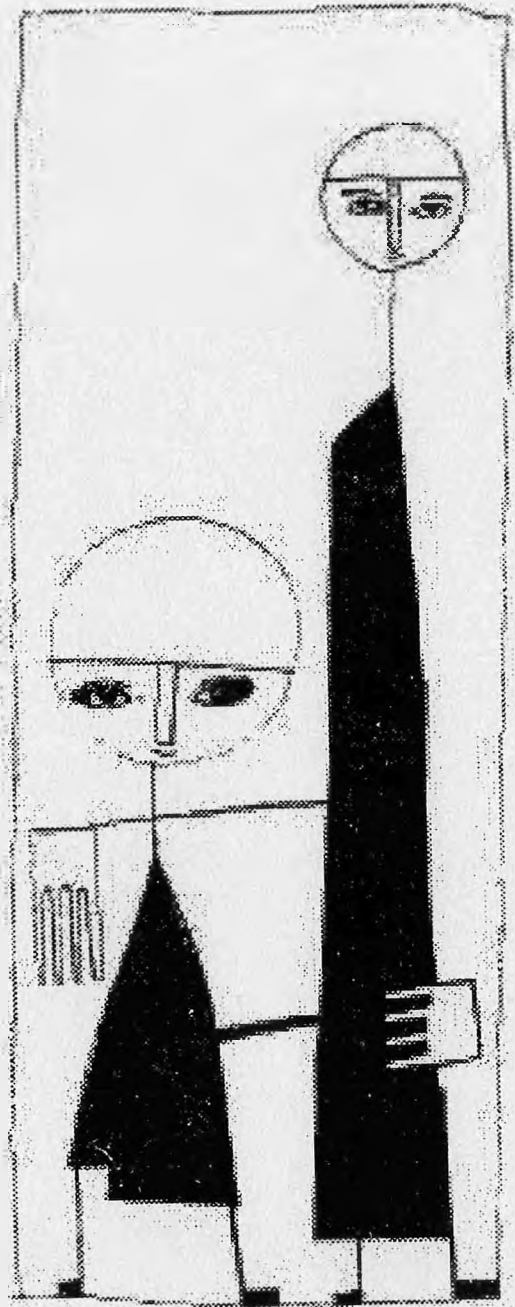


# Action for the Rights of Children

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February 2000

HRE/CHILD/9/5



## **Action for the Rights of Children**

### **ARC – A Rights Based Capacity Building and Training Initiative**

#### **Introduction**

UNHCR and the Save the Children Alliance initiated ARC in 1997 as a direct response to the United Nations Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children (the Graça Machel Study). The Machel Study points out that UNHCR is often one of the first agencies to intervene in emergencies, where approximately 50% of refugees and other people of concern to the Office are children and adolescents. ARC's primary goal is to increase the capacity of UNHCR, government, and NGO field staff to protect and care for children and adolescents from emergency through to durable solutions.

In line with the importance placed on mobilising inter-agency collaboration in the area of child rights, UNICEF and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) were welcomed to the ARC Steering Committee at the beginning of 1999. Both organisations are actively involved in regional initiatives and in reviewing training materials.

ARC directly links training to field operations. Participants of regional pilot trainings review the content of resource packs and identify training methods in accordance with the political, economic, social, and cultural context of the region. In turn, ARC's participatory framework engages regional staff to identify pilot projects that address critical issues affecting children and adolescents.

ARC reinforces the child and adolescent components of existing UNHCR and NGO emergency training programmes. Workshops establish regional training teams who identify training needs and develop action plans. Needs are addressed through further ARC trainings, and joint NGO-UNHCR situation assessments. As children and adolescents' concerns become increasingly part of mainstream programming, ARC evolves from a free-standing initiative into a resource that is incorporated into existing training programmes.

ARC has been generously supported by the governments of Denmark, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, and the United States.

#### **Content**

ARC is a compendium of guidelines, critical issues, case studies, and participatory training material that encourages field workers and policy programmers to integrate their experience into regional situations. Its content is divided into two sections: Foundations and Critical Issues. Both sections include an age-gender perspective to ensure that girls and boys benefit equally from all protection and assistance efforts. In addition, there is a Facilitator's Toolkit which gives the potential facilitator ideas about participatory approaches to use, as well as giving guidance on how to navigate the various resource packs.

