child Helpline International can also send a support letter for the child helpline to receive a toll-free number. In this letter the telecom partners are reminded that the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) has also included promoting the access of Information Communication Technologies amongst children in its declaration of principles.

#### **Telecom companies support toll-free Family Support Helpline in Jordan**

In Jordan, the country's four telecommunication companies came together under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Rania in February 2007 to sign an agreement activating a toll-free Family Support Helpline under the Jordan River Foundation. The agreement was signed at the Building Public-Private Partnerships to Enhance Social and Economic Development Conference held at the Dead Sea to highlight corporate social responsibility and the importance of partnerships among different sectors. The toll-free Family Support Helpline agreement, signed by representatives from Zain, Orange, Xpress and Umniah, seeks to promote a culture of child safety and child rights. The Jordan River Foundation pioneered the initiative '110 for families and children', which is intended to empower children and families by providing them with support and guidance. The support extended from the telecoms sector in Jordan to the child helpline comes as a social responsibility and a commitment to the Declaration of Principles of the WSIS adopted in 2003 in Geneva, as well as the Tunis Commitment and Tunis Agenda that emphasise the role of the ICTs and telecoms in the work of child helplines. The agreement in Jordan eases a tremendous financial burden on the child helpline and allows children unlimited access (from a financial point of view) to child helpline services.

To assist you in lobbying for a toll free number, please find attached:

- A draft letter that could be sent to the telecom partners in Annex XI.
- A draft support letter that could be sent by Child Helpline International in Annex XII.
- An extract of the WSIS declaration regarding reaching out to marginalised groups of children, especially in economically developing countries in Annex XIII.

#### *4.7.2 Approaching the local government authorities*

The local government authority dealing with children could be approached to fund the salary expenses and administration/overhead costs of the Coordinating Team, contact centre and the outreach organisation. Additionally, they could also fund the core emergency expenditure of the contact centre.

In addition to financial resources, the local government authorities can assist in several other ways. During the course of its work, the child helpline comes into contact with various government authorities such as the police, health care system, judicial system, juvenile justice system, education system, transport system, labour department, media and department of telecommunication. Representatives from these government authorities can also be on the child helpline Coordinating Board. To ensure that this spirit of cooperation on behalf of children trickles down to all levels and functionaries of the government authorities, the child helpline should organise training programmes and workshops on a regular basis. These workshops can cover the following issues:

- Greater access to services such as healthcare and education;
- Development of specialised services where they are needed;
- Allocation of resources including time, attention, money and infrastructure;



- An attitudinal change from seeing the child in need of care as a problem, to seeing her/him as a failure on the part of the system.

Finally, child helplines have unique access to the direct experiences of children and often know better than any other organisation where systems and services are failing children. Because of this, they have a key role to play in advocating for the provision of better and more appropriate services for children. By lobbying with local governments, child helplines can target decision makers and advocate for law reform and policy change to ensure that children's rights are protected and realised.

Child Helpline International has developed an *Advocacy Manual* to inform child helplines on how to incorporate advocacy strategies into their work, taking into account the various steps needed in assessing what type of advocacy effort is best for an identified goal. This manual can be requested at [info@childhelplineinternational.org](mailto:info@childhelplineinternational.org)

#### 4.7.3 *Approaching bilateral and multi-lateral organisations, donors, the corporate sectors and the media*

The child helpline should actively collaborate with bilateral and multi-lateral organisations, other donors, the corporate sector and the media to mobilise resources. Some of the components that these partners may support, based on the experience of other child helplines, include:

- Bilateral and multi-lateral organisations may support aspects of the child helpline related to documentation, training and awareness building.
- Donors could be approached to support specific components such as medical assistance, nutrition, travel costs and more.
- The corporate sector could be approached for infrastructure required such as a vehicle for awareness campaigns, pro-bono tech support, programming or design for information, education and communication materials.
- The media is an important partner for the child helpline in creating awareness about the child helpline, its services and the issues faced by children.

The child helpline should thus aim to include child protection on the agendas of these different potential partners.

## 4.8 Training of the child helpline team

The child helpline team is the heart and soul of all child helpline activities. The dedicated staff and volunteers are the face and the engine of the child helpline. Staff and volunteers need to be trained and kept informed on the functioning of the child helpline. Based on the experience of various Child Helpline International member child helplines around the world, a list of desirable characteristics for child helpline staff can be pinned down. Experience shows that a child helpline team should preferably be young, dynamic and committed and have some experience with the realities of the communities they are serving. Across the world, child helplines have different team compositions answering incoming contacts. The team may consist entirely of professional counsellors, such as social workers, psychologists, health workers and legal experts. In most countries however, professionals work alongside volunteers and students. Volunteers and students have to be trained and guided but can be a valuable addition to the child helpline team. Some child helplines work predominantly with volunteers who are supervised by professionals. Volunteers can also assist in the child helpline's outreach efforts.



A child helpline's team members, especially volunteers, should be able to identify with the target groups they are serving. Work at a child helpline could be a part of a rehabilitation exercise for some of the volunteers who may have grown up as street children or have lived in shelters themselves. The organisation should ensure that regular capacity building exercises encourage the team to see the child helpline as a stepping stone to their own futures. Volunteers from the community may also be paid a token amount for volunteering at the child helpline.

In-house training for all staff, paid and volunteers, should be arranged after recruitment. A thorough training should last about a week and should encompass concept, credo, counselling, working, intervention skills, documentation and outreach. It is also recommended to team up with an existing, experienced child helpline in the region for help with training for all levels of staff. An existing child helpline can, with the support of Child Helpline International when needed, host an exchange visit (known as a 'Peer-Exchange') for the start/scale up child helpline. Representatives from an existing child helpline in the Child Helpline International network can also visit a newly formed/scaling up child helpline to give on-site trainings or workshops for staff and volunteers.

