**THE JF-CPIE
Endline evaluation
of in-country
interventions during
Phase 1 2022–2024**

GLOBAL
SYNTHESIS
REPORT

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JOINING FORCES
For All Children

german
humanitarian
assistance
DEUTSCHE HUMANITÄRE HILFE

ChildFund Alliance PLAN INTERNATIONAL Save the Children SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES INTERNATIONAL Terre des Hommes International Federation World Vision

ACRONYMS

BITA	Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts
CAR	Central African Republic
CPiE	Child protection in emergencies
CVA	Cash and voucher assistance
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FGD	Focus group discussion
GBV	Gender-based violence
GCT	Global Coordination Team
IDP	Internally displaced person
JF-CPiE	Joining Forces for Child Protection in Emergencies project
KII	Key informant interview
MPCA	Multi-purpose cash assistance
PFA	Psychological first aid
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Millions of children and adolescents around the world are living in protracted crises, complex emergencies, armed conflict and contexts of fragility and threat. They face immediate risks of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, alongside multilayered risks that are exacerbated by crises and emergencies.

Since July 2022, the Joining Forces Alliance has been running a two-year project to address major issues relating to child protection in emergencies in various conflict settings around the world. The project – Joining Forces for Child Protection in Emergencies (JF-CPiE) – aims to improve protection of children and adolescents among refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs) and their host communities. It is implemented by alliance partners in six countries that are seriously affected by violence and instability – Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Colombia, Ethiopia and South Sudan. The project is funded by the German Federal Foreign Office, and Plan International Germany is the lead organisation in terms of overall project management.

Each alliance member supports the in-country activities of implementing partners in two of the six targeted countries. A total of 12 implementing partners run the project activities, which are tailored to children and adolescents, to their caregivers, and to community members. Activities include awareness-raising sessions on child protection; psychosocial support and psychological first aid; establishing safe spaces; parenting sessions; providing cash vouchers and garden start-up kits; capacity building for child protection groups; and support for local child protection referral pathways.

About the Joining Forces Alliance

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

Evaluating the JF-CPiE project

The evaluation of the JF-CPiE project sought to find out to what extent the various interventions were working or not in the target communities, and under which circumstances, and how they could be improved. It also examined the extent to which approaches addressing gender and inclusion were applied during project implementation. The evaluation was based on a pre-/post- comparison format. It drew on data collected shortly after the start of the project and during a mid-point workshop, and then collected further data using a mixed-methods approach in March 2024 towards the end of the first phase.

Timeline for project and evaluation

July 2022	Phase 1 of JF-CPiE project set up in six crisis-affected countries.
November 2022 – January 2023	A baseline study gathering quantitative data carried out across all 12 implementing partners in the six countries. Needs assessments, collecting qualitative data, also carried out by each implementing partner to determine local child protection risks.
August 2023	11 of the 12 implementing partners held a mid-term reflection[1] workshop. This involved mainly internal project staff, although external stakeholders, such as government and beneficiary representatives and young people, attended some sessions. Aim is to discuss project progress and identify potential lessons learned about the interventions to strengthen child protection within emergency settings through a consortium.
March 2024	Endline evaluation carried out using a mixed-methods approach, within each country, supervised by the implementing partners.
July 2024–2026	Phase 2 of the project begins. It is implemented in the same countries and by the same organisations as Phase 1, except for Colombia, which is no longer part of the project. Phase 2 focuses on the integration of food security and child protection.

This report

This report is a condensed account of the endline evaluation findings for the JF-CPiE project Phase 1[2]. The report is organised as follows:

■ Section 2 provides an overview of project contexts in the six countries relevant to the evaluation.

■ Section 3 outlines how the project works, in terms of the intended outcomes, outputs and activities that underpin its implementation.

■ Section 4 details the evaluation, including the evaluation questions and methodology.

■ Section 5 presents the evaluation results, organised by the four evaluation criteria – relevance, effectiveness, inclusiveness and implementation.

■ Sections 6 and 7 offer conclusions and recommendations.

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1 Online versions of the baseline summary document and the mid-term reflection summary document.
2 The original endline evaluation report was restructured to create this condensed version in order to highlight the most important findings on a global level. Specific analyses at country level can be provided on request, where available.

What is child protection in emergencies – CPiE?

Child protection in emergencies involves preventing and responding to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children in humanitarian contexts. The child protection risks involved are varied, and may depend on compounding factors such as age, gender, disability and the humanitarian context.

Effective and sustained improvements in child protection are likely to require addressing all dimensions of a situation simultaneously, making sure that these are adapted to any changes that are occurring in the humanitarian context. Changes could be the disruption of key services, changes in family dynamics and separation, increased vulnerability to child protection risks.

For example, raising awareness with caregivers about children's needs after displacement or separation is crucial for promoting children's wellbeing and creating a protective environment during a crisis. Households with socio-economic difficulties should be supported and children in all their diversity should be able to access support networks, safe spaces and services that are relevant for them, timely and of quality.

2. HOW CRISES AFFECT THE PROJECTS IN THE SIX COUNTRIES

Areas of implementation per country and organisation

Organisation key: **Plan** – Plan International; **SOS** – SOS Children's Villages; **STC** – Save the Children; **TdH** – Terre des Hommes; **WV** – World Vision

Bangladesh

Refugee camps, host communities
Cox's Bazar, Chittagonj District
Plan: Ukhiya and Teknaf sub-districts
WV: Ukhiya sub-district

Burkina Faso
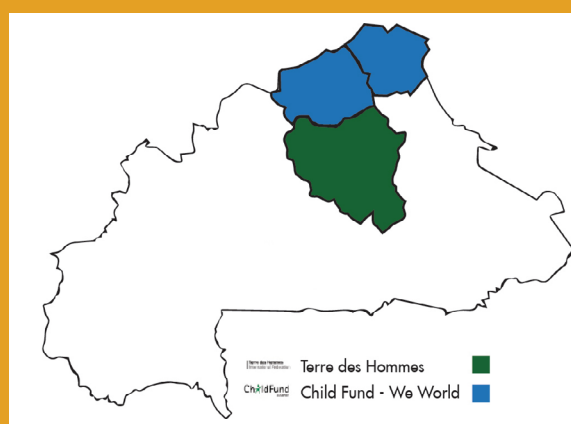
Mixed host communities, IDP camps
ChildFund: Djibo, Soum Province, and Gorom-Gorom, Oudalan Province. **TdH**: Bam, Namentenga and Sanmentenga Province, Centre-Nord Region (30 villages and 6 towns)

Central African Republic
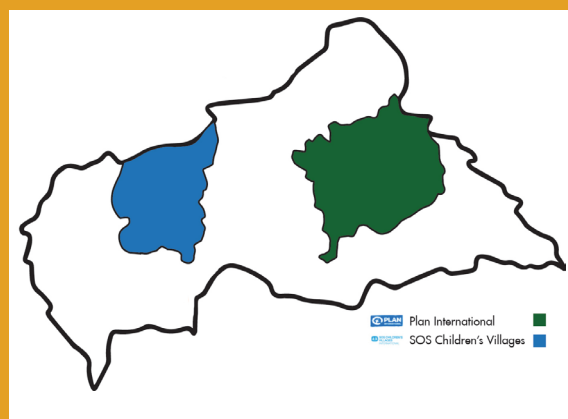
IDP camps, host communities
Plan: Haute-Kotto Prefecture, Bria sub-prefecture
SOS: Ouham Prefecture, Bossangoa sub-prefecture

Colombia
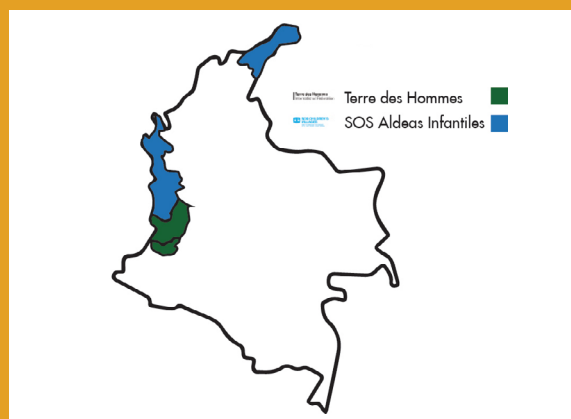
SOS: Chocó (urban and rural areas), La Guajira (informal rural and urban settlements). **TdH**: 26 communities, with host communities and survivors of the armed conflict, in Northern Cauca Department, West Cauca, Buenaventura and surrounding areas (rural indigenous areas), part of Valle de Cauca, Cali and surrounding areas, Valle del Cauca Department

Ethiopia
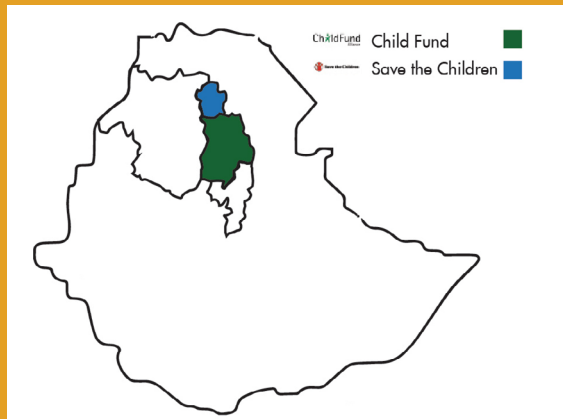
IDP sites, IDPs/returnees, host communities
ChildFund: Amhara region – South Wollo and North Wollo Zone
STC: Amhara region – Waghumera Zone

South Sudan

IDP sites, host communities, mixed communities
STC: Jonglei State, Akobo East county, Akobo West county, Bor South county. **WV**: Central Equatoria State, Juba county; Western Equatoria, Tambura county

Country contexts

Bangladesh

Around 1 million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar live in camps across the border in the Cox's Bazar area of Bangladesh. The refugees are reported to be targeted in violent attacks and abductions by armed groups operating in the camps.[3] The refugees have few means of protection, partly because their legal status as refugees is not fully recognised in Bangladesh.

The JF-CPiE implementing partners work at different refugee camps and with host communities. Staff associated with **Plan International Bangladesh** highlighted the constant threat of kidnapping by armed groups. The groups target individuals from both the camps and the host community, demanding a ransom for their release. Not only does this endanger the lives of community members, it also severely disrupts the work of project staff.

World Vision Bangladesh staff reported that due to the threat of violence, caregivers and children have been less willing to visit the centres that they run within communities. Staff also reported general political instability. During (local) elections public life slowed down, which affected the project implementation. The communities were also affected by Cyclone Mocha in May 2023, significantly affecting field teams' abilities to be present within target communities.

Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso in the Sahel region of Africa is experiencing significant conflict and instability. Armed groups, active in Burkina Faso since 2016, have been the primary drivers of the violence. Armed groups have been primary drivers of violence and blockades in about 26 cities (incl. Djibo) are severely restricting the movement affected communities, limiting their access to basic services. Warnings of famine due to the blockade have been issued for the town's population,[4] many of whom are people displaced by the violence in surrounding areas.

ChildFund Burkina Faso, which works near Djibo, has reported being affected by the security issues. **Terre des Hommes** is the other implementing partner for JF-CPiE projects in Burkina Faso. Both work with IDP communities, host communities and mixed sites.

Central African Republic (CAR)

This landlocked country has suffered a decade of conflict and instability. Armed groups fight to control and exploit raw materials. The violence has forced one in five civilians to become displaced. Around 3 million people were severely food-insecure in 2023.[5] Access to basic services like healthcare and sanitation is affected

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3 Human Rights Watch (2023). "Bangladesh: Spiraling Violence Against Rohingya Refugees", 13 July.
4 FEWS NET (2023). "Attack and suspended humanitarian access underscore risk of Famine in Djibo", Burkina Faso Alert 12 December.
5 Norwegian Refugee Council (2024). "What's happening in the Central African Republic?", 4 July.

by the neglected state of critical infrastructure. Around 1.2 million children struggle to access education.

JF-CPiE implementing partners in CAR are **Plan International**, which works at two IDP camps and two host communities; and **SOS Children's Villages**, which works at five sites in five villages – all are host communities where IDPs also live.

Colombia

Significant internal conflict in Colombia is primarily driven by armed groups, drug trafficking and socio-political tensions. Despite a peace agreement in 2016 with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), violence has persisted due to dissident FARC factions, the National Liberation Army, and criminal organisations involved in drug trafficking and illegal mining. Assassinations of social leaders, human rights defenders and former FARC combatants are on the rise, attributed to armed groups seeking to control territories and resources. Regions like Cauca (where one of the implementing partners is active), Nariño and Antioquia are severely affected.

Colombia is a major cocaine producer. Control over lucrative coca cultivation and trafficking routes has fuelled violence among armed groups, leading to clashes and instability. Government efforts to eradicate coca crops have met with resistance and sometimes trigger violent confrontations with local communities and armed groups. The JF-CPiE project in Colombia is implemented by **SOS** and **Terre des Hommes**. SOS works with people in rural and urban areas, including in informal settlements. Terre des Hommes works with 26 communities, which include host communities and survivors of the armed conflict, as well as in indigenous rural areas.

Ethiopia

Widespread volatility and unrest have troubled Ethiopia's second-largest region, Amhara, for more than a year as armed groups clash with the government's Ethiopian National Defense Forces. The Amhara conflict comes months after a devastating civil war centred on the neighbouring Tigray region. The insecurity is exacerbating severe drought in these northern regions, leaving affected communities facing extreme hardships.

