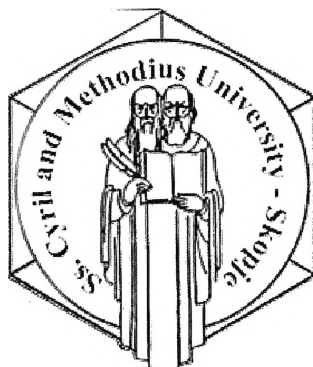"Ss. Cyril and Methodius University" - Skopje

Faculty of Philosophy – Skopje

UNESCO Chair in Intercultural Studies and Research

MA in International Relations: Conflict Resolution, Diplomacy and Human Rights

УЛОГАТА НА ФОРМАЛНИТЕ НАСПРОТИ НЕФОРМАЛНИТЕ СИСТЕМИ ЗА ДЕТСКА ЗАШТИТА ВО КОНТЕКСТ НА ПРЕВЕНЦИЈА НА КОНФЛИКТИ И ОДРЖЛИВО ГРАДЕЊЕ МИР

MA Thesis

THE ROLE OF FORMAL VERSUS INFORMAL CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS IN THE CONTEXT OF CONFLICT PREVENTION AND SUSTAINABLE PEACEBUILDING

Candidate: Supervised by:

Bojana Kodjasinska   Maja Gerovska - Mitev PhD

Skopje, 2018

CONTENTS:

ABSTRACT

The main research of this master thesis will focus on the formal and informal child protection systems and their contribution towards conflict prevention and sustainable peacebuilding. The objective of the thesis is to evaluate both systems and how they can impact the conflict prevention and the sustainable peacebuilding. By carefully analyzing a few previously selected case studies, the thesis will try to elaborate which one is in greater advantage of having the child protection system in question. The study is going to look at examples on how these states are coping with the issues in their area. It is given that children from all around the world have a right to human dignity, as well as to their physical and psychological integrity. The right to protection from all forms of violence is an inherent one and it means that no matter their nationality, place of birth, gender, age, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language or any other status, each child has the very right to live a life without harm. Regardless of their given rights, children from all over the world face myriad risks such as: child abuse, separation from their parents or caregivers, sexual abuse, violence in their schools or communities, dangerous diseases like HIV and AIDS, early marriage, child pregnancy, justice-related issues, living and working on the streets, becoming child soldiers and many more. Child protection systems work closely and towards establishing and implementing many measures so that children can grow in safe and stable environments. After the final analysis, the thesis will try to prove which child protection system, whether the formal one that many governments have adopted or the informal child protection system, that operates with the help of NGOs and similar organizations, is better to have in order to have a sustainable peacebuilding.

Key words: child protection systems, formal child protection system, informal child protection system, children, peacebuilding, sustainable, conflict prevention, risks, actors, programs

"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children." - Nelson Mandela, Former President of South Africa

1. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

There has been a joint acceptance that children from all around the world have the right to grow up in stable and safe surroundings, protected from neglect, abuse, violence and have their developmental needs attended to. Their basic needs and rights should always be met and the governments have recognized the need to provide a safety net. Children face multiple risks such as: child abuse, separation from their parents and caregivers, sexual abuse and exploitation, disabilities, violence in their schools or communities, dangerous diseases like HIV and AIDS, early marriage, child pregnancy, justice-related issues, living and working on the streets, becoming child soldiers and many more. One cannot decrease the number of children affected in armed conflicts, violence, abuse and neglect without looking at the problems at home or their school. A child, who is the victim of violence, can easily face the risk of being trafficked, may be also me harmed or disabled, in conflict with the law and experience abuse and neglect at home and in his/her community.

PROBLEM AREA

Children have identified the violence against them as a key priority to be addressed. At the same time, family and other social support networks may be weakened and education may be disrupted. These experiences can have a profound effect on children – from infancy and childhood through adolescence. During emergencies and in displacement, girls face particular gender-related protection risks. Children are also very strong and brave, and try to find ways to cope and look ahead in the face of the suffering. Their families and friends are one of the main sources of strength that children drew from. By learning in school and not neglecting education, playing sports and having a creative space to explore their talents and skills, children can become active members in the community and their voices can actually be heard. The purpose of this master's thesis is to provide further information about the formal and the informal child protection systems in the context of conflict prevention and sustainable peacebuilding. In the first part of the thesis, I will focus on the information that was gathered by previously selected authors and their input on this sensitive topic. The next few parts will be analyzed in a similar fashion. With the help of previously selected case studies from Sierra

Leone, England and Bosnia and Herzegovina, I will try to show how the children were treated during a conflict, and which child protection system is better to have in order to have a sustainable peacebuilding.

MAIN AREA OF THE RESEARCH

The main area of research will focus on the role of the formal and the informal child protection systems in the context of conflict prevention and sustainable peacebuilding. Half of the population, affected by severe levels of violence or conflict, is children. It is of greater importance to protect children from violence, conflict or abuse and in the same time to obtain the ability of peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts. Violence, abuse and exploitation amplify conflicts drivers. The conflict drivers, regarding child protection, include: weak social welfare systems, violence, and gender-based violence against children in their homes, schools and communities. Child protection risks also coincide with other conflict drivers, such as: urbanization, injustice and lack of access to education and livelihood.

The former will be a research with regard on the role of the child protection systems in states that were victims in a conflict. Moreover, the study, with the help of several case studies, will focus on some key points that make up a successful child protection system.

The research will try to elaborate which child protection system provides better protection regarding poverty, education, health, child abuse, violence, gender-based issues, child soldiers etc. States, like USA, England, Australia and Canada, have the formal child protection system, through some well-adopted laws and policies, while states such as, Tanzania, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Chad and Sudan, apart from the formal child protection system, have adopted the informal child protection system as well. The afore-mentioned states, which have the informal child protection system, are trying to put an end to some of the problems and issues arising from the not-so-well adopted laws and policies that these states all have in common.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the study is to evaluate the child protection systems of the states, both formal and informal, and their impact on the conflict prevention and the sustainable peacebuilding.

This will be conducted by analyzing a few previously selected case studies. The case studies will have both states with formal and informal child protection systems. Through these given studies, we will try to elaborate which ones are in greater advantage of having the child protection system in question. The study is going to look at examples on how these states are coping with the issues in their area.

The informal actors, such as children, families and communities, are important parts of child protection systems. Children are part of the informal child protection system because they may help peers, families and communities to protect children. Parents are also part of the system with their careless love and affection towards their children and protecting them from harm. They should be the ones who will encourage their kids to stay in school, apart from the teachers, elders, nurses and natural helpers who respond to and prevent harms to children. There are families who intentionally harm and hurt children by abusing them sexually and mentally. Many communities still use harmful practices such as female genital mutilation. Although, these are serious issues, children, families and communities play a vital role in informal child protection systems. With the help of the informal systems, child protection can make a significant contribution to peacebuilding, when specific peacebuilding activities are incorporated into child protection programming at the community level, involving the participation of community-based groups, and by integrating children into other programs. Community-based child protection mechanisms respond to violations against children and they focus on preventing the risks to children. They are vital parts of child protection systems since they function at the lowest level in the state, such as the village level in rural areas and the neighborhood level in urban areas, which is where children and families are located and are frequently exposed to significant risks on a daily basis. These child protection mechanisms have plenty of protection resources, such as teachers, parents and religious leaders.

METHODOLOGY

The thesis will mainly employ qualitative research strategy. Hence, it will use the technique of bottom-up approach. First, it will use the content analysis for the sources that come in form of available documents, conventions, articles, reports, case studies, etc. Second, it will use the technique of secondary data analysis for the data such as the official statistics, from the previously selected case studies, regarding the number of children without education, those living in poverty, the children who are sexually abused, the ones who are being recruited as child soldiers and those living with a deadly disease. The thesis will try to explain how the child protection systems in specific countries affect conflict prevention and sustainable peacebuilding.

HYPOTHETICAL FRAME

The hypothesis that will be tested will go in line with the question which child protection system, formal or informal, is better to have in order to have a better conflict prevention and sustainable peacebuilding.

General hypothesis: Formal child protection systems provide better support to children than informal child protection systems during the processes of conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Specific hypotheses:

- Formal child protection systems provide better access (than informal) to basic services and rights for children;
- Formal child protection systems provide better protection (than informal) from poverty and social exclusion;
- Formal child protection systems need functional democracy to be able to protect children from conflict and violence;
- Informal child protection systems are associated with higher child poverty rates and higher dropout rates;
- Informal child protection systems provide, less bureaucratic services, but are less accountable than statutory services.

Indicators which will be used in measuring the researched results will be the number of children who are dropping out of school, the number of children living in poverty, those affected by deadly diseases, children who are constantly being sexually abused and those who are being recruited as child soldiers. By analyzing the above-mentioned indicators, we will see which system is better implemented and which one better prevents conflicts and achieves a sustainable peacebuilding.

Chapter 1: DEFINING CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS

The goal of child protection is to promote, protect and fulfill children's rights as well as to protect them from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence as expressed in the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other human rights, humanitarian and refugee treaties and conventions, as well as in national laws. (Olofsson, 2010)

Many authors have given their two cents on this topic. UNICEF has defined child protection systems as "certain formal and informal structures, functions and capacities that have been assembled to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children. Primary components of child protection systems include laws and policies, human and financial resources, governance, means of data collection and system monitoring, child protection and response services, and non-formal supports of families and communities. The systems are given a vital role in addressing the risk factors in the lives of all children and their loved ones. Depending on the country, child protection systems may take part of the social welfare, education, health, and security sectors.

There is a difference however between prevention and response services. The prevention services are the services which include the promotion of knowledge and skills and strengthen the community for keeping children safe. It also helps families who struggle with some difficulties and provides a change for them. The response services are child protection interventions which respond to situations in which the child is at risk of harm or he/she has been abused, exploited, neglected, abandoned, etc.

Diverse actors make up a child protection system. Government actors at different levels bear the primary responsibility for the protection of children within the state's territorial boundaries. Formal actors such as social welfare officials, police, government social workers and magistrates lead the child protection system at national and sub-national levels. At grass-roots levels, the role of non-formal actors is highly visible. At societal levels, the media, government leaders, and civil society organizations play an important role. Problems, such as child trafficking cross international boundaries; international actors may also contribute to or support national child protection systems. (Wessells, 2015)

The Child Protection sector has yet to define or describe the definition a child protection system, as many agencies do not have documented positions on child protection systems. Although, some agencies have emphasized the need to define what is meant by the word

'system'. The list of the agencies' documentation consists and focuses on the prevention of and response to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. It is based on a child rights framework, indicating, where possible, the rights to protection enshrined in international humanitarian law. They serve the purpose of serving the best interests of children, involving them in the community, regardless of nationality, gender, race, age or stage of development. It is crucial to mention the government responsibility and ownership that is greatly needed in order to aid the national, as well as the humanitarian agencies, which serve the purpose of external and temporary actors.

The formal and informal child protection systems are relevant in emergency and crisis situations. Although, many authors comment on the inevitable conflict between the humanitarian agencies and the systems approach, others see a joint work and state that they are, in fact complementary. They are of a great benefit in situations where the children suffer from many complex emergencies, such as: extreme poverty, conflict, natural disasters, lack of education – each of which presents distinct challenges. In these situations, the priorities to which a child protection system should help are likely to be different from more developmental settings. As the nature of threats to children's protection changes, so does the system which priorities are being addressed. Furthermore, such situation may present new opportunities for building or strengthening the system that not only build the capacity to cope with future shocks but also provide a better protection for even larger groups of children.

These systems, as previously mentioned, should respond and stop any form of abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence and to mitigate their effects. The system in question should do this in a range of ways, including legal practice and other standards; collecting valuable information, providing social services to homeless children, including family tracing, reunification, psychological and reintegration services, mobilizing families and communities, raising public awareness, etc. In order to provide the best help, the systems should engage with justice systems, national security systems, health systems, education systems, and economic and social welfare systems. The quality of collaborative work between the formal and the informal child protection systems is crucial to the effectiveness of the child protection system, since these systems also provide services to children which directly influence their protection.

1.1. WHERE DOES THE PROTECTION SYSTEM BEGIN AND END?

Debate is ongoing on the question of the 'borders' of the child protection system vis-a-vis other systems; and the limits of responsibility of each system. For example, whereas some have described juvenile justice issues as falling within the parameters of the child protection system, others feel that such issues would in fact fall within the justice system. In this view, the latter is seen as a separate system, which should operate in harmony with the child protection system through, for example, adherence to common child protection standards and establishment of well-coordinated referral and monitoring systems. Many aspects of child protection work (such as identification of individual cases, messaging, and provision of general and targeted responses) may be carried out by those working in other systems (for example health workers, policemen, teachers, etc.), making the questions of coordination and referral central in considering the child protection system. Indeed multiple, distinct systems relevant to children in emergencies do not simply interface but overlap. Some functions may involve and require practitioners from two or more systems to act in an integrated way. Investigation of and response to child protection violations, for example, can involve social work, justice, and health personnel acting as a team. In Thailand, UNICEF found that putting clear conceptual parameters around the child protection system (defined broadly as the 'child and family welfare system') was a key first step to analyzing the system, pinpointing accountability for child protection, identifying areas for improvement, and keeping both a clear focus and achievable goals for the child protection sector. UNICEF's June 2008 global workshop on Child Protection Systems addressed the same issue by charting - on a table with columns such as 'protection sector'', 'education sector', 'health sector', etc. - where responsibility lay for different activities, such as 'alternative care' or 'background checks for those working with children'. (Barnett, 2008)

Many questions were asked about what makes a successful child protection system. Although, many experts have discussed this somewhat issue and they still have not agreed on one definition, below-listed are some of the criteria which are quite essential.

- Legal and policy framework;
- Effective regulation and oversight;
- Preventive and responsive services;
- Effective coordination;
- Knowledge and data;

- A skilled child protection workforce;
- Children's voices and participation;
- An aware and supportive public;
- Adequate funding. (Barnett, Child Protection Systems in Emergencies , 2008)

1.2. FORMAL CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

Formal child protection systems are composed of the laws, policies, regulations, human and financial resources and services which are of great importance across all social sectors, such as: the social welfare, health, education, security and justice. These sets of laws and policies are made with the sole purpose of preventing and responding to the protection-related risks. Many different actors make up the formal child protection system. Responsibilities often vary across government agencies, local authorities, non-State providers and community groups. As previously mentioned, the primary responsibility is given to the government actors for the protection of children within the state. However, at national and sub-national levels, the actors, who are in charge of the system, are the social welfare officials, the police, the government social workers, etc.

Image 1: Other sectors with associated child protection functions at a national level

Examples of the other sectors with important children protection

Education

Health

Goverment, CSD and other service providers

Justice and law enforcement

Beneficial traditional cultural practices and structures

Disaster risk, reduction of emergency preparedness

Family and community

Labour / employement

The child

Social welfare/ social protection
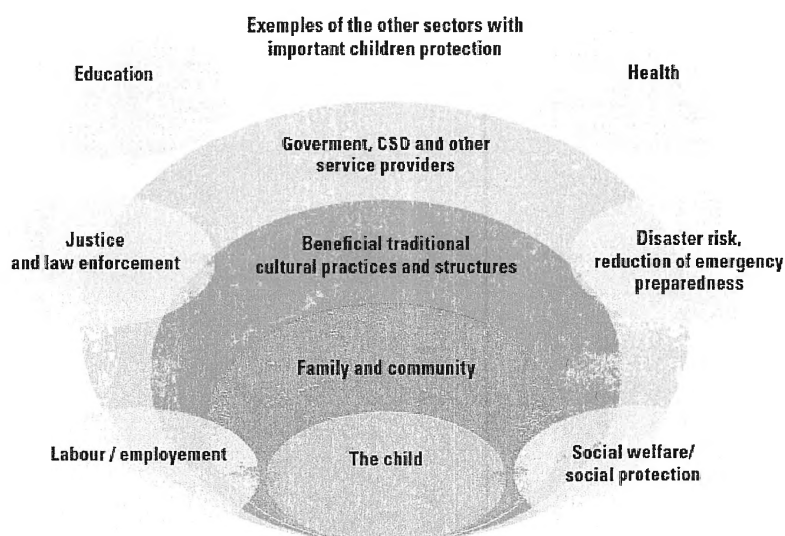
Taken from: (Delaney & Quigley, 2014)

This system is indeed multidisciplinary and intersectoral. Although the sets of laws, the police and the social welfare ministries play an important role in the protection of children, many other actors hold a responsibility in order to best protect children. By providing a formal education, children are sheltered from other harms, such as sexual exploitation or drug abuse. In the same way, health workers treat children, who are vulnerable because of health issues, such as HIV and AIDS or disabilities. Children, who are at risk of being discriminated and unable to access basic health and other services, would greatly benefit civil registration. The economic sector provides powerful implications, since poverty causes many risks.