To assist you in staffing your child helpline and training your team in new services, Child Helpline International has compiled a *training manual* and a *counselling practice guide* which detail aspects of selecting and training child helpline team members. The counselling manual contains detailed information and examples on issues such as operational considerations and procedures, selection of potential counsellors, volunteer versus paid counsellors, recruitment process, key training considerations, core competencies and training programmes. The manuals can be requested at [info@childhelplineinternational.org](mailto:info@childhelplineinternational.org)

Child Helpline International is also willing to support peer exchange visits within the network. The aim of these visits is to share knowledge and link child helplines according to training needs and interests. Child Helpline International's objective is to provide opportunities to emerging and existing helplines to communicate, network and share their expertise with other child helplines and policy-makers. Peer exchanges are a concrete way of assuring that this objective is met. They also lead to a common level of quality amongst different service providers. A 'bottom up' approach is necessary to identify equal partnerships between child helplines. There are three types of peer exchanges: exposure visits; thematic based training (for example, Childline Zimbabwe went on a fundraising training to South Africa) and long-term cooperation.

A Peer Exchange Concept Note can be requested from Child Helpline International at [info@childhelplineinternational.org](mailto:info@childhelplineinternational.org)

## 4.9 Launching the child helpline

Once the structure of the child helpline is in place, the team is trained and the toll free number is received, your new or scaled up child helpline is ready for operation! However, before the formal inaugural launch of the service, it is recommended that the child helpline has a trial phase.

### 4.9.1 The Trial Phase

The key activities during this trial phase would include:

- Phone testing to ensure connectivity of the number from all geographic regions;
- Grassroots awareness with children;
- Identifying child/ youth volunteers in key areas who would spread awareness;



- Close monitoring of the calls/contacts received and the action taken by the team, including initial communication problems and documentation;
- Initiating dialogue with those allied systems most in contact with children calling the helpline to ensure good referral and follow up.

Awareness raising during the trial phase should be limited. The child helpline in this phase will be testing the service and the quality of cases followed up. Mass media campaigns for the child helpline can raise expectations that the child helpline may not be able to meet in the first period. The child helpline has to be able to meet the needs of all children who contact it, and should therefore measure its awareness raising according to its capacity.

A trial phase should generally last for three to six months. During this time there will be a gradual increase in the number of contacts received, and the child helpline will become proficient in handling the follow-up of the cases referred to the allied system. Documentation should also become streamlined during this time. The trial phase also allows all of the organisations involved to smooth out cooperation and work out their different roles.

#### *4.9.2 The Launch*

Confident and assured of its effectiveness in responding to contacts, your child helpline is now ready to be inaugurated! Consider making your child helpline's launch a festive celebration for child rights. A special week of events that provide an opportunity to place child rights on the country's agenda is a great way to raise awareness and get your services noticed.

It is important to keep in mind that a child helpline should be continuously reviewing, monitoring and evaluating its services together with partners, referral organisations and most importantly children.

Good luck, and don't hesitate to contact Child Helpline International for any and all matters related to your child helpline!



## Annexes

### Annex I: Templates of Memorandum of Understanding

#### TEMPLATE I:

(Logo)

#### Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

between

**[Child Helpline X]  
and  
[Organisation Y]**

In an effort to strengthen services for *[runaway, homeless and at-risk youth]* and to ensure appropriate, safe services to the *[Child Helpline X]* callers, this Memorandum of Understanding defines areas of cooperation and activity between *[Child Helpline X]* and *[Organisation Y]*. The parties agree to the following:

The *[Child Helpline X]* agrees to:

1. Continue to provide 24-hour telephone crisis intervention, conference calls, message relay and information and referral services to children, young people and families in and around *[city/country]*;
2. Provide referrals to *[Organisation Y]* as appropriate, in accordance with the information provided by *[Organisation Y]* on the *[Child Helpline X]*'s Resource Agency Profile;
3. Provide *[Child Helpline X]* outreach and educational materials to *[Organisation Y]* to utilise within its organisational outreach effort;
4. Maintain a web site on the Internet ([www.childhelplinex.org](http://www.childhelplinex.org)) with capability for multiple linkages as an additional outreach tool;
5. Provide community-based referrals for information and direct services for children, young people and families ; and
6. Coordinate access to the Home Free transportation program, conducted in collaboration with *[bus company]*, Inc., to youth in and around *[city]* and provide consultation and support to qualifying youth during the youth's journey home.

In exchange, *[Organisation Y]* agrees to:

7. Complete the *[Child Helpline X]*'s Resource Agency Profile as fully and accurately as possible. Your signature/check mark, as an authorised representative of *[Organisation Y]* will provide the basis for all *[Child Helpline X]* referrals to *[Organisation Y]*.



8. Be available by phone within the hours specified on the [*Child Helpline X*]’s Resource Agency Profile for youth referred by [*Child Helpline X*].
9. Provide a link between your web site (if applicable) and [www.childhelpline.org](http://www.childhelpline.org), the web site of [*Child Helpline X*].
10. Advise [*Child Helpline X*], as soon as possible, of any substantive changes in the descriptions of programs offered or demographic populations served by *Organisation Y*.

The [*Child Helpline X*] and [*Organisation Y*] jointly agree to

11. Communicate, at least once a year, to assure accurate program information is available to each other.
12. Maintain regular communication via exchange of agency newsletters and agency updates.

Term of Agreement

This MOU becomes effective on the date it is signed by representatives of both parties and will end [*Month Day, Year*], except that either party may end the MOU by giving a 30-day written notice to the other.

**[*Child Helpline X*]**

**[*Organisation Y*]**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

xxxxxxx  
Executive Director

xxxxxxx  
*Organisation Y*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Date



## TEMPLATE II

# Memorandum of Understanding

between

Department of Children's Services, Office of the Vice President and

Ministry of Home Affairs,  
and

Childline X

**Whereas**, the Department of Children Services (hereinafter referred to as the 'DCS') of the Government of [country] in the office of the Vice President and the Ministry of Home Affairs have been established for the coordination and planning of child welfare services in [country]

**Whereas**, *Childline X* (hereinafter referred to as 'xxx') is an NGO established in [country] in 2004 to provide a twenty-four (24) hours emergency and toll free telephonic counselling and referral service to children.

**Whereas**, DCS and *Childline X* (hereinafter referred to as the 'Parties'), share the principles and the commitments contained in the U.N. Convention On the Rights of the Child (1989), the Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children (CRWC), The Children Act No. 8 of 2001, and the common goal of improving the rights, welfare and participation of children.