It is vital that our responses to the needs of children and adolescents are addressed through a multi-sectoral approach. There are multiple and complex factors that inter-relate to affect the well-being of children and adolescents. Alerting staff to some of these complex relationships is one of the objectives of the ARC project. The resource packs thus include multiple cross-references to other issues, related or of concern to the issue under consideration, in order to assist users in finding their way around. In

order to facilitate the understanding of these inter-relations and to encourage the user to explore some of these learning opportunities, two graphics are attached.

In certain cases it may be a specific issue that has been identified as of concern, for example separated children. Taking this issue as a vertical learning opportunity, it becomes clear that we should also be considering a number of cross-cutting themes represented as Foundations within the ARC resource packs. ARC thus seeks to engage staff in a broader analysis, and discussion, of issues in order to serve the best interests of the child.

### **ARC Resource Packs**

#### **i) Foundations**

International Legal Standards and Principles  
Fundamental Principles of Child and Adolescent Development  
Durable Solutions  
Working with Children  
Situation Analysis  
Community Mobilisation

#### **ii) Critical Issues**

Separated Children  
Child Soldiers  
Landmine Awareness  
Reproductive Health  
Disability  
Exploitation and Abuse  
Education

#### **iii) Tools**

ARC Facilitator's Toolkit

### **Time-Frame: Progress and Plans**

#### **1999 Up-date**

- Six regional Training of Trainers workshops conducted
- Great Lakes region included into the programme
- Final "draft" edition of materials printed and distributed
- Electronic versions of some resource packs produced in CD-Rom format
- Follow-up activities are underway in all five regions

#### **2000 objectives**

- Finalise the review of ARC training material for production and distribution (to include printed and CD-Rom format)
- Foster ownership of the ARC programme within UNHCR as well as by partners concerned through increased awareness raising and mainstreaming efforts
- Expand the regional scope of the programme
- Support regional offices in dissemination of ARC materials and organisation of ARC workshop and follow-up
- Strengthen inter-agency co-ordination mechanisms, including refugee representation, for addressing children's needs
- Undertake an inter-agency evaluation of the ARC project

## **ARC RESOURCE PACK ABSTRACTS**

### **i) FOUNDATIONS**

#### **International Legal Standards and Policies**

Effective protection of refugee children requires an initial recognition of the rights to which all children are entitled. Such rights are well established under international law, and in turn, have been incorporated into UNHCR policy. This resource pack outlines the legal foundations for protection of refugee children, taking as its starting point the State's responsibility for protecting the human rights of all persons within its territory, including refugee children. The resource pack examines the guiding legal principles that provide the basis for prioritised action on behalf of refugee children, and additionally, suggests means of implementing these actions.

#### **Fundamental Principles of Child and Adolescent Development**

Concepts and belief about childhood and adolescents differ by place and context. Definitions, both legal and cultural, have operational significance. This resource pack introduces a dynamic model of children's physical, cognitive, social and psychological development. It emphasises that in the early stages of an emergency, priorities for children and adolescents should be on promoting normalisation and prevention of further harm. Moreover, it explores the need to actively promote children and adolescents' development, adolescents being active agents in their own development. Special capacities, needs and vulnerabilities of adolescents are also addressed. It concludes by exploring the concept of "Best Interests" the standard established by the Convention of the Rights of the Child as a measure for all actions on behalf of children.

#### **Durable Solutions**

One of UNHCR's primary functions is to seek durable solutions for refugees. This resource pack examines the basic principles of refugee children and adolescents; the particular needs and difficulties which children may face while in transit and while integrating and reintegrating into communities; and appropriate action to meet these needs, minimise or overcome these difficulties. The resource pack focuses on voluntary repatriation and reintegration, as it often is, when feasible, the durable solution most likely to apply to the greatest number of refugee children.

#### **Situation Analysis**

Situation analysis is the process of assessing a complex situation within its wider context. This involves systematically gathering information, identifying the main problems and needs within a refugee population, identifying the principal resources contained within that population and analysing the information gathered in order to facilitate the process of planning in a systematic, strategic, integrated and co-ordinated manner. This resource pack is designed to give a broad overview of the topic of situation analysis relating to children, adolescents and families, and an introduction to the skills required. The main emphasis of this resource pack is on how to enable participants to examine particular situations, to consider what information is required and how to acquire it, and to analyse it in order to make planning decisions. Situation analysis will require both quantitative and qualitative information, as well as an element of forecasting to take account of the long-term needs of children and adolescents.