Project staff associated with **ChildFund Ethiopia** explained that at the time of data collection for the evaluation, it was not possible to visit two project kebeles (administrative wards) of Tehuledere district within the Amhara region. **Save the Children Ethiopia** indicated similar challenges in their project areas,

including reports of killings and abductions of children and women by armed groups from across the border with South Sudan. Project staff associated with Save the Children Ethiopia also reported flooding, which severely affected the lives of communities and the ability of field teams to respond. Both partners work with IDPs and host communities, including at IDP sites. Save the Children also works with returnees.

South Sudan

Sub-national and intercommunal violence has displaced some 2.2 million people within South Sudan and pushed another 2.2 million into neighbouring countries. Fighting over control of territories and resources causes significant casualties and displacement. Multiple shocks, such as flooding, climate vulnerability, displacement and a high cost of living severely impact food security.[6] The JF-CPiE project in South Sudan operates in Jonglei State, Western Equatoria State and Central Equatoria State. Jonglei State includes IDP sites, mixed communities where more than half the population are IDPs, and host communities. The other two states include IDP sites and host communities.

Save the Children and **World Vision South Sudan** are the JF-CPiE implementing partners. As a result of the ongoing insecurity, World Vision staff reported that project activities had to be partly put on hold.

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[6]OCHA (2024). <u>South Sudan Overview</u> (accessed 24 October 2024)

3. THE JF-CPIE PROJECT FRAMEWORK

At the global level, the Joining Forces Alliance is working to ensure that all children and adolescents[7] who are affected by crisis live free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The overall intended outcome of the JF-CPiE project is the **improved protection of vulnerable girls, boys, adolescent girls and adolescent boys through access to quality child protection services and support for prevention, mitigation and response to risks.**

This overall outcome is measured using three outcome indicators, each combining two dimensions.

These are centred on children's and young people's knowledge of child protection risks and staying safe; caregivers' knowledge of protective and preventive factors; and community members' confidence in dealing with child protection risks.

Table 1: The three project outcome indicators

	Outcome indicator	Target groups
1	Children's knowledge: % of children who report (i) increased knowledge of child protection risks; and (ii) how to stay safe due to participation, compared to the beginning of the project	Children and young people aged 7 to 17
2	Caregivers' knowledge: % of caregivers who report (i) increased knowledge of caring; and (ii) protection behaviours towards children under their care compared to the beginning of the project	Adults who take care of children aged 0 to 17
3	Community confidence: % of community members who report (i) increased confidence in their ability to prevent child protection risks; and (ii) to respond to child protection risks compared to the beginning of the project	Heads of households, caregivers, teachers, health-care workers, local authorities

Outcome indicators 1 and 3 in particular focus primarily on enhancing awareness and confidence regarding **child protection risks**.

Within the context of this project on child protection in emergencies, child protection risks are defined as potential threats and harms that children and young people may face during crises such as natural disasters, armed conflicts or other humanitarian emergencies. These risks can significantly affect their physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing,[8] and they vary depending on context, circumstances, age, gender, disability.

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[7]For the purposes of this report, "adolescent" is understood to mean 10 to 14 years and "young people" as aged 15 to 19 years. It should be noted that these age ranges vary across organisations. For example, in line with United Nations (UN) practice, Plan International defines adolescence as the period from 10 to 19 years of age, with the following breakdowns: early adolescence – 10 to 14 years; late adolescence – 15 to 19 years. By the UN definition, young people are aged from 10 to 24 years.

[8] Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2007). _IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings_

Determining child protection risks in the six countries

The project teams in each country decided to rank the most contextual child protection risks within each locality during sessions with project participants.[9] The exercise took place during the 2022 baseline assessment and was repeated at the mid-term reflection workshops.
A set of locally relevant risks was subsequently compiled for each country, integrating aspects from both assessments. This is summarised in Table 2.[10]

Table 2: Locally relevant child protection risks

Project country	Child protection risks identified
Bangladesh	Abduction, child labour, child marriage, neglect, separation from family, family conflicts, legal status, substance abuse, violence
Burkina Faso	Child labour, child marriage, FGM, neglect, violence, family conflicts, migration, substance abuse, war
Central African Republic	FGM, child labour, child marriage, legal status, neglect, adolescent parenthood, family conflict, violence
Colombia	Child labour, child marriage, migration, family conflicts, neglect, separation from family, substance abuse, adolescent parenthood, war
Ethiopia	Abduction, child labour, child marriage, cultural practices, neglect, separation from family, substance abuse, trauma, violence
South Sudan	Abduction, child labour, child marriage, neglect, substance abuse, adolescent parenthood, trauma, violence

Efforts to address child protection risks must include consideration of the underlying factors that drive these risks, as well as the barriers that hinder improvements in child protection. It is also crucial to identify actions that can promote better protection outcomes. For example, a lack of awareness or understanding of potential risks among children prevents them from seeking help and increases their vulnerability.

Given the potential drivers, barriers and enablers, the project's logical framework (log frame)[11] outlines six outputs that are intended to achieve the aim defined in the overall outcome – namely, the improved protection of vulnerable children and adolescents. Each output describes the activities (goods and services[12]) as well as their use by the target population.

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[9] In this report the term "participant" refers to a person directly taking part in the project activities, often referred to elsewhere as "project beneficiary". As Plan International encourages a participatory approach, including during project implementation, the term participant is preferred over beneficiary.

[10] For a full breakdown of the different baseline, mid-term and combined lists of child protection risks per partner, per country, see Annex Table A3.

[11] See Annex Table A1 for the JF-CPiE project logical framework.

[12] See Annex Table A2 for full description of activities and targets per output.

The six outputs are:

1. Vulnerable girls, boys, adolescent girls and adolescent boys have improved knowledge, skills and capacities to protect themselves from violence
Activities include: awareness-raising sessions, life skills groups, safe spaces, psychosocial support and psychological first aid, distribution of dignity kits

2. Caregivers and families are more able to meet protection needs of vulnerable children and to reduce drivers of child protection risks
Activities include: parenting sessions, providing cash and vouchers, non-food items (NFIs), garden start-up kits, food distributions and savings groups

3. Community-level child protection mechanisms are strengthened so that they provide protective environments for vulnerable children and adolescents, promote positive social and gender norms, and prevent and respond to violence
Activities include: participatory community mapping exercises, capacity building for child protection groups, financial and material support to child protection groups

4. Child protection services have improved capacity so that vulnerable children and adolescents, (including children associated with armed groups and armed forces, child labourers and child survivors of SGBV) can access specialised child protection services, including timely, quality case management and referrals to multi-sectoral services
Activities include: supporting local child protection referral pathways, providing case management services

5. Child protection is mainstreamed within humanitarian programming by improving child protection coordination through strategic planning, information sharing, capacity building, and strengthening standard operating procedures
Activities include: child protection mainstreaming, participation in coordination groups, establishment of help desks

6. Child protection and food security are integrated at national, regional and global levels (Implemented by Plan International at global level.)

Implementing partners vary in the project activities they carry out and the targets they aim to achieve. These depend on the risks, contexts, capacities, priorities, needs and strategic programmatic approaches specific to their locations. Across all output areas, implementing partners incorporated feedback and safeguarding risk analysis adapted to children, parents/caregivers and community members.

4. EVALUATING THE JF-CPIE PROJECT PHASE 1

The evaluation sought to assess the relevance, effectiveness, inclusiveness and implementation process of the JF-CPiE project Phase 1. The evaluation aimed to answer a set of 16 questions based on the four evaluation domains below:

- Relevance refers to the extent to which the objectives of a project intervention are meeting participants' requirements and country needs, and those of other stakeholders. It is one of the evaluation criteria outlined by the OECD-DAC.[13]

- Effectiveness, also an OECD-DAC criterion, refers to the extent to which an intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, considering differentials across beneficiary groups.

- Inclusiveness refers to the extent to which the project applied gender-aware and inclusive approaches, particularly for children with disabilities, and the degree to which it explicitly aimed for results that improve the rights of children and young people, and gender equality.

- Implementation refers to the challenges that may have affected project targets being reached and the extent to which working through a consortium helped or hindered project implementation.

The full list of 16 evaluation questions – four per domain – is as follows. The findings are presented according to the evaluation questions.

Table 3: The evaluation domains and evaluation questions

Evaluation domain / questions
Relevance
1. Have child protection needs identified by the project been relevant?
2. Are project budget allocations aligned with perceived relevance?
3. Is the project aligned with government frameworks, and humanitarian response plans?
4. Are there additional areas or circumstances affecting child protection that the project needs to address?
Effectiveness
5. To what extent have project targets been reached?
6. Have the project activities helped to address needs associated with child protection?
7. What other changes may have occurred within communities?
8. To what extent are project changes attained long-lasting?
Inclusiveness
9. How far has the project applied approaches that are inclusive of gender, disabilities and children's views in its design and implementation?
10. Is the project culturally appropriate and not causing harm?
11. Has the project been responsive to feedback and concerns raised?
12. Have children's rights been strengthened?
Implementation
13. What challenges have affected project implementation?
14. Has the consortium helped or hindered project implementation?
15. Has the project helped to incubate innovations and improvements?
16. What are the lessons learned from the JF-CPiE consortium work?

[13]The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee has published a set of six evaluation criteria which include relevance and effectiveness. See: OECD (2021). *Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully*, Paris: OECD Publishing, https://doi.org/10.1787/543e84ed-en.

Methodology

The evaluation integrated qualitative and quantitative data, drawing from both primary and secondary sources wherever feasible. This approach enabled the evaluation to cross-reference diverse perspectives and triangulate information to gain a more complete picture of project implementation. The use of secondary data from progress reports, budget and monitoring data, and internal evaluations strengthened the validity of the findings.

Quantitative data collection

Surveys were used to measure the three project outcome indicators outlined in Table 1. Households surveyed were of host community members, as well as internally displaced and refugee households. Community surveys targeted facilities ('units') such as healthcare centres, schools and local authorities.

For outcome indicator 1, children's and young people's opinions were classified as demonstrating self-protective behaviours if they mentioned advising a friend to avoid a particular situation, to talk to a trusted adult, or to reach out to child protective services. For outcome indicator 2, awareness of child protection risks and parenting behaviours were measured using the Nicomachus-Positive Parenting Questionnaire scales.2 The Nicomachus-Positive Parenting Questionnaire was chosen due to its ability to measure positive parenting behaviours and child protection practices across various contexts. This tool is particularly useful for assessing awareness and the adoption of protective behaviours within families. For outcome indicator 3, household heads and community members were asked how they would respond to incident of child abuse.

At the household level, the survey was completed by three individuals. In households, the respondents included the household head, a caregiver, and a young person, chosen at random if multiple individuals were present. For the community survey, three members from each unit were randomly selected.

The survey aimed to sample 385 households with at least one child and 100 unit-level individuals. The intention of the endline sampling was to revisit households that had previously been surveyed in the 2022 baseline survey. However, this was only successful for seven of the 12 implementing partners, resulting in a joint baseline/endline sample of 1,978 households. Only caregivers and household heads classified as project beneficiaries were included in the resulting pre/post comparison analysis, referred to as the 'pre/post sample'.

In the endline survey, 54.7 per cent of respondents were from host communities, 36.4 per cent were IDPs and just under 9 per cent were refugees, which was comparable with the distribution at baseline.

Qualitative data collection

Focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) were the approaches used in the qualitative data collection. The FGDs typically involved six respondents discussing topics under the guidance of facilitators. The KIIs were semi-structured one-to-one interviews with individuals with a good understanding of a particular aspect of the JF-CPiE project.

Respondents who took part in the qualitative data collection were children and young people, caregivers, community-based child protection group members, other community members (who were not taking part in project activities), JF-CPiE project staff, external child protection experts, and humanitarian actors not involved in child protection.

There was a target of 34 FGDs and 25 KIIs per implementing partner, however as the table shows, this was not always possible.

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[14]See: Kyriazos, T.A. and Stalikas, A. (2019). "Nicomachus-Positive Parenting (NPP): Development and Initial Validation of a Parenting Questionnaire within the Positive Psychology Framework", *Psychology*, 10: 2115-2165. https://doi.org/10.4236/psych.2019.1015136

Table 4: The number of FGDs and KIIs realised for each implementing partner

Country	Implementing partner	The number of FGDs realised	The number of KIIs realised
Bangladesh	Plan International	35	24
	World Vision	34	24
Burkina Faso	ChildFund	9	8
	Terre des Hommes	35	25
CAR	Plan International	16	21
	SOS	18	24
Colombia	SOS	35	17
	Terre des Hommes	32	19
Ethiopia	ChildFund	31	22
	Save the Children	25	20
South Sudan	Save the Children	8	4
	World Vision	35	23

Approval of evaluation approaches

The evaluation tools were designed in partnership with the JF-CPiE technical team within the Global Coordination Team (GCT) and with a group of consultants leading the evaluation process at a global level. Tools were shared with implementing partners' country teams for a review and relevance check to ensure that these met local needs and standards. The ethics review process of Plan International helped to ensure that tools were intentional about their targets, questions and method, and participation groups, including the most marginalised, and that the principle of "do no harm" was applied.

Limitations of the evaluation

Various aspects of the endline data collection approaches had limitations. In part these were due to fears for the safety of non-programme staff working in some areas, which curtailed where they could access. There were also reports that the length of the questionnaire left respondents tired. As a result, local consultants hired for the qualitative data collection were unable to meet the targets for the number of FGDs and KIIs conducted, which was likely to have compromised the depth of data available. The local consultants were also expected to provide summary reports for each FGD and KII. However, in several cases, these summary reports were not substantial enough. Some aspects of interviewees' answers were thus likely to have been lost.