This system is one of the most basic concepts in the international child rights framework. The result of the UN study on violence against children indicates that violence happens in almost every country in the world in a variety of forms and settings. This problem is deeply engraved in the cultural, economic, and social practices. The UN study suggests that each country, apart from having adopted a national child protection system, to have a multi-faceted and systematic framework to respond to violence against children. As previously mentioned, UNICEF has stated that over 1 billion children nowadays live in places affected by conflict and high level of violence. Violence has a grave impact on children physically, psychologically and emotionally, now and in longer term. It causes post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, antisocial behaviors, substance abuse, problematic peer relations and greater involvement with the criminal justice system. In situation, where there is an armed conflict, vulnerabilities are exacerbated and children are exposed to a wide range of new protection risks, hampering their ability to survive and develop. (Scott, The Crossroads of Child Protection and Education in peacebuilding, 2013)

That is why it is of great importance for the country to adopt protection and security issues for children. The children are the ones who make half the population in situations affected by high levels of violence or conflict. Protecting children from abuse and violence should be our first priority, in order to reduce the harmful effects on children's well-being. Violence, abuse and exploitation amplify conflict drivers and can be conflict drivers themselves. Conflict drivers specific to child protection include weak or failed social welfare systems; violence, including gender-based violence in the home, school and community; potentially harmful social norms and 'cultures of violence'; lack of knowledge or capacity to address psychosocial impacts of conflict and widespread ability of small arms and weapons. Child protection risks can also interact with and compound other conflict drivers, such as urbanization, injustice and lack of access to education and livelihoods. (Scott, 2013)

1.3. INFORMAL CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

Informal actors, such as children, families and communities, are an important part of the child protection system. However, many times they are presented as successors or as part of the problem. Children are part of the informal child protection system because they can help other children, families or communities trying to help a child in need. Parents may not want to label their activities as "child protection", they do much by helping their children by ordinary activities, such as shielding them from harm, injury and teaching them good behavior. The communities are part of the informal child protection system, by providing the children with qualified teachers, elders, nurses who respond to and prevent harms to children. It is of great importance to mention that sometimes children, families and the communities can be the perpetrators instead of being helpers. Families often hurt children through sexual abuse or family violence, and societies can harm children through female genital mutilation. Although, these are serious issues, children, families and communities play a vital role in informal child protection systems. With the help of the informal systems, child protection can make a significant contribution to peacebuilding, when specific peacebuilding activities are incorporated into child protection programming at the community level, involving the participation of community-based groups, and by integrating children into other programs.

1.3.1. COMMUNITY-BASED CHILD PROTECTION MECHANISMS

Community-based child protection mechanisms respond to violations against children and they focus on preventing the risks to children. They are vital parts of child protection systems since they function at the lowest level in the state, such as village level in rural areas and neighborhood level in urban areas, which is where children and families are located and are frequently exposed to significant risks on a daily basis. These child protection mechanisms have plenty of protection resources, such as teachers, parents and religious leaders.

How to respond to, mitigate, and prevent risks to children's protection and well-being is a profound, if unanswered, question. Practitioners agree that it is necessary to develop or strengthen protective factors at multiple levels, such as the family, community, and national levels. This idea of building protective capacities at multiple levels fits with ecological models of child development that highlight the importance of the social environment in children's development, and that emphasize that actors at different levels affect children's well-being. Children's protection and healthy development depend critically on the care and protection provided by caretakers – typically, family and extended family. However,

families' ability to provide care and protection for children depends on having a secure, protective environment, and access to child and family supports at the community level. The community is a crucial source of potential support, since it includes friends, neighbors, traditional leaders, elders, teachers, youth groups, religious leaders, and others who provide valuable care and protection. To provide adequate protection for children and families, however, communities need wider support organized by the government, which bears the primary responsibility for children's protection and well-being. Government actors and institutions are obliged to provide for security, maintain law and order, and develop child friendly services, regulations, and policies that promote children's protection and well-being. (Wessells M. , 2009)

1.4. CHALLENGES FOR THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS IN TIMES OF CONFLICT

The capacity of families and communities to care for and protect their most vulnerable members is often undermined in complex humanitarian situations. There are many challenges for the child protection systems in times of conflict. The main role of the formal child protection system, as well as the community-based child protection mechanisms and networks is to protect children. As stated before, promoting, safeguarding and fulfilling the right of children to protection from abuse, violence, various diseases, exploitation and neglect is the goal of these systems. They both strive to ensure that more and more children live in a supportive and caring environment that promotes their development and which is safe from conflicts. That is why; it is of great importance to emphasize that child protection is the responsibility of society of whole and involves a range of groups. In order to be successful, is should be a joint work of communities, families, parents/guardians, teachers, traditional and religious leaders, elected representatives and government authorities.

1.4.1. CHILDREN AND VIOLENCE

All types of abuse and neglect of a child under the age of 18 are thought to be child maltreatment. It can be caused by a parent, caregiver, or another person in a custodial role (clergy, coach, teacher, etc.). There are four types of abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. In the recent years, some extreme forms of violence against children, such as sexual exploitation and trafficking, female genital mutilation, the impact of armed conflict, have provoked strong international public disapproval and achieved a consensus of condemnation. Despite to these extreme forms of violence, many children are

daily exposed to physical, sexual and psychological violence in their homes and schools, in the places where they work and in their communities. It is no wonder that this causes devastating consequences in the present and in the future.

Violence causes more than 1.6 million deaths worldwide every year. More than 90% of these occur in low and middle-income countries. Violence is one of the leading causes of death in all parts of the world for persons ages 15 to 44. (Krug et al., 2002). Violence against children cuts across boundaries of geography, race, class, religion and culture. It occurs in homes, schools and streets; in places of work and entertainment, and in care and detention centres. Perpetrators include parents, family members, teachers, caretakers, law enforcement authorities and other children. Some children are particularly vulnerable because of gender, race, ethnic origin, disability or social status and no country is immune, whether rich or poor. The consequences of violence can be devastating. Above all, it can result in early death. But even children who survive must cope with terrible physical and emotional scars. Indeed, violence places at risk not only their health, but also their ability to learn and grow into adults who can create sound families and communities. (Wamimbi & Kasimbu, 2015)

As stated above, the main priority for child protection's contribution to peacebuilding would be prevention of all forms of violence, abuse, maltreatment against children and promotion of social norms change. Child protection systems should work on reducing the number of small arms and armed violence. After the conflict is over, there is a widespread availability of small arms long after the hostilities are done. The actions to respond to this issue include promoting non-violent conflict resolution and tolerance and preventing children to take part in an armed conflict. Another important issue that needs to be addressed is gender-based violence, inequity and discrimination. Gender-based violence occurs when there are no specific reconstruction and peacebuilding programs. It raises insecurity among vulnerable community members, with physical, social, emotional consequences, such as girls dropping out of school. Boys may also be part of the gender-based violence, such as peer-on-peer violence, homicide and recruitment into armed groups of criminal gangs.

14

Image 1: Children and types of abuse and neglect

Types of abuse and neglect	Prevalence	Children abused and neglected
Sexual abuse	9.6%	18 million
Physical abuse	22.9%	44 million
Emotional abuse	29.1%	55 million
Physical neglect	16.3%	31 million
Emotional neglect	18.4%	35 million

Taken from: (Avert, 2018)

When we talk about violence and armed conflict, it is essential to mention that children are often recruited as child soldiers. Many children today take part in wars and conflicts and they have many different roles than the ones they have experienced in the past, especially as 'underage', illegal or hidden child soldiers, and as soft targets and victims. Throughout history, many children have been involved in their prosecution; such as Alexander the Great, Joan of Arc, the mythic children's crusaders and captains of 'nursery' ships under Napoleon. From the Cold War to civil wars, and from total war to totalitarianism, there are many parallel uses of children as political currency, in the way of threats, models, investments, instruments, resources, symbols and icons. Their minds and bodies towards particular ideas can make children effective weapons. (Collins, 2007)

It is of great importance to agree on a single definition on children when we discuss child abuse and violence in armed conflicts. This definition is very important in order to determine or help explain how we treat children nowadays. In the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is stated that all children are all persons under the age of 18. Every person, who is under 18, can be treated as a child, a juvenile or a minor. In practice, the childhood lasts shorter in the West and it ends when the child is eight years old or twelve years old. This happens before puberty, marriage or developed labor capacities. Childhood is formed of the following stages: birth, infancy, early childhood, and adolescence. Although, children, in each stage, may be discriminated, abused or maltreated. Some countries have altered this

definition. For example, Palestinians have reclassified children until the age of sixteen. This means, that each person, above the age of sixteen, is thought to be an adult, and not a child. Due to this change, many children can experience mental and physical changes, as well as emotional harm that are thought to be quite different than the ones experienced by adults. It is not difficult to harm children especially in early childhood. The latest research, though, has stated that children can engage morally from the ages of four or five and became adults from the age of twelve. This is how some can hinder child development in some countries.

1.4.2. CHILD SOLDIERS

Many times, during a conflict, children are recruited as child soldiers who serve in military organizations, such as state armed forces and non-state armed forces. Thousands of them are serving in armed conflicts all around the world, both in government forces and armed opposition groups. Their role varies from being participants in suicide missions, fighters in the front lines, and sometimes they act as messengers, spies or lookouts.

Even though there is an in international norm saying that a child is a person under the age of eighteen, many children, who are voluntarily recruited, are at the age of sixteen and many are much younger than this. Many NGO's are working on this issue, trying to put an end to the recruitment of child soldiers. There is not one simple profile of a child soldier. From the images and videos that we have been presented in the media the recruited children look fearless, defiant and positioned. It is not easy to guess their age-specific and gendered roles. The statistics show that over forty-five states are estimated to use 300,000 child soldiers on average. The UN Security Council lists child recruitment in conflicts as one of the six grave violations. The six grave violations form the basis of the Council's will, monitoring and respond to abuses by children affected by wars. The Special Representative is also trying to stop and prevent these violations.

However, no matter the work and advocacy of the Special Representative and the UN Security Council, children's lives are highly expendable and their figures in conflicts are much higher. It is thought that the majority of them are part of the government armed forces, while the youngest are often active in armed groups. Up to 50% of soldiers are girls, who may be forced to sexual slavery. Children may constitute 10% of current armed soldiers. The changing image of today's conflicts has contributed to this percentage. Light weaponry can be easily acquired and even without it, many child soldiers do not have to be armed or ready to fire to be effective or dangerous. (Collins, 2007)

In the conflicts that occur nowadays, it is difficult to estimate whether the children are voluntarily or involuntarily recruited, given the fact that militias offer far more to children than just a life of combat. In a research made by the International Labor Organization, it was found that volunteers were accounted for two thirds of child soldiers in four Central African countries. Children, who decide to enlist, are often times motivated to ward off poverty and insecurity, while at the same time being attracted by the familial-style environment, food and clothing. They receive food and shelter in return for 'using' guns. Some countries are known for offering education with military experience.

1.4.3. CHILDREN AND HIV

Children whose parents are ill because of HIV/AIDS or those who have been orphaned by the disease face psychological violence, stigma and discrimination. They may be rejected by their friends and schoolmates, as well as the health centers. In addition to the grief and loss they feel, the estimated 15 million orphans due to AIDS face growing up without adequate bonding and emotional support from parents. Many of these children find themselves without family or extended family support, either because the initial solution was unsustainable or because they had no options available.

Psychosocial trauma can continue even when orphans move to foster families or to extended families. They may be treated as second-class family members – discriminated against in the allocation of food, perhaps, or in the distribution of work. Orphans in Zambia have reported a lack of love and a feeling of being excluded, as part of outright discrimination. Many of these children are vulnerable to abuse (physical, emotional and sexual) from extended family members and other members of their communities, and girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse. (Trickett, 1998)

In 2000, the United Nations Security Council held a meeting regarding HIV/AIDS. It was the first time in history, that this issue was treated as a threat to international peace and security. Although, at the beginning it was thought that HIV/AIDS is just a health issue, nowadays it is treated as much more. This lethal disease poses a serious challenge to the peace and stability of the countries, especially those is Africa. It is also believed that HIV/AIDS may cause more than ten times as many deaths as armed conflict. Throughout the world it is estimated that approximately 40 million people are living with AIDS, and more than 25 million people lost their battle with this disease.

Children are not immune to this virus/disease either. It attacks the youngest especially in Africa. Children, due to the illness of their parents may become orphans, quit school or they are forced to provide income at a very young age. Many children, from all around the world, are infected with this virus. Since 2010, worldwide, the yearly number of new infect in among children (0-14 years), has almost halved. There is a big risk if the mother is living with HIV and passing it to her child during pregnancy. This risk can be reduced to 5 % or less if the mother has access to effective therapy which she can receive during pregnancy, delivery and breastfeeding.

Approximately 1.6 million new HIV infections have been stopped with the help of antiretroviral medicines (ARVs) to women living with HIV during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Despite these improvements, the number of children who are infected is still very high. The current statistic on this issue state that many children do not have an access to the medicine which would help them.

The majority of children infected with HIV live in Africa, where AIDS remains the leading cause of death among adolescents. In 2016 only, 120,000 children, from all around the world, died to AIDS-related illnesses. This means that 328 deaths occur every day. It is said that children aged 0-4 years, who are living with this disease, are more likely to die than any people living with HIV of any other age.

Image 2: New HIV infections in children
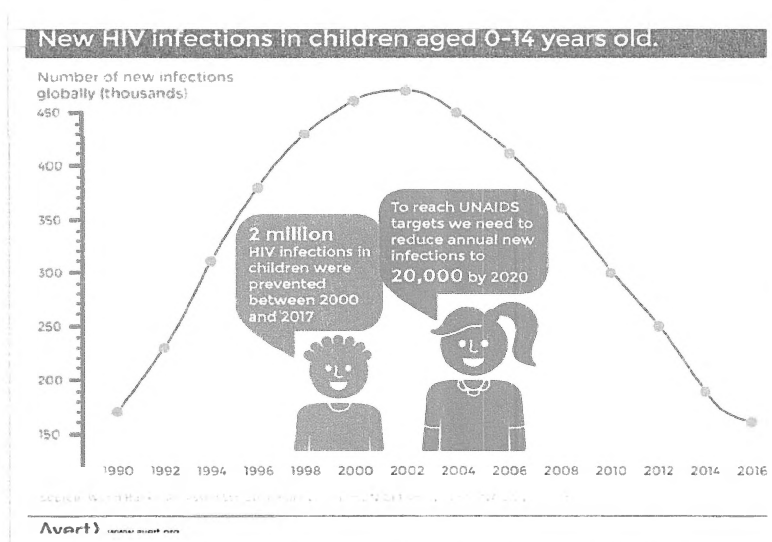
Taken from: (Avert, 2018)

In addition, millions more children are indirectly affected by the impact of the HIV epidemic on their families and communities. Regular HIV testing, treatment, monitoring and care for children living with HIV can enable them to live long and fulfilling lives. However, a lack of necessary investment and resources for adequate testing, pediatric ARVs and child-friendly prevention programs mean children continue to suffer the consequences of the epidemic. (Avert, 2018)

If the infected children have access to treatment, they can continue with their normal, happy everyday lives, just like any other child. Despite the existing treatments, children living with HIV can face discrimination and bullying at home, at school and in the community. Both the formal and informal child protection systems, should strive to educate people about the virus and the disease. Efforts are made to inform children and families affected by the virus/disease and it has been openly discussed the HIV testing, as well as the treatment services which are available to them.

1.4.4. CHILDREN AND EDUCATION

A great priority has been put on the importance of child education. Many articles and studies have shown the benefits of emotional, social and physical advance of young children and their effects on their development of their future self. Not just the education in young adults is important, but their future well-being should be one of the parents' first priorities regarding their child. Even nowadays, education and educational development remain one of the inaccessible rights for millions of children worldwide. More than 72 million children are not in school and 759 million adults are illiterate and do not have the skills to improve their basic living conditions and those of their children.

The reasons, why children are lacking formal education, are numerous and are connected to inequality and marginalization. In developing and developed countries, children are not attending school because of many inequalities related to: sex, cultural identity, health, etc. These children, by not being part of the school environment and community, are missing out on the benefits that are vital to their intellectual and social development. Illnesses, unemployment and illiteracy of parents contribute to the drop-out rate and the access of children to education. Due to their impaired backgrounds, children are forced to abandon their education in order to provide some kind of income for their family.