**Now Therefore**, the parties have agreed to enter into this Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter referred to as the 'MOU'), concerning the project called 'Helpline', as follows:

### Definitions

- (a) 'xxx' means *Childline [country]*, the non-governmental organisation undertaking the child helpline project in [country], in partnership with the Department of Children's Services.
- (b) 'Helpline' means the project being undertaken by the parties.
- (c) 'Department of Children Services' means the Department of Children Services in the Office of the Vice President and the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- (d) 'Government' means the Government of [country].
- (e) 'NGO' means a non-governmental organisation registered under The Non-Governmental Organisation Coordination Act of 1990 of the laws of [country].

### Law Governing Contract and Language

The MOU shall be governed by the laws of [country] and the language of the MOU shall



be English.

## **Article I – Objective**

- 1.1 The objective of this MOU is to facilitate collaboration between the Parties setting up and operating a 24 hour Child Helpline in *[country]*. These and any other activities agreed to by the Parties shall be subject to the principle of the best interest of the child.
- 1.2 The purpose of this agreement is to enter into partnership agreement between the Department of Children’s Services and Childline *[country]*. The agreement sets out the terms that shall regulate the partnership and will clarify the responsibilities and obligations of the parties.

## **Article II – Areas of Cooperation**

- 2.1 The Parties will, in particular, cooperate in setting up and operationalising a child helpline (116) to protect children from all forms of violence and abuse and create a culture of child rights. Specifically the child helpline will
  - i. Facilitate children to report abuse and raise concerns about their rights.
  - ii. Support child victims of abuse and neglect to access services for curative purposes and on their rights.
  - iii. Act as a support mechanism for children and the public to prevent child abuse
- 2.2 The Parties commit themselves to implement the proposed activities as directed by the National Steering Committee which will be responsible for strategic and policy issues of the child helpline.
- 2.3 The Parties shall endeavour to keep each other informed on emerging areas of collaboration and to promote joint activities with relevant third parties, in accordance with the procedures and obligations as stipulated in this MOU.

## **Article III - Obligations of the Parties**

- 3.1 **The Government of *[country]* through the DCS shall;**
  - 3.1.1 Provide premises for hosting the Child Helpline.
  - 3.1.2 Facilitate the setting up and operationalisation of the 116 helpline.
  - 3.1.3 Provide and manage linkages between various government and the civil society agencies for effective services by the helpline.
  - 3.1.4 Act as the government agency with the custody of service line 116 as an obligatory service for children in *[country]*.
  - 3.1.5 Provide the necessary support to Childline X to effectively manage the child helpline.
  - 3.1.6 Through its agents, investigate abuse cases, conduct home visits and rescue operations, assist with court procedures and reports.
  - 3.1.7 Provide appropriate budgetary support for operations and government personnel attached to the helpline.
  - 3.1.8 Selection, and posting of relevant staff to the 116 helpline in consultation and with the assistance of Childline X



- 3.1.9 Ensure that the helpline management structure adheres to and takes cognisance of GOK code of conduct as well as to Childline [country]'s Human Resource regulations and procedures.
- 3.1.10 Be a member of the National Steering Committee of Childline X
- 3.1.11 GOK with support from Childline X and other partners, will set up other call centres in every province in [country] within a reasonable time.
- 3.1.12 Dissemination of periodic national reports.
- 3.1.13 Set up and host the National Steering Committee Chaired by the PS and deputised by Childline's Steering Committee Chairperson.
- 3.1.14 Develop quality assurance standards for the helpline services with support from CHI.
- 3.1.15 Carry out a mid-term review within the 5 year period.

### 3.2 **Childline X shall:**

- 3.2.1 Manage the 116 child helpline as a strategic partner to DCS.
- 3.2.2 Recruit and continuously train volunteer counsellors and call centre teams in consultation with DCS.
- 3.2.3 Ensure 24 hour operation of the helpline with support from DCS.
- 3.2.4 Be responsible of publicising the helpline with support of DCS.
- 3.2.5 In liaison with the PCO/DCO teams, organise and coordinate emergency responses.
- 3.2.6 Facilitate referrals to partners with support from DCS.
- 3.2.7 Advise and support partners on case management.
- 3.2.8 Be responsible for data management, documentation and dissemination.
- 3.2.9 Inform and mobilise civil society, the public and the government on child protection matters for action.
- 3.2.10 Be responsible for enhancing and developing capacities of partners on child protection issues in consultation with DCS.
- 3.2.11 Coordinate the child protection (child abuse) network and strengthen operations with partners.
- 3.2.12 Provide funding for Childline X's activities.
- 3.2.13 Host the National Management Technical Committee, Co-chaired by DCS and Childline.

### **Article IV - Entry into Force, Duration and Termination**

- 4.1 This MOU shall come into force on the date of its signing by both Parties and will be operational for five years, and will be renewed on agreement by both parties.
- 4.2 In the event that either party (DCS or Childline) ceases to exist in its current form, the government will make all efforts to ensure continuity of the child helpline services as its continuous commitment to children's rights.



## Article V - Modifications or Variations

- 5.1 Any modification or variation of the terms and conditions of this MOU, including any modification or variation of the scope of the Services, shall only be made by written agreement between the Parties.
- 5.2 However, each party shall give due consideration to any proposals for modification or variation made by the other party prior to the written agreement in 5.1

### 5.3 Force Majeure

(a) **Definition**

For the purposes of this MOU, 'Force Majeure' means an event which is beyond the reasonable control of a Party and which makes a Party's performance of its obligations under the MOU impossible or so impractical as to be considered impossible under the circumstances.

(b) **Notice**

The party affected by Force Majeure must give notice to the other party within 7 days of occurrence of Force Majeure.