A glitch in the data collection software (Kobo toolbox) for the quantitative endline survey meant that data on point (i) of outcome indicator 1 was only collected for ChildFund Ethiopia, SOS Colombia and World Vision Bangladesh. As a result, no pre/post analysis was possible on that aspect. This affected the data available to assess one of the evaluation questions on effectiveness.

As noted above, it was not possible during the endline survey to revisit all respondents from the baseline survey. Unit-level respondents from baseline were also not revisited for logistical reasons, meaning that unit respondents at endline were new to the evaluation process. The volatile security situation in Ethiopia led teams there to focus only on safe locations; this may explain why only host community respondents were interviewed in Ethiopia.

Compared to the baseline, the total endline sample of respondents dropped by around 26 per cent. This reduction in respondents suggests that in-country supervision of the community-based data collection at endline was insufficient to some degree. More thorough spot checks of field teams carrying out the surveys would have resulted in higher participation rates.

In a number of cases, new respondents were wrongly classified as baseline respondents, possibly due to a lack of training for some endline survey teams. This led to gaps in the socio-demographic data for household heads, compromising some of the pre/post comparisons.

Key terms to describe JF-CPiE project approaches

- **Child-sensitive** programmes and interventions explicitly aim to maximise the benefits for children and minimise any harm. This is achieved by assessing and monitoring positive and negative effects for children, according to their age, gender and vulnerabilities. It also entails listening to children and taking account of their views in the planning, design, implementation and review processes of programmes and interventions.

- **Gender equality** means that all persons, regardless of their gender, enjoy the same status in society; have the same entitlements to all human rights; have access to the same opportunities to make choices about their lives; and have the same amount of power to shape the outcomes of these choices. It does not mean that women and men, or girls and boys, or individuals with different gender identities, are the same. Instead, they have different but related needs and priorities. Their positions in society are based on standards that, while not fixed, tend to advantage men and boys and disadvantage women and girls. Consequently, they are affected in different ways by policies and programmes. A gender equality approach is about understanding these relative differences, appreciating that they are not rigid and can be changed.

- **Gender-aware** approaches recognise and acknowledge the existence of gender differences and inequalities, and specific needs of different genders, while seeking to facilitate equal access to aid and activities.

- **Gender-transformative** approaches have an explicit intention to transform unequal power relations for positive change towards gender equality (or to contribute towards this change). This entails explicitly tackling the root causes of gender inequality, such as discriminatory social norms and legislation, and the social, cultural and institutional structures that perpetuate these inequalities.

- **Inclusion** is about bringing people into a process in a meaningful manner. It involves improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society, enabling them to fully enjoy their rights and be treated with dignity. It requires addressing the root causes of exclusion and understanding how these are intertwined. Inclusion involves improving the opportunities available particularly to those who are vulnerable and excluded, including children with disabilities, and those who are excluded on the basis of the social groups they identify with or are associated with.

5. FINDINGS FROM THE ENDLINE EVALUATION

The findings are organised by the following domains:

■ Relevance of project activities

■ Inclusiveness of project activities

■ Effectiveness of project activities

■ Implementation process of the JF-CPiE project

Key findings summary for EQs 1–4

- ### EQ 1 – Whether needs targeted were seen as relevant

  - The JF-CPiE project appears broadly to be addressing child protection needs that target populations consider to be relevant in most of the locations.

  - No consistent trend emerged from the data, supporting the assumption that child protection risks are context-dependent.

- ### EQ 2 – Whether budget matched prioritised needs

  - Budget allocations generally match participants' views on important target needs, but there are differences among implementing partners and across various activities.

  - Activities targeting caregivers received the largest share of budget across all partners, closely followed by activities for children and young people.

- ### EQ 3 – How far the project and policy frameworks align

  - Projects are generally aligned with national policy frameworks and local humanitarian response plans – and with wider humanitarian sector priorities.

  - The JF-CPiE project in general reflects an understanding that barriers to child protection exist at national level, and project activities account for this fact.

- ### EQ 4 – Other perceived areas of needs

  - Participants in the six countries raised no additional areas for attention in the project other than the circumstances and needs already being addressed.

  - Tweaks to the existing project were suggested in some countries to improve activities on awareness raising, tackling gender inequality and meeting basic needs.

Key findings for each domain are presented in a summary box at the top of each section. Where it is helpful to understand the findings, the approach taken to address the evaluation question is briefly described.

Findings are then discussed in terms of the overall results for the project as a whole, with separate country-based findings for each question detailed after that where relevant.

5.1 Relevance

The evaluation domain of relevance is about the extent to which the JF-CPiE project is in line with the requirements of target communities. The evaluation questions (EQs) consider whether the project addresses the same child protection needs as those identified by the target populations; whether budget allocations were made in line with the prioritised needs; whether the project aligned with national policies, legal frameworks and locally relevant humanitarian response plans; and finally, whether other child protection needs were identified that the project is not addressing.

EQ 1 – Have child protection needs identified by the project been relevant?

Approach

The evaluation investigated this question by assessing if the areas covered by the six intended outputs in the project log frame were considered relevant by the project participants.

This question was explored using qualitative evaluation data from focus group discussions and key informant interviews with participants linked to implementing

partners. Quantitative baseline data was also incorporated.

The groups were children and caregivers who are participating in project activities, other community members (e.g. members of community-based child protection groups), external stakeholders (e.g. external child protection experts), and project staff.

Participants were asked how many community members were able to meet specific child protection expectations. For example, to increase caregivers' ability to meet basic needs, respondents were asked how many out of ten caregivers could provide for their children's basic needs both now and two years ago.

They were also asked about factors that could affect child protection such as children's and caregivers' awareness of child protection risks, the community's ability to prevent and respond to those risks, the quality of child protection case management, and the impact of gender inequality.

Findings

Regarding the question "Have child protection needs identified by the project been relevant?", results across the 12 implementing partners varied and no consistent trend emerged. Differences mainly reflected the areas

Figure 1: The relative relevance of child protection challenges (Plan International Bangladesh)

Source: Final evaluation 2024 © JF-CPiE   ■ Qualitative data (evaluation)   ■ Quantitative data (baseline)

Note: the black error lines associated with each bar represent the variability or uncertainty in the data. The actual value (i.e., the mean) within the population most likely will be in the range outlined by a given error line.
Plan International Bangladesh's results are given for illustrative purposes only.

that participants found important and, to a lesser extent, varied by implementing partner or the type of data used (qualitative or baseline quantitative). This suggests that child protection risks and their scale depend on the specific context.

Despite the differences, there were notable similarities in the responses. In every country, respondents identified children's lack of awareness about child protection risks as a significant concern, according to at least one data set. Additionally, gender inequality emerged as a relevant factor in addressing child protection issues in several findings, along with communities' inadequate responses to these risks.

In Bangladesh, both types of data highlighted that communities' inadequate responses and their lack of awareness about child protection risks among children and caregivers were considered highly relevant areas that require attention. Figure 1 gives an illustration of how relevant the respondents judged various factors to be concerning their effects on child protection in their communities.

In Burkina Faso, children's lack of awareness, community response and gender inequality were leading concerns in both types of data. Case management was signalled as poor in one set of responses.

Central African Republic respondents signalled that caregivers' inability to meet their children's basic needs was a major concern, as was children's lack of awareness about risks.

In Colombia, children's lack of awareness and community failure to respond to risks were both particularly high-scoring.

In Ethiopia, lack of awareness among children and caregivers were both leading concerns, especially in the quantitative data.

Respondents in **South Sudan** also highlighted children's and caregivers' lack of awareness, along with concerns shown in the qualitative data about gender inequality and community failure to respond to risks.

EQ 2 – Are project budget allocations aligned with perceived relevance?

Approach

This question was explored by using secondary data from budget allocations for each implementing partner. The evaluation team wanted to find out how much time, materials and human resources were allocated to the

15See Table A4 in the Annex for the grouping approach.

different activities and then compare these allocations with the perceptions of relevance for the different areas related to child protection risks.

To enable this comparison, the level and relevance of budget allocations focused on activities with children and young people were grouped broadly as 'level 1'; 'level 2' refers to activities aimed at caregivers; and 'level 3' refers to community-focused activities.[15]

Findings

Budget allocations generally match participants' views on important target needs, but there are differences among implementing partners and across various activities.

At the global level, activities targeting caregivers received the largest share of budget allocations across all implementing partners, closely followed by activities for children and young people. The percentage allocations were as follows:

- 38.9 per cent of budget allocations for level 1 activities (children);

- 40.8 per cent for level 2 (caregivers);

- 19.6 per cent for level 3 (communities).

Across the 12 implementing partners, six partners allocated the most budget to level 1 activities (for children). Five partners allocated the most budget to level 2 activities (caregivers) and one partner devoted the most budget to level 3 activities (communities).

The amount of budget allocated by some implementing partners could vary considerably across the three levels (children, caregivers, communities). In contrast, participants viewed the relevance of the three project levels as being fairly evenly distributed.

Budget and relevance data seemed to be more aligned for half of the 12 implementing partners.

These results do not necessarily imply that project allocations should be revised. Actual budget allocations are decided as a result of other factors such as the difference made through certain project activities. It could also suggest that implementing partners have formulated different work packages to address the child protection issues that most affect the communities they work with. Although some project activities may not necessarily be associated with the highest levels of perceived relevance by project participants, they may be particularly impactful in tackling existing problems related to child protection.

Two countries showed broad alignment between budget and relevance. For instance, in **Bangladesh**, both **Plan International** and **World Vision** activities for children (level 1) attracted the highest budget and were deemed as the most relevant.

In three countries, the findings were split. This means that some activities for children, caregivers and communities were allocated budget amounts that matched the perceptions of relevance among project participants. However, in a couple of cases, more budget was given to activity types that were not considered to be particularly relevant, while less budget was allocated to those areas that were perceived as more relevant, creating a mismatch.

One country tended to have situations where budget amounts allocated varied considerably despite the fact that perceived relevance was quite even across the three levels of children, caregivers and communities. In this case, budget and perceived relevance were not aligned.

EQ 3 – Is the project aligned with government frameworks, and humanitarian response plans?

Approach

The extent to which a project is aligned with national policies and legal frameworks gives an indication of how far the project is aligned with government priorities in a given country. The extent to which project activities are aligned with local response plans indicates their relevance from a humanitarian sector perspective.

Together, these are entry points through which to build up collaborations with local and national governments as well as other humanitarian actors. The JF-CPiE log frame output 5 concerns participation in local humanitarian coordination group meetings, and includes activities aimed at strengthening coordination efforts within the project context.

Findings

Qualitative data suggests that projects are generally aligned with national policy frameworks as well as local humanitarian response plans. This suggests that project priorities are aligned with the priorities of the wider humanitarian sector. Furthermore, it gives an indication of the relevance of the project to external project stakeholders such as government.

All implementing partners have taken active steps to embed their JF-CPiE project activities within governmental frameworks and local humanitarian response plans where possible. To some degree, this may be a requirement because national governments are the key players that coordinate responses to a humanitarian crisis. It may also be a practical approach because humanitarian responses are generally resource-intensive and frequently exceed the resources of a given humanitarian actor. Harmonisation and alignment among different humanitarian players are therefore necessary to ensure resources available across the different organisations are used most efficiently.

Barriers to improving child protection in humanitarian contexts exist at the national level. The JF-CPiE project generally reflects this understanding and thus has included project activities to account for this fact. National-level structural barriers include legal status and gaps in government policy frameworks on child protection and children's rights.

Project alignment also provides opportunities for each implementing partner. Through project alignment and cooperation, implementing partners gain access to policy makers and the wider humanitarian sector. It opens up the possibilities for advocating for important changes at the policy and sector level.

Activities within output 5 aim at mainstreaming child protection across humanitarian organisations. Moreover, activities within output 6 aim to interlink food security and child protection. Both measures are important.

Detailed below are ways in which implementing partners in the six countries have aligned projects with government frameworks and humanitarian response plans.

In **Bangladesh**, projects are aligned to national policies and legal frameworks on child protection and children's rights, including specific provisions for tackling child labour – a key child protection risk in the country.

Yet for both World Vision and Plan International, the work of the JF-CPiE project highlights a policy gap at national level concerning refugees, which is undermining child protection provision for that community. The Bangladeshi government has not granted Rohingya refugees the full rights and protections normally accorded under international law. This makes Rohingya refugees, particularly women and children, vulnerable to risks of gender-based violence, human trafficking and other forms of exploitation. They cannot formally work in Bangladesh, so some engage in informal work, which is often low-paid and exploitative. Lack of legal status was a key child protection risk cited by project stakeholders.

Burkina Faso projects are aligned to national policies and ministerial guidelines, particularly those from the National Council for Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation (Conseil National de Secours d'Urgence et de Réhabilitation, CONASUR). That body is responsible for coordinating and implementing emergency responses and rehabilitation efforts in the country – for instance, managing disasters, getting aid to affected populations, and coordinating with national and international stakeholders to ensure effective relief efforts. Coordination with CONASUR is essential to the work of humanitarian actors in Burkina Faso. Another important reference point used by the JF-CPiE project is the 2009 Children's Code, a comprehensive national legislative framework to protect and promote the rights and welfare of children. The Code covers aspects including birth registration, protection from exploitation and abuse, access to education, healthcare and social services. Implementing partners also follow laws and regulations against child labour, child trafficking, child marriage and other forms of violence against children, and those that promote equal education in the country.