### Community Mobilisation

Community mobilisation is a process whereby local groups are assisted in clarifying and expressing their needs and objectives and in taking collective action directed at meeting them. It emphasises the involvement of the people themselves in determining and meeting their own needs. This resource pack examines the questions: what is community mobilisation and why it is important? It looks at the importance of community structure for children's development, outlines the characteristics of a community mobilisation approach and examines the factors which help decision – making about re-establishing previous community structures and facilitating the setting up of new ones. It also looks at the value of community mobilisation of women and examines the importance of community mobilisation of adolescents.

## **ii) CRITICAL ISSUES**

### Separated Children

Separation is a devastating experience for children in situations of conflict and displacement and can have serious long-term consequences for the child's well-being. It is vital for staff at all levels to have a broad awareness of the issues facing separated children, and in particular, the prevention of separation, broad knowledge of interim care and family tracing issues and the need for inter-agency co-operation. It is particularly important to note that some of the key messages in this resource pack will be found to be counter-intuitive for some people: for example, the disadvantages and potential dangers of institutional forms of care, and the dangers of evacuating children from war zones.

### Child Soldiers

This resource pack creates an understanding of children's active involvement in armed conflict. It focuses on measures to prevent recruitment, as well as appropriate procedures for demobilisation. Ways to facilitate social integration, such as family reunification, education, and income-generating activities, are also explored. Special consideration is given to the impact of armed conflict on children's psychological and social development.

### Disability

One of the major reasons why children with disabilities are discriminated against is because of attitudes of other people towards or about them. This resource pack aims to address negative attitudes towards disability and encourage participants to seek more specific knowledge so as to ensure that all children and adolescents, including those with disabilities, have access to services to meet their basic needs and that they are able to exercise their rights. Differing concepts of disability according to regional and cultural attitudes are explored. The resource pack looks at how the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other legislation which concerns disabled children can help determine ways to ensure both the protection of disabled children and their participation in children's activities. The resource pack also looks at the importance of advocacy work surrounding issues concerning disabled children, particularly the contribution of parent organisations and disabled-people organisations.

### Education

This resource pack aims to provide Senior Managers, Programme Staff and Field Staff with what they need in order to ensure that the education rights of the children within their jurisdiction/care are fully met. The resource pack takes as its starting

point the relevant legal instruments that underpin children's rights to education. It shows how to be prompt and efficient in setting up educational activities in emergency. Thereafter, the resource pack offers general information about education, the role of adults within the process, what should be taught and how, and about how to ensure that all children and adolescents are included.

#### Landmine Awareness

Children as a group are seriously endangered by mines and UXO (unexploded ordnance). Analysis of an actual situation and of community needs determines if mine education is an appropriate response. The aim of a mine education programme for children is to modify their behaviour so as to reduce their risk of being killed or injured. This resource pack introduces the subject of mine education for children and examines the legal basis behind any intervention to ensure children's rights by protecting them from landmines. It addresses the need for situational analysis to determine the nature of the problem and whether mine education is the most appropriate response. It shows how children can take part in both situation analysis and mine education programming, deals with the components of programmes, and addresses the role of UNHCR and NGOs in developing policies and programmes for mine awareness.

#### Reproductive Health

The health of children and adolescents depends on the people and social conditions found within the child's immediate environment. When children and adolescents live in refugee situations, they are often at greater risk of health concerns, such as sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancy and unsafe abortion. This resource pack intends to provide a structure for how to create a safe and supportive environment from which refugee children and adolescents can receive health information and services. It examines the health problems faced by children and adolescents, the key elements for health promotion and prevention, and the interventions that will respond to the needs of children and adolescents.

#### Exploitation and Abuse

Children and adolescents are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse during flight, while in exile, and in the process of voluntary repatriation and reintegration. Using the principles contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and in UNHCR guidelines and policy as a framework, this resource pack looks at risk situations, preventative measures, and how to respond when children are exploited or abused. Particular attention is paid to the prevention of, and response to, sexual exploitation of children and adolescents.

