

Development of EPW Model

In many countries, schools have failed to ensure effective integration of key precursors to learning – namely, children’s safety, social-emotional learning (SEL) and psycho-social well-being.¹

Data collected by ChildFund in 2019 on child well-being from almost 18,000 children across 17 countries showed that 67% of students witnessed or experienced violence in school over a three-month period.² Further, ChildFund’s community-based child protection mechanism strengthening work, which conducted mapping of risks to children in over 360 local communities in 19 countries, confirmed that violence is a significant issue affecting children at school and home.

In response to these findings, ChildFund developed the **Education for Protection and Well-being Program (EPW) Model** drawing from prior research, evaluation results from the USAID-funded PUENTES Project³ and other ChildFund programs, and literature review findings of extant conceptual and empirical studies of school-based violence prevention and social-emotional learning (SEL) interventions. EPW adapted a cognitive-behavioral skills training for teachers and caregivers, “Thousands of Hands” (ToH; also known as *Miles de Manos*), which was developed by the German Development Cooperation, with technical expertise from clinical psychologists and prevention scientists⁴, and representatives of the Ministries of Education (MoE) of the Northern Triangle. ToH is based on existing evidence-based teacher training, positive parenting, and violence prevention interventions. Findings from a quasi-experimental study evaluating the effectiveness of ToH suggested positive trends in reducing the number of violent incidents in the classroom and a statistically significant change in the behavior of caregivers, resulting in increased protection of children and parental engagement in education.

The EPW model was developed using a participatory approach with Child Fund staff from 15 countries in Asia, Africa, and the Americas. The goal of this process was to create an intervention that used a holistic, ecological approach to engender environments that are physically, emotionally, and psychologically healthy for children’s well-being and their education to adapt globally.

Overview of Model

ChildFund’s EPW Model targets children ages 6-12, their teachers and their caregivers, over a two-year period in schools. The EPW model places a strong emphasis on improving relationships within and between levels of the ecological model among children, caregivers, and teachers. Four components, targeting children, caregivers, teachers, and the school/family work in partnership to build social cohesion, enhance teaching practices, positive parenting, and parental engagement in education, break the continuum of violence, and improve educational outcomes for children. The four components, intermediate and long-term outcomes are illustrated in **Figure 1**.

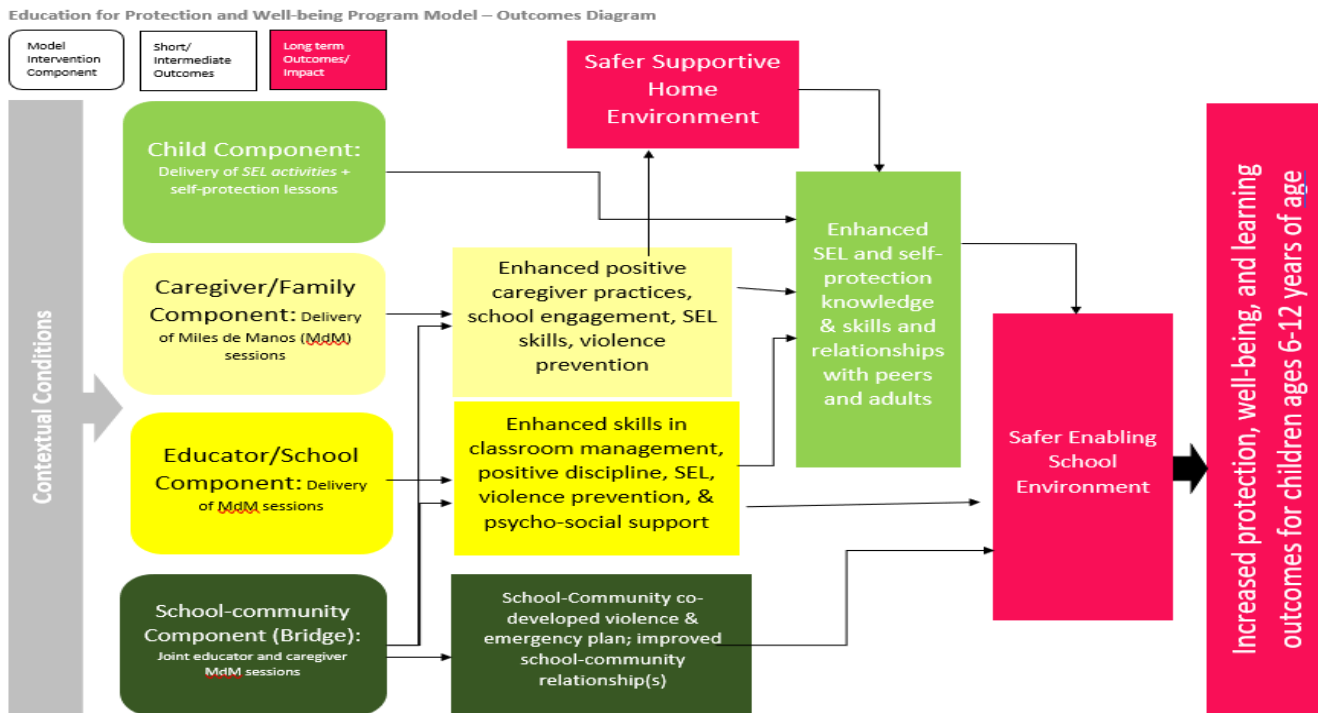
¹ OECD (2021), *Beyond Academic Learning: First Results from the Survey of Social and Emotional Skills*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/92a11084-en>.