Implementing partners in **Central African Republic (CAR)** coordinate with the Ministry of Social Affairs, which plays a critical role in humanitarian responses, focusing on several key areas to support vulnerable populations and coordinate aid efforts. A member of Plan International project staff noted in an interview that **"the state is the boss"** when coordinating humanitarian responses in CAR. Thus, all project activities **"need to go in line with national policies"**. Partners are also part of national response plans to combat child labour, typically involving collaboration with government agencies, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders to identify and address the root causes of child labour.

Both implementing partners in CAR identify gaps and shortcomings in national policy regarding child protection. They produced emergency response plans based on international frameworks to tackle gender-based violence to account for gaps in national law. SOS CAR also contributed to the development of the country's child protection policy, the Code de Protection de l'Enfant, adopted in 2020 – demonstrating the benefits of project alignment with national policies and the potential for influencing policy.

In **Colombia**, implementing partners have noted that national policies can lag behind international frameworks. Project activities are partly carried out within the context of humanitarian response plans aimed at addressing critical needs arising from ongoing armed conflicts, violence and displacement. Experts associated with Terre des Hommes Colombia highlighted the need to shape national policies and legal frameworks further to make them more attuned to the needs of refugees, IDPs and children.

Terre des Hommes also consider it important to comply with rules and (traditional) norms of the communities they work with. This particularly concerns indigenous communities that have their own sets of local social and cultural frameworks. The legal and educational autonomy of some indigenous communities grants them legal recognition within the state.

As well as being aligned to the main national child rights frameworks in **Ethiopia**, the JF-CPiE project has also incorporated part of the country's National Social Protection Policy into programming. In doing so, both implementing partners expected to strengthen project efforts to tackle the economic and social vulnerability faced by children and their communities. Government policy on IDPs – who are in high numbers in Ethiopia due to ethnic conflicts, violence and climate-related issues – informs the implementing partners' work to ensure that activities complement national response plans.

Project activities in **South Sudan** align with the Child Rights Act, but staff from both implementing partners believe the Act needs strengthening. It should better address ongoing conflict, political instability and limited institutional capacity. Both implementing partners have also set up memoranda of understanding with the government of South Sudan to clarify NGOs' roles and responsibilities within humanitarian work. This helps to minimise misunderstandings and conflicts with the government, leading to better coordination and collaboration with agencies and more effective humanitarian responses.

EQ 4 – Are there additional areas or circumstances affecting child protection that the project needs to address?

Findings

Within the FGDs and KIIs that formed part of the qualitative data collection, participants were asked whether there were any other things the project needs to address at their project location to improve child protection.

Key findings summary for EQs 5–8 on effectiveness

- **EQ 5 – How far project targets were met**

  - On the indicators used to measure progress towards the JF-CPiE's overall goal, implementing partners achieved at least partial improvement in around two-thirds of the three outcome indicators.

  - Implementing partners were on track to reach most of their targets set for activities and outputs within the first phase of the project.

- **EQ 6 – How far project activities addressed needs**

  - Regarding the effectiveness of project activities, ratings suggest that activities have directly contributed to improvements over the last two years in terms of tackling barriers to child protection.

  - Evidence suggests the project is successfully targeting the most vulnerable households for financial forms of support, but more tailoring, clearer communication and more regular support were called for.

- **EQ 7 – Whether other changes occurred**

  - Participants did not detect other changes that had arisen as a result of the project activities, aside from those anticipated by the project.

  - This reflects the project's holistic and broad conceptualisation of the spectrum of needs related to child protection.

- **EQ 8 – Whether project effects were sustainable**

  - Participants expressed a general belief that the project had made a difference for their children, for caregivers and for their communities, especially on raising awareness and community ownership of positive changes.

  - Threats to the sustainability of project effects were primarily seen to be household poverty, situations of insecurity, and the expectation that other humanitarian actors would not prioritise child protection.

Across the different countries, discussions with participants raised no additional areas for attention for the project other than the circumstances and needs already being addressed. The only substantive change to the project came from participants in Bangladesh who discussed the need for advocacy at the national level regarding the legal status of Rohingya people there (see below for country-level findings).

Other comments suggest the need for tweaks to the existing project in some of the countries to improve how various aspects are covered – for instance, designing awareness-raising campaigns in a smarter way or increasing provision of psychosocial support services.

In terms of country-level findings, in **Bangladesh** project stakeholders associated with Plan International and World Vision stressed that the legal status of Rohingya people has a direct negative bearing on the socio-economic situations faced by children, caregivers and community members. Ramifications of this involve higher exposure to risks of violence, abduction and trafficking, and substance abuse. They called for national-level advocacy by the project to improve the legal status of Rohingya refugees in tandem with the existing awareness-raising activities. Other stakeholder reflections included the sense that not all children across existing refugee camps were being reached by World Vision Bangladesh, despite considerable efforts; and that psychosocial support needed to be better aligned with the mental health needs of communities.

Stakeholders in **Burkina Faso** noted two key drivers of child protection issues in the country – caregivers' ability to meet basic needs, and gender inequality. The stakeholders, who were associated with ChildFund, felt that over the past two years, caregivers' capability of meeting the basic needs of their children had not improved. They also explained that gender inequality meant that women have reduced access to economic activities and basic needs, with harmful consequences for their children. There was, they said, a need to "**support women through income-generating activities**" (young male participant of a safe spaces) to strengthen their economic and financial situation.

Several stakeholders associated with Terre des Hommes in Burkina Faso felt that caregivers and communities still lacked a good understanding of children's rights. They suggested that more needed to be done to explain the children's rights to communities in an "**accessible and engaging way**" (non-child protection humanitarian actors). There was a call to "**continue to raise awareness because ignorance is still an obstacle**" (male participant, caregiver FGD).

Stakeholders linked with **Terre des Hommes Colombia** underscored the urgency to expand and strengthen

psychosocial support and psychological first aid. This need arises from the levels of violence observed across Colombia. This opinion echoes those of participants in the mid-term reflection workshops in Colombia, who called for heightened professionalism in the psychosocial support provided by Terre des Hommes.

No unidentified child protection risk was reported from stakeholders in **South Sudan**. However, some of those associated with World Vision believed that the project was limited in scope and coverage. Suggestions were for World Vision South Sudan to expand the project to cover more people and to intensify awareness-raising activities while paying attention to developments occurring as a result of the security situation in the country.

No data was gathered on this from Ethiopia.

5.2 Effectiveness

The evaluation domain of effectiveness refers to the extent to which the project objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, considering their relative importance. The evaluation questions probe whether targets for project activities and outputs have been reached; whether the project activities have helped to address needs associated with child protection; whether other changes have occurred in communities as a result of the activities; and how far changes arising from project activities are long-lasting.

EQ 5 – To what extent have project targets been reached?

Approach

The evaluation team examined how well different implementing partners met project activity and output targets. They also assessed each partner's performance on the three outcome indicators used to achieve the overall outcome of improving protection for vulnerable children and adolescents.

Activities and outputs are measured against the targets in the project log frame and are expressed as a percentage of targets met. Not all targets apply to all implementing partners.

The three outcome indicators, each with two dimensions (see Table 1), apply to all implementing partners and are used to gauge levels of improvement on child protection among the targeted participants – children, caregivers and communities. Performance on outcome indicators by implementing partner is categorised as to whether an improvement was seen by endline.

■ Full improvement: this implies that the participant groups (children, caregivers, communities) targeted show improvement on both dimensions of a given indicator.

■ Partial improvement: this implies that participant groups targeted show improvement on either the first or second dimension of a given indicator.

■ No improvement: this implies that participant groups targeted show no improvement on either the first or second dimension of a given indicator.

Both quantitative and qualitative data from the endline evaluation was used in this analysis, along with monitoring data. It is important to note that the results of the indicators were affected by certain limitations in data collection, which resulted in only partial data being available to assess the indicators for some partners.

The findings also study the output and activity targets. According to the project's log frame, there are six outputs that are intended to achieve the aim defined in the overall outcome. At least one activity is required to generate each output, and these are defined in the log frame.

Findings overview

On average, implementing partners experienced at least partial improvement in around two-thirds of the three outcome indicators (i.e. 63.9 per cent across all implementing partners). This is similar to their achievements on activity and output targets. The global averages there accumulate to 67.5 per cent and 69.7 per cent respectively.

Comparing performance across the different outcome indicators does not suggest strong patterns, however. Performance on one outcome indicator does not appear to be necessarily related to performance on any of the other two outcome indicators. A comparison of implementing partners' overall performance on project activity and output targets does not suggest a strong pattern either.

Performance on outcome indicators

Outcome indicator 1 measures the percentage of children at endline who report increased knowledge of child protection risks and how to stay safe due to participation in the project. It has two dimensions, namely, (i) children's levels of awareness of child protection risks; and (ii) their self-protective behaviours.

Due to limited available data, in most cases the results obtained were mainly in relation to dimension (ii) of indicator 1. Five of the 12 implementing partners showed improvement. By contrast, six implementing partners showed no change within dimension (ii). One was categorised as partial improvement.

Outcome indicator 2 concerns the percentage of caregivers who report increased knowledge of caring and protection behaviours towards children under their care compared to the beginning of the project. Its two dimensions are: (i) increased knowledge of caring; and (ii) protection behaviours towards children under their care compared to the beginning of the project.

Four out of 12 implementing partners were associated with full improvement on outcome indicator 2. Two partners were associated with partial improvement. Six out of 12 partners were associated with no improvement.

Outcome indicator 3 measures the percentage of community members who report increased confidence in their ability to prevent and respond to child protection risks compared to the beginning of the project. Its two dimensions are: (i) awareness of child-protection risks; and (ii) responding to child protection risks. To measure the response element, household heads and other community members were asked in the quantitative surveys about what they would do when they see or hear of children experiencing abuse at home or in the community. A respondent was classified as adequately responding to child protection risks when they indicated that they would report the incident.

Eight out of 12 implementing partners were associated with full improvement on outcome indicator 3 among community members. Another three partners were associated with partial improvement. Only one implementing partner appeared to show no improvement.

Activity and output targets

As to be expected within a multi-country project as complex as the JF-CPiE consortium, not all targets were reached by the time of data collection for this evaluation. The evaluation was conducted within the seventh of eight project quarters, when implementation was still ongoing. The analysis therefore does not cover the very final numbers. Implementing partners were on track to reach most of their targets at the activity and output level.

At the **activity level**, approximately one-third of project targets set by implementing partners were not met. In around two-thirds of cases, these partners collectively achieved their targets, with about 45 per cent even exceeding them.

Across all implementing partners at the global level, some activity targets were underachieved. This especially concerned: project activities on accountability mechanisms (log frame activity 0.3), safe spaces (1.3), dignity kits (1.5), community mapping exercises (3.1), support to child protection groups (3.3), supporting local child protection referral pathways (4.1), humanitarian coordination group meetings (5.2) and establishment of help desks (5.3). In most cases, the discrepancies are small in absolute terms.

In terms of outputs, implementing partners have successfully met around 70 per cent of targets, with underperformance noted in about 30 per cent of cases. Key areas for future improvement include the quality of safe spaces (log frame output indicator 1.3) and the number of children reached through safe spaces (1.4). There is an opportunity to enhance performance for output 1.4, which aims to reach 84,366 children; in fact, 49,350 children had been reached by milestone 3.[17]

EQ 6 – Have the project activities helped to address needs associated with child protection?

Approach

This question is explored using the same qualitative evidence gathered as part of the evaluation FGDs and KIIs that was used for the evaluation domain on relevance. Participants and project stakeholders were asked to provide indications of the extent to which certain circumstances or factors impeded child protection within project communities. They were asked about this twice – at the start and at the end of the project.

By comparing both sets of results, it is possible to obtain a rough estimate of whether or not circumstances or factors perceived as barriers to improving child protection have changed during the project.

The contributions of the different project activities are also explored using qualitative evidence as quantitative evidence on this does not exist.

Findings

Figure 2 shows the percentage of respondents (to ChildFund, Burkina Faso) who agreed with statements that described factors impeded child protection within their locality. The respondents were asked about each factor at the start of the project two years ago, and at the time of the endline evaluation.

Qualitative evidence indicates that project activities are directly impacting the barriers to an improved child protection environment. A detailed discussion of these activities follows.

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[17]Milestones are a part of the log frame and indicate by what date a certain number or stage of an activity/indicator should be reached.

