



# Including the voices of children in advocacy work

August 2023

NEWSLETTER

Q10

# Children's actions lead to changes in policies





# COME JOIN US IN THE NEW JOINING FORCES PROJECT!

The Joining Forces for Child Protection in Emergencies (JF-CPIE) project is a global consortium project bringing together six large child rights organisations in Germany to improve the protection of children and adolescents amongst refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) as well as their host communities in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Colombia, Ethiopia, and South Sudan.

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## JOFA Q10 Newsletter



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## About JOFA

**Joining Forces is an alliance formed in 2017 of the six largest child-focused international NGOs – ChildFund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children International, SOS Children's Villages International, Terre des Hommes International Federation, and World Vision International. Together, they are working with and for children to secure their rights and end violence against children.**

# Project Progress

## ON TRACK!

**In this quarter, the JOFA project continued to strengthen national and local protection and response systems.**



Project participants, community members, project staff and other relevant stakeholders participated in formal and informal child protection coordination mechanisms at national and subnational level to exchange on best practices, lessons learned and challenges. To strengthen community based psychosocial support activities for children, formal and informal child protection service providers received trainings in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Senegal. In Uganda, child-led community dialogues were organised which enabled children to engage the community and duty bearers on their rights and discuss community protection concerns.

To improve protection in resilient families, communities, and institutions in the context of COVID-19 and during recovery phase, a variety of awareness raising activities continued. Television, radio and posters and awareness raising sessions at community level were used to increase the knowledge on child protection risks as well as measures to mitigate those risks.

Amongst others, the topics sexual and gender-based violence, child marriage, mental health and psychosocial support, inclusive education and positive parenting were addressed within these awareness raising activities.





To strengthen positive parenting practices, campaign materials were provided and the approaches “Parenting without violence” and “Celebrating Families” continued. Community based child protection mechanisms were strengthened through training and material support to enable them to actively identify, report, refer and follow up on child protection cases. The supported actors conducted community sessions to sensitize parents and caregivers for different child protection risks, including child labour, domestic violence, and child neglect, and informed their communities about the mechanisms to report such child protection issues. In Kenya and Senegal, teachers and mentors were trained on psychological first aid for children as well as identification, reporting and referral procedures. In Ethiopia, Uganda and Senegal similar trainings and sensitizations were conducted for parent-teacher associations, district officials and school management committees.

In this quarter, the JOFA project continued to strengthen capacity and agency of children to prevent and respond to violence against them during COVID-19 crisis and recovery phase. In all five countries, children and peer-based

networks were supported through different trainings on positive life skills, child protection risks, reporting and referral mechanisms. In Kenya child councils undertook a variety of activities, including sensitization of their peers on children’s rights and responsibilities, income-generating activities, and public speaking.

**[Access the JOFA Project Thematic Review on child friendly feedback and complaint mechanisms.](#)**

Learning and sharing of knowledge and best practice related to child protection approaches continued to be strengthened. To gather the opinion of project participants on the project’s intervention activities and methods, focus group discussions, interviews and door-to-door visits were conducted in Ethiopia. In Kenya, feedback forums with community members, project stakeholders and child protection actors were organised. In Mali, the revitalised feedback mechanisms are operational and include suggestion boxes and telephone calls. In Senegal, a meeting was held to raise awareness about the installed feedback mechanisms to improve the understanding of the mechanisms.



# Children's actions lead to changes in policies

## STRENGTHEN CHILD PARTICIPATION

**Including the voices of children in advocacy work is essential to respond to their needs and to overcome structural child protection issues.**

In this quarter, the consortium continued to strengthen child participation mechanisms with the aim to enable children to influence decision makers.

In Kenya, children engaged with the committee working on the education reform to communicate their needs, concerns, and recommendations.

The children supported the introduction of a competency-based curriculum and advocated for the improvement of the teacher-child ratio,

the construction of new schools and financial support for families to provide learning materials. In Uganda, a children's round table with policy makers was organized to discuss child protection issues and develop strategies to improve budgeting for children.

In Mali, the regional children's parliaments carried out advocacy actions on protection issues, drawing the attention of decision makers to the precarious situation of children who are accommodated with their parents in official and spontaneous reception centres.







Furthermore, they advocated for the construction of a reception centre for abandoned children and children in difficult situations.

Next to directly engaging with decision makers, children also led campaigns and public mobilisation actions to raise awareness on child protection issues and increase public pressure on decision makers.

Action Days such as the Children’s Day and the International Day of the Girl served as an occasion for children to organise a variety of activities such as talks about children’s rights under international and domestic law.

In Kenya, children called upon the government and stakeholders to enhance their efforts towards supporting education and well-being of girls, emphasizing the specific needs of children living with disabilities.

### Support to district child protection bodies

Find out more about the JOFA programme approach PlanZ of empowering children as agents of change in Kenya to end violence and for further information on the JOFA initiative to engage child participation in Ethiopia to halt child marriage.

Child participation and child leadership leads to early marriage cases dropping and increases school enrolment of girls



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