(c) **No Breach of MOU**

*The failure of a Party to fulfil any of its obligations hereunder shall not be considered to be a breach of, or default under, this MOU insofar as such inability arises from an event of Force Majeure, provided that the Party affected by such an event has taken all reasonable precautions, due care and reasonable alternative measures, all with the objective of carrying out the terms and conditions of this MOU.*

### Measures to be taken

- (i) A Party affected by an event of Force Majeure shall make efforts to continue to perform its obligations under the MOU as far as is reasonably practicable, and may take all reasonable measures to minimise the consequences of any event of Force Majeure.
- (ii) A Party affected by an event of Force Majeure shall notify the other Party of such event and shall similarly give written notice as to the impact of the event as soon as possible.
- (iii) In case of disagreement(s) between the Parties as to the existence or extent of Force Majeure, the matter shall be settled according to *Article VI*.

## Article VI - Settlement of Disputes

### 6.1 Amicable Settlement

If either Party objects to any action or inaction of the other Party, the objecting Party may file a written Notice of Dispute to the other Party providing in detail the basis of the dispute. The Party receiving the Notice of Dispute will consider it and



respond in writing within 21 days after receipt.

If the affected party fails to respond within 21 days, or the dispute cannot be amicably settled within **60** days following the response of the affected Party, Clause 6.2 shall apply.

## 6.2 Arbitration

All disputes and questions whatsoever which shall arise between the parties hereto touching on this agreement or the construction or application thereof, or any clause or thing herein contained or the rights or liabilities of any party under this agreement shall be referred to the discussion of a single arbitrator to be appointed in accordance with the arbitration Act of 1995 or any Act amending or replacing the same.

The decision of such arbitration may be deemed to be final but the aggrieved party may seek recourse or redress through a Court of Law.

## Article VII - Channels of Communication and Notice

7.1 For the purpose of implementation of the activities herein, the channels of communication for the Parties shall be:

### 7.1.1 For the Government of [country]

Contact details

*Name*

*Address*

*Telephone*

*e E-mail*

### 7.1.2 For Childline [country]:

Contact details

*Name*

*Address*

*Telephone*

*E-mail*

Either party may, by notice in writing to the other party, designate additional representatives or substitute other representatives for those designated in this Article.

In Witness whereof, the Parties hereto, each acting through its duly authorised representative,



have signed this MOU in two (2) original counterparts in the English language, as of this;

The Director, Department of Children's Services		Childline [country]	
Name:		Name:	
Signature:		Signature:	
Director of Children' Services		Chairperson, National Steering Committee	
Date:		Date:	

**Countersigned by: Permanent Secretary.....)**

**Office of the Vice President, Ministry of Home Affairs**

**Date**

**Countersigned by: National Coordinator.....)**

**Childline [country]**

**Date**



## Annex II: Agenda for the Brainstorming Meeting

The tentative agenda for the Brainstorming Meeting could include:

- Item 1: Sharing of the experiences of existing local hotlines or helplines and/or a child helpline from the region
- Item 2: Understanding the global perspective of child helplines
- Item 3: Reflecting on the country specific problems affecting children that need to be addressed
- Item 4: Brainstorming on ideas about a child helpline in small groups. Some of the topics for discussion could include:
- Do we have the capacity to cope with the demand that the referrals will create? If not, how do we build the capacity?
  - What services exist that can be built on?
  - Telephone counsellors; how do we recruit; what training is necessary; should they be volunteers/paid? etc.
  - How do we reach the children?
  - Coverage: should we pilot a small area first? Where is the best place to start?
  - The model; should the child helpline be purely a telephone counselling and referral project or should the helpline play an intervention role as well?
  - What are the benefits to partners who become involved in the child helpline?
- Item 5: Determining a plan of action to take the idea forward (based on the checklist in Annex II)

### **Suggested List of Participants for the Brainstorming Meeting:**

Existing local hotlines and helplines, NGOs, regional/national child right networks, academic organisations, telecommunication companies, UNICEF, donor organisations, government officials, child right activists and existing local child helplines.



**Annex III: Checklist for Plan of Action for the preparatory activities**

Steps to be taken	Name of person in charge	Dates
<p><b>Step 1. Organising a brainstorming meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Date of the meeting</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 2. Needs Assessment Study</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Determining the objectives and final questionnaire</li> <li>▪ Data collection</li> <li>▪ Data analysis</li> <li>▪ Report writing</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 3. Exploring the region</b></p> <p><i>1. Resource directory</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Finalising the pro-forma for resource directory</li> <li>▪ Finalising the list of organisations to be visited</li> <li>▪ Visiting the organisation to explain about the child helpline and filling in pro-forma</li> <li>▪ Collating the data collected</li> <li>▪ Sending a draft copy of the information collected to the organisation</li> <li>▪ Compiling the final resource directory</li> </ul> <p><i>2. City Mapping</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Plotting the geographic locations with high concentrations of children, organisations and available resources</li> <li>▪ Demarcating geographic areas of operation for contacts</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 4. Determining a structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Date of consultation meeting</li> <li>▪ Date of children’s meeting</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 5. Preparing a business plan</b></p>		



<p><b>Step 6. Resource mobilisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Approaching Regulatory Authority and private telecom companies</li><li>▪ Approaching the local government authorities</li><li>▪ Approaching bilateral organisations, donors, the corporate sector and media</li><li>▪ Tentative date for getting the toll free number</li></ul> <p><b>Step 7. Training the child helpline team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Dates for training</li></ul> <p><b>Step 8. Launching the child helpline</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Trial phase (3-6 months)</li><li>▪ Proposed date for launch</li></ul>		
--	--	--



## Annex IV: Needs Assessment Study questionnaires

These are sample formats, which need to be adapted to the specific requirements of the country.

### 1. Children living alone on the street

---

Age of the child:	Below 6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7-10 <input type="checkbox"/>	11-14 <input type="checkbox"/>	15-18 <input type="checkbox"/>	18-24 <input type="checkbox"/>
Sex of the child:	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>			
Affiliated to NGO:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>			

1. What are the problems you face living on the street?

- Shelter
- Medical
- Abuse
- Employment
- Any other

.....  
.....  
.....

2. What do you do when you have these problems?

- Tell an NGO
- Bear the
- problem
- Self help
- Any other

.....  
.....  
.....

3. If you could call a telephone number to tell someone your problems, would you call?

- Yes
- No

4. If you could call a special telephone number for children to tell someone your problems, would you call?

- Yes
- No

5. If Yes, what support would you expect the service to provide you:

- Medical
- Shelter
- Employment
- Protection form abuse
- Counselling
- Food
- Any other

.....  
.....  
.....