Figure 2: Factors affecting child protection in the locality, two years ago and at endline (ChildFund Burkina Faso)

Source: Final evaluation 2024 © JF-CPiE   ■ 2 years ago   ■ Now

Note: the black error lines associated with each bar represent the variability or uncertainty in the data. The actual value (i.e., the mean) within the population most likely will be in the range outlined by a given error line.
The figure is given for illustrative purposes only.
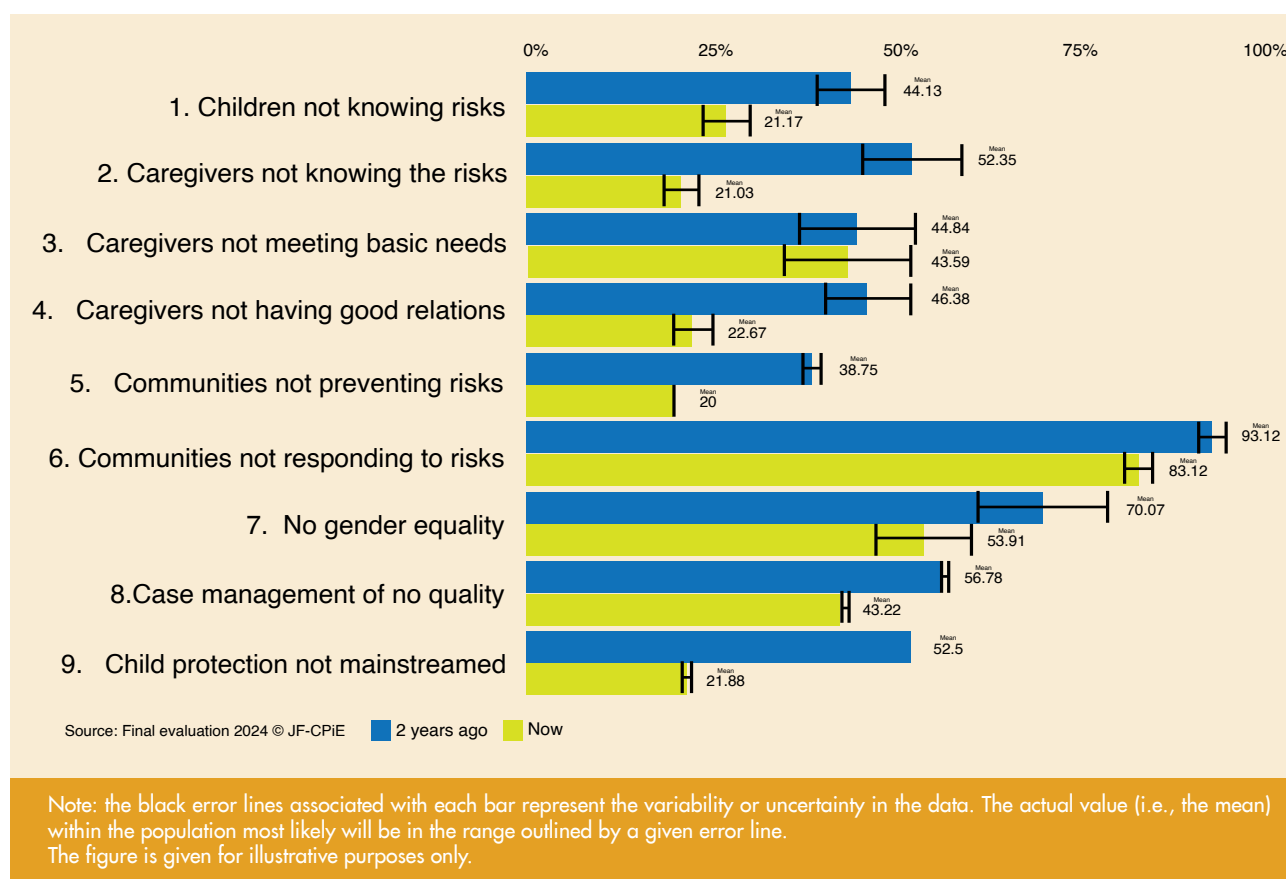
Awareness-raising campaigns and sessions

The main goal of these activities is to inform participating households and target communities about children's rights, including being safe, access to education and health. In the long term, they aim to challenge harmful cultural norms and practices that put children at risk in crisis situations, such as child marriage, child labour and abuse.

Activities promote positive behaviours and attitudes towards children, encouraging practices that support their development and wellbeing. By raising awareness of the signs and effects of child abuse and exploitation, these campaigns aim to reduce risks to child protection.

In the context of the JF-CPiE project, child- and adolescent-friendly awareness raising occurs through campaigns, workshops, forum theatre, radio broadcasts and social media. For caregivers and community members, there are seminars, community meetings and parenting groups.

Discussions with participants and project stakeholders as part of the evaluation highlighted how these activities also complement other project activities. For instance, it is predominantly through awareness raising that the JF-

CPiE project has been informing communities about the services available to those affected by child protection abuses. In that way, awareness activities are essential to make other activities work optimally.

Members of a caregiver FGD associated with Plan International CAR described the parenting group they attended as a "**catalyst**" for raising awareness on gender equality. Members of a children's FGD said that World Vision Bangladesh's awareness-raising work in collaboration with other humanitarian actors on the implications of child marriage "**performed an important role**".

"People in our community didn't know about the impacts of child marriage but now they are aware of it. JF-CPiE spread the knowledge about it through drama and awareness sessions."

External child protection expert associated with Plan International Bangladesh

Two points were raised in discussions that suggest room for improvement. Firstly, the scope and reach

of awareness-raising activities may need to be both widened and more tailored in some countries. Project staff with Plan International Bangladesh said that awareness sessions on child protection needed to cover all children and their relatives in the camp. They also suggested developing educational material for use in awareness activities that appealed to the target group.

Second, awareness-raising activities may be most effective when complemented with other interventions, especially in communities affected by crisis and poverty. Members of a community-based child protection group linked to World Vision Bangladesh described how awareness-raising there was complemented by positive parenting training, and distributions of food, non-food items and cash vouchers among the most vulnerable families.

Life skills groups with children and adolescents

These groups are intended to help children to develop essential personal and social skills, such as communication, problem solving, critical thinking, decision making and emotional management. Life skills curriculums often include topics related to schooling, health, hygiene, nutrition, sexual and reproductive rights, gender, equality and locally relevant child protection risks.

According to the qualitative evidence from project stakeholders, life skills groups have helped to make children more aware of locally relevant child protection risks and of the importance of gender equality. They have also helped children to develop good relations with their parents – in this sense, life skills groups are complements to parenting groups. Children also learned about the role of community-based child protection within community responses to child protection violations. Life skills groups are a means to further strengthen community capacities to prevent and respond to child protection risks.

Some children explained that participating in life skills activities "**greatly contributed to improving their family relationships**" (children's FGD, World Vision Bangladesh); helped to develop a "**good relationship to their families**" (children's FGD, ChildFund Ethiopia); and helped with "**maintaining relationships with their parents or guardians**" (children's FGD, Plan International CAR).

Life skills groups also offer a supportive environment where children can express their feelings, share their challenges, and receive emotional support from peers and facilitators. This support is crucial for their mental and emotional wellbeing, especially for those who have experienced trauma or adversity.

> ## "The life skills activities allowed me to understand more and be patient in family conflicts." –
>
> Child respondent interviewed by Terre des Hommes Colombia

Child-friendly spaces

Child-Friendly spaces – also known as safe spaces – offer a physically and emotionally secure environment where children are protected from harm, violence and abuse and where they are supported by skilled facilitators and volunteers. They are particularly important in conflict-affected areas or communities with high levels of violence.

In the JF-CPiE project, safe spaces are generally set up in community centres, schools, daycare centres and recreational facilities. They are cross-cutting with other JF-CPiE project activities. At the safe spaces, children receive psychosocial support and psychological first aid, and take part in life skills talks and awareness raising on children's rights. They are also places where

How safe spaces directly help to improve child protection – in participants' words

"Thanks to the talks organised in safe spaces, [the] Joining Forces Alliance allowed us to deepen our knowledge of children's rights."

– children's FGD, ChildFund Burkina Faso

"A child will be able to tell you completely what the risks of the community might be."

– Project staff, Plan International Bangladesh

"By providing these spaces, the Alliance helps strengthen communities, allowing children to thrive and develop their potential."

– Female caregiver interviewed on behalf of ChildFund Burkina Faso

An external child protection expert interviewed on behalf of Save the Children South Sudan explained how safe spaces had helped to reduce the "**rate of children being abducted**" within conflict-affected areas.

A female caregiver (ChildFund Burkina Faso) described how the project safe spaces for women and girls are providing refuge from domestic violence, abuse and threats, and offer psychosocial and legal support, enabling them to rebuild their lives safely.

children have fun and interact with others from different backgrounds, share experiences and build friendships – potentially promoting social cohesion and reducing feelings of isolation. By providing a structured setting for social and educational activities, the safe spaces have enabled children to develop social skills while strengthening their emotional wellbeing and resilience.

Some safe spaces bring boys and girls together, helping to forge better social relations between the genders, with the potential to contribute to gender equality. Spaces dedicated to women and girls play a crucial role in providing an environment where they feel safe to discuss sensitive topics such as gender-based violence or menstrual hygiene. This addresses their specific needs while encouraging their empowerment.

Safe spaces are also incorporated into local referral pathways, which helps to ensure that children who are victims of child protection violations receive the support services they require.

SOS Colombia established suggestion and complaint boxes in close proximity to safe spaces, making them part of their project's safeguarding and feedback structure – a move also reported by project staff of World Vision South Sudan.

Psychosocial support and psychological first aid

These are two distinct forms of assistance provided in child protection projects, especially in fragile and conflicted-affected contexts. Psychosocial support aims to provide additional help to assist children in coping with adversity, to help them regain a sense of control and to enable them to function as before. Psychological first aid (PFA) includes humane, supportive and practical assistance for people who are distressed, in ways that respect their dignity, culture and abilities.[18] PFA involves giving practical care and support that does not intrude. It entails assessing people's needs and concerns, helping them to access basic supports (such as food and water), comforting and helping them to feel calm, connecting them to information, services and social supports, and protecting them from further harm.

A major means of providing psychosocial support and PFA to communities is through safe spaces – as is the case with the JF-CPiE project, where psychosocial support and PFA are almost synonymous with safe spaces. Within the project, PFA is also provided to caregivers, who reported that this had helped to improve family relationships.

[18]From World Health Organization, War Trauma Foundation and World Vision International (2013). Psychological first aid: Facilitator's manual for orienting field workers, WHO: Geneva; based on the 2011 edition of the Sphere Handbook, Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response, and the IASC MHPSS Guidelines (2007).

Data gathered through FGDs with caregivers on behalf of ChildFund Ethiopia suggest that PFA supports caregivers in dealing with personal issues affecting their relationship with their children, offering them "**crucial emotional support**".

Children living with disabilities interviewed for World Vision Bangladesh reported that they receive PFA to cope with the social challenges they typically face, making them feel safe and supported.

Psychosocial support was also offered through sports, theatre or storytelling sessions, as well as through the provision of counselling and guidance especially for victims of violence. Participants referred specifically to the importance of psychosocial support. Caregivers described how "**psychosocial support helps prevent the development of mental disorders, […], relieves emotional stress and promotes mental wellbeing**" (caregiver FGD, ChildFund Burkina Faso) as well as easing "**mental strain, tension, or problems**" (caregiver FGD, Plan International Bangladesh).

> **"[Children] can also talk to [volunteers] about their stress and signs of depression in order to receive counselling. If kids are unable to speak with them directly, they also offer advice to the parents regarding their problems. In these situations, their bond deepens and their parents are better able to comprehend them."**
>
> – Children in FGD, Plan International Bangladesh

Dignity kits

Dignity kits help women and girls to maintain proper hygiene after being displaced or when in an emergency context, and they are a critical component to protect adolescent girls. The content of kits depends on context, and may include sanitary pads, soap, underwear and other menstrual hygiene products and materials that contribute to girls' safety and dignity (towels, hijab, whistle, torch).

In the evaluation, the provision of the kits was interpreted as a major contribution to addressing the basic needs of girls.

The items within the dignity kits enable girls and young women to manage their menstrual cycles hygienically and with dignity, which also reduces the risk of infections and other health issues. By addressing basic hygiene needs, dignity kits help girls and young women

to maintain their dignity and self-respect, which is important for their mental and emotional wellbeing.

Girls and young women who lack menstrual hygiene products may resort to unsafe alternatives or may put themselves at risk by engaging in unsafe practices to obtain these items or may drop out of school to avoid uncomfortable situations or stigma.

Comments from project participants underlined how the dignity kits were helping to improve circumstances for girls and young women, as well as families.

Girls interviewed on behalf of World Vision South Sudan explained how "**some girls who used to skip school because of the menstrual cycle no longer do that**" since receiving dignity kits. Girls with disabilities interviewed for World Vision Bangladesh said that "**dignity kits help [with] enhancing [the girls'] comfort, dignity and independence for greater participation in daily life and social interactions**".

According to participants, awareness and information sessions related to dignity kits can help to reduce cultural taboos and stigmas surrounding menstruation, both at home and in the community. The receipt of dignity kits strengthened the dialogue in families "**because the caregivers were able to talk to the girls without concealment or taboo about the menstrual cycle and their care**" (girl, FGD, SOS Colombia).

> **"Dignity kits play a significant role in helping children maintain a positive relationship with their caregivers."**
>
> – Girl, FGD, World Vision Bangladesh

Positive parenting groups

Positive parenting groups are organised programmes or support groups designed to provide parents and caregivers with the knowledge, skills and support needed to raise their children in a nurturing, non-violent and supportive environment. The groups focus on promoting effective parenting practices that foster the healthy development and wellbeing of children.

In the JF-CPiE project, positive parenting groups are held in schools and local community centres. Caregivers gain knowledge about the physical, emotional and psychological needs of their children at different ages. They learn about effective parenting techniques, such as positive reinforcement, active listening and setting appropriate boundaries, which help to nurture a supportive and loving family environment.

By fostering open communication and emotional bonding, positive parenting groups help to promote a healthy

family dynamic. Caregivers discuss conflict resolution skills to handle disputes and disagreements within the family constructively, reducing stress and tension at home. This is the key objective of the "parenting without violence" sessions within the curriculum employed by most of the implementing partners. Positive parenting groups also educate caregivers and households about the different locally relevant child protection risks.

Participants' comments to the evaluation made clear that parenting groups have made major contributions to making caregivers aware about locally relevant child protection risks and gender equality. The groups have contributed significantly to strengthening parental relations between caregivers and children. In fact, when asked what explains the improvements of caregiver–child relationships, almost all project participants interviewed explicitly mentioned the parenting groups organised by implementing partners.

Abuse and neglect are among the locally relevant child protection risks listed by implementing partners. Participants were mindful that the groups' focus on non-violent discipline strategies was helping to reduce the "**various forms of violence against children, including mental and physical abuse**" (caregiver FGD, Plan International Bangladesh).