Many developing countries do not have the appropriate resources and finances that are necessary to build schools, provide school supplies and employ and train the staff. The funds given by the international community are many times not enough to allow counties to create an education system for all children. The inequality of teaching goes hand in hand with the lack of financial resources. Teachers do not benefit a lot from basic trainings and schools, without a qualified staff, have many classes during the day and cannot attend to the children's needs. In this way, children from different educational levels are faced together which does not allow an individual improvement and education adapted to their needs and abilities.

It is widely known that education provides most children with their second most important source of socialization (after the family). Research suggests that one of the most effective means of preventing violence and crime among certain high-risk children is to provide incentives for them to complete schooling obtain vocational training and pursue higher education. USA has consistently found that providing high school students with incentives to graduate was the most cost-effective intervention.

Programs in schools are an important strategy, both for divesting schools themselves of gang culture and interpersonal violence, and also for preventing violence among young people in the community. Children, who are from disadvantaged backgrounds and groups that suffer from discrimination are more likely to be involved in anti-social behavior, and are also likely to be excluded from school or drop out early. That is why; programs created by the community-based mechanisms can reach out to such children and re-introduce them to formal education via non-formal or 'catch up' programs. (Trickett, 1998)

1.4.5. APPROACHES TO IMPROVING CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING PROCESSES

The development of constructive personal, group and political relationships across ethnic religious, class, national, and racial boundaries is part of the process, called peacebuilding. It aims to resolve injustice in nonviolent ways and to transform the structural conditions that generate deadly conflict. Peacebuilding can include conflict prevention; conflict management; conflict resolution, and post-conflict reconciliation. Related to these peacebuilding instruments, it could be noted that peacebuilding presents a long-term and comprehensive theory.

Therefore, peacebuilding becomes strategic when it works over the long run and at all levels of society or region to establish and sustain relationships among people locally, regionally and globally. Strategic peacebuilding connects people and groups with policymakers and powerbrokers. It aims not only to resolve conflicts, but to build societies, institutions, policies, and relationships that are more able to sustain peace and justice.

Strategic peace builders address issues of human rights, economic prosperity and environmental sustainability, as well as violence. Strategic peacebuilding stretches across generations. While it engages immediate crises, strategic peacebuilding recognizes that peacemaking is a long-term vocation that requires the building of cross-group networks and alliances that will survive intermittent conflicts and create a platform for sustainable human development and security. (Georgieva, 2016)

At national and community levels in fragile environments, it is integral to peacebuilding and reconciliation to protect children from violence, abuse and exploitation. UNICEF is trying hard to create a protective environment, by engaging the communities which social norms support peacebuilding efforts. The Government of the Netherlands currently supports UNICEF's Peacebuilding Education and Advocacy Programme. This Programme has been implemented in 12 countries and it is hoped that this will make a significant contribution to promoting peace and stability. This study aims to document promising practices on child protection and peacebuilding and on how child protection programming contributes to peacebuilding and education initiatives.

This study will contribute specifically to outcomes 3 and 5 of the PBEA project:

• Outcome 3 – Individual capacity development: Increased capacity of children, parents, teachers and community members to prevent, reduce and cope with conflict and promote peace.

• Outcome 5 – Knowledge, evidence and advocacy: Adequate generation and use of evidence and knowledge in policies and programming on linkages between education, conflict and peacebuilding.

This study uses the following definitions relating to peacebuilding and child protection:

• Peacebuilding: A multidimensional range of measures to reduce the risk of a lapse or relapse into conflict by addressing both the causes and consequences of conflict. Peacebuilding works to strengthen national capacities at all levels for conflict management in order to lay foundations for sustainable peace and development. It occurs at all levels in a society (national to community levels) and includes governments, civil society and the United Nations system, as well as an array of international and national partners.

• Conflict analysis: The systematic study of the profile, causes, actors and dynamics of conflict. Conflict analysis should capture the many dimensions (political, social, economic, security, etc.) of a conflict, and can be tailored to any geographic area or programmatic level. (Scott, The Crossroads of Child Protection and Education in peacebuilding, 2013)

In order for children to have a safe environment in which they will live, the society should strengthen the systems and links between informal mechanisms at the community level, by joining the community-based child protection mechanisms and formal child protection systems. By working alongside, the systems should encompass education, social welfare, health, law enforcement and justice-related interventions, with the purpose of helping children.

One UN study showed that schools are one of the five biggest settings for violence among and against children. Sustainable peacebuilding efforts can be achieved by stopping and preventing violence in schools. Ensuing safe attendance of children in school is linked to sustainable peacebuilding. Children benefit a lot from attending school regularly. They have the skills and competence to meet their needs, protect them and build hope for a better future. To do that, schools should be inclusive, protective and participatory environments which are accessible to children, especially in times of violence, fragility, and conflict and post-conflict.

UNICEF's education and child protection sectors closely collaborate on school-based violence prevention projects. These include the 'School without Violence' program in Kyrgyzstan, which includes an inter-school mediation program that fosters dialogue, tolerance and mutual respect to reduce ethnic tensions; and the 'Safer Environment for Children' program in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which addresses the problem of arms and ammunition. In Uganda, police child protection and family units are being supported to visit schools to educate students and teachers on prevention of violence against children and on reporting channels. Improved monitoring and reporting of attacks on schools has also been

effective in protecting schools and preventing violence against children. Of particular note is the strong engagement of the child protection and education clusters with the MRM[1] in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Yemen and the Children Affected by Armed Conflict Working Group in the State of Palestine. Codes of conduct to protect schools from violence and attacks have also been negotiated at community level in Nepal, Philippines and Sierra Leone. Some of the countries implementing programs are: Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and State of Palestine, Yemen.

Implementation of the MRM and the associated action plans directly contributes to peacebuilding and reconciliation on multiple levels. The goal of the MRM is protection of children through prevention of grave violations against them, by holding perpetrators to account. MRM country task forces have been established in 17 countries to date, and similar working groups on children and armed conflict are being established in other contexts, most notably in the Palestinian State. Data emerging from implementation of the MRM inform conflict analysis and identify important trends and patterns for broader UN early warning mechanisms, indicating changes in levels of violence and conflict, such as in Afghanistan. Data also inform and improve targeted prevention and response programming. In addition the MRM promotes accountability of parties to the conflict, by publicly 'naming and shaming' perpetrating parties by listing them in the annexes of the UN Secretary General's annual report to the Security Council on children and armed conflict; and by requiring listed parties to sign and implement action plans. Consequently, the UN engages with parties to develop and implement action plans to end grave violations against children and to take measures to prevent and respond to those violations. This includes issuance of military orders to this effect, which enhances stability. Every action plan, whether directed at the military or at armed groups, has an important component of building knowledge on child rights and child protection. They also include large-scale community sensitization activities on protecting children, which promotes transformation of social norms. As of June 2013, 24 action plans with 28 parties have been signed (15 with governments and 9 with non-state actors), resulting in the release and community-based reintegration of thousands of children. The MRM has also raised the profile of children and armed conflict issues on the political agenda at all

---

[1] Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism managed by country-based task forces co-led by UNICEF and the highest UN representative in the country, to provide timely and reliable information on children's rights.

levels. The leverage of the Security Council and Member States has provided a strong political motivation for both State and non-State parties to address and prevent violations against children. The MRM often provides a critical strategic entry point for engagement on children's issues in peacebuilding. (Scott, The Crossroads of Child Protection and Education in peacebuilding, 2013)

1.5. THE INCLUSION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS IN PEACEBUILDING

For more than ten years, the involvement of children and young adults – especially men, but also women – in violence and conflicts has led to the belief that youth poses a risk to global security and stability. Current research shows that youth who actively participates in violence is a minority, while the greater part of youth is not violent and does not participate in violence. Specifically, the majority of evidence collected shows that young women and men can actually play active roles of positive and constructive change.

In the recent Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security are presented the date of formal recognition of the positive role young adults can play for the continuation of international peace and security.

The main objective of the Resolution is to let know policy makers for supporting the participation of young adults in peacebuilding. Moreover, this Resolution has been created to:

2. provide evidence-based promising practices in youth peacebuilding in the field;
3. create an understanding of complex and interconnected policy and programs for youth peacebuilding intervention, and;
4. Find more funds through donors and agencies that supports youth peacebuilding programs.

An inter-agency working group (WG) on youth and peacebuilding was established in 2012 under the umbrella of the wider United Nations Inter-Agency Network of Youth Development (IANYD) to help actors working in the field of youth and peacebuilding advocate for a paradigm shift in supporting young people as a force for peacebuilding. This group, co-chaired by the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), the international Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Search for Common Ground and

United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY) – a global network of youth peace organizations – includes over 40 member organizations from the United Nations (UN), NGOs, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and academia. In order to support improved strategies and policies on young men and women's contribution to peace and stability, this wide constituency of partners developed the Guiding Principles on Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding. The Principles are designed to inform participative, inclusive and intergenerational peacebuilding strategies and programs that systematically promote and ensure participation and contributions of young people. This Practice Note intends to complement these principles, conceived to be overarching and applicable to a wide range of actors, to provide concrete guidance based on evidence and practice from the field. It will also support the implementation of Security Council Resolution 2250. (Foundation, 2016)

Young adults are many times perceived as perpetrators or victims of violence in countries affected by violence and conflicts. Young men are usually identified as the main source of sexual and gender-based violence, while young women as the primary victims. Regardless of the stereotypes before-mentioned, the lives of young people in these contexts are much more complex. Some young people may be the victims and perpetrators of violence, other may be neither.

Many "young bulge" theories, propagated in popular literature and media, give warnings that a growing male youth population, who is unemployed, is at risk when it comes to violence and insecurity. Today we have the largest number of youth ever to have existed and there will be 72 million more youth by 2025. Although, research has documented a link between youth population and the risk of armed conflict, the findings are not a straightforward indicator of violence. Alternatively, they show which countries are at higher risk of conflict. Many countries, containing youth bulges, have not recently suffered violence and are relatively stable, such as the following countries: Malawi, Zambia, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Benin and Nicaragua.

Society keeps claiming that young men are more prone to become violent and take part in armed conflicts, where as women are portrayed as victims in need of protection. That is why peacebuilding interventions target and prioritize young men. Through these interventions, men are given a chance to short-term employment schemes, because of the stereotype saying that economic deprivation is the main factor of turning young people into violence and conflict.

As a matter of fact, these peacebuilding programs fall short when it comes to meeting the needs of young women and nurture their leadership. Young women are feeling left aside from the majority of peacebuilding programs and are rarely included in these interventions. Although, many women's civil society movements include young women, peacebuilding policy and practice should be able to catch up to this reality and engage them more systematically. These peacebuilding interventions can strengthen through emphasizing the importance of social services, such as education. Education is the most transformative national institution that can help both young men and women. It can serve as a pillar of nation-building, as well as peacebuilding. Youth understand the importance of education. Peacebuilding can benefit from education in a several ways. First, education can promote peace and provide safe environments for children and young adults. Policy, materials, curricula, and a peaceful environment play vital roles in fostering peacebuilding and conflict prevention. It does not come as a surprise that teachers, who underpin the success of any educational system, have an important role to play as agents of peacebuilding and protection.

In reality, most children and young adults, who live in conflict-affected countries, are out of school and the girls are the first to be excluded. Without proper education, the gender inequality rises, which research has proven that societies become less stable and vulnerable to conflicts. If education is accessible to everyone, it can build societies more resilient to conflict. Education programs that support youth can be both formal and non-formal. With the help of these programs, the knowledge and skills are reinforced, while non-violence in school decreases. Thus, investing in alternative or non-formal education programs that reach out to young people is of vital importance. Also, we should all invest in quality and conflict sensitive education as a strategic contribution to peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Another thing that we can do is to support the programs that support the reduction of violence in and around schools and give everyone the right and access to education, factoring the gender, the most marginalized and identity groups.

Apart from education, there is actual evidence suggesting that young men and women can play various roles in post-conflict situations and countries. These can vary, depending of the peace process; political activists; criminals and vigilantes; negotiators and mediators; key security and justice actors; and peacemakers. In this way, young people can be positively engaged and take part in their societies during the difficult time and after the violent conflict. Children and young adults can play a crucial role as drivers and agents of change in the

development of their societies. Most of them are willing to change, provide feedback and change. They want their future changed, free from risks and violent conflicts. With the help of democratic national projects, children and young adults will unleash their full potential to contribute to their societies and the national economy.

Be that as it may, all young people face a lot of vulnerabilities after conflict. Regardless being direct or indirect victims, perpetrators or bystanders, they have specific needs that need to met, including skipped years of education, unemployment or loss of traditional living opportunities, trauma, loss of status and resources.

Another reason to engage young people in building peace and developing their societies is that most young people want to and do play positive roles in peacebuilding. There are many examples where youth organizations have played important roles in peacebuilding, in many cases through youth-led and self-initiated activities. These activities often involve direct participation and alternative ways of organizing, often at young people's own expense and with risks to their lives, in order to claim spaces in the world of peacebuilding that is traditionally controlled by adults. There is emerging evidence on a number of societal, community and individual "protective" factors that can foster resilience and prevent young people from (re)engaging in violence. At a community level, some studies suggest that "strong communities" and young people's involvement in associations can build their social capital and sense of belonging and empowerment and as well as act as an important deterrent to engagement in violence. This suggests that investment in well-designed voluntary and civil engagement programmes is important.

At an individual level, protective factors can include traits such as resourcefulness, intellectual curiosity, and flexibility around emotional experiences, sense of purpose and agency, as well as a need and ability to help others. In addition, there is growing evidence that skills building approaches, including through early childhood development, can have an effect on how young people manage tensions and conflict or recover from trauma – including building emotional intelligence, listening and communication skills, conflict management skills and cognitive restructuring. For example, a number of recent HIV and gender-based violence prevention programmes have successfully used small group participatory learning and critical reflection techniques to shift the knowledge and behaviors of young men and women. This suggests that life skills programmes, anti-violence curricula and therapeutic interventions can play an important role, although there is a need to consider how to target

such programmes given their resource intensiveness. Overall, it is very important that the specific needs and priorities of different groups of young people, including the differentiated needs of young women and men, during and after conflict are identified and addressed through targeted initiatives. These should be developed with and by young people themselves, building on research which identifies existing local capacities for peace and young people's sources of resilience, as opposed to externally driven solutions. (Foundation, 2016)

1.6. INCLUSION OF THE COMMUNITY IN PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS

It is equally important to mention that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) refers "violence against children" as all forms of mental and physical violence, injure and neglect, abuse or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.

Hereby are stated some of the definitions regarding violence against children and young adults:

- *Physical Violence* against children refers to all forms of torture, degrading treatment and corporal punishment, as well as physical bulling. Corporal punishment is explained as any punishment in which physical force is used and is meant to inflict lighter pain. It can involve: kicking, hitting, shaking or throwing children, biting, pulling ears, etc.
- *Sexual Violence* consists of any sexual activities by an adult on a child, against the child's wishes and protection by criminal law. This includes: the engagement of a child in any sexual activities, child prostitution, and sale of children for sexual purposes, trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation and forced marriage. Sexual activities are also considered as abuse when committed against a child by an older child.
- *Emotional Violence* is explained as verbal abuse and psychological maltreatment. All forms of constant harmful interactions, scarring, terrorizing and threatening, as well as exploiting and corrupting a child or young adult is considered emotional violence. It is important to mention that denying emotional responsiveness and neglecting the mental health and the educational needs of the children is also an emotional violence.

Psychological bullying and hazing by other children or adults, isolations, detention, humiliation and cyber-bullying are thought to harm a child or a young adult.

- *Neglect* is defined as failure to attend the physical and psychological needs of the children, to protect them from danger or obtain medical, birth registration or other services to do so. It includes physical neglect, psychological or emotional neglect, including lack of any support or love, as well as neglect the physical or mental health of the children. Moreover, educational neglect is when the parents/caregivers fail to secure their children's attendance at school.

Children can have a positive impact on their learning and educational outcomes from preventing violence in the community. It has been proven that violence during childhood can harm the educational outcomes. The exposure to violence can be a predictor of lower grades. Victims of violence, especially children, are more likely to drop out school and permanently leave their non-abused peers. In this way, their basic human rights are infringed and their faced with the inability to concentrate and focus on their school-related activities. Experiences of violence can result in children being constantly absent from school and increased drop-out rates.