6. If no, why would you NOT call?

- Do not like to use the phone
- Will have to pay



Not sure that they will help   
 Fear that s/he will be sent to  
 Remand home

7. Have you used a phone before?  
 Yes  No

8. If Yes, whom did you speak to?  
 Parents   
 Friends   
 Relatives   
 Social worker   
 Others

.....  
 .....

9. If No, why not?   
 No phone accessible   
 Afraid of using the phone   
 No one to speak to   
 Any other

.....  
 .....

**Questionnaire – 2. Children who are employed living with parents/employers**

Age of the child:	Below 6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 –10 <input type="checkbox"/>	11-14 <input type="checkbox"/>	15-18 <input type="checkbox"/>	18-24 <input type="checkbox"/>
Sex of the child:	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>			
Residence:	Living with family <input type="checkbox"/>		Living with employer <input type="checkbox"/>		
Type of employment:					
Hotel/restaurant	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Small industry	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Work on the street	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Domestic help	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Prostitution	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>				

.....

1. What is your daily routine?

.....  
 .....

2. What problems, if any, do you face during your work?

Employer shouts/ is rude/  
 insults   
 Employer physically punishes   
 Not paid agreed wage   
 Long working hours   
 Cannot go to school



- No problems
- No response
- Others

.....  
 .....  
 .....

3. Have you spoken about these problems to anyone?

- Yes
- No

4. Have you spoken about these problems to anyone?

- Parents
- Employer
- Friends
- Relatives
- Neighbours
- Social worker

.....  
 .....  
 .....

5. If not, why not?

- No one can do anything
- Afraid employer will be angry
- Other

.....  
 .....  
 .....

6. If you could call a telephone number to tell someone your problems, would you call?

- Yes
- No

7. If you could call a special telephone number for children to tell someone your problems, would you call?

- Yes
- No

8. If Yes, what support would you expect the service to provide you:

- Medical
- Shelter
- Employment
- Protection from abuse
- Counselling
- Food
- Any other

.....  
 .....  
 .....

9. If no, why would you NOT call?

- Do not like to use the phone
- Will have to pay
- Not sure that they will help
- Fear that s/he will be sent to State home
- Other



.....  
.....

10. Have you used a phone before?

Yes  No

11. If yes, whom did you speak to?

Parents

Friends

Relatives

Social worker

Others

.....  
.....

12. If No, why not?

No phone accessible

Afraid of using the phone

No one to speak to

Any other

.....  
.....

**Questionnaire – 3. Children in school living with family**

Age of the child:	Below 6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7–10 <input type="checkbox"/>	11–14 <input type="checkbox"/>	15–18 <input type="checkbox"/>	18–24 <input type="checkbox"/>
Sex of the child:	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>			
Type of school:	Private <input type="checkbox"/>				
	Government <input type="checkbox"/>				
	Non-formal <input type="checkbox"/>				
	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	.....			

1. When do you feel sad?

When your parents shout at you

Your teacher shouts at you

Someone hits you

Someone is rude/ teases/ insults you

Something bad happens

Specify.....

.....

2. What do you do when you are sad?

Cry

Get angry

Keep quiet

Shout/ hit the person

Seek revenge

Tell parents/ friends

No response



Other

.....  
.....  
.....

3. Have you spoken to anyone when you are sad?

Yes  No

4. If yes, whom did you speak to?

Parents

Person who upset you

Friends

Relatives

Neighbours

Social worker

Others

.....  
.....  
.....

5. If not, why not?

No one can do anything

Afraid of talking about it

Able to deal with it

Other

.....  
.....  
.....

6. If you could call a telephone number to tell someone your problems, would you call?

Yes  No

7. If you could call a special telephone number for children to tell someone your problems, would you call?

Yes  No

8. If yes, what would you call to discuss?

School issues

Bullying

Family related issues

Friends

Sex

Self

General

Other

.....  
.....  
.....

9. If not, why not?

Your parents might not like it

Fear of using phone

Afraid of talking to a stranger

10. Have you used a phone before?

Yes  No



11. If yes, whom did you speak to?

- Parents
- Friends
- Relatives
- Social worker
- Others

.....

.....

.....

12. If No, why not?

- No phone accessible
- Afraid of using the phone
- No one to speak to
- Any other

.....

.....

.....

**Questionnaire – 4. For concerned adults**

Name:	
Sex:	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>
Occupation:	Police <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Local shop keeper <input type="checkbox"/> Public transport personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Health care professional <input type="checkbox"/> Street corner worker <input type="checkbox"/> Lawyer <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> .....

1. What groups of children do you think require most assistance?

- Street children
- Child Labourers
- Children in prostitution
- Children of migrants/refugees
- Children in domestic work
- Children unable to deal with school pressure
- Children who want to commit suicide
- Children with emotional problems
- Children with disabilities/impairments
- Children or families affected by violence
- Other

Specify.....

.....

.....

2. Have you ever seen a child in need of assistance?

- Yes                       No



2a. If yes, how did you react?

- Did not know what to do
- Gave money
- Called an organisation
- Did nothing
- Talked to the child
- Felt guilty
- Other

.....  
.....  
.....

2b. How would you like to have reacted?

.....  
.....  
.....

3. If a child helpline service were introduced in your country, do you think it would work?

- Yes  No

3a. If yes, what services should be required for children?

- Education
- Shelter
- Medical
- Counselling/ guidance
- Employment
- Recreational
- Other

.....  
.....  
.....

3b. If no, why not?

- Phones don't work properly in this country
- Children will not phone
- Not enough children in need
- There are very few existing services
- Other

.....  
.....  
.....

4. Would you call if you saw a child in need of assistance?

- Yes  No

4a. If yes, what do you do afterwards?

- Call and leave
- Call and wait with the child
- Other

.....  
.....  
.....



4b. If no, why not?

- Not sure that a child helpline will help
- Fear that too much will be expected
- Other

.....  
.....  
.....