The testimony of a female caregiver in an FGD for Plan International Bangladesh encapsulates how the parenting groups can facilitate change to harmful traditional norms. She explained that she did not know about the negative impact of child marriage on girls. She herself got married at an early age and gave birth to children soon afterwards. Through the discussions within her parenting group, the woman realised how much her own health had suffered due to early childbirth. She

also realised that forcing her own daughter into child marriage could be fatal for her health.

More broadly on children's wellbeing, the majority of caregivers interviewed on behalf of Plan International Bangladesh said the groups had helped parents to be more aware of children's hygiene, nutritional food and the importance of education for both boys and girls.

Parenting groups function as complements to the life skills groups and the safe spaces for children. However, several stakeholders did suggest that financial hardship may prevent caregivers from putting into practice what they have learned in parenting groups.

Financial and other support to meet basic needs

Cash voucher assistance, non-food items (NFIs), garden start-up kits, food distribution and savings groups have been used to support the abilities of caregivers to meet the immediate and long-term basic needs of children and their households.

Cash voucher assistance (CVA) is a form of humanitarian aid that provides project participants with cash or vouchers to meet basic needs. In this project, partners have used two different types of CVA to respond to basic needs – these are multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) to tackle food insecurity, and cash for child protection to prevent and respond to child protection risks.

MPCA gives caregivers the financial means to meet their basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter and access to healthcare and education. All of these factors directly

affect children's wellbeing and when these needs are unmet, can expose children to protection risks.

Almost all caregivers who were supported through cash for child protection as part of case management and through MPCA reported having better relationships with their children compared to when they did not receive such assistance (data from the quantitative endline household survey). Some project staff interviewed for the qualitative data observed that the receipt of cash vouchers strengthened inner-household ties between different family members including children.

Cash was used by some stakeholders to buy assets that could contribute to long-term improvements in household financial stability. Caregivers interviewed for Plan International Bangladesh said "**they got sewing machines**" through the cash vouchers. Community members said that households used the vouchers "**for establishing small income-generating activities**" (World Vision Bangladesh) and "**to start their own businesses**" (World Vision South Sudan) – which also help to meet the basic needs of children.

The project appeared to be targeting the most vulnerable households for CVA. However, there were calls for more tailoring, and for clear communication with communities over the rationale for targeting vulnerable families. Participants also expressed frustrations about the "**limited and irregular**" dispersal of the cash vouchers, which forced families to fall back on other coping mechanisms.

Food distribution was used to substitute or complement MPCA. This supported communities and households affected by emergencies, addressing immediate food shortages and malnutrition while promoting long-term food security and resilience. These food distributions play a critical role in ensuring that children's nutritional needs are met during crises.

The Sahel region frequently faces food crises and insecurity due to climate change, armed conflicts, poverty and economic challenges. Project participants in Burkina Faso reported having appreciated the food distributions from the JF-CPiE project, describing it as "**an excellent initiative**" (children's FGD, ChildFund Burkina Faso). They noted that these distributions help to build "**resilience in the face of food crises and poverty**" (project staff, ChildFund Burkina Faso).

In Ethiopia, project stakeholders highlighted how food assistance enables households to ensure that their children have regular access to nutritious meals, thereby reducing food insecurity (child protection experts, ChildFund Ethiopia). In Bangladesh, female members of parenting groups reported that "**most caregivers have been able to increase provision of food for their children**" thanks to the distributions (World Vision).

Caregivers in Colombia found that delivering food stamps directly to households effectively ensured their "**economic relief**" (caregivers' FGD, Terre des Hommes Colombia). Additionally, child protection experts from Save the Children Ethiopia suggested integrating food distributions into school feeding programmes.

Garden start-up kits are a form of agricultural assistance provided to promote food security, improve nutrition and support the livelihoods of households in crisis. Kits typically contain seeds, fertilisers and farming tools – the most essential inputs needed to start and maintain a small-scale garden. The kits are sometimes delivered in tandem with gardening programmes to enable households to grow their own nutritious produce – both for household use and to sell in markets to generate income to meet basic needs.

Girls interviewed in FGDs linked to ChildFund Burkina Faso considered "**community garden programmes**" were a means to ensure "**food security**". In Colombia, caregivers interviewed said the programme enabled them "**to produce food for self-sufficiency and to feed the children**", although they faced difficulties such as "**the loss of crops due to climatic problems and the lack of maintenance of the space**" (Terre des Hommes).

People who had not participated in gardening programmes found the combination of the garden kits and corresponding instructions was effective. Project stakeholders in Burkina Faso found it "**enabled the beneficiaries to produce their own vegetables, thus improving their food security and financial independence**" (ChildFund).

Savings groups are self-managed groups of individuals who pool their savings together and provide loans to members from the accumulated funds. Regular contributions to the savings group help households to build financial buffers. Savings groups provide members with access to small loans, which can be used to start or expand income-generating activities. Saving groups and loans are complementary activities that aim to improve access to basic needs and reduce children's exposure to child protection risks.

In the JF-CPiE project, members can invest the loans in small businesses, agricultural projects, or other entrepreneurial activities that contribute to increasing or improving household income. By increasing financial stability, savings groups also reduce child protection risks like child labour, child marriage and school dropout.

When accompanied with risk analysis, savings groups also have the potential to empower women by giving them financial resources and decision-making power, which strengthens their ability to care for their children and advocate for their rights.

To meet children's basic needs, savings groups may need more support than cash vouchers. Forming these groups takes guidance, as project stakeholders explained: "**Only through training have parents learned how to earn and save for the future**" (members of a community-based child protection group supported by World Vision Bangladesh).

ChildFund Ethiopia staff described savings groups as "**support systems**", unlike cash, vouchers and food distributions which are direct aids. Other stakeholders called them sources of "**economic stability**" (ChildFund Burkina Faso) and of "**economic resilience**" (Terre des Hommes Colombia). Caregivers in Ethiopia noted that savings groups help "**fill the gap**" in meeting children's basic needs during tough times.

Discussions also indicated that savings groups may promote a mindset of planning for the future. Caregivers interviewed by Save the Children Ethiopia noted that the "**self-help group helps develop an understanding of the importance of saving money**".

Some households appeared to develop social support networks through participation in savings groups. Caregivers in FGDs for Plan International CAR said that "**savings groups also promote solidarity and mutual aid within the community, which is crucial in a crisis context**".

From the project teams' perspective, savings groups served as entry points into communities. By visiting these groups, field staff from implementing partners could share important messages about child protection and gender equality. Stakeholders from ChildFund Ethiopia highlighted that savings groups have been effective platforms for training and raising awareness about the importance of "**supporting girls and boys equally**".

Participatory community mapping exercises and support to local child protection groups

Participatory community mapping exercises are processes of identifying, documenting and analysing the threats, risks and resources in a set area of intervention. Local resources may include services, informal groups, community-based child protection groups. Strengthening community-based child protection groups can help to strengthen the capacities within communities to prevent and respond to child protection violations.

Respondents associated with implementing partners in Bangladesh explained that community-based child protection committees are involved in organising local awareness-raising events such as theatres to educate communities.

Child protection groups can also act as the first point of reference for children affected by protection violations. The groups can facilitate the referral of cases to appropriate services, such as healthcare, counselling and legal aid, ensuring that children receive comprehensive support. This aspect was especially highlighted by members of community-based child protection committees interviewed on behalf of Plan International Bangladesh.

Referral pathways, case management and child protection feedback practices

These activities align with the JF-CPiE project's goals of enhancing child protection services, particularly case management (output 4), and integrating child protection into the humanitarian sector (output 5).

The data collected from the FGDs and KIIs provided only limited insights. For example, they did not specify the child protection referral pathways that the JF-CPiE project has strengthened within communities or the quality of the case management services now offered. As a result, the discussion of these activities is brief.

Child-friendly help desks are associated with output 5 of the project. They are located at multi-sectoral service points within refugee and IDP camps and host communities. They are designed to provide caregivers and their children with crucial information about available services, including healthcare, education, legal assistance and social services, ensuring that they are aware of the support that is available.

Mainstreaming of child protection across the humanitarian sector appeared to have made progress for most of the implementing partners, according to the data from KIIs. However, in Colombia, project stakeholders interviewed on behalf of Terre des Hommes suggested that the level to which child protection is mainstreamed across the humanitarian sector had not improved within the last two years. (For the case of SOS Colombia, no data is available.)

EQ 7 – What other changes may have occurred within communities?

Findings

During the FGDs and KIIs, project participants reflected on whether there were any positive changes within communities resulting from the project work. This inquiry was part of the discussion related to Evaluation Question 4 (EQ 4), which focused on additional needs related to child protection that the project may not have anticipated.

The results of these discussions indicate that participants did not identify any additional changes. This suggests that the project has effectively mapped out all potential major areas of change since the planning stage and through adapting the activities to the actual needs of children, their families and community members.

EQ 8 – To what extent are project changes attained long-lasting?

Findings

This question addresses the sustainability of the project's effects and was discussed with project participants and stakeholders in the FGDs and KIIs. Respondents generally believe that the JF-CPiE project has positively impacted the lives of children, their caregivers and their communities.

There is some optimism that these improvements may continue after the project ends. However, it is clear that not all project effects will endure across different output areas. Respondents noted that changes achieved in one area may not be sustainable without fundamental improvements in other areas.

This perspective underscores the complexity of child protection in humanitarian actions, the need to respond to immediate needs and to prevent children's exposure to risk with the resources in place and through a limited time. The paragraphs below describe the opportunities and challenges that arise when aiming to embed sustainability in humanitarian interventions.

Raising awareness

Respondents believed that changes related to raising awareness would likely be sustainable beyond the end of the JF-CPiE project. They observed an increased awareness of child rights, gender equality, and related topics, which they felt would not simply vanish after the project concludes. However, several respondents emphasised that efforts to raise awareness must be complemented by other project activities to help community members to put the principles into practice – suggestions focused on activities that help to alleviate poverty, or involve schools, or that take a more "holistic" approach.

In **Bangladesh**, project stakeholders from Plan International noted that the JF-CPiE project achieved significant attitudinal changes including about the importance of personal hygiene and children's rights. Similarly, stakeholders in **Colombia**, associated with SOS, generally observed that awareness of child protection-related issues had significantly increased among participant communities as a result of the project.

In **Ethiopia**, stakeholders from ChildFund emphasised that the project's awareness campaigns sparked discussions on gender roles within communities, which they believe will continue in the future. Additionally, the child protection experts interviewed indicated that spontaneous community support networks have already emerged among beneficiary communities. These networks are fostering collaboration among "**action groups**", "**child protection committees**", and "**religious leaders**".

Community ownership

The emergence of community support networks in **Ethiopia** indicates a level of community ownership over the changes initiated by the project. Community ownership refers to the local communities having primary responsibility and control over project activities and outputs.

Discussions with participants linked to **SOS Colombia** indicate that they have successfully fostered a sense of ownership of child protection within the communities they serve. Similarly, stakeholders from Terre des Hommes Colombia believe that the project's outputs have produced positive and lasting effects on their communities.

However, some stakeholders suggested that project outputs need better integration into local contexts and institutional frameworks. For example, schools could play a crucial role in sustaining awareness of child-related topics. Training school staff to reinforce the importance of child rights and gender equality within communities could be beneficial. Implementing partners should also consider embedding local structures into project activities.

Threats to sustainability

Respondents from several countries highlighted two interconnected factors – poverty and instability – as potential risks to the sustainability of improvements in child protection. They also expressed concerns that, after the conclusion of the JF-CPiE project, other humanitarian organisations may not share the same commitment to child protection priorities.

In **Bangladesh**, concerns were raised about the potential consequences if the project were to cease support for households in meeting their basic needs. Stakeholders warned that the sustainability of changes in awareness depends heavily on the socio-economic conditions of community members. If households experience economic hardship, they may revert to "old habits", as noted by a male external child protection expert associated with Plan International.

Participants in **Burkina Faso** echoed these concerns, noting the country's deteriorating socio-economic situation. A female participant in a children's focus group discussion linked to ChildFund stated, "**It is true that we have knowledge about children's rights, but poverty often means that these rights are violated nonetheless**". Those associated with Terre des Hommes Burkina Faso emphasised the need to strengthen the socio-economic conditions of the supported communities. A young female participant from a life skills group remarked: "**We need to find work for our mums and dads, support their activities, and train them for jobs**" (children's FGD, Terre des Hommes).

Respondents in **Ethiopia, Central African Republic (CAR)** and **South Sudan** all expressed significant concerns regarding the instability in their countries. They noted that security and political challenges have increasingly hindered collaboration with local organisations and government actors.

A key informant in **South Sudan** remarked: "**The country is living in a complex and dynamic situation that is unpredictable**". A boy participant from a safe space described how farmers are struggling to cultivate their fields, stating they cannot venture more than 5km into the bush to work due to insecurity in the forest. This economic strain on families significantly impacts the overall wellbeing of their children.

In **Bangladesh**, respondents recognised the importance of ensuring that the gains achieved by the JF-CPiE project are sustained and they emphasised the need for collaboration with other humanitarian organisations if this project were to end. Staff from World Vision Bangladesh expressed hope for the sustainability of the project's effects through partnerships and community engagement. They noted that there is an opportunity to enhance child protection efforts by fostering collaboration with the many humanitarian organisations that are currently active in refugee camps. By leveraging their collective expertise, these organisations can work together to effectively address child protection issues and build on the progress made by the JF-CPiE project.