### **iii) TOOLS**

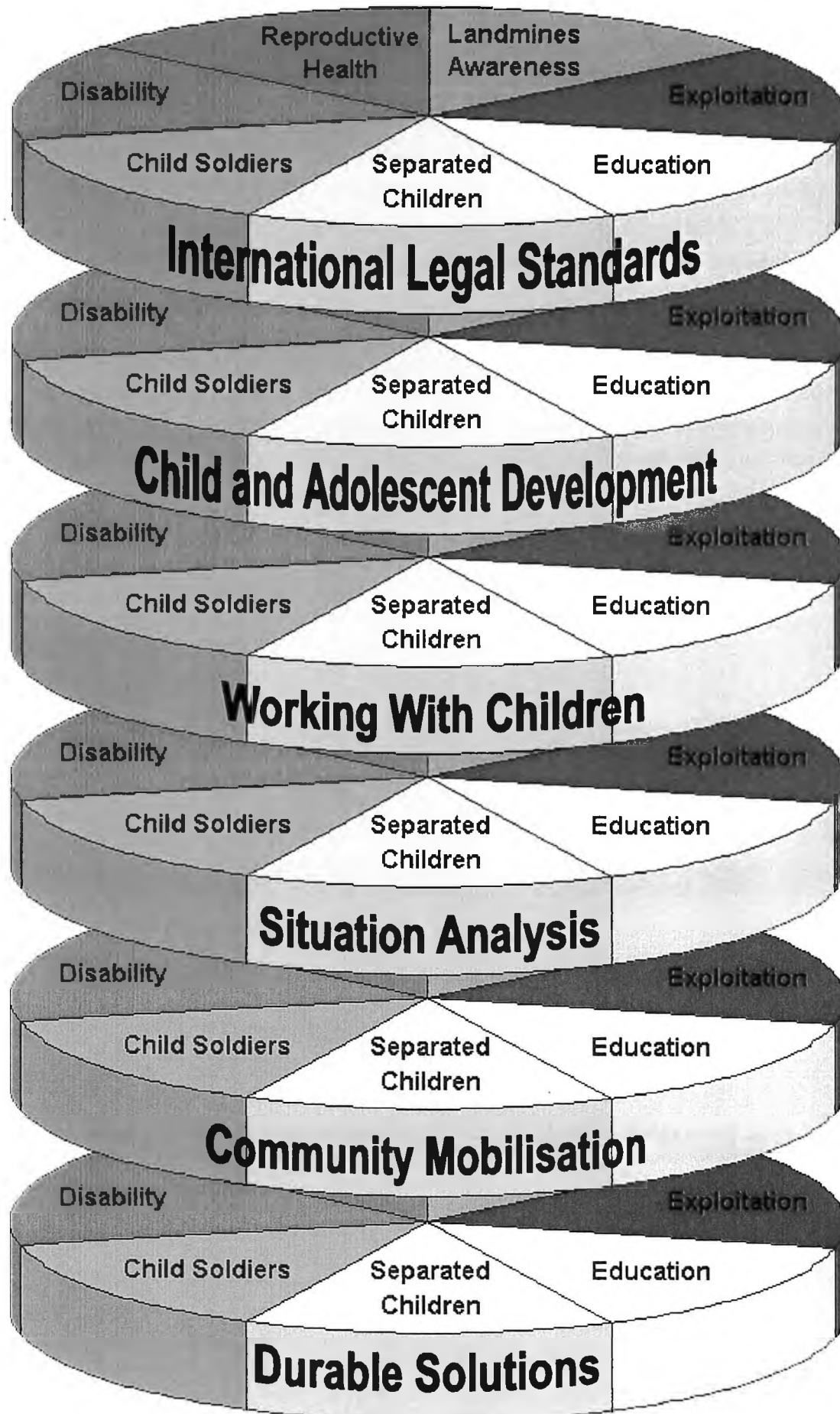
#### ARC Facilitator's Toolkit

This resource pack has been produced for people who will be facilitating the ARC training programme. It can be read alone as a basic introduction to training and facilitating, but it is best used in conjunction with the ARC resource packs that one is planning to use when conducting a training event. The Toolkit provides instructions on principles of learning, guidelines on preparing for training, instructions on how to use the participatory training methods cited in the ARC resource packs. It also gives guidelines for the writing and production of case studies, handouts and overhead projections, and suggestions for evaluating training.