In order to prevent all types of violence, children should take an active part in the peacebuilding plans and community services. Conflict is very much a brutal and local affair that tears apart the most intimate community fabric. Therefore, action that builds community level social cohesion, relationships and collective action can deliver important peacebuilding dividends.

The researches made about the community, also known as CBPR[2], action researches and bottom-up approaches, are not new. Despite their great popularity, CBRP is faced with many ethical challenges. The "outsiders" are the main actors in these researches and they use their own ideas and methods to help the communities and work alongside the powerful experts who make the final decisions that affect communities. The tensions between the "outsiders", that is the researchers of CBPR and the insiders are quite common, which is consequently

---

[2] CBPR – Community-based participatory research is an approach designed to research and gather data of the community with the help of community members, representatives of some organization and researchers in all aspects of the research process.

reflected in low engagement and the results in the communities are visible but with limited sustainability.

Community building is an approach to empowering young people to take charge of their lives and the life of their communities. It recognizes a positive relationship between youth development and community development, and provides a context in which young people can become fully engaged community partners. Community building entails attitude, process, and structure: how young people and other citizens relate to each other, engage in decision-making and action, and organize through collaborative mechanisms. Community building takes place in the immediate environment of youth. In this sense, it is concrete, visible, physical, and emotional. It is here where contact with the "other" is real. Despite this immediacy and importance, some national peacebuilding plans and interventions never reach the community level – particularly when youth live outside of the capital and in marginalized regions.

What is more, community building takes on entirely new dimensions when youth are displaced into new, fluid and less known communities. There, supporting youth to become involved in their environment and to build new relationships is vital for cohesion and peaceful coexistence. Community building is proving a central theme to addressing high levels of gang violence in Central America. Emerging lessons show that the most successful prevention programmes are based upon two principles: community-driven programming (the establishment of programmes that respond to the self-identified needs of a particular community) and community capacity building (efforts to strengthen a community's own ability to develop and support programmes that work with its youth). Successful interventions tend to be led by communities and bring together diverse actors such as schools, local government, healthcare centres, religious institutions, with guidance and support from national governments. (Foundation, 2016)

Children can have a positive impact on their learning and educational outcomes from preventing violence in the community. It has been proven that violence during childhood can harm the educational outcomes. The exposure to violence can be a predictor of lower grades. Victims of violence, especially children, are more likely to drop out school and permanently leave their non-abused peers. In this way, their basic human rights are infringed and their faced with the inability to concentrate and focus on their school-related activities.

Experiences of violence can result in children being constantly absent from school and increased drop-out rates.

There are many new policies and programs that have included development and support of young adults in civil society institutions and organizations, which are created and dedicated to informing youth in their formative years on the advantages that promote a peaceful community. Some of them include researches that understand and evaluate the potential of youth in the peacebuilding processes in the community after a conflict. They focus on the sustainability of such processes that accept children and young adults from different generations and have different impacts and outcomes. These institutions are given practices that reflect various regions and cultures from all around the world. Here are named some of these organizations with a seat in different countries: Youth-led Community Building through Service Learning in Maryland, USA; Youth for Justice and Reconciliation in Cambodia; Youth-Led Livelihood Programming in Uganda, etc.

Chapter 2: COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES ON CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS AND THEIR ROLE IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND SUSTAINABLE PEACEBUILDING

In the next chapter of my master's thesis, I will focus on a few case studies that have tackled the issues with children and violence and their continued efforts to prevent and stop conflicts in order to have a sustainable peacebuilding.

Before I focus on each case study, I want to elaborate on a research that showed that international child protection agencies recognized the need for more informal child protection mechanisms, since the traditional (formal) approaches did not sufficiently prevent or respond to child protection issues. It has been widely accepted the need to shift away from responsive programming towards a systems approach which focuses mainly on prevention. This allows the systems to shift from small and isolated projects to more effective and systematic approach which provides comprehensive, well-organized set of measures to prevent the frequency of child protection violations in order to support social and economic development in the countries in question. The current discussion focuses on a number of debates on just what is a child protection system and how a child protection system might incorporate both formal and informal protection mechanisms.

For this purpose, first we will have a chance to see the current situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is an upper-middle-income country and a potential candidate to become a member in the European Union. Since the country is decentralized, so the governance issues have slowed the reforms and there are many challenges from not realizing the rights of all children. One of the biggest problems in the country is the risk of poverty and exclusion. Roma children are the most vulnerable category in the society. Although, with the support from UNICEF, social protection and inclusion systems have been strengthened, Roma kids are still the most marginalized ones. When it comes to juvenile offences, they have fallen by 10% since 2010, again with the help of UNICEF (by supporting the "Justice for Children" program). Many day-care services have been established to help children with disabilities, as well as to help rural children. Moreover, the early childhood education increased from just 6% to 13% in 2012, but the proportion falls to 1.5% among Roma children. With the help of the formal child protection system (the implementation of UN Child Rights Convention, the European Convention for the Protection of Civil Rights, the Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor, etc.)

many rights to children have been granted and regulated. In order to prevent conflicts and having a sustainable peacebuilding, Bosnia and Herzegovina has adopted and implemented many programs to protect and shelter children, as well as to promote their rights, welfare and foster greater social inclusion.

In a similar fashion, the case study about England will be conducted. England is a country that has a traditional (formal) child protection system, regulated through various Conventions and laws. The main legislation governing the protection system is the Children Act 1989. Although, the Children Act has been amended many times since its adoption, it continues to provide the core legal framework for all children in England. The country is known for a highly integrated child protection system with its 156 English local authorities having the main responsibility for implementing this at local level. The local authorities are the one who need to safeguard and promote the child's rights in England. However, according to one study, millions of children in England are at risk or are growing up in risky environments. One team of experts calculated that 580,000 children receive some kind of care or support from the country, and the number is even bigger at children whose families were seen as vulnerable. For this purpose, the study on England's child protection system will focus on children's risks, and will try to elaborate the programs and actors trying to strengthen the system.

Finally, the third case study will focus on child protection system (mostly informal) in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone, as a country, is shaped by the colonial history, the struggle for autonomy and a terrifying 11-year conflict. The country achieved independence in 1961, though it retained the system of governance of the Commonwealth. In 1991, the country descended into civil war which lasted for 11 years. Today, the country struggles to develop a new society after the conflict was over and overcoming the challenges with child protection. Some of the biggest challenges are in the sectors of health, education and social welfare. Some of the ways to improve the education sector was by introducing the Education Sector Plan. This program set out a goal to provide quality education for all and to give access to quality primary education. However, the quality of the education remains very poor with teachers being unqualified to teach. In addition to this issue, girls and boys are exposed to a number of serious concerns, such as sexual exploitation and abuse, teenage pregnancy, child trafficking and labor, deprivation of care, etc. Due to the conflict, many children in Sierra Leone have lost their primary caregivers and data show that 11% of them have lost one

parent. Although, Sierra Leone was one of the first two countries to receive funding from the UN Peace Building Fund, only a small amount was given to UNICEF to support child protection in recovery and peacebuilding.

2.1. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND ITS CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

Bosnia and Herzegovina is an upper-middle-income country which is highly decentralized. However, one of the most common problems that this country faces is that more than half of the population is poor or socially excluded and at risk of poverty. This problem is especially seen at vulnerable families and children, children with disabilities, children without parents, Roma children, children of minorities, etc.

The child protection system of Bosnia and Herzegovina is both formal and informal. There are many laws that protect children from violence, poverty, diseases, etc. Even though, many amendments have been made, children are not safe, and the country is not able to protect Roma children, children with various disabilities, children without parents, etc. Bosnia and Herzegovina faced many security and terrorist incidents which made gaps in capacities of BiH authorities and insufficient coordination between the security agencies in order to prevent and fight violent extremism. That is why, the NGO sector works without stopping to help the formal child protection system.

UNICEF works tirelessly to provide social inclusion and special services for the most vulnerable children and families. Some of which, include day-care services for children and continued help for Roma and rural children. However, the help from UNICEF is not enough because there is an unharmonized legislation, insufficient collaboration between sectors and lack of capacities among social workers. The situation in this field is particularly complex in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in particular given its highly de-centralized social protection system and divided competences in the field of social protection between the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the ten cantons. Apart from helping the vulnerable families, UNICEF provides vaccines to make sure that children under the age of five are fully immunized. A child-centered approach has been implemented in many primary schools and thousands of teachers have been trained. UNICEF also contributed in the field of HIV/AIDS prevention by organizing a study among drug users in order to collect data on risk behaviors and HIV statistics in the country. More than 30 schools were furnished, creating a friendlier and more stimulation environment for children. Roma families, including children, visited classes to improve their parenting skills.

Regardless of the work that UNICEF provides on a daily basis, a great number of families in Bosnia and Herzegovina live in poverty. Although, 90 percent of the children attend primary school, only one third of Roma children is educated and attends classes. Drop-out rates are even higher among rural children and children whit disabilities are likely to be excluded from the society. Although the war of independence ended decades ago, ethnic tensions are still present in the country; many children of different backgrounds attend separate classes and are often excluded from the education system. The armed conflict left as many as 1 million landmines and killed more than 15,000 victims; quarter of them being children in period between 1996 and 2006. Another problem is the child trafficking that is spread throughout the entire region.

2.1.1. RISKS AND CONDITIONS THAT YOUNG ADULTS AND CHILDREN FACE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The risks and conditions, that children fin Bosnia and Herzegovina face, are quite broad and some of them were mentioned in the previous chapter. In this part of the thesis I will focus on the most common risks that the children are daily exposed to and how do these risks affect their everyday lives.

Poverty remains one of the biggest problems that children in Bosnia face. According to a UNICEF report (Chzhen & Ferrone, 2015), which uses the MODA[3] tool and analyzes the situation of children of different ages, found out that there has been an overlapping between the deprivation and monetary poverty when it comes to families in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This report analyzed a few dimensions and some of them are listed below.

- The dimensions analyzed for children under the age of five were: Nutrition, Health, Child Development, Violent Discipline, Information Access and Housing.

---

[3] MODA is a tool created by UNICEF to find out the extent and nature of material deprivation and monetary poverty that affect children. This tool focuses on the international framework of child rights and the child well-being in the fields of survival, development, protection and social participation.

Image 3: Children with highest poverty gap in Bosnia and Herzegovina
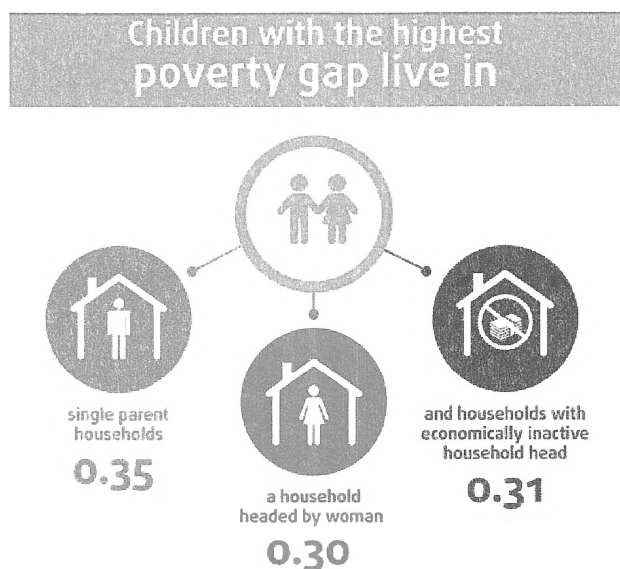
Taken from: (Bruckauf, 2011)

- The dimensions analyzed for children above the age of five were: Nutrition, Clothing, Educational Resources, Leisure, Social Participation, Information Access and Housing.

- For older children, the study also analyzed the overlapping of deprivation and monetary poverty, using the consumption-based absolute poverty line of 238 BAM per capita per month.

Once the data was collected, the study showed that 98.1% of children aged 0 to 4, were deprived in at least one dimension and more than a third are deprived in four or more dimensions. Also, younger children were most likely to be deprived in Nutrition (71.8%), Child Development (65.7%), Information (53.4%) and Violent Discipline (48.7%). On the other hand, children who live in rural areas are more likely to be deprived in Information and Housing. Having a single parent who is poorly educated, increases the deprivation of most of the dimensions previously mentioned.

This study showed that three out of four children, who are between 5 and 15 years old, are deprived in at least one dimension, while 22.8% of this group of children is deprived in three or more dimensions. Older children are lacking information, i.e. an internet connection and overcrowding, due to many infrastructural problems. Being deprived in many of the dimensions is due to the activity of the head of household and the number of children in the

36

family. Having a parent that is not well educated increases the probability of being deprived in any dimension.

Image 4: Children and the areas of deprivation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Children aged 5-15
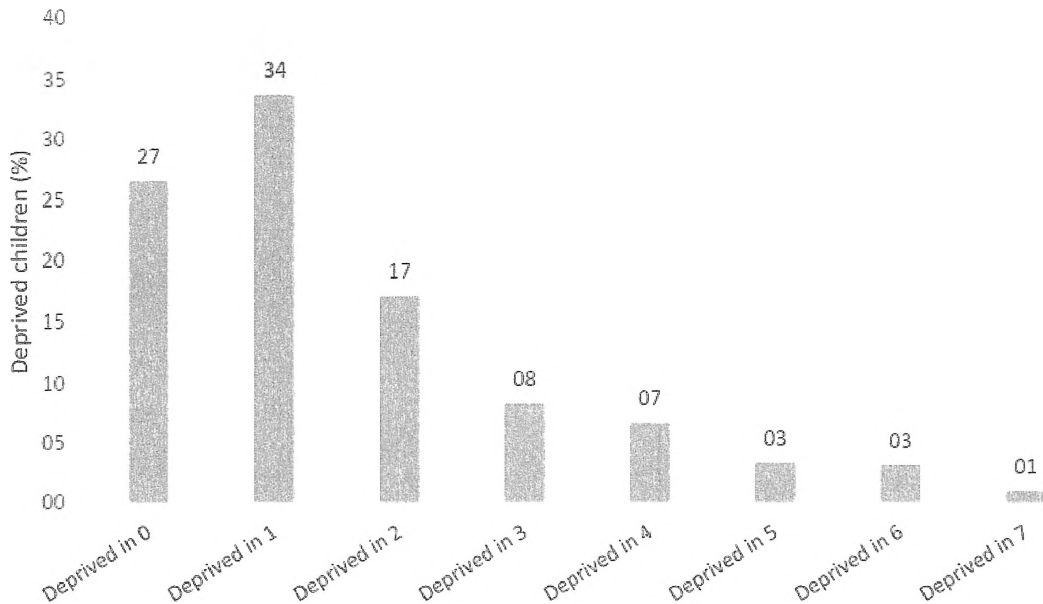
Taken from: (Ferrone, 2015)

According to the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, almost a third of children (30.6%) between 5 and 15 years old are poor. These children are likely to be deprived in any of the dimensions studied. The correlation between being poor and having a household head, which does not hold a secondary degree of education, increases. However, the overlap between deprivation and poorness is moderate, with only 13.8% of this category of kids. Once the study was finalized, the results showed that the majority of children in Bosnia and Herzegovina are deprived in at least one dimension. Deprivation is greater in younger children, especially in those who are at the age 0-4.

2.1.2. PROGRAMS FOR MEETING THE RISKS THAT CHILDREN FACE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

With the support from UNICEF, attendance in early childhood education increased from just 6% in 2006 to 13% in 2012. By advocating and providing assistance, UNICEF managed half of the country's children to attend minimum preschool programs prior to first grade, which was required by the legislative framework. Another critical issue that was tackled by UNICEF is equality gaps in education. Even though, attendance is high, Roma children are still excluded when it comes to attending school. However, this number has greatly decreased from 69% to 23%. There is a still a prejudice towards Roma children, children with disabilities and the ethnic division persists.

Juvenile offences have fallen by approximately 10% overall since 2010. The decline has been larger, 16% and 30% respectively, in the third and fourth largest cities (Tuzla and Zenica), where the UNICEF-supported "Justice for Children" program was implemented. However, the Committee on the Rights of the Child continues to be concerned with insufficient alternative measures to detention and forms of rehabilitation for children in conflict with the law. It recommended the development and strengthening of systems to recognize the rights of children to express their views in relevant legal proceedings. Bottlenecks for further progress include both service providers' limited capacity to ensure children have access to justice and scarce awareness among children and their families about the services available to them.