² ChildFund International (2020a). *Global M&E level 2 data brief FY19: Exposure to violence in schools*. Washington, D.C.

³ ChildFund’s PUENTES Project in Honduras, implemented with U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) funding, piloted the school-based violence prevention methodology Miles de Manos in 2016-2017.

⁴ Currently based at the University of Oregon and University of Washington.

Figure 1: Overview of ChildFund's EPW Program Model



Essential Components

The **Child Component** reinforces SEL and self-protection skills in children and is delivered in classrooms settings through activities, lessons, and a comic book. The goal of the SEL intervention is to develop competencies which act as the foundation for academic achievement and prosocial behavior, while simultaneously protecting against problem behaviors, such as conduct issues, emotional distress, and violence.⁵ Though a wide range of skills fall under the umbrella of SEL and vary across cultural contexts, the model uses the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework,⁶ which targets self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Self-protection lessons have been adapted from *Children's Participation in Child Protection Tool*, developed by Keeping Children Safe Coalition, and focus on four key skills: a) recognizing child abuse; b) safe/unsafe situations; c) network of adults; and d) reporting. ChildFund developed two comic books, *Keeping Yourself and Your Friends Safe*, available in English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Arabic, and *RISE*, available in Tagalog and English, to compliment lessons.

The **Educator, Caregiver, and Bridge Components** use Thousands of Hands, which incorporates seven key strategies to influence behavior change among caregivers and educators. These strategies are: 1) effective communication; 2) clear expectations; 3) positive feedback; 4) limits and consequences; 5) problem solving; 6) managing emotions; and 7) monitoring and adult supervision. Educators and caregivers attend separate sessions to discuss similar themes. The “bridge” component is where teachers/educators and caregivers attend

⁵ Taylor, Rebecca & Oberle, Eva & Durlak, Joseph & Weissberg, Roger. (2017). Promoting Positive Youth Development Through School-Based Social and Emotional Learning Interventions: A Meta-Analysis of Follow-Up Effects. *Child Development*.

⁶ CASEL. (2017). What is SEL? Retrieved from <http://www.casel.org/what-is-sel/>

sessions together to establish common behavior norms and cultivate relationships. Educator, Caregiver, and Bridge components are described in **Table 1** and **Table 2** below.

Table 1. Thousands of Hands Methodology

Module	Session content
Educator Module	Strengthen the capacity of teachers to guide social and interpersonal skill development in students, enhance classroom management, teacher-student relationships, and teacher SEL skills.
Caregiver Module	Enhance positive parenting skills, engagement in school, SEL skills, parent-child relationships, and equip caregivers with knowledge and skills to reduce high-risk behaviors that contribute to violence at home and in school.
School/Family (Bridge) Module	Unite educators and caregivers to build relationships and work together to reach a common understanding of expected behavior for children and promote the holistic well-being of children and caregiver self-efficacy.

