



## CASE STUDY: Early childhood development (ECD) programs as an entry point for building systems of community-based child protection in Ethiopia and Uganda

In **Ethiopia** and **Uganda**, ChildFund's country offices supported a stronger community response to violence against young children as part of its early childhood development initiative *Communities Caring for Children Program (CCCP)*.<sup>3 xxxi, xxxii</sup> This five-year program, which ended in 2016, aimed to promote positive parenting practices, establish high quality early childhood development (ECD) centers, and strengthen the ability of communities to prevent and respond to violence against children.

**"The Child Protection Committees are our watchdogs on the ground!"**

-Senior Probation Officer, Uganda

Operating in communities with significant levels of child neglect, abuse, harmful traditional practices, and violent discipline, our partners sought to reduce the risk of harm to young children by working in:

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- **Homes:** Building the capacity of community volunteer networks to support families to improve parenting, use positive discipline techniques, encourage violence-free homes, and inform parents about access to health, education and social services.
- **ECD centers:** Training ECD staff and management committees (composed of parents and community members) to identify and respond to any child at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence.

In **Uganda**, ChildFund extended this model by establishing and training **Child Protection Committees (CPCs)** from the village to district levels, which were then linked to ECD centers, schools, and government social welfare providers through a simple referral system. Communities could report child protection issues to the community CPCs, who would respond or, in more serious or complex cases, refer children to the police or formal social welfare services.

**“We really saw a difference. Once families and ECD centers were linked to well-functioning CPCs the community was able to handle and respond to case of abuse much better and faster.”**

-ChildFund child protection specialist

In both Ethiopia and Uganda, CCCP has seen encouraging results around parenting practices, including a reduction in violent discipline and improved caregiver engagement (including by fathers) in children’s learning and play.