As documented in the Joint Country-Led Evaluation on Social Protection and Inclusion (SPI and an independent evaluation of the Justice for Children program, one of the key lessons learned from the previous program was the importance of human rights-based cross-sectoral approaches. Cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms at all levels were instrumental in promoting local ownership and strengthening collaboration between sectors. The strong convening power of UNICEF and its recognized ability to partner with governments and civil society, as highlighted in the modern review, contributed to fostering this coordination, which helps in addressing the multiple deprivations faced by the most vulnerable children. (UNICEF, 2014)

The ultimate goal of the UNICEF program is to support the efforts of Bosnia and Herzegovina to promote child rights through social inclusion, especially of the most vulnerable and excluded children and families. This program aims to reduce disparities and

strengthening social cohesion among groups, by implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities. This will be done by monitoring child rights, social protection, and justice for children, early childhood education and young child well-being for all children, including children with disabilities and Roma children. The UNICEF program will focus on the following:

- Facilitating a national dialogue on child-friendly social norms through communication for social change in order to enhance positive changes in behaviors and attitudes;

- Advocating strong and independent voice for children and young adults;

- Helping strengthen systems for child rights;

- Leveraging funds for children;

- Contributing to enhancing capacities with the sole purpose to provide effects and services;

- Providing technical expertise;

- Enabling comprehension exchange.

This part of the program focuses on strengthening the country's capacity to monitor child rights, reduce poverty and provide access to protection services. The UNICEF program collaborates with the responsible government institutions and civil society networks, while reporting the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

As previously mentioned, the program's main goal is to reform the social protection and inclusion sector, by reducing poverty and addressing equity gaps. This will be conducted with the help of advocacy and technical assistance for legislation and policies, comprehension exchange, etc. However, this program is not only focusing on child's poverty and equity gaps, but also tries to prevent and respond to cases of violence, neglect, abuse and family separation, particularly for children with disabilities.

Through professional development programs, the capacity of social workers in managing child protection cases will improve. These joint efforts will lead to:

- Reducing the number of children in institutions;

- Reducing the number of children with disabilities in residential care;

- Increasing the number of municipalities who implemented the guidelines on the response system in cases of violence against children.

When it comes to inclusive early learning, the UNICEF program supports the continued enlargement of preschool education programs. The most important thing of this program is to emphasize the awareness of early childhood education, as well as inclusive and intercultural education. Initiatives to increase skills and capacities of professionals are supported and promoted in preschools. Hopefully, at least 30% of children will be enrolled in these preschool education programs, including Roma children and children with disabilities. The transition from preschool to primary school will also be supported.

Moreover, data gaps in inclusive quality primary and secondary education will be supported by this program. Working alongside the "Call for Action on Education Equity", UNICEF will promote the below-mentioned points:

- The importance of universal access to education;

- Support inclusion of all children, especially children from minority groups and children with disabilities;

- Strengthen capacities of professionals on inclusive and intercultural education, social cohesion and equity.

The focus will also be put on assessing the learning outcomes and equity gaps. The purpose is to target communities with very low attendance rates, promote learning in primary and secondary education and strengthen the skills of students, but also prepare them for the job opportunities once they finish formal education. UNICEF believes that by supporting this program, the attendance in primary and secondary education will increase, especially by Roma children and children with disabilities.

Even before this program implemented by UNICEF, the education system was strengthened with the help of capacity development of 445 primary and secondary schoolteachers from 89 schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the Annual Report

from 2015 by UNICEF, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, 400 children from all municipalities in Canton 10[4] benefited from the training that 21 preschool teachers had.

There has been an improvement in the health system through various initiatives. Almost 27 providers, such as nurses, social workers, teachers and pediatricians from 14 locations, became certified professional for the "Early childhood interventions", organized by several NGOs and the Federal Ministry of Health. Moreover, 125 professionals improved their skills through in-service ECI training.

According to the 2015 Children's Equitable Access to Justice Study, there were many issues and recommendations regarding the delivery of justice to children. The study identified that children are still not perceived as rights holders, while the procedures for justice often times remain ad-hoc. The recommendations emphasize the need to identify the best interests of children and to support the capacity of children who access the justice system. During a national conference in May 2015, the findings were presented and discussed. They all came to a conclusion that there should be more training programs for legal aid providers, witness support officers and media professionals.

The Memorandum of Understanding in 2014 initiated further strengthening and expanding new agreements with Mostar University and two facilities of Sarajevo and Tuzla University. The purpose of signing this Memorandum was to enhance the understanding of child rights by facilitating interactive lessons for students and university staff in the bigger cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

UNICEF has also supported the education system by applying for the Erasmus+ Call 2016, an EU-funded program aimed at promoting the skills and employability of young people in Europe through education, training and youth institution.

---

[4] Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided into ten cantons which were established by the Law on Federal Units (Cantons) on 12 June 1996.

2.1.3. ACTORS IN THE IMPLEMTATION OF PROGRAMS AIMED AT CHILD PROTECTION

Children are defined as a vulnerable population group, which is easily exposed to risks and has very little access to means of risk management and prevent poverty. That is why children are in need of a special social protection system, which can be provided by the State with the help of the social protection system. Children do not just need financial support; but they also require support and a protective environment. Moreover, social protection for children should be defined as "financial support and benefits" and social help that incorporates preventive and protective social work aimed at helping children and providing safe environment in which children can live and prosper.

The social protection system in pre-war Bosnia and Herzegovina was composed of the following pillars: employment, universal social insurance and social welfare systems, organized in a few categories. The social welfare systems had centrally defined categories such as single parent headed households, disabled persons and children. Due to the war, the effectiveness of the pillars decreased and the number of socially vulnerable people increased in the country, which paved the way for new categories, such as "war invalids" and "war orphaned children".

The situation in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina faces high-levels of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion. The tax revenues to finance the social sector are very little, because of the high levels of unemployment and with much of the employment being in the informal sector. After the war ended, social policy response in Bosnia and Herzegovina was introduced by the humanitarian sector which focused on short term relief operations rather than the longer term of sustainable policy for social protection. According to one research, the country spends less money on vulnerable population than any other country in the region. Donor help has drastically decreased, leading to even further resource limitations.

Even though, the current Laws give a broad range of social protection rights, many of these rights are not being realized because there are not enough funding, lack of responsibility and coordination between the actors. The State level institutions are not given social protection responsibilities and that has led to two parallel legal frameworks for social protection. The person, who should receive social protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina, depends to meet the needs of the most vulnerable population, but this had led to inefficiency in the administration and not knowing how to allocate those in need of financial support.

Below mentioned are the most important international and national, formal and informal documents which treat the area of child protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Some of the documents are formal and represent the rights that children have in the child protection system and others represent the general overview of the community-level child protection system in the country.

When Bosnia and Herzegovina ratified the UN Child Rights Convention, it made a commitment to accept and protect the rights which are provided at the Convention. The country also made a commitment, according to clause 26, to respect and secure the rights to the availability of social security, to include social insurance and to help parents who are responsible for the child in achieving the right to life standard through the material help program. By ratifying the European Convention for the Protection of Civil Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the country made an obligation to stop discrimination. By ratifying the Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor, Bosnia and Herzegovina committed to protect the rights of mothers before and after labor and to ensure that the mother is paid the monthly compensation while she is on maternity leave. Bosnia and Herzegovina, by ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, committed to ensure appropriate life standard and to ameliorate the conditions of people with disabilities. The UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children provides emergency changes of previous institutional models of orphan child care and ensure a non-institutional model of child protection on the territory of the country.

In the Republika Srpska, which is one of two constitutional and legal entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the social protection is regulated by the Law on Social Welfare. This law was amended after the war, in 1996 and Law on Child Protection of 2002 is also applicable.

The Law on Social Welfare regulates the rights and regulations related to social welfare, its organization and financing. Social welfare is given to citizens who do not have sufficient means or resources to satisfy their daily needs.

Child beneficiaries covered under the RS Law are children:

- Without parental care;
- Who are physically and mentally disabled;

43

- Whose development is disturbed by family circumstances;
- With neglected upbringing and demeanor. (Mutiso, 2003)

Hereby are mentioned the following rights that children in Republika Srpska are entitled to:

- Material assistance

  Every child has the right to material assistance that can be provided if the family income falls below the minimum level of social security.

- Vocational education

  This right is given to children who are mentally and physically impaired and who can be trained according to their psychophysical capabilities and is realized through material assistance and reimbursement of professional orientation, accommodation and transportation costs. Experts assess the children's disability and psychophysical capabilities.

- Accommodation in a social protection institution or with another family

  Children without parental care, children whose development is impaired due to family circumstances, neglected children and disabled children are given the right to a social protection institution or with another family (placement or foster family).

Apart from these rights, there are institutions for children that include homes for children without parental care and children whose development is impaired due to family circumstance; homes for children who are mentally or physically impaired including children with autism; reception units/shelter for children who are begging on the streets.

Social protection in the Federation is governed by the Law on the Basis of Social Welfare, Protection of Families with Children and Protection of Civil Victims of War (The Federation Law). When the law was set, the cantons had three months to enact their own legislation. Child protection in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is regulated by Law on Child Protection and it is the same law that former Yugoslavia had.

Child beneficiaries under the Federation Law are:

- Children without parental care;
- Uncared for children/"educationally neglected children";

- Children neglected in upbringing;
- Children whose development is hindered due to family circumstances;
- Disabled children. (Mutiso, 2003)

Hereby are mentioned the rights that children in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina are entitled to:

- Financial and other material assistance

  Children, who are under the age of 15, have the right to financial and other material assistance if their families cannot support them. Children with disabilities and other impairments are entitled to higher amounts of basic financial assistance by a third person.

- Vocational education

  This right is given to children with developmental handicap and it includes accommodation, food and transportation costs for the purpose of training.

- Accommodation in social protection institutions

  Children who are in need of support and assistance, which their families are unable to provide, can be placed in a social protection institution.

- Accommodation in another family

  Children, who have a need of permanent assistance and support which their families cannot provide, can be placed in another family. The child needs to be older than 15 years and the consent of the parents is required. The Centres for Social work are also responsible for mantling contact with the child through regular visits. The placement family may not be responsible for making decisions about the future of the child without the consent of the parents.

There are institutions for children without parental care; institutions for neglected and uncared for children; institutions for disabled children and day-care centres.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is an upper-middle-income country with both, formal and informal child protection system. There are many laws, both in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; and Republika Srpska, which are intended to safeguard the welfare of children. However, many children, especially Roma children live in poverty, are not vaccinated and abused by their peers and adults. It is estimated that only one third of Roma children is educated and attends classes. Another problem, when it comes to drop out rates at school, is that rural children and children with disabilities are likely to be excluded from the society.

The war of independence ended many years ago, but there are tensions that are still present in the country. Children of different backgrounds attend separate classes and are many times excluded from the education system. Another problem is that a third of children between 5 and 15 years, according to the Agency for Statistic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, are poor. The risk increases regarding the correlation between being poor and having a parent who does not have a secondary degree of education.

The child protection system, especially the informal system, provides assistance and advocates the children in the country. With the help of UNICEF, the attendance in school increased and more Roma children were included in the early childhood education. Juvenile offences have fallen by 10% since 2010 by implementing the "Justice for Children" program. What the informal sector lacks is supporting the efforts of Bosnia and Herzegovina to promote child rights through social inclusion, especially the most vulnerable children. The goal of UNICEF is to facilitate a national dialogue on child-friendly social norms, to advocate strong and independent voice for children and to provide more funds for children.

When it comes to the formal child protection system of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the current laws give a broad range of social protection rights, but many of these are not realized due to the lack of funding and coordination between the actors. The country has ratified the UN Child Rights Convention and it made a commitment to protect the rights provided at the Convention. Since then, it had ratified many Conventions, such as: the European Convention for the Protection of Civil Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, etc.

2.2. ENGLAND AND ITS CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

The child protection system in England, or just "child protection", consists of state-adopted services intended to protect vulnerable children and young people from harm and promoting their welfare. Although, the child protection in England is led by local government, many other public agencies, such as schools, health authorities, police, voluntary organizations, help the system as well.

It is true when they say that we are all responsible for the safety of children. In England, the Government says that the Department for Education holds a lot of responsibility when it comes to protecting children. The Department for Education is the one which gives statutory and non-statutory guidance to local authorities. On the other hand, the local authorities guide and make the procedures which should be carried out by practitioners and professionals who decide to work in this delicate field, called child protection.

The formal child protection system in England consists of laws and rights that are not only for children at risk of abuse and neglect, but also protect children that are in need of support. The services, intended to help children, are not provided by law, but also by statutory guidance issued by central government and non-statutory guidance.

As previously mentioned the Children Act of 1989 is the main legislation promoting and governing child welfare services. Since its adoption, many other acts were adopted, such as: the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, the Adoption and Children Act 2002, the Children Act 2004, the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the Children and Families Act 2014. However, the Children Act 1989 provides a continuous legal framework for all children in England. The National Health Service works closely with the child welfare services, thus promoting and providing a universal service which is free of at the point of delivery.

However, the child protection system in England underwent a lot of scrutiny over the past years. According to one independent research, conducted by professor Eileen Munro, the system had become overly prescriptive and bureaucratic and that there should be a balance between the exercise of professional judgment and prescription. The point of the research was to find out whether the child protection system in England allows for effective identification of and early help of children at risk or many types of abuse and neglect, such as: neglect, sexual and physical abuse, domestic violence, forced marriage, etc. It also provides

information on the quality of decision-making of the people who work to help children and examined the different interventions for and against removing children from their families. Lastly, the research tries to show whether the child protection system and the work of non-social work agencies and Government staff assist professionals to work together in order to help children in need.

2.2.1. RISKS AND CONDITIONS THAT YOUNG ADULTS AND CHILDREN FACE IN ENGLAND

Children in England face many risks in their everyday life and here are some of the most serious ones.

Neglect is the most common form of child abuse in England, but people still struggle with the definition of this term. There is a problem with what neglect means and people should know what it actually means. There are two official definitions of neglect. The first one is for criminal and the later is for civil purposes. The Children and Young Persons Act 1993 describes neglect as a criminal offence, in which the word "neglect" is explained as failure to allot food, clothing, medical help or lodging. However, Action for Children demanded a review of the definition since it focuses solely on the physical neglect rather than the emotional or psychological maltreatment. This children's charity believes that the definition of neglect leaves parents unclear about their duties towards children and wants to punish only parents after neglect has happened rather than trying to prevent it.

The other definition of neglect, the civil one, is used in child and family law and it is set out in the Children Act 1989. This definition describes neglect as the continued failure to meet children's basic physical and/or psychological needs, resulting in the serious deterioration of the child's health or development. There are many types of neglect. The first one is during pregnancy as a consequence of maternal substance abuse. The other one defines the neglect when the child is born and the parent/caregiver fails to provide food, shelter, and clothing and protect the child from physical and emotional harm or danger, as well as adequate supervision and medical care.

There is a long-term damage of neglect that is known apart from being potentially fatal. Neglect causes great deal of distress to children, which may impair the short and long-term outcomes of the child. Many mental health problem may arise from the child being neglected, difficulties to form attachment and relationships, poor educational achievements,

etc. Early recognition is essential to prevent long-term damage since the risk of fatalities can be as high as other forms of abuse. This form of abuse causes children to have low self esteem, feel depressed and isolated, as well as socially disconnected.

The most common reason for children to become part of a child protection plan was neglect, for almost 43% of cases, according to the Department for Education. The study of child abuse and neglect, conducted by NSPCC[5], showed that neglect was the most prevalent type of abuse and maltreatment in the family for all age groups: 5% of children under the age of 11, 13.3% of 11-17 year olds and 16% of 18-24 year olds had been neglect at some point in the their childhood. However, severe form of neglect was seen at 3.7% of children under 11, 9.8% of 11-17 year olds and 9% of 18-24 year olds at some time during their childhood. Action for Children after conducting a research found that the gross part of professionals have met children who have been neglected, including 81% of primary school staff, 69% of health professionals and 67% of pre-school/nursery staff.

Although these figures may not give an accurate representation of the scale of neglect, often times this form of abuse is the main problem and the one recorded for a child protection plan. Neglect rarely occurs in isolation, as there are usually other abuses that go hand in hand with it. It is also easy to use neglect as a "catch-all" category for maltreatment which does not easily fit another category. In the table provided below can be seen the number of children and young people who are subject to a Child Protection Plan, by category of abuse, from 2006 to 2011.

