

Action for the Rights of Children (ARC)

ARC is a child rights-based training and capacity-building initiative. It was established in 1997 as a collaborative programme by UNHCR and the Save the Children Alliance, and was joined by UNICEF and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in 1999. From 2002, co-ordination activities of the project are being handled by Save the Children, Geneva.

The purpose of ARC is to increase the capacity of UNHCR, government and implementing partners' staff to protect and care for children in emergency situations.

The project has developed a series of resource packs which focus attention on the rights and needs of refugee and displaced children. Each resource pack includes briefing notes, participatory training materials, case studies and training aids that encourage field and headquarters staff to integrate their experience into regional situations.

UNHCR's Regional Policy Officers for Refugee Children act as focal points for ARC, and have organised 'training of trainers' workshops in East and West Africa, the Commonwealth of Independent States and Central Asia, to develop regional resource teams. These teams subsequently identify follow-up strategies to address critical issues affecting refugee children and youth.

Through the ARC programme, seed funding has been made available to the regional teams to develop pilot activities. In Pakistan, the resource team conducted further training to expand its network with the intention to include neighbouring countries in Central Asia. In Sudan, workshops including government and local NGOs have been linked to community-based projects implementing recommendations for improving the situation of children and young people in refugee camps. In Uganda, local authorities have been involved in initiatives to increase the awareness and response by the community to critical issues affecting returnee children.

Sources:

- UNHCR/International Save the Children (2001) Action for the Rights of Children. UNHCR, Geneva