Program Delivery and Materials

ChildFund and local partners train EPW facilitators, who are typically teachers at the school in which EPW is implemented, using a Train the Trainer model. There are Facilitation Guides for each component of EPW and manuals/handbooks for educators and caregivers. Table 2 describes EPW delivery elements, session content, and session frequency.

Table 2: EPW Components, Curricula, and Frequency

Component	Number of Sessions	Frequency	Time/Activity
Child:SEL	A bank of activities that can be repeated	Minimum of 2x/week (greater frequency preferred)	~15-30 mins
Child: Self-Protection	19 sessions	Minimum of 2x/month	~ 45 mins
Educators	11 sessions	Once a month	~3-3.5 hrs
Caregivers	9 sessions	Once a month	~ 90-120 mins
School / Community (Bridge)	6 sessions	Every 4-5 months	~ 120 mins

Implementation and Evaluation of ChildFund’s EPW Global Program Model

ChildFund contextualizes, implements and monitors EPW in collaboration with local partners and Ministries of Education for greater sustainability and community buy-in. The EPW model is currently being implemented in Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Gambia; Indonesia and the Philippines will begin in September 2023. Countries conduct safe environment qualitative assessments and map child protection risks and community-based child protection mechanisms to inform contextualization.

Table 3: EPW First Cohort Participants by Country

Country	EPW 2021-2024		
	Students	Caregivers	Educators
Sierra Leone	164	164	18
Sri Lanka	363	362	15
The Gambia	398	384	41
Uganda	410	410	25
TOTAL	1335	1320	99

ChildFund’s assessment tools measure the following constructs at the child, caregiver, School Director, and teacher level at the start and end of EPW activities:

1. Self-protection skills
2. SEL skills
3. Caregiver-child relationship
4. Educator-students’ relationship
5. Educator-caregiver relationship
6. Peer to peer relationship (children)
7. Child behavior (caregiver perspective)
8. Parenting practices
9. Classroom management practices
10. Inclusive and safe classroom environment practices
11. Knowledge about child protection
12. Caregiver-educator relationship
13. Incidence of violence against children (VAC) at school
14. School safety (perception by students and educators)
15. Risk factors at the school level

Preliminary qualitative program evaluation findings from focus group discussions suggest parent and teacher satisfaction, engagement, buy-in, and caregiver and teacher reports of increased use of EPW target skills. Preliminary themes that emerged from focus groups with caregivers included increased child protection at home (e.g., reduction of corporal punishment, increased caregiver supervision), improved caregiver-child relationships, and improved caregiver engagement in education. Preliminary themes that emerged from focus groups with teachers and School Directors included reported improved caregiver-teacher relationships, teacher-

student relationships, classroom management practices, and increased student attendance. Initial process evaluation outcomes in The Gambia suggest that in 2019, 169 caregivers attended the parent teacher meeting (i.e., parent-teacher conferences). Attendance for parent-teacher meetings in 2022 was 77. In 2023, after over a year of implementation of EPW, attendance at parent-teacher meetings nearly doubled from 2019 - 310 caregivers attended the parent teacher meetings in 2023. Quantitative and qualitative program evaluation data collection is underway. Program evaluation findings will be made available as countries complete their implementation and evaluation.

ChildFund is also currently conducting a rigorous controlled trial to test the effectiveness of the ToH methodology in Honduras with funding from the U.S. National Institute of Health in partnership with the University of Texas and University of Oregon. Outcome findings from the first cohort of schools will be available by December 2023 and complete study results will be available in early 2025.

ChildFund International works throughout Asia, Africa and the Americas to connect children with the people, resources and institutions they need to grow up healthy, educated, skilled and safe – safe at home, at school, in community and online. Delivered through over 150 local implementing partner organizations, our programs address the underlying conditions that prevent any child or youth from achieving their full potential. We place a special emphasis on child protection throughout our approach because violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect can reverse developmental gains in an instant. Last year, we reached 21.1 million children and family members in 23 countries. Learn more at [ChildFund.org](https://www.childfund.org).

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