Table 1: Children and young people subject to a Child Protection Plan, by category of abuse, from 2006 to 2011 - Taken from: (Committee, 2012)

Category of abuse	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Neglect	11,800	12,500	13,400	15,800	17,200	18,590
Physical abuse	3,600	3,500	3,400	4,400	4,700	4,820
Sexual abuse	2,300	2,000	2,00	2,000	2,200	2,370
Emotional abuse	6,000	7,100	7,900	9,100	11,400	11,420

---

[5] NSPCC stands for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children which promote the responsibility to keep children free from abuse and prevent it from happening.

From the table above, we can notice that the number of looked-after children in England continued to rise between 2011 and 2012. The number of looked-after children in 2012 reached 67,050, 75% of whom were living in a foster placement. The main reason for being taken care of was abuse or neglect. Thus, the number of applications for care increased each year and now it is on a very high level. In 2011 and 2012, there were a lot more care applicants compared to 2009 and 2010.

The number of adopted children in 2012 was 3,450, an increase of 12% since 2011 and the highest number of looked-after children since 2007. Children between one and four years old constituted the biggest part of the children who were adopted that year, with only 2% of children who were under a year old and a further 2% between 10 and 15. The average age was 3 years, 8 months.

There are many major risk factors that lead to neglect. Some of those are: domestic violence, mental health problems and drug and alcohol abuse. According to a recent study, in many of the cases (60.1% to be more precise), the parent had been the victim of domestic violence and the perpetrator of domestic violence in 40.3% of the cases.

It has been brought to attention that usually local authorities automatically classify children as 'neglected' when there is domestic violence in the homes, in which they classify the non-abusive parent (oftentimes the mother) as failure to protect her child from being part of domestic violence. This has been very challenging as they put the blame on the abused parent (usually mother) rather than dealing with the abuser. In other words, mothers are usually blamed for failing to protect their children.

The Women's Aid Federation of England, commonly called "Women's Aid", proposed that the mother and her children, who are encountered with domestic violence, should both receive support and referred to specialist support services to address the domestic violence. In these cases, there should not be a presumption that an abused parent cannot be a good parent, but the focus should be on supporting that parent and helping the child and the parent, rather than removing the child. However, the interests of the children should come first, since there should be specialized training in this sensitive area.

Section 11, of the Children Act 2004, states that local authorities have a statutory duty to promote the welfare of children in need, up to 18 years old. However, there were 471 serious cases conducted between April 2007 and March 2011, in which 111 cases were of

children above the age of 14. Children at this age can face many problems such as: alienation from parents, drug and alcohol misuse, accommodation problems, emotional and mental health difficulties, domestic abuse, etc. NSPCC found that are many cases concerning older children as there were concerning 1 to 4 year olds. In some of these cases, older children have suffered from abuse and neglect for their entire lives which had led to self-harm and suicide attempts. Sadly, many of these children accepted their situation as normal and had very few expectations or ideas that life could be different. Academic research has shown that teenagers, especially, do not always understand this neglectful behavior that is happening in their lives, because they accept it as normal.

Because of these reasons, the NSPCC was concerned that the child protection system meets the needs of younger children rather than focusing on older children as well. It is not strange that some of the professionals, who work in this field, perceive children's social care services as being less likely to take any action in cases regarding older children, that goes especially for children above the age of 15. The cases of neglect and abuse were underlined as the most problematic as many professionals do not identify older children at risk since they are perceived as more resilient and able to cope with difficult situations. Also, for vulnerable teenagers there is a lack of specialist early intervention services. Although, the universal child services have a vital role in finding out the needs of young people, there is a lack of training and awareness amongst professionals of the detailed needs of older young people.

The Children's Society elaborated that older child, who are in need, are often portrayed as 'badly behaved', self-harming, and in trouble with the criminal justice and the blame is put on the children. One part is maybe because older children are reluctant to share information and that is why their behavior is misunderstood as acting out and misbehaving. Other behavioral issues can be just a response to being in a risky situation and it is their "cry for help". That is why it is of great importance for social workers and the police to demonstrate greater awareness and offer their support when it comes to dealing with older children, because they can be very vulnerable.

According to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, trafficking is described as: the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over

another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. (Committee, 2012)

Latest numbers, according to the Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on Human Trafficking, show that in 2011, 234 children from over 30 countries were brought to England. This report is based on the number of referrals to the National Referral Mechanism. The number of children, who were trafficked into England, may be even higher as many children are oftentimes afraid or unable to come forward and explain what has happened. There is a greater number of female than male victims between the ages 16-17 years old. However, 80% of known victims in 2011 were between 12 and 17 years old.

Several criminal offences relate to trafficking, such as trafficking and conspiring to traffic a person into or within England for sexual exploitation. The related immigration offences include assisting unlawful immigration and facilitating entry by asylum seekers.

Children who are brought into England can be travelling alone or an unrelated adult. The Government classifies children who arrive in England as "accompanied" or "unaccompanied" children. Moreover, this classification is rather important in determining a child's protection plan. Other organizations prefer the term "separated" children in order to describe children who enter England alone or without an adult who is their parent/guardian.

However, the organization End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking Children for Sexual Purposes describes child trafficking as a child protection concern of the highest order and not an immigration issue since this is child abuse requiring complex child abuse investigations. The most important thing is to ensure the children's safety and welfare and to focus on their immigration status. Many organizations argue that the Department for Education should take main responsibility for trafficked children within Government.

2.2.2. PROGRAMS FOR MEETING THE RISKS THAT CHILDREN FACE IN ENGLAND

It goes without saying that children are owed the right to be safe from harm. It is everyone's responsibility to protect children when they come into contact with children and families, especially those who have been neglected and abused.

One way to ensure that child's voice can be heard in child protection is to promote and provide an advocacy service to make sure that their rights are protected. In this way, children in England will be enabled and ensured that their rights are protected. Although there is limited research on how children benefit from advocacy, the evidence provides positive outcomes. Through advocacy, children can be empowered and will be enabled to easily understand the process and influence decisions, lower risks and result in better services for children and their families. It is important to advocate and the voice of the children to heard in the child protection systems. According to an Ofsted report, that analyzed 67 serious case reviews involving children (The Office for Standards in Education, 2011), the child was not seen frequently by the professionals, nor asked about his/her feeling and views. This report found out that agencies did not actively listen to parents who speak on behalf of the child and who had important information to share. Some parents and guardian forbade professionals to take care of their children, while some practitioners focused solely on the needs of the parents/guardians and overlooked the needs of the children. Another thing is that agencies could not interpret their finding well enough to protect the child. This report highlighted the need of seeing, observing and hearing the child. However, in many of the cases the children were too young to express their feelings. In some, the case highlighted the difficulties that children faced when they were in their home environment. Children had suffered from neglect, abuse, both physical and sexual over many years. Once the children were removed from the toxic environment, they were able to speak about the abuse they had gone through.

A very important aspect of the child protection process is that the children work together closely with the professionals who provide an assessment and compose a plan in order to reduce the risk to the child.

2.2.2.1. LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARDS

Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 obliges every local authority to have its own local safeguarding children board (LSCB). Each of the local safeguarding children board has an independent Chair, i.e. someone who does not work for social services, although the Chair will collaborate with the Director of Children's Services. The objectives and functions of the LSCB include a range of roles, some of which are:

- To coordinate what is done by each representative on the board in order to promote the welfare of children;
- To ensure that each member of the board is doing his/her job regarding the promotion of welfare of children.

When it comes to the functions, Section 14 of the Children Act 2004 obliges the local boards to:

- Develop policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the designated are;
- Take action if there are concerns about a child's safety';
- Provide training for new people who work with children;
- Recruit new people who would like to work in this field;
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of what can be done by the local authorities.

There are different policies and procedures for each board in a specific area. It is not just the local authorities that represent the local board. Other organizations are represented through the board. Some of those are: the police, health services, probation services, the local youth offending team, Children and Family Courts Advisory and Support Service, etc.

2.2.2.2. ACTION FOR CHILDREN

Action for Children is charity for children based in the United Kingdom which commits to help vulnerable and neglected children and young adults, as well as their families. This charity provides 650 projects and services for the countries in the United Kingdom and helps 370,000 children, young adults and their families. It provides therapy, foster care and adoption. The goal of the charity is to make sure that each child or young adults had the love

and support to reach his/her potential. Action for Children also helps the children by intervening early in order to stop neglect and abuse.

When it comes to disabled children and young adults, the charity offers community-based short breaks for the families in order for them to take a break, while the volunteers work with the child to gain independence, learn and develop. With the help of the Children and Family Act 2014, families with disabled children in England can receive personal budget that will help them to manage their own budget.

Action for Children also has been finding stable homes for homeless children and offers the same possibilities as other fostering and adoption agencies, as well as providing training and support for the new parents.

2.2.2.3. SAVE THE CHILDREN

Save the Children Fund, or Save the Children, is a non-governmental organization that promotes children's rights and offers relief and support to children in England, but also in developing countries as well. This organization was established in the United Kingdom in 1919 with the sole purpose of improving the lives of children and young adults through education, health care, economic opportunities and offering help in times of natural disasters, war, and other conflicts. Save the Children is quite widespread and it offers help in 120 countries around the world.

This international organization tackles issues about hunger, poverty, homelessness, education, etc. They give children a new lease on life, by giving support, funding and opportunities to learn and grow. We all know the impact that poverty has on the children and how it can last a lifetime. That is why; Save the Children offers campaigning for change and helps England, even though it is a well developed country, to overcome rates of poverty and aid children to grow up with the essentials they need to reach their potential. All the people who work in this organization try to help families, schools and communities in England.

Since 2010, Save the Children are running the award-winning **Families and Schools Together** which helps build stronger relationships between parents, schools and communities. Another program that is worth mentioning is the program **Eat, Sleep, Learn, and Play!**, which grants essential items for children's development, such as toys, beds and books to families with low income.

2.2.2.4. UNICEF-UNITED KINGDOM (ENGLAND)

The main understanding of child protection system according to UNICEF is the set of laws, policies, regulations and services that are important across all social sectors and are intended to safeguard the welfare of children.

UNICEF, or the United Nations Children's Fund, is a program funded by the United Nation, based in New York, which provides humanitarian aid to children, young adults and mothers from all around the world. Its primary focus is to provide emergency food and healthcare to children. This humanitarian organization relies on contributions from governments and private donors in order for its income to increase. It has been estimated that 92% of UNICEF revenue is given to the programs.

It has been estimated that almost 4 million children in the United Kingdom live in poverty, and problems associated with obesity and health issues are constantly rising. A growing number of children in England are in danger from violence, abuse and neglect. That is why UNICEF is collaborating with hospitals where children are born, the schools where they learn and grow, and provide services that shape their lives for the better.

UNICEF in England provides many initiatives and services. Some of them are:

- **The Baby Friendly Initiative** supports and helps new parents to provide live, care and nourishment to their children;

- **The Rights Respecting Schools Award** helps schools to make classrooms a safe environment for their students;

- **The Child Friendly Cities & Communities** program helps vulnerable children in the country to feel safe and protected/

2.2.3. ACTORS IN THE IMPLEMTATION OF PROGRAMS AIMED AT CHILD PROTECTION

The Department for Education is responsible for the formal child protection system in England. It is the one which sets out policy, legislation and statutory guidance on how the child protection system should function. At the local level, the situation is different, as the local safeguarding boards coordinate and make sure that work to protect and promote the welfare of children is effective. Each local board includes: local authorities, health bodies, the police, non-governmental sector, different organizations, etc. The Local safeguarding bodies are responsible for local child protection policy, guidance and protection.

The person, who is accountable for the delivery of services, regarding the education and social services, is the Director of Children's Services (DCS). Whereas the lead member of the children's services, elected by the council, works closely with the director and the Local safeguarding bodies.

As previously mentioned, local authorities have a required duty to promote and protect the welfare of children. They are obliged by Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 which places a duty to investigate a situation in which a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Whenever there is a concern that a child might be at risk, the local authorities should investigate the child protection proceedings. However, in recent years, the formal child protection system in England has been closely examined due to a repeated public concern that the system is failing to protect children at risk. In order to make the system better again, professionals and practitioners have often stressed the importance of giving a chance for the voice of the child to be heard during the child protection process.

In the next part of the thesis, I will focus on the laws and acts that were adopted in England in order to protect and promote welfare of children in need.

2.2.3.1. LEGISLATION

The Children Act 1989 justifies obligatory intervention in family life in order to protect and promote the welfare of a child who is in need, or likely to suffer, significant harm. Section 31(9) of the Children Act 1989 states that:

- the word 'harm' means mal-treatment or the deterioration of health and/or development;

- 'development' means the physical, intellectual, mental, social development;
- 'health' means physical or mental health; and
- 'mal-treatment' includes sexual abuse and any form of mal-treatment that are not physical.

Section 31(10) of the Act provides that the welfare of children is of utmost importance and that children should be brought up and cared for in their own families. This section also stresses that authorities should work closely with the parents/guardians of the child and that there should not be any delays in decision-making as these can be very detrimental to the welfare of the child.

The Children Act 2004 strengthens the Children Act 1989. This act promotes partnerships between agencies and creates more accountability. Its responsibilities include creating the post of Children's Commissioner for England and placing a duty on local authorities so they can appoint a director of children's services, ultimately responsible for the delivery of services. Also, it places a duty on local authorities and their partners (this includes the police, health service providers and the youth justice system) to continue promoting the welfare of children and young adults and to promote the wellbeing of children. This act also places a duty on the authorities to make sure that the child's wishes and feelings are taken into consideration.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 mainly applies to England and received Royal Assent on 27 April 2017. This act consists of a broad range of provisions regarding the support and care of children, their welfare and safeguarding of children. Here are some of the main provisions that apply to looking after children and care leavers.

- According to Section 2 of the Act, local authorities from England are required to bring out information about the services they offer to care leavers in order to help them adapt to adulthood and living independently.
- Section 3 obliges local authorities to provide personal advisers for care leavers up to the age of 25.
- While Section 4 and 5 provide duties to local authorities school related governing bodies to promote the educational attainment of looked after and previously looked after children.

- Sections 8 and 9 prioritize and ensure that children's needs and their relationship with carers are considered regarding the care and adoption proceedings in England and Wales.
- Section 34 obliges all schools in England to provide education to pupils who are to be attending primary education and sex education to pupils in secondary education.
- Section 35 required all schools in England to provide education in the fields of health, economy, as well as personal and social education to all primary and secondary schools pupils.

The Education Act 2002 consists of provisions that require school governing bodies, local education authorities and education institutions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Below mentioned are the duties of local education authorities regarding the welfare of children.

- A local education authority shall make arrangements for ensuring that the functions conferred on them in their capacity as a local education authority are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.
- The governing body of an institution within the further education sector shall make arrangements for ensuring that their function relating to the conduct of the institution are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children receiving education or training at the institution.
- An authority or body mentioned in any of subsections shall, in considering what arrangements are required to be made by them under that subsection, have regard to any guidance given from time to time (in relation to England) by the Secretary of State (in relation to Wales) by the National Assembly for Wales. (Archives, 2018)

The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 intends to provide high quality care and services for children in need. This act covers England and Wales and also gives a duty on registers to notify the Local Safeguarding Children Board of all child deaths.

The Education Act 2011 gives a duty to English local authorities to provide free education to for each young child and makes changes to provisions on school discipline, as well as placing restrictions on the public reporting of allegations made against teachers.

The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 is an act adopted by the Parliament of the United Kingdom, which applies to England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This act amends section 73 and 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 and provides a legal duty for regulated social care and health professionals, as well as teachers to report to the police whenever they a girl under the age of 18 tells them that she has undergone an act of female genital mutilation, or if they observe physical signs that a girl under 18 has undergone FGM. The maximum penalty from this behavior is increased from 5 to 14 years.

The child protection system in England, mostly formal, is composed of state-adopted services which are intended to protect vulnerable children and young people from harm. The Ministry of Education is the most accountable for promoting wellbeing of children. The formal system, comprised of laws and rights, tends to help children from abuse and neglect, but also wants to provide support for them.

The main legislation for promoting child welfare services is the Children Act of 1989. Since then, many other acts have been adopted, such as: the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, the Children Act 2004, the Adoption and Children Act 2002, the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, the Children and Families Act 2014, etc.

Neglect is still the biggest problem that children face and that is why it is the most common reason for children to become part of a child protection plan. There are many reasons that lead to neglect, such as: domestic violence, mental health problem, and drug and alcohol abuse. Many studies found out that the cases of neglect and abuse were underlined as the most problematic since many professionals thought that older children at risk are more resilient and can cope with difficult situations.

However, the child protection system was a topic of many discussions because it had become overly bureaucratic and lacks a balance between the exercise of professional judgment and prescription. In order to make the system better again, professionals have often stressed the importance of giving a chance for the voice of children to be heard during the child protection processes.