5. Would you support a child helpline in your country?

- Yes  No

6. If yes, what would you do?

- Publicise the helpline amongst children
- Donate cash
- Donate in kind
- Share ideas/time
- Other

.....  
.....  
.....

7. If no, why not?

.....  
.....  
.....

8. What in your opinion are the important channels for creating awareness about the service?

.....  
.....  
.....



## Annex V: Tips for data collection with children and adults

**With children:** The children are the key respondents in the NAS. They have a mind of their own and their needs and wants should be given due consideration in planning for the service

- The child should know why the study is being conducted.
- It is important that the child answers exactly how s/he feels.
- The answers given by the child should be confidential.
- The interview schedule should not be treated as a mere question answer exercise.
- The child should not be prompted with options provided. If her/his response does not fit into any option, then it should be written out verbatim.

### **With adults**

- The purpose of the Need Assessment Study should be explained.
- The confidentiality of individuals' responses should be assured.
- The importance of honest replies should be explained.
- Any random comments made by the interviewee should be recorded.
- The schedule should not be filled by the interviewee.
- The options provided should not be read out.



## Annex VI: Resource Directory Sample

**This is only a sample, please adapt to the specific requirements of your country.**

### **Residential services:**

Children's Organisation

Address

Country

Telephone No

Fax No

### **Objectives:**

To provide:

- Shelter to run-away and street children
- Educational services
- Vocational training for self-employment
- Health services

### **Intake Policy:**

- Age: 4-20 years
- Sex: Boys and Girls
- Documents: No documents required

### **Timings:**

- Open all 24 hours

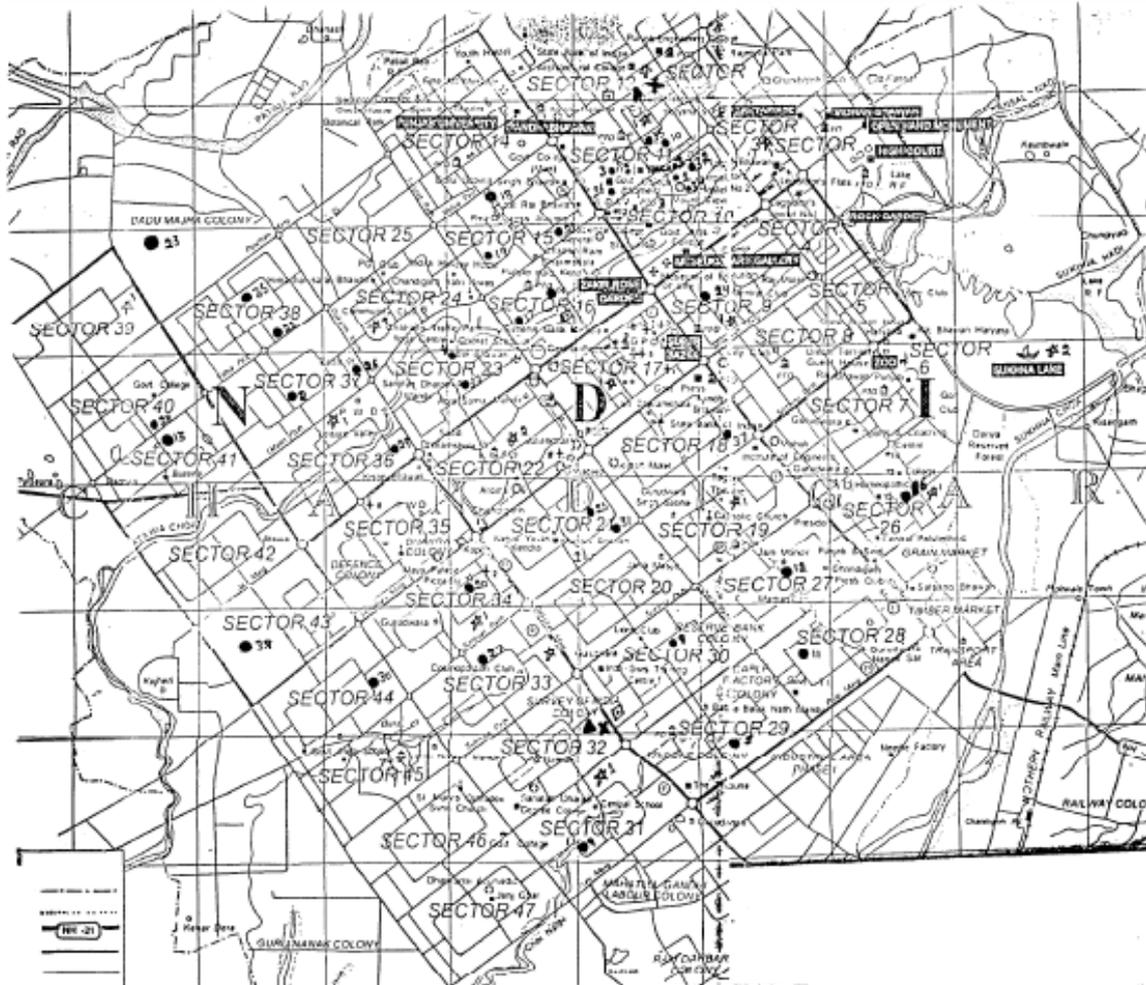
### **Rehabilitation:**

- Free shelter, food and medical care.
- Vocational training
- Family counselling
- Reconciliation



## Annex VII: An example of a City mapping exercise

An example of the city mapping done during preparatory work for CHILDLINE Chandigarh, India