5.3 Inclusiveness

The inclusiveness criteria for this evaluation relate to the extent to which the project applied approaches that were inclusive, particularly regarding gender and people living with disabilities. It also considers whether approaches incorporate children's views and inputs. The evaluation investigated how far the project applied inclusion approaches in its design and consultative processes; whether the implementation of the project was culturally appropriate; how the project responded to feedback and concerns from the targeted communities; and whether the project succeeded in strengthening the rights of children and improving gender equality within communities. Inclusiveness in this evaluation refers to the intentional and systematic efforts to ensure that individuals with disabilities and different genders have equal access to opportunities, resources and benefits provided by development initiatives.

Key findings summary for EQs 9–12 on inclusiveness

- **EQ 9 – Inclusion of disability, gender, children's views**

  - The project had a low level of inclusion for people living with disabilities, according to two sets of data analysed – some implementing partners noted that their initial planning of the project did not properly consider involving people with disabilities.

  - Evidence shows that the project set out to incorporate gender awareness into both design and implementation, and was successful in doing so.

  - Children's views were sought as part of the assessment process to identify children's needs and they could easily offer feedback on activities – but it was unclear how far they were actively engaged in consultative processes.

- **EQ 10 – Being culturally appropriate and not causing harm**

  - Most implementing partners have been respectful and inclusive of local customs, culture and beliefs while also maintaining a strong commitment to child protection.

  - Use of local languages helped to bring positive behavioural change for some partners, although others reported difficulties when behaviours based in customs conflicted with child protection priorities.

- **EQ 11 – Feedback mechanisms**

  - Feedback and complaint mechanisms were set up at the start of the project and were selected in consultation with local communities.

  - They included face-to-face interactions with staff, suggestion boxes, hotlines and digital platforms, with face-to-face methods seen to be the easiest for most.

- **EQ 12 – Strengthening child rights**

  - Awareness of child rights has improved for all partners over the implementation period, although children's right to protection from violence was mentioned less often in several countries suggesting lower awareness of this.

  - Project activities that strengthened household capacity to meet basic needs were strongly associated with helping to improve child rights, followed by life skills, safe spaces and parenting sessions.

EQ 9 – How far has the project applied approaches that are inclusive of gender, disabilities and children's views in its design and implementation?

Living with disabilities – approach

The evaluation used data from the endline survey where the head of households self-reported to be living with disabilities. It only included households that were participating in the JF-CPiE project. It also analysed the socio-demographic breakdown of participants from the activities lists submitted by implementing partners for the first seven quarters of the project.

Findings

There is a discrepancy between the results from the qualitative and quantitative data – however, both sources indicate a low level of participation for people living with disabilities in the project.

According to the endline data, the proportion of participants who self-reported as living with disabilities accounted for on average around 3.35 per cent of all those participating across the 12 implementing partners.

According to the activity list data, the proportion of people with disabilities was less than 1 per cent of the total numbers taking part across all implementing partners.

The discrepancy between the two results suggests that project staff might not have been sufficiently trained to record the disability status of project beneficiaries. Anecdotal evidence from the implementation of the evaluation reflects the low level of inclusion of people with disabilities. As part of the evaluation design, local consultants were expected to organise FGDs with children with disabilities. Some of the consultants reported back that they were unable to do so because children with disabilities were unknown to project staff.

Discussions with some project staff associated with the different implementing partners suggest that the project did make special efforts to include people with disabilities, although specific targets on inclusion

may not have been defined. However, the results do not suggest that these efforts were successful. Some implementing partners mentioned that the participation of people with disabilities was not properly considered during their initial planning of the project. Project staff of **Terre des Hommes Colombia** conceded that poor levels of inclusion of people with disabilities was a serious shortcoming of the project. According to a female project staff member, "**the participation of people with disability was requested to be included in the initial planning, but their needs may not have been adequately considered**".

Gender inclusion – findings

The evaluation based its assessments on qualitative data for this section.

The project does appear to be gender aware[19]. Across its design and implementation, it is possible to see awareness of the needs, challenges and participation of both genders. Some implementing partners provided accounts that suggest the project has gender-transformative elements as well. However, to determine the overall nature of the project from a gender-transformative point of view, further research and discussions may be needed.

These examples suggest that the project set out to incorporate gender awareness into its design. The life skills groups for children and adolescents were supposed to be "gender sensitive" (activity target 1.2). They achieve this in the sense that they "**facilitate equal and unhindered access for both girls and boys**" (project staff, World Vision Bangladesh) and thus "**parity of attendance**" (project staff, SOS CAR) between the genders. Awareness-raising, parenting groups and training sessions for child protection groups were organised in a way that allowed for "**the specific needs, perspectives and experiences of men, women, girls and boys**" (project staff, Terre des Hommes Burkina Faso) to be considered. In so doing, this would ensure that "**everyone can participate equally and feel comfortable expressing their concerns**" (project staff, ChildFund Burkina Faso).

Input from both genders was sought during the project consultation processes. According to project staff for Save the Children Ethiopia, partners made use of "gender-sensitive language and interaction" to ensure the meaningful participation of women, men, girls and boys in project planning and decision-making processes.

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[19]Gender-aware approaches recognise and acknowledge the existence of gender differences and inequalities, and specific needs of different genders, while seeking to facilitate equal access to aid and activities. Gender-transformative approaches have an explicit intention to transform unequal power relations for positive change towards gender equality (or to contribute towards this change). See definition box in section 4.

> **"We actively sought out the perspectives of women leaders, mothers and existing girls' groups within communities to understand their concerns and priorities regarding child protection."**
>
> – Project staff member, Save the Children Ethiopia

Staff members associated with **Save the Children South Sudan** reported that they defined the objectives for their work through a consultative approach involving community members, local government and child protection experts from both genders. These objectives focused on "**avoiding stereotypes, gendered adjectives, patronising and sexist terms and expressions**" during project implementation. They helped to develop awareness-raising campaigns and materials to increase awareness around gender equality.

However, gender inequality may continue to be a challenge as was suggested anecdotally. For example, a female project staff member with a local partner collaborating with Plan International Bangladesh (the NGO Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts (BITA)), explained that, "**as a woman working in NGOs, [it] has been difficult. Unfortunately, some people in the community do not like [it] when women do this kind of work because of the conservative nature of our community. And it was also difficult for me to maintain both my family and profession**".

Inclusion of children's perspectives – findings

The project employed two broad participatory approaches: engaging with children, adolescents and youth, and engaging with relevant adults.
The summary reports of the evaluation FGDs and KIIs do not signal the extent to which children were actively engaged in the consultative processes. Children were certainly involved in the project's needs assessments focus groups as well as some of the mid-term reflection workshops. Five out of the 11 implementing partners organised reflection workshops that involved children. They were invited to participate in sessions that aimed at reflecting and validating locally relevant child protection risks.

Children have also been able to provide feedback on project activities via feedback and accountability mechanisms set up by implementing partners. As part of the project monitoring frameworks, satisfaction monitoring tools also ask respondents about their general perceptions of project implementation. These align with log frame indicator 0.2, about the percentage of surveyed children and caregivers targeted by the project who report that project activities were delivered in a safe, accessible, accountable and participatory manner.

An example is the monitoring on the distribution of dignity kits, which allows girls to express their level of satisfaction with the product as well as with the distribution itself. Although monitoring on the distribution kits is not yet systematically and consistently carried out within the project, high satisfaction levels with dignity kits were reported by recipients.

It appears however, that there are no project monitoring tools that allow boys to express their satisfaction levels with other project aspects. By contrast, for this evaluation, local consultants organised FGDs with girls and boys. Thus, children have been involved in aspects of the monitoring and evaluation for the project.

EQ 10 – Is the project culturally appropriate and not causing harm?

Findings – overview

The JF-CPiE project was designed to be culturally adapted to the targeted communities, aligning closely with local cultural norms and practices during implementation. This adaptation process involved consultations with community leaders and members to ensure their perspectives were considered. By fostering this alignment, the project aims to enhance participation, engagement and acceptance among community members, ultimately leading to improved child protection outcomes and greater community resilience.

Across all JF-CPiE countries, sufficient efforts have been made to make the project culturally appropriate and locally acceptable. Implementing partners have overall been respectful and inclusive of local customs, culture and beliefs while also maintaining a strong commitment to child protection. Some implementing partners have tried to go beyond respectful and inclusive approaches to test cultural engagement and understanding in ways that may open a window to rethink the role of culture in project implementation.

Regarding **project design**, meetings were set up at the beginning of the project with participants and communities, indigenous leaders, activists and women leaders, community groups, elder and tribal advisers, religious leaders, local volunteers or staff, and other relevant community members to integrate their points of view and input for the project. Important efforts were made to adhere to, accommodate and when possible, integrate local customs and act in accordance

with traditional political norms and forms of authority. Likewise, national-level frameworks and policy on traditional territories and rights for cultural difference, when available, were reviewed and followed.

On **implementation**, partners adapted different strategies to better include cultural differences. Efforts included the use of local, indigenous or traditional languages in project activities or when distributing dignity kits, during food distribution, garden start-up kits or project information. There has been active involvement of traditional figures of authority to plan, discuss and help carry out different project activities within communities. Religious figures, elders, women's groups and local headmen have been reliable people for children and community members to seek out for advice and support about child protection. In numerous instances, these figures of authority have played a role as child protection advocates for the project and for children's rights at large within their communities. Their voices, support and involvement in the project have facilitated conversations that helped to validate the project locally. This greatly improved and facilitated the work of implementing partners and project staff on the ground, and helped to steer implementation towards cultural appropriateness. Implementing partners have put much effort into adapting their work, methodologies and administrative decisions to better suit the cultural backgrounds of different participating communities.

Navigating conflicts between local customs and child protection

Partners in Burkina Faso and the Central African Republic (CAR) encountered challenges arising from harmful behaviours rooted in cultural practices.

To promote positive behavioural change, project staff in Plan International CAR described how staff across the project prioritised consultations with all participants at the outset and maintained their involvement throughout the implementation phase. From the beginning, the team placed significant emphasis on awareness raising among caregivers to introduce and discuss child protection concepts, highlighting their importance and implications, according to an external child protection expert associated with SOS CAR. Project staff actively ensured that participants could voice their opinions and share their needs, making sure these perspectives influenced project implementation.

Plan International CAR adapted its activities to align with local customs, making them culturally appropriate. In areas with Muslim communities, the team organised separate activities for boys and girls, demonstrating sensitivity to local customs while also initiating essential conversations about child protection. This approach empowered both boys and girls to express their opinions freely.

When local cultural practices conflict with child protection policy, implementing partners deploy "**awareness raising on the dangers of cultural practices**", as noted by a member of project staff for **Save the Children South Sudan**. Another expert interviewed for **World Vision South Sudan** said: "**the project only discourages inappropriate cultural practices**" – i.e., "**those in conflict with the law**" such as child marriage, female genital mutilation and abusive forms of child labour. This adds to ongoing efforts of the project to align with national legal frameworks.

Effective communication with project participants and communities is crucial. For SOS CAR project staff, this meant being flexible in translating project resources into local languages. This adaptability helped to build local goodwill and fostered some positive behavioural changes among culturally diverse communities. Experts observed a growing openness to gender equality, particularly regarding the importance of girls attending school, as well as a willingness to protect boys from harmful forms of child labour. These shifts reflect a "**drastic reduction**" in child protection issues rooted in cultural beliefs and practices that were previously prevalent (external child protection expert, SOS CAR).

ChildFund Ethiopia also noted positive impacts. Before project implementation "**it was considered taboo to send girls to school**" because some people believed it to be a "**waste of money**" because girls would soon marry. But now more and more communities are finding it "**culturally acceptable sending girls to school**" (non-child protection humanitarian actor).

A child protection expert from Save the Children Ethiopia observed that when the project aimed to promote positive behavioural changes, local reactions were often more nuanced, and the resulting gains were not always immediately apparent.

Spotlight on approaches to working with different customs

Bangladesh

Project implementation in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, required adaptation and negotiation around religious customs, particularly in communities with conservative views. Staff from **World Vision Bangladesh** reported that initial reluctance to allow women to participate in project activities hindered progress. They also faced challenges in encouraging adolescent girls to engage, as local authorities sometimes imposed delays and obstacles. Instead of merely being culturally aware, World Vision staff actively reached out to religious leaders to discuss child protection issues, seeking their guidance and support for the project. By enlisting these leaders as child protection advocates, World Vision gained local recognition and support within conservative communities while staying true to the project's message and objectives.

Project staff in **Plan International Bangladesh** worked hard to run culturally appropriate interventions. A diverse group of community members, including religious leaders, was actively engaged throughout the project. This offered valuable insights into the community's specific needs and preferences, ensuring that activities were culturally appropriate and respectful. Staff members who were familiar with local languages were recruited to communicate with community members. "**This not only enhanced communication but also helped in building trust and rapport with the local population,**" according to a staff member.

The same approach guided interactions with Rohingya communities. A staff member said that girls and boys had separate meetings, and as did mothers and fathers for the parents' meetings. Several community figures, including religious leaders, were engaged, and staff were proficient in the local languages. Most FGD participants said they felt comfortable while participating in programmes and sessions for the project. Some did mention how "**they sometimes feel shy or awkward when sessions discuss physical need or intimate-related topics**" although "**these topics teach them a lot about their own health**" (male participants of life-skills groups).

Colombia

Project staff in Colombia have used approaches to cultural acceptance to knit together indigenous populations, migrant populations and different host populations. **Terre des Hommes Colombia** believe their work has been accepted because their own staff are part of the same communities where the project has been implemented. "**We have been very careful while carrying out project activities [in a culturally appropriate manner] because we, the people going to the project field sites, belong to the same communities**" (female project staff). This partner defines their approach as "**intercultural**" or as "**an exercise in interculturalism**". Their work tries not only to be culturally sensitive, culturally acceptable, and inclusive of indigenous participants' viewpoints and opinions, but to incorporate their understanding into the project implementation.