2.3. SIERA LIONE AND ITS CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

Today, Sierra Leone is characterized by colonial history, post independence struggle for independence, a difficult 11-year conflict, as well as post-conflict reconstruction efforts that influence the situation of children and the formal and informal child protection systems that protect them. The country gained independence in 1961, having a Parliamentary system of governance and membership of the Commonwealth. Moreover, Sierra Leone went down into civil war in 1991, which lasted for 11 years. After the war was over, half of the population was displaced. Nowadays, Sierra Leone struggles to develop social and legal system appropriate for its culture. In the table presented below, we can see the country's overview, more specifically its income, political stability, the child protection policy, etc.

Table 2: Sierra Leone country overview

Sierra Leone Country Overview			
Country economic classification (WB)	Low income	Social Protection strategy present	Yes, but nascent
Human development index	180	Child Protection Leading Agency	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
Country Corruption index (TI)	158	National child protection coordination mechanism	National Steering Committee
Political stability	Instable	International Conventions not ratified / reservations:	ILO 182 on Worst Forms of Child Labour
Judicial system	Pluralistic: Civil law and customary law		ILO 138 on Minimum Age
Overall Child Protection law/policy	Existing - Child Rights Act		Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption
National Plans of Action	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper		Hague Convention on International Child Abduction

Taken from: (Thompstone, 2010)

After the post-conflict period, Sierra Leone has set out an agenda for economic growth and human development. However, the country is listed in the Human Development as the third poorest country in the world.

When it comes to Sierra Leone's child protection system, the country has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and is also part of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Apart from the major charters, Sierra Leone has also ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and has also signed the Optional Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. The international and regional child protection instruments, which are adopted by Sierra Leone, are presented in the table below.

Table 3: International and Regional Child Protection Instruments

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL CHILD PROTECTION INSTRUMENTS			
	Signed Only	Ratified / Acceded	Date
Convention on the Rights of the Child		✓	16 Jun 1990
CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography		✓	17 Sept 2001
CRC Optional Protocol on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict		✓	15 May 2002
African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child		✓	13 May 2002

Taken from: (Thompstone, 2010)

Apart from the existing formal child protection mechanisms, the international child rights/welfare community has provided a good deal of care and protection of children in Sierra Leone. Many organizations were brought to the country in order to protect the children affected by war, however some of the them remained in Sierra Leone and have implemented child protection programs, such as:

- Save the Children UK;
- International Rescue Committee;
- Plan Sierra Leone;
- Defense for Children International;
- Child Fund;
- UNICEF.

2.3.1. RISKS AND CONDITIONS THAT YOUNG ADULTS AND CHILDREN FACE IN SIERRA LEONE

Girls and boys are exposed to a number of risks in Sierra Leone. According to an assessment undertaken by UNICEF, children and young adults are constantly sexually exploited, abused and some of them are faced with teenage pregnancy, child trafficking, child labor, as well as deprivation of care. Chronic food insecurity and continued poverty are some of the major risks that these children face every day. Of all these risks, teenage pregnancy and child labor are the most serious ones and also the most widespread. The second in line are sexual abuse and exploitation.

Table 4: Sierra Leone Child Protection Indicators

Sierra Leone Child Protection Indicators	
Child Labour (%)	
Child labour (5-14 years) total	31%
Child labour (5-14 years) male	33%
Child labour (5-14 years) female	30%
Child marriage (%)	
Child marriage, total	58%
Female genital mutilation/ cutting (%)	
Female genital mutilation/ cutting, (15-49) urban	85%
Female genital mutilation/ cutting, (15-49) rural	95%
Female genital mutilation/ cutting, (< 15) total	71%
Domestic violence	
Attitude towards domestic violence (MICS)	85%
Orphans	
Children (0-17) orphaned -- all causes (000s)	11 / 2%
Institutional care	
Children in institutional care (estimate) total	1,871
Children in institutional care (estimate) male	1,070
Children in institutional care (estimate) female	801

Taken from: (Thompstone, 2010)

Even though the legal age for marriage is 18, more than half of the girls are married before them and the median age for the birth of a first child is 19 years. Almost nine out of ten mothers receive ante-natal care from a health professional, but only 25% of the babies are delivered in health facilities. The virus HIV is spread in 1.5% of the people aged between 15 and 49, but the percentage is higher for pregnant women, with 4.4% of them carrying the virus while pregnant. Although, most of the population knows about HIV, only 14% of women and 25% of men have enough information in order to protect themselves from the virus.

Another common practice is female genital mutilation/circumcision, affecting 85% of girls in urban areas and 95% of boys in rural areas. This practice is associated with acceptance by the society and marriage ability, since most of these practices are performed during initiation ceremonies into secret societies. The percentages are the following: 71% are performed on girls before they turn 15, while 23% are done before the age of 5.

Moreover, when the war was over, the Government of Sierra Leone has invested a lot of money into building new hospitals and constructing three maternity wards in district cities. However, the health care system is still under-resourced and under-utilized. One survey from 2008 showed that the mortality rates have declined by 26% over the 15 years, but the country is still facing the highest maternal, infant and child mortality rates in the world, with one in eleven children being dead before their first birthday and one in seven die before turning five.

Due to the 11-year long conflict, many children have lost their primary caregivers. Statistics show that 11% have lost one parent and 2% have lost both. In order to access basic services, such as education, some of the children are forced to move between households. Many of them, 26% to be more precise, do not live with their parents even though both are living. The organization, that are working with orphans and vulnerable children, showed that a total of 1,871 girls and boys are living in 48 residential care institutions, due to poverty. Children and young adults, who are living in informal care residences, are at increased risk of sexual abuse and labor exploitation.

2.3.1.1. EDUCATION

The Education Act of 2004 defines the structure of the education system and promotes non-discrimination in access to education. The government promoted free education in 2001 and as a result the number of enrolled children plummeted. Despite these efforts, the census of 2004 showed that 240,000 children had never attended school. In 2005, only 65% of children completed Class 6. According to one study from UNICEF, the children who were most at risk of dropping out from school, are orphans, children living with a broader family, children in forced marriages, disabled children and those who were sexually abused or exploited.

The quality of education also remains very poor, due to the fact that more than 50% of the educators/teachers are unqualified, the buildings are inefficient and the resources are used without transparency. Because of the lack of resources in the rural areas, families were forced to send their children to study in the urban areas, where not necessarily the child will be well taken care of and safe, since the use of physical punishment in endemic. Over 80% of teachers are male and there are many reports of sexual violence as a form of punishment.

2.3.1.2. CHILD SOLDIERS

The problem with child soldiers has become a global concern since more than 300,000 soldiers under the age of 18 have been recruited to fight in armed conflicts in 41 countries around the world. However, this problem has been especially serious in Sierra Leone where thousands of children have been recruited to participate directly in armed conflict or have been recruited for labor or sexual exploitation. The vast majority of the children have been abducted; although there is evidence that the RUF[6] attracted volunteers. Once the boys and girls were abducted, they had to perform different roles in order to support the activists of the armed conflicts. Their duties varied from domestic chores, sexual slavery and combat exercises, and often times varied according to their age, physical strength. The kids, who were newly captured, were relocated to perform several domestic activities, such as fetching firewood, water, carrying ammunition, etc.

---

[6] RUF – The Revolutionary United Front was a rebel army which fought an eleven-year war in Sierra Leone, from 1991 to 2002, which turned into a political party and still exists today.

Many girls, captured by RUF, provided sexual services to the men and boys in their group. Rape and sexual assault by one person, sometimes using objects were quite common. As the sexual violence was quite widespread during the armed conflict, the physical and psychological after-effects were quite shocking. Many girls were forced to marry members of the rebel army.

Combat activities were a significant part of the duties of many of the boys and girls. Some girls reported that when first captured, they initially held only domestic roles. However, later on they became part of the fighting forces. For many of the girl participants, however, combat activities formed the crux of their involvement in the combat. Combat roles reported by both boys and girls included frontline fighting, spy missions, other forms of wartime aggression that included looting, burning villages, the deliberate killing, maiming and torture of civilians, acting as human shields, and capturing other child combatants. Additionally, boys reported responsibility for tending checkpoints as well as acting as bodyguards for adult commanders. (Denov, 2005)

## 2.3.2. PROGRAMS FOR MEETING THE RISKS THAT CHILDREN FACE IN SIERRA LEONE

The government efforts for care and support of children in Sierra Leone were quite supported by the international child rights and the welfare community, which made a considerable contribution in this area. Many organizations protected a great number of children during the war and some of these agencies have remained in the country. There is now a group of these international agencies which implemented child protection programs, such as:

- Save the Children UK;
- International Rescue Committee;
- Defense for Children International;
- Plan Sierra Leone;
- Child Fund;
- UNICEF.

Not all agencies work in the field of child protection. Most of them have a focus on a number of issues including education, health, gender, community development, HIV/AIDS, etc. Some of these agencies work with local partners in certain districts. The primary focus of

the NGOs is advocacy and capacity building. It is not obligatory that if a certain region of Sierra Leone is poor, that the number of NGOs will be increasing. This is the situation of the country in 2010. Although the data may now be changed, it is good to see the prevalence of the NGOs in the country.

Image 5: NGO Distribution and Poverty Levels
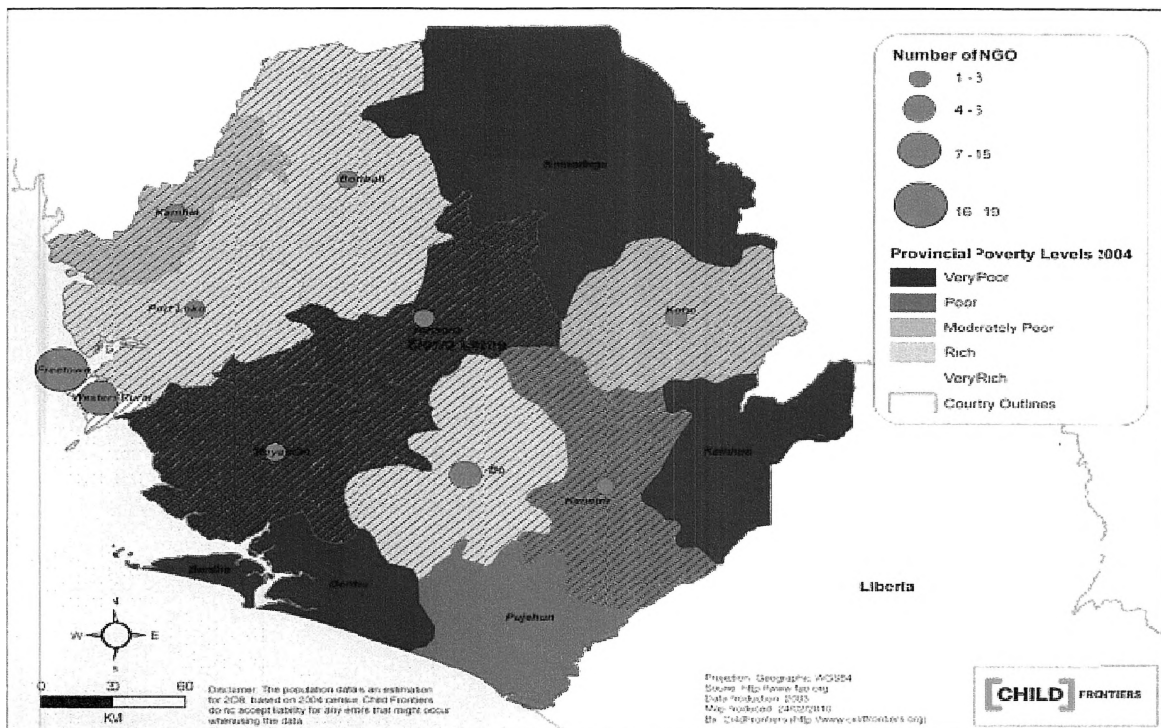
Taken from: (Thompstone, 2010)

From the table we can see that although Freetown is a relatively rich region, the number of NGOs is increasing, where as in Koinadugu, a very poor region, the number of NGOs is low and barely existing. Most of these agencies work primarily in Freetown.

2.3.2.1. INFORMAL COMMUNITY STRUCTURES

A special role in ensuring and protecting the welfare of children is retained by the Paramount and Village Chiefs. The Chiefs hold bare meetings and informal mediation processes through which they are responsible for ensuring harmony and well-being within families. The Village Elders support the Chiefs and constantly receive complaints about disputes in the families, parental separation, and child protection issues, complaints against teachers and civil servants who ask for sexual favors from children. Some Chiefs are actively involved in community seminars and discussions on child welfare, protection, sexual abuse,

early marriage, etc. The Chiefs, however, have recognized the contrast between the expectations of their role and the resources in order to fulfill it. In order to fulfill the activities provided, they need specialized training and a minimum budget. They have worked closely to support the creation of by-laws of the country, yet they have not received budget to enforce these laws.

2.3.2.2. SECRET SOCIETIES

Africa has a long history of cults and secret societies which are ancient cultural institutions. Some secret societies are still intertwined with the modern life in Sierra Leone and hold a considerable power. The secret societies admit new members by initiation and must observe a number of laws and protocols. In most villages in Sierra Leone, there is a society which prepares individuals into becoming members of the society. There is one women's society, known as Sande in the south, and another called Bondo in the north and Freetown, that are general to Sierra Leone. Sande is a secret society that prepares girls for womanhood and makes them eligible for marriage. Many people think that this is part of the social maturation. Woman, still not being initiated, are considered children and unworthy of marriage, because this secret society prepares women for future roles as wives and co-wives. Leaders of the women's secret societies are known to receive significant income from payment or initiation fees by families.

Moreover, the frontline workers indicated that early admission into these secret societies can lead to children's vulnerability. It is not a surprise that many initiations are forced and this is how children are exposed to sexual abuse, pornography, physical violence, substance and alcohol abuse, etc. There is an ongoing debate on whether these secret societies are bad for girls and boys, it is important to recognize these institutions for its actual and potential role in promoting and protecting children's rights and not violating them.

2.3.3. ACTORS IN THE IMPLEMTATION OF PROGRAMS AIMED AT CHILD PROTECTION

Sierra Leone's pluralist legal system encompasses British common law inherited from its colonial period and local customary law. The laws of the country are comprised of the Constitution, statutory law, common law and customary law.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by Sierra Leone, and this country is also a signatory to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. It is also part of the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, as well as the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. Sierra Leone adopted the ILO Minimum Age Convention 138 on June 13, 2011. In the years that followed after adopting the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the country has made a progress by incorporating the CRC into the national legal and policy framework. The main objective is to make sure that the child is safe and protected.

Other policies regarding child protection include the Agenda for Social Protection which highlights the need to help a lot of people who live in crisis situations, dire poverty, with different diseases, etc. The purpose of the Agenda is to protect "Vulnerable and Excluded Children" in order to have a sustainable peacebuilding. The Agenda aids the National Youth Policy, which promotes youth in the post-war setting. By creating youth associations and providing job opportunities, it is expected that a non-violent community will be developed.

In the tables provided below, the child protection system has been addressed through a great number of national laws. When it comes to child and family welfare and child labor, the authorities refer to the Child Rights Act, 2007, while the National Child Justice Strategy 2006 serves to promote juvenile justice. Since physical and sexual abuse is quite common among children in Sierra Leone, the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act is adopted mainly for that purpose. It states that if a person over 16, who takes care of a child, who ill-treats, neglects, abandons the child on purpose, is likely to cause such child unnecessary suffering to his health (physical and emotional) and shall be liable on conviction before the Supreme Court and accept the necessary consequences.

Table 5: Child Protection Laws

CHILD PROTECTION LAWS	
Child and Family Welfare	Child Rights Act, 2007
Birth Registration	Child Rights Act, 2007 Births and Deaths Registration Act, 1983
Custody and Maintenance of Children	Matrimonial Causes Act Child Rights Act, 2007
Domestic Violence	Domestic Violence Act, 2007
Inheritance Rights	Devolution of Estates Act, 2007 Registration of Customary Marriages and Divorce Act, 2007 Child Rights Act, 2007
Adoption	Adoption Act. 1989
Child Labour	Child Rights Act, 2007
Juvenile Justice	National Child Justice Strategy, 2006 Child Rights Act, 2007
Child Victims/Witnesses in Criminal Proceedings	National Child Justice Strategy, 2006
Corporal Punishment	Child Rights Act, 2007
Physical Abuse	Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act Child Rights Act, 2007
Sexual Abuse	Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act
Child Prostitution	Protection of Women and Girls Act, 1927 Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act
Child Pornography	
Trafficking in Children	Anti-Human Trafficking Act, 2005
Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict	Child Rights Act, 2007 Recruitment Act, 2006 RSLAF Recruitment Policy, 2004
Refugee and Migrant Children	
Child Protection in Emergencies	

Taken from: (Thompstone, 2010)

As mentioned before, the Child Rights Act, 2007, is the main national law regarding child protection services. This Act defines a child as a person under the age of 18 and it includes a statement of children's rights, such as: delineating roles, responsibilities for promoting children's welfare and gives procedures for handling children in conflict with the law and children who need protection. The Child Rights Act provides modifications to previous laws so that they can improve compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, such as the Corporal Punishment Act, the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act and the Children and Young Persons Act. Moreover, the Act guarantees the child's right to life, respect, liberty, name, health, education, shelter from their parents and protection from involvement in armed or any other kind of violent conflict. The CRA also forbids child labor, forced or early marriage, all kinds of torture. Although, corporal punishment is not explicitly forbidden, the CRA disagrees with people who would like to impose it on their children.

Although, the CRA recognizes the primary responsibility of parents to protect their children and enjoy their rights, the Act also includes a statement saying that the government should also support parents in their children's responsibilities.

2.3.3.1. REGULATION OF OUT-OF-HOME CARE

For children in need of protection, the Child Rights Act provides five types of out-of-home care:

- **Place of Safety**: a place used as emergency measure for up to seven days, for children who need protection;

- **Approved Fit Person**: A person, approved by the district court, who would take care of the child in need of protection. The Act does not provide any criteria or procedures for selection and approval of fit persons;

- **Approved Residential Home**: if the Family Court or a probation/welfare officer gives a recommendation, the children may be admitted to an approved home. In order to host a child, any NGO or person should obtain a license from the district council;

- **Foster care**: this option is only available to children who are in residential homes. In order for the child to be placed with a foster parent, the committee comprised of a probation officer, social welfare officer, person in charge of the approved residential home and two other representatives should give their consent;

- **Adoption**: the child can be put up for adoption, if the parent or guardian does not show interest of the child's wellbeing or after consultation with the management of the home. Adoptions are allowed by the Adoption Act, 1989 which should be authorized by the High Court.

Although this Act provides legal rights for the protection of children, there is a disconnection from the reality of the lives of people in Sierra Leone, since the CRA wants to make a balance between international standards, traditional customs and the inherited colonial legislation. Apart from this Act, emphasis on the community support for children and parents, as well as village-level protection mechanisms. It is surprising to find out that even though the CRA involved stakeholders, the law has been perceived that it does not provide any duties or responsibilities to children. That is why religious leaders see the CRA as too permissive and lets the children to be "out of control", since they are being perceived as being too disrespectful and disobedient.

The goal of choosing this case study on Sierra Leone was to analyze and map the existing laws, structures and services which are provided for the protection of children. It did not come as a total surprise when the current formal and informal child protection systems in Sierra Leone are not achieving their planned impact on the lives of the youngest members of the society.

The child protection system (mostly informal than formal) lacks to provide considerable resources to child protection initiatives, since many children in the country are constantly exposed to abuse, child labor, child trafficking, early or forced marriage, etc. What the community lacks is a strong leadership to bring together the effort in creating an improved national vision in order to help children, families and communities. The government of Sierra Leone, apart from relying heavily upon the work of the local, national actors, should pave a way for the international actors to ensure that child protection and family welfare are promoted in their initiatives and programs. Although, the government issued two Agendas for Prosperity, the country still faces poverty, various diseases, and the access to education is not as high as it is expected to be. Mr. Julius Maada Bio, the president of Sierra Leone, believes that the country by 2035, the country would be an inclusive, middle-income country with less than 5% of people looking for jobs would be without work and over 90% of the population would be able to read and write.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, in the recent years, makes efforts to strengthen the formal child protection system mostly through the Child Rights Act and the National Policy for Child Well-being. However, the formal child protection system in Sierra Leone does not take into consideration the harsh realities that children endure in their impoverished communities. The majority of children are faced with abuse, neglect and exploitation. Moreover, the Ministry faces a limit when it comes to its small budget to manage the activities. That is why; the child protection system of the country relies heavily on the international community for the key social protection and welfare funding. By providing several programs, such as UNICEF, Safe the Children, Child Fund and many more, and children have a chance to experience a new lease on life. All things considered, the government sector (health, education, justice) and the international and local NGOs should work together and reconsider the current programs and the strategic plans of action in order to enable realistic targets and goals to be set.

2.4. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ON THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM OF THE THREE COUNTRIES

Many differences can be noticed between the formal and the informal child protection systems, based on the aforementioned data of the analyzed case studies in the second chapter.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a child protection system that encompasses both formal and informal actors in the need of protecting children. One of the biggest problems that this country faces is that a growing number of the population is poor or at risk at poverty. Even though, there are many laws that should protect children, the country fails at protecting Roma children, children with disabilities, children without parents, etc. Roma children are still lacking formal education, with only one third of them being educated. In general, 90% of children in Bosnia and Herzegovina attend primary school. That is why the formal sector is strengthened by the NGO sector, especially with the help of UNICEF.

On the other hand, England has mostly a formal child protection system, but children face many risks such as: neglect, abuse, child trafficking, etc. The Children Act 2004 obliges local authorities to promote the welfare of children in need, up to 18 years old. However, there were many serious cases of children above the age of 14 that included alienation from parents, drug and alcohol misuse, health difficulties, etc. There was a report from the Children's Society saying that older children in England are often portrayed as badly behaved and the blame is put on them. Compared to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the children in England have a higher attendance at school, due to the fact that the Ministry of Education portrays a vital role in child protection system. However, there are many other risks even the formal sector cannot put an end to. That is why the informal sector, such as UNICEF, Save the Children, the local safeguarding children boards are there to promote the welfare of children and to help vulnerable and neglected children. Additionally, there is no certainty that their presence is as beneficial as they would want it to be, due to the existing many laws and procedures in the country.

Moreover, Sierra Leone has adopted many conventions in order to promote the wellbeing of the children. Some of them include the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and many more. Although, the country has a good set of formal child protection mechanisms, the international child welfare community has provided a good deal of care intended for vulnerable children. Their presence is quite beneficial, since they help children with education. Similarly to Bosnia and

Herzegovina, children in Sierra Leone are not attending a quality formal education. The main reason is that more than 50% of the teachers are unqualified. Another risk, that was not quite present in Bosnia and Herzegovina and England, is the common practice of female genital mutilation/circumcision, which affects 85% of girls in urban areas and 95% of boys in rural areas. The Paramount and Village Chiefs are the main informal actors that promote the welfare of children. On the other hand, there are also many child protection laws that are meant to protect children from a certain risk. Similarly to Bosnia and Herzegovina and England, the country has adopted the Child Rights Act and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Based on the data gathered from the three countries, the table provided below shows how applicable is the services intended to protect children from various risks and harms and whether the aforementioned services are accountable for a better child protection system in the given country.

Table 6: Comparative table regarding the child protection services for each country

Country:	Access to basic services and rights for children	Protection from poverty and social exclusion	Access to formal education	Flexible non-governmental services	Protection from conflict and violence
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Moderate	Poor	Moderate	Moderate	Poor
England	Good	Moderate	Good	Moderate	Moderate
Sierra Leone	Moderate	Poor	Poor	Moderate	Poor

3. CONCLUSION

The aim of my master thesis was to provide arguments based on which the aforementioned hypothesis will be tested. Although, the child protection systems of the case studies that I have selected may seem complex, each one case has its own positive and negative sides. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country with a child protection system that includes both formal and informal actors, while England has mostly a formal system. Lastly, Sierra Leone is a country with a formal child protection system, which is greatly influenced by the non-governmental actors.

The hypotheses which were tested are the following:

- Formal child protection systems provide better access (than informal) to basic services and rights for children;
- Formal child protection systems provide better protection (than informal) from poverty and social exclusion;
- Formal child protection systems need functional democracy to be able to protect children from conflict and violence;
- Informal child protection systems are associated with higher child poverty rates and higher dropout rates;
- Informal child protection systems provide, less bureaucratic services, but are less accountable than statutory services.

When it comes to the first hypothesis, it goes without saying that formal child protection systems provide better access to basic services and rights for children. All three countries have adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child which sets out the civil, political, social, economic, health and cultural rights of children. Also, all three countries have ratified many conventions that prevent and promote the welfare of children.

Regarding the second hypothesis, it is not necessarily true that formal child protection systems provide better protection from poverty and social exclusion. Poverty remains one of the biggest problems that children in Bosnia and Herzegovina face. Although, there are many laws that give a broad of social protection rights, these rights are not completely realized due to the lack of funding, responsibility and coordination between actors. The situation in Sierra Leone is quite similar with a growing number of children who are poor and live in impoverished homes.

From the case studies we can clearly observe that the formal child protection system in all three countries has undergone a lot of scrutiny in the past years. The problems clearly arise from the lack of coordination between the actors, lack of funding, and not accepting the responsibility which are given to the professionals. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sierra Leone are clearly an example of not having functional democracy which tends to shelter children from conflicts and violence. Sierra Leone is an example of having child soldiers during the 11 year civil war. Thousands of children have been recruited to participate directly in the armed conflict. Bosnia and Herzegovina is not an exception. During the conflict in Srebrenica, many children were actively fighting and were part of the "ethnic cleansing" campaign. In England, although children were not directly affected by an armed conflict, some of them experienced domestic violence. In this case, the informal sector, especially through the help of "Women's Aid" proposed that the mother and the children who experienced domestic violence to receive support.

The fourth hypothesis states that informal child protection systems are linked to higher child poverty rates. According to me, the informal sector is actually working hard to decrease these rates. In Sierra Leone solely, the number of NGOs is growing in the regions which are quite poor in order to help children. UNICEF in England provides many initiatives and services for poor children, such as: the Baby Friendly Initiative which supports and helps new parents and provides care and nourishment for the children. The Child Friendly Cities & Communities program helps vulnerable children to feel safe and protected in the community. While UNICEF in Bosnia and Herzegovina aims to leverage funds for children, reduce poverty and provide access to protection services.

The last hypothesis says that informal child protection systems provide flexible, less bureaucratic services, but are less accountable than statutory services. From the case studies mentioned previously, we can clearly state that providing less bureaucratic services may be more flexible and successful in the long run. UNICEF, Save the Children, The Women's Aid Federation and many more offer services to children, young adults and women in order to help, relieve their stress and decrease homelessness. It is true when they say that child protection should be less about the targets and the form-filling and should focus more about looking after the child. According to many social workers, especially in England, people often ask questions whether the rules and procedures have been met and do not actually focus on helping the child. A lot of time is being spent on preparing for inspections and meeting the requirements and this often times results in distracting the social workers making the right

decision. When it comes to the informal child protection services' accountability, all three countries benefit from these services regarding children's education, health, safety, etc. Although some may argue that this kind of services is not as accountable as statutory services, I think that without these informal services, the waiting list, for children in need, would only grow bigger and their needs would not be properly identified.

The general hypothesis stated that formal child protection systems provide better support to children than informal child protection system during the processes of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Generally speaking, this might be semi-true because formal child protection systems provide a set of laws which protect and promote the welfare of children. However, from the cases examined before, we can see that these systems still lack funds that are to be granted to children and basic coordination between the actors. There is also an increasing recognition among international child protection agencies that traditional approaches do not prevent child protection problems. That is why child protection actors feel the need to move from issue-specific programs towards a systems way of solving and protecting children's rights.

In order for the formal system to be effective at the national level, there should be a systems approach which requires strong leadership, ground-set laws and policies and a greater communication with other actors, such as: social protection, education, health, etc. By working together, formal and informal actors will be better prepared to reinforce the actions of the other. Strengthening the child protection system and improving protection should be the actors' first aim. This can be done by having a clear vision supported by a strategic plan. Having a strategic plan would help to define the actions in order to have more protective environments in which children can live freely and without risks. In order for the system to function even better, it should be jointly owned by various actors, such as: government officials, child protection agencies (national and international), etc.

To conclude, having a system which incorporates both the formal and the informal child protection initiatives and practices is what every country would benefit the most. From the countries mentioned above, we can clearly see that each child protection system of a country has its own qualities and flaws. Having a joint collaboration would increase the funds, strengthen staff capacities, provide more services which focus on the children and not just a specific situation and create safe and healthy environments in which children can live happily and freely.

REFERENCES

Archives, T. N. (2018). *Legislation.* Retrieved June 26, 2018, from Education Act 2002: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/section/175

Avert. (2018, February 13). *Avert.* Retrieved February 18, 2018, from Children, HIV and AIDS.

Barnett, K. (2008). *Child Protection Systems in Emergencies .* Save the Children.

Barnett, K. (2008). *Child Protection Systems in Emergencies.* UNICEF.

Bogoevska, N. (2015). *Protection of Children at Risk in the System of Justice for Children in the Republic of Macedonia.* Skopje: European Journal of Social Sciences Education and Research.

Bruckauf, D. Z. (2011). *Child Poverty and Deprivation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Analysis of the Household Budget Survey 2011 in Bosnia and Herzegovina.* UNICEF.

Chzhen, Y., & Ferrone, L. (2015). *Child Poverty and Deprivation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.* Florence: UNICEF.

Collins, A. (2007). *Contemporary Security Studies.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Committee, T. E. (2012). *Children first: the child protection system in Englan.* London: The stationery Office.

Delaney, S., & Quigley, P. (2014). *Understanding and applying a systems approach to child protection: a guide for programme staff.* Terre des Hommes.

Denov, M. (2005). *Child Soldiers in Sierra Leone: Experiences, Implications and Strategies for Rehabilitation and Community Reintegration.* Ottawa: University of Ottawa.

Ferrone, L. (2015). *Child Poverty and Deprivation in Bosnia and Herzegovina National Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (N-MODA).* UNICEF.

Foundation, I.-A. N. (2016). *Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding: A Practice Note.* PeaceNexus Foundation.

Georgieva, L. (2016). *International Relations and Conflict Resolution.* Skopje: Faculty of Philosophy - Skopje.

MKD. (2013, July 31). *MKD.* Retrieved May 5, 2018, from https://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/politika/mladinec-od-sos-detskoto-selo-dobi-stipendija-od-svetskiot-koledzh-vo-kostarika

Mutiso, J. (2003). *Legal Aspects of Social Protection for Children in Bosnia and Herzegovina.* UNICEF.

Olofsson, G. (2010). *Building rights-based national child protection systems: a concept paper to support Save the children's work.* Save the Children.

Peacebuilding Initiative . (2007). Retrieved March 11, 2018, from The conceptual origins of peacebuilding: http://www.peacebuildinginitiative.org/index34ac.html?pageId=1764#two

Scott, L. (2013). *The Crossroads of Child Protection and Education in peacebuilding.* New York: UNICEF.

Scott, L. (2013). *The Crossroads of Child Protection and Education in peacebuilding.*

Stamenkova-Trajkova, V. (2006). *VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN; Results of an Institutional Assessment of the Responsiveness of Service Providers to Violence against Children in Macedonia* . Skopje: UNICEF.

The Office for Standards in Education, C. S. (2011). *The voice of the child: learning lessons from serious case reviews.* Manchester: Ofsted.

Thompstone, G. (2010). *Mapping and analysis of the child protection system in Sierra Leone.* Kowloon: Child Frontiers Ltd.

Tozija, F. (2007). *Global School-Based Student Health Survey.* Skopje: UNICEF.

Trickett, P. K. (1998). *Violence Against Children in the Community.*

UNICEF. (2014). *Bosnia and Herzegovina Country programme document.* UNICEF.

Wamimbi, R. W., & Kasimbu, R. (2015). Strengthening community formal and non- formal systems to prevent violence against children in East Africa: What is working? *Academic Journals* , 15.

Watch, H. R. (2004, November 11). *Human Rights Watch.* Retrieved February 11, 2018, from Sri Lanka: Tamil Tigers Forcibly Recruit Child Soldiers: https://www.hrw.org/news/2004/11/11/sri-lanka-tamil-tigers-forcibly-recruit-child-soldiers

Wessells, M. G. (2015). *Child Abuse & Neglect.* Columbia University.

Wessells, M. (2009). *What Are We Learning About Protecting Children in the Community?* The Save the Children Fund.

Георгиева, Л. (2006). *Менаџирање на ризици.* Скопје: Филозофски факултет.