LEGEND		
<b>NGO's</b> ●	26. Mahila Sundar Kand Sabha	<b>POLICE STATIONS</b> ★
1. Y.W.C.A. of India	27. Indian National Postage Association	1. Police Stations at Sectors-3, 9, 11, 17, 19, 26, 31, 34, 36, and 39.
2. Indra Social Welfare Society	28. Jan Kalyan Sanshan	2. Police Posts at Manimajra, Industrial Area, Dhanas, PGI, Maloya, Railway Station, Sukhna Lake, Sec- 22, 24, Neelam Theatre, Bapu Dham, Bus Stand, Public Window and CBI Control Room
3. Indian Council of Social Welfare, Karuna Sadan	29. North West Zone, Special Olympic Society	<b>BLOOD BANKS</b> ■
4. Indian Council of Child Welfare, Bai Bhawan	30. Society for the Rehabilitation of Handicapped	1. Blood Bank, PGIMER, Sector-12.
5. Sewa Bharti	31. Senior Citizen's Association	2. Blood Bank, Government Medical College and Hospital, Sector-32.
6. YTTC	32. Institute for Deaf and Dumb	3. Blood Bank, Civil Hospital, Sector-16.
7. Y.M.C.A	33. Missionaries of Charity	<b>AMBULANCE SERVICES</b> ✚
8. Sri Satya Sai Trust	34. Indian Red Cross Society	1. Ambulance Service, PGIMER Chandigarh
9. Mahila Parishad	35. Prayasa	2. Ambulance Service, Government Medical College and Hospital, Sector-32.
10. Environment Society	36. Ramkrishan Mission	3. Ambulance Service, Civil Hospital, Sector-16.
11. Surya Foundation	37. Lions Club for Deaf and Dumb	
12. Karuna	38. Savera	
13. Society for Social Health	<b>CHILD GUIDANCE CLINICS</b> ▲	
14. Bharat Vikas	1. Child Guidance Clinic, PGIMER, Sector-12	
15. Chetana Society	2. Child Guidance Clinic, Government Medical College and Hospital, Sector-32	
16. Society for the Care of the Blind	<b>DE- ADDICTION CENTRES</b> ✕	
17. Gandhi Samrak Nidhi	1. De-Addiction Centre, PGIMER, Sector-12	
18. Lajpat Rai Bhawan	2. De-Addiction Centre, Government Medical College and Hospital, Sector-32.	
19. Bai Niketan		
20. Aptech Computers		
21. Citizen's Awareness Group		
22. Physically handicapped Society		
23. Humanity Welfare Society		
24. Humanity Welfare Society		



## Annex VIII. Preparing a business plan

Index for your business plan, please adapt according to child helpline needs.

### 1. Introduction

- Background information on the country
- Why a child helpline?
- Potential number of contacts
- Vision and mission

### 2. Planning process

- What preparations have been done?
- Result of the Needs Assessment Study (NAS)
- Proposed strategy and structure for the child helpline
- Proposed partnerships

### 3. Objectives and expected outcomes

- Creating access
- Networking/linked services
- Documentation
- Contact
- Training
- Outreach

### 4. Expected outcomes

- Creating access
  - Ensuring toll free number, national coverage, 24-hour
- Networking/ linked service
  - Resource directory
  - Establishing partnerships with NGOs, government and Allied Systems
- Documentation
  - Call recording sheet/ software
- Contact
  - Number or children calling the child helpline
  - Ensure best strategies to reach out to all children



- Training
  - Training on all key aspects of the child helpline
  - Ensure constant guidance for the child helpline team
  
- Outreach
  - City planning
  - Target areas
  - How to reach marginalised children

## **5. Timeline**

- Plan of action

## **6. Budget**

On the next pages you will find a proposal and a budget for the child helpline's coordinating team and the call centre.



## Annex IX. Format for a proposal for a child helpline's coordinating team

Please note: This requires customising according to your country's needs:

### Introduction:

- Overall situation of children in the country
- Findings of the need assessment study
- Other back ground processes undertaken

### Objectives of the child helpline:

- To operate in the spirit of the Convention of the Rights of the Child with a special focus on the protection and 'listening' rights of the child.
- To reach out to every child in need of care and protection by responding to calls and emergencies received.
- To ensure access to telecommunication services to the most marginalised areas urban as well as rural).
- To advocate for services for children that are inaccessible, inadequate or non- existent.
- To strive for quality services for children in need of special care and protection and to ensure that the best interests of the child are secured.
- To provide a platform of networking amongst organisations and to provide linkages to support systems which facilitate the rehabilitation of children in need of care and protection.
- To create a family of NGOs and Government organisations working within the framework of a national vision and policy for children.
- To provide an opportunity for child-to-child interface, thereby building up a network of young persons who can advocate for issues concerning themselves, to place young people at the centre stage of advocacy and policy development.

### Target group for the helpline:

- Based on the NAS, please mention the focus of the child helpline

### Proposed Plan of Action

- Please mention the structure determined

### Role of the Coordinating Team's Board

- Facilitate the coordination of the helpline at the country level through regular meetings of the child helpline partners and visits to the organisations.



- Ensuring connectivity to the helpline's number by following up with the telephone department.
- Organising ongoing training of the helpline's field staff.
- Organising regular networking meetings with outreach organisations.
- Conducting training with the Allied Systems such as the Police, Doctors, Nurses, Probation officers etc.
- Ensuring that there is sufficient and relevant awareness material.
- Compiling monthly reports on the calls received, highlighting key innovations, publishing a newsletter/annual report, call related publications and reports and updating the resource directory.

### Budget for a Coordinating Board

ITEMS			
<b>I. Recurring</b>			
<b>1. Salary</b>			
Country Coordinator			
<b>2. Travel</b>			
<b>3. Administration</b>			
Computer maintenance			
Page rental			
Stationery			
Communication			
Internet connection			
Auditor's fee			
<b>Total I.</b>			
<b>II. Non recurring</b>			
Computer			
Telephone installation			
Furniture			
Pager			
<b>Total II.</b>			
<b>Grand Total (I + II)</b>			



## **Annex X. Format for a proposal for a child helpline's contact centre**

Please note: This requires to be customised according to your country's needs:

### **Introduction:**

- Overall situation of children in the country
- Findings of the need assessment study
- Other back ground processes undertaken

### **Objectives of the child helpline:**

- To operate in the spirit of the Convention of the Rights of the Child with a special focus on the protection and 'listening' rights of the child
- To reach out to every child in need of care and protection by responding to contacts and emergencies received
- To ensure access to telecommunication services to the most marginalised areas (urban as well as rural)
- To advocate for services for children that are currently inaccessible, inadequate or non-existent
- To strive for quality services for children in need of special care and protection and to ensure that the best interests of the child are secured
- To provide a platform of networking amongst organisations and to provide linkages to support systems which facilitate the rehabilitation of children in need of care and protection
- To create a family of NGOs and Government organisations working within the framework of a national vision and policy for children
- To provide an opportunity for child-to-child interface, thereby building up a network of young persons who can advocate for issues concerning themselves, to place young people at the centre stage of advocacy and policy development