Likewise, and employing similar aims and the same strategy as Terre des Hommes Colombia, **SOS Colombia** has directed targeted efforts to implement the project in a culturally appropriate way among their indigenous and afro-descendant participants. The same efforts are applied when working with migrant and refugee communities. According to experts interviewed, "**No prejudices have been identified in the activities carried out by SOS Colombia to raise awareness of the migrant population**" (male external child protection expert). In La Guajira, an important region for the Wayuu indigenous population, SOS staff hired agents who speak Wayuunaiki to facilitate spaces within communities where necessary. The project also incorporates cultural initiatives and priorities such as the rescue of traditional dances, traditional games and managing the environment.

While this has optimised project interventions in many cases, there are some cultural barriers that must be overcome. For example, Wayuu girls are expected to look after younger siblings, and in migrant communities, children are often left unattended during working hours. SOS Colombia's approach has been to "**try to slowly introduce changes in indigenous culture to better reflect child protection needs**" (female project staff).

EQ 11 – Has the project been responsive to feedback and concerns raised?

Feedback and complaint mechanisms are a comprehensive system designed to capture and report the viewpoints of girls, boys and young people, communities and partners about an organisation's work in order to improve it. They should also serve as a mechanism to identify safeguarding concerns or dedicated requests of support that cannot be channelled differently.

Findings

The project utilises multiple feedback methods, including face-to-face interactions (either informally or in community meetings and focus group sessions), suggestion boxes, hotlines and digital platforms. These feedback and complaint mechanisms were established at the project's outset in consultation with local communities, which helped overcome participants' reluctance to share their views.

Community members often rely heavily on the support provided by the JF-CPiE project, which can make them hesitant to share feedback, as they may fear that expressing negative opinions could jeopardise the assistance they receive. As project staff from the JF-CPiE consortium highlighted, it is crucial to make feedback mechanisms as accessible as possible and address these concerns in the feedback mechanisms.

Additionally, the need to conform can affect how community members respond – this is known as social desirability. The term describes the tendency for individuals to give answers they think are expected or desired by the project, rather than their true opinions. This issue may arise during group meetings, field visits or monitoring sessions, potentially leading to less honest feedback.

In-person feedback methods

Participants often find face-to-face feedback and complaint mechanisms the easiest to use, as these do not require technical skills or literacy (making them more accessible). However, these methods typically reveal the identity of the person providing feedback, which may discourage some individuals from speaking up. Additionally, many people may feel uncomfortable discussing personal issues in formal groups or community meetings.

■ Respondents associated with **World Vision Bangladesh** indicated that project participants typically approach project volunteers to voice complaints or provide feedback. Since these volunteers are well-known in their communities, participants feel comfortable reaching out to them. A similar situation exists with **Plan International Bangladesh.**

■ **ChildFund Burkina Faso** conducts monthly meetings with local committee members to facilitate quick responses to feedback and concerns.

■ **World Vision South Sudan** organises feedback sessions where community members can express their concerns and collectively discuss "corrective measures" (external child protection expert).

■ **ChildFund Ethiopia** has established peer support groups led by trained professionals, providing children with a confidential and safe space to voice their opinions and concerns about the project (female project staff).

■ Feedback mechanisms have strengthened children's right to participate in the project, according to **Plan International CAR** stakeholders.

Suggestion boxes, hotlines and digital platforms

Suggestion boxes provide individuals with a discreet way to submit feedback, complaints or suggestions anonymously. Designated project members regularly check these boxes, ensuring that all feedback is addressed in a timely manner. Typically placed in strategic yet inconspicuous locations within communities, these boxes allow for easy access while maintaining the anonymity crucial for encouraging honest input.

Implementing partners have also been experimenting with hotlines and digital platforms. Hotlines are dedicated phone lines that children and community members can call to report concerns or provide feedback about the project. Digital mechanisms rely on use of social media or apps where participants can submit feedback and receive updates on how their input is being used.

■ **ChildFund Burkina Faso** provides a hotline and SMS service to allow participants to contact them with feedback and concerns. Similar services are also provided by all other implementing partners in the project.

■ **Terre des Hommes Colombia** has experimented with emoji-based feedback procedures. Children communicate feedback through a "friendly" and "easy to interpret" outlet to voice their opinions during some activities (female project staff).

■ **SOS Colombia** relies on WhatsApp messaging. This tool directly links community leaders with project management and allows staff to quickly administer complaints, concerns, suggestions and planning within the project.

EQ 12 – Have children's rights been strengthened?

Findings

The project demonstrates a positive trend in raising awareness of children's rights throughout its implementation. Most implementing partners observed that the increased awareness among participating communities stemmed not only from the project's efforts but also from broader initiatives led by government agencies and the humanitarian sector.

Project participants consistently highlight the importance of addressing basic needs to uphold child rights. The right to education, healthcare and an adequate standard of living all depend on a household's ability to meet these fundamental needs. Activities that have helped strengthen household capacity in this regard are seen by participants as key to improving child rights. Some experts have noted that households struggling to meet basic needs are more likely to face challenges in upholding child rights.

Elements of integrated programming and collaboration with schools and food deliveries have likely contributed to strengthening children's rights to education, and to health and healthcare. Project participants did not frequently raise security concerns or how awareness of child rights may be impacted by such issues. Some experts suggest that this area may need further exploration in future research.

Figure 3 compares the perceived level of child rights awareness at endline versus two years ago, when the project began, across the 12 implementing partners. The data indicates that most partners report improvements, although in some cases, the average suggests more modest gains. Respondents in FGDs and KIIs often provided a more nuanced perspective, highlighting significant challenges to child rights in nearly all country contexts. Below is a summary of the findings from the six countries.

Figure 3: Proportion of community members who are aware of child rights

Source: Final evaluation 2024 © JF-CPiE   ■ 2 years ago   ■ Now
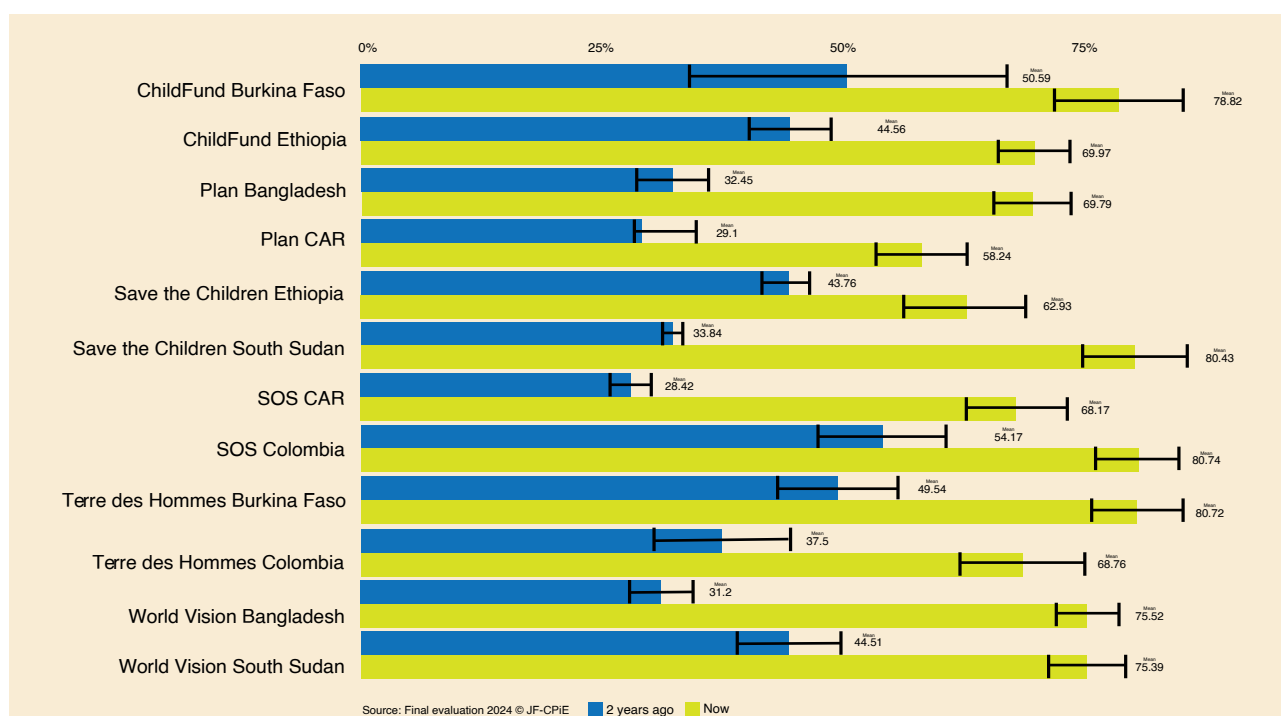
Note: the data is taken from the qualitative evaluation.

Bangladesh

Respondents with **Plan International** and **World Vision** reported a significant improvement in awareness of child rights among communities compared to two years ago. Evaluation interviews suggest that the idea of child rights was particularly unknown among the Rohingya community, and some community members may have only been exposed to the notion of child rights through their engagement with the project. Experts with World Vision noted that no campaigns on child rights had previously taken place in the camps, which partly explains the lack of knowledge.

A notable shift has been seen in attitudes towards education, particularly regarding girls. Two years ago, many caregivers in the camps were unconvinced of the importance of education, especially for their daughters. Since then, the project's awareness efforts have gradually improved this perspective. Project participants now show a greater recognition of the right to education, and more participants are supporting the education of girls.

Plan International Bangladesh has prioritised children's and adolescents' life skills sessions and safe spaces, and these efforts seem to be paying off. Project participants report an increased awareness of children's rights. Many caregivers now express a deeper understanding of their children's needs and recognise the importance of these rights for their child's development. Additionally, World Vision's community advocacy and peer-led education efforts have likely contributed to strengthening collective knowledge of child rights, creating social pressure to uphold them within the community.

Project stakeholders highlighted that child protection risks like child marriage and child labour are still considerable and economic hardship is widespread.

Burkina Faso

Community members' awareness of children's rights has increased over the past two years, according to both **ChildFund** and **Terre des Hommes** in Burkina Faso. A primary reason for this has been improvements to caregivers' capacity to meet basic needs. In this regard, stakeholders with Terre des Hommes mentioned activities implemented by the project, such as life skills and financial support for caregivers, while those associated with ChildFund noted governmental and non-governmental programmes on income-generating activities, job creation and professional training in some communities.

The JF-CPiE project also played a significant role in raising awareness. It got some municipal councils involved, working together to adopt a resolution on child rights and then organising community events to reach caregivers and children. This has strengthened child protection awareness campaigns implemented by various humanitarian actors, including ChildFund Burkina Faso through the JF-CPiE activities, as well

as the capacity of households to uphold these rights. FGD respondents mentioned that awareness raising by Terre des Hommes has been fundamental in expanding knowledge about child rights. Some caregivers said other "**information channels**" such as radio and television had contributed to this.

The involvement of many humanitarian sector organisations was reported to have helped overall to increase awareness of children's rights in the country, according to Terre des Hommes.

The worsening security situation in Burkina Faso was also a factor. Unexpectedly perhaps, several stakeholders believed that their awareness of child rights had risen as the security situation had deteriorated and as threats to child protection had increased.

On the other hand, KII respondents to Terre des Hommes noted that where child rights may have decreased, it was likely due to caregivers "**being unable to meet their basic needs**" – such as in places heavily affected by terrorist attacks, or among IDPs who have lost access to schools and the child protection mechanisms that those provide.

Central African Republic

Respondents in an FGD for **SOS CAR** were frank about not knowing about child rights as they do now. Project stakeholders attribute this positive change to awareness campaigns carried out by several humanitarian organisations. The FGD respondents specifically mentioned the work of SOS CAR in raising awareness, and the considerable influence of community-based child protection groups in carrying out awareness campaigns on child rights through child protection networks. These networks have been important in coordinating different humanitarian efforts among communities; they also helped SOS CAR to coordinate work with government stakeholders.

Feedback mechanisms set up by the project have also strengthened the right to participation of children during project implementation, according to stakeholders affiliated to **Plan International CAR**. Experts linked to SOS CAR thought the referral mechanisms set up by government stakeholders to manage child protection risks were useful for expanding awareness of child rights.

According to SOS CAR stakeholders, a major contributor to raised awareness has been the creation of community-based structures around child protection and rights. These structures support various project activities and awareness raising with different groups, help to identify families in need of cash support, and facilitate coordination and aid from government stakeholders.

Colombia

SOS Colombia child protection experts reported that some participants have now "**internalised**" child rights because of the project's awareness-raising efforts. Stakeholders with **Terre des Hommes Colombia** also reported higher awareness of child rights now compared to two years ago. FGD participants specifically mentioned healthcare and education as rights that they had become more aware of during the project implementation. Cases of educational neglect have decreased, according to experts interviewed for SOS Colombia. Caregivers are now more capable of identifying children's right to play thanks to the playful implementation by SOS Colombia of life skills activities and safe spaces – which have prompted discussions about other child rights.

Two years ago, a large part of the migrant Venezuelan population in Colombia lacked any kind of identity documents, which constrained their access to education and healthcare. This is no longer the case. SOS Colombia's rights restitution programme and personalised awareness advice and tracking during the project strongly contributed to this improvement.

Collaborations with other organisations have helped to raise awareness. Terre des Hommes' work with indigenous councils in some indigenous territories enabled dialogues