## ARC Resource Packs

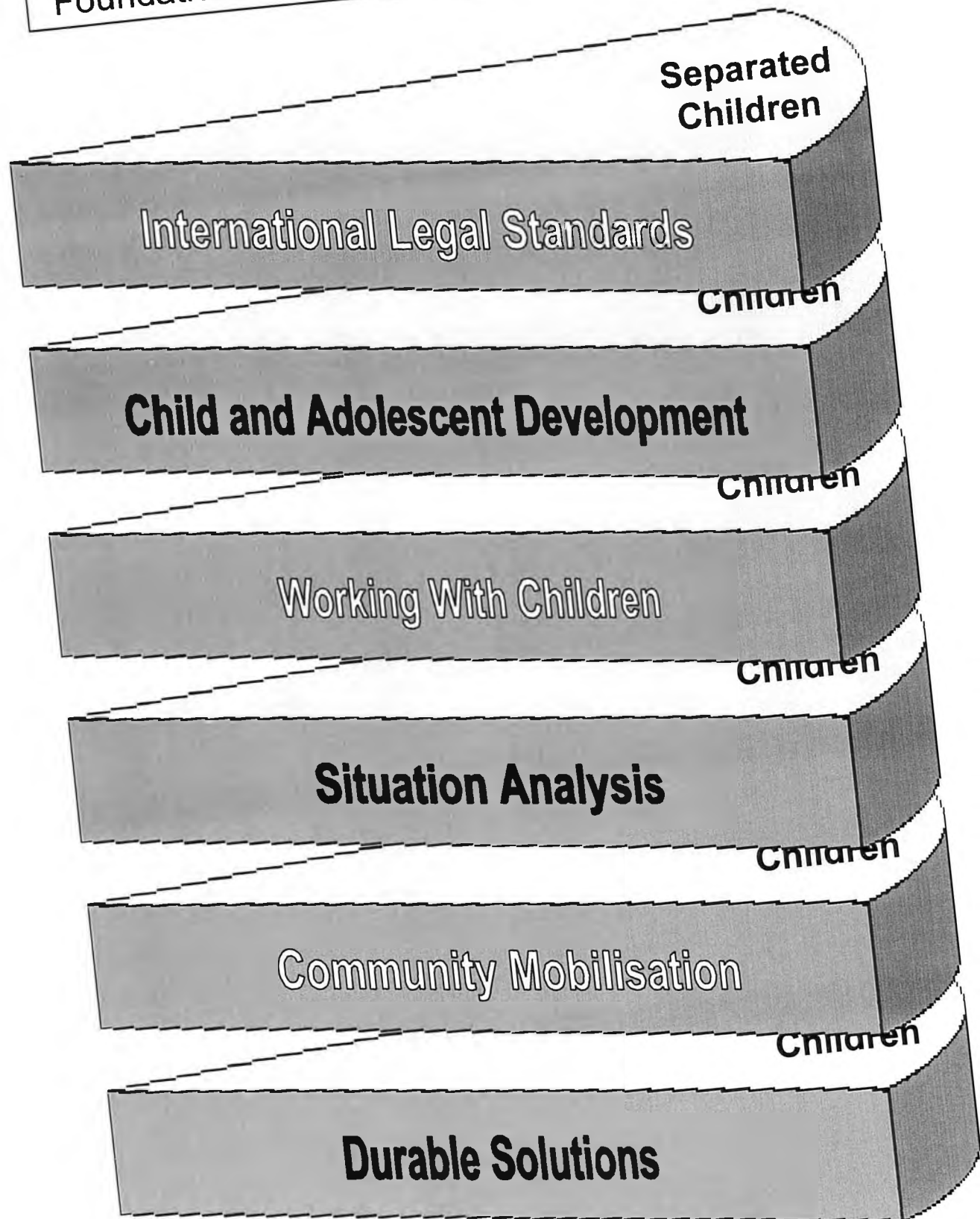
**Foundations:** horizontal training opportunities

**Critical Issues:** vertical training opportunities



## **ARC Resource Packs**

**Example:** **Separated Children** as a 'vertical training opportunity' allows us to explore cross-cutting themes presented within the Foundations resource packs.





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