



**UNODC**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

*An Ecological Framework for*

# PSYCHOSOCIAL CHILD ASSESSMENT



## **AN ASSESSMENT MODEL SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR CHILDREN**

Taking into account child rights, child psychosocial development and children's experiences of violence.

## **A RESILIENCE-FOCUSED ASSESSMENT PROCESS COMBINED WITH AN ECOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

Supporting rehabilitation and reintegration in complex situations.

## **PRACTICAL GUIDANCE ON IMPLEMENTING THE KEY PHASES OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

Ensuring that assessment protocols meet the children's best interests, and illustrated by real-life scenarios faced by these children.

## **ABOUT THE MANUAL**

**A Resilience-focused Model for Children Associated with Armed and Organized Criminal Groups, Including Those Designated as Terrorist Groups.**



# CRUCIAL STEP

Child assessments are a crucial step in providing appropriate rehabilitation and reintegration support to children. Currently, many assessment processes developed in contexts of pervasive insecurity focus on evaluating potential risks posed by the child and predicting the likelihood of a negative outcome such as the risk of re-recruitment.

This Manual proposes instead an innovative approach to psychosocial assessment for children in these contexts. It proposes tools to gain a holistic understanding of the child, this model focuses on positive outcomes in the child's life through recommendations for psychological, physical health and social interventions.

## Ultimate Goal

*Child psychosocial assessments, in the context of child association with armed and organized criminal groups, including those designated as terrorist groups, should ultimately be aimed at promoting a child's rehabilitation and reintegration.*

## CONTEXT

All over the world, children are recruited and exploited by armed and organized criminal groups, including those designated as terrorist groups. Regardless of the groups' labels, during their association, children in these contexts are exposed to insecurity and extreme levels of violence, including neglect and psychological violence.

Many children die during such association and those who survive may have to overcome the long-term impact of violence on their physical and mental health. At the same time, even after exit these children are stigmatised, perceived as threats to public safety first and as children only second.

The phenomenon of child association with armed and organized criminal groups, including those designated as terrorist groups, is not confined to a particular geographical region or political setting or cultural context. It is a global issue with a long history. Furthermore, it occurs in both conflict and non-conflict settings, including those children who travel from their countries of origin to countries of transit or return. Providing support for these children through appropriate rehabilitation and reintegration must be prioritised in building inclusive and peaceful societies. This process of rehabilitation and reintegration is best informed by carrying out individual child psychosocial assessments.