### **Target group for the helpline**

- Based on the NAS, please mention the focus of the child helpline

### **Proposed Plan of Action**

- Please mention the structure determined

### **Role of the contact centre**

- Respond to all contacts, case interventions and follow-up
- Conduct regular phone testing



- Document all contacts and maintain registers
- Feed data into the computer package
- Organise monthly meetings of all the team members
- Preparing and implementing a monthly plan for outreach to make children aware of the service

**Budget for the child helpline’s contact centre**

ITEMS			
<b>I. Recurring</b>			
<b>1. Salary</b>			
Country Coordinator (1)			
Team members (7)			
<b>2. Client related</b>			
Nutrition			
Medicine			
Repatriation			
Travel			
<b>3. Administration</b>			
Computer maintenance			
Page rental			
Stationery			
Communication			
Internet connection			
Auditor’s fee			
Meetings			
<b>Total I.</b>			
<b>II. Non recurring</b>			
Computer			
Telephone (2)			
Furniture			
Pagers (2)			
<b>Total II.</b>			
<b>Grand Total (I + II)</b>			



## Annex XI. Draft letter to be sent to Telecom Partners

Dear

We have recently been involved in an exciting initiative to discuss the possibility of building a child helpline in (name of country). Some of your colleagues have also been present at the brainstorming meeting held on (details of the meeting – if applicable)

We have since been actively discussing this idea with children, especially (please mention groups of children such as street children. The response has been very positive (please mention brief statistics of the NAS). Please find enclosed a copy of the NAS. We have also compiled a directory of all children's services and have prepared a plan of action to address the needs of these marginalised groups of children. We have been working closely with Child Helpline International, a global network of child helplines in this process.

As you are aware, (name of country) has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in (please mention the year) that endorsed our commitment to protect the rights of children. The child helpline would be an effective tool to assist us to keep our commitment to the children. Additionally our country has also participated at the World Summit on the Information Society where we have pledged our support to take efforts to bridge the digital divide and provide access of Information Communication Technologies to young people, especially the most marginalised groups in developing countries.

More specifically, Point 92 in the Telecoms agenda says that: *"We encourage countries, including all other interested parties, to make available child helplines, taking into account the need for mobilisation of appropriate resources. For this purpose, easy-to-remember numbers, accessible from all phones and free of charge, should be made available"*.

To be effective in reaching out to children whenever they are in crisis, it is essential that we have a toll free number that is easily memorable to children. We therefore request you to consider the allocation of such a number for children and young people. We look forward to meeting with you to further discuss the same.

Best Wishes,



## Annex XII. Draft support letter to be sent by Child Helpline International

Dear .....

Child Helpline International is a global network of telephone and outreach services for children and young people. It is founded in order to strengthen and develop helplines for children and young people in need of care and protection. Child Helpline International works with ..... **(number)** helplines across the world and we support ..... **(number)** countries establishing a child helpline service.

Child helplines across the world annually receive approximately 10 million calls from children and young people who call when they need crisis intervention, rehabilitation, counselling or just to talk to someone. Reasons for calls vary between abuse, shelter, HIV/AIDS, relationship problems, exploitation, addiction, and suicide. A telephone helpline for children and young people is accessible to them around the clock, free of cost and enables them to contact someone in any emergency situation. It provides children and young people with an opportunity to directly express the concerns and issues affecting them.

In .... **(your country)** Child Helpline International is working together with ..... **(your organisation)**, which is coordinating the effort to establish a national toll free child helpline. The ..... **(your organisation)** is working together in this initiative with several INGOs and NGOs, such as..... To be effective in reaching out to children whenever they are in crisis, it is essential that .... **(your country)** has a toll free number that is easily memorable for children. We therefore urge you to:

- Allocate a 3-digit number for a national child helpline for .... **(your country)**
- Ask telecom operators (including private mobile providers) to provide the number to incoming callers and the helpline organisations free of cost.
- Work with ..... **(your organisation)** and the designated NGOs to implement the services

As you are aware, .... **(your country)** has participated at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) where countries have pledged support to take efforts to bridge the digital divide and provide access of Information Communication Technologies to young people, especially the most marginalised groups in developing countries. Enclosed is the WSIS declaration, in which the support to children and young people is mentioned in article 92.

Child Helpline International wishes to express its sincere gratitude and hopes that you will make this dream of a .... **(your country)** national child helpline a reality.

Yours sincerely,

Child Helpline International



## Annex XIII. Extract form



**Document:** WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/6(Rev. 1)-E

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### TUNIS AGENDA FOR THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

#### INTRODUCTION

**1. We recognise** that it is now time to move from principles to action, considering the work already being done in implementing the Geneva Plan of Action and identifying those areas where progress has been made, is being made, or has not taken place.

**2. We reaffirm the commitments** made in Geneva and build on them in Tunis by focusing on financial mechanisms for bridging the digital divide, on Internet governance and related issues, as well as on implementation and follow-up of the Geneva and Tunis decisions.

The complete document can be downloaded <http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs2/tunis/off/6rev1.html>

**90. We reaffirm our commitment** to providing equitable access to information and knowledge for all, recognising the role of ICTs for economic growth and development. **We are committed** to working towards achieving the indicative targets, set out in the Geneva Plan of Action, that serve as global references for improving connectivity and universal, ubiquitous, equitable, non-discriminatory and affordable access to, and use of, ICTs, considering different national circumstances, to be achieved by 2015, and to using ICTs, as a tool to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals, by:

*q. incorporating regulatory, self-regulatory, and other effective policies and frameworks to protect children and young people from abuse and exploitation through ICTs into national plans of action and e-strategies.*

**92. We encourage countries, and all other interested parties, to make available** child helplines, taking into account the need for mobilisation of appropriate resources. For this purpose, easy-to-remember numbers, accessible from all phones and free of charge, should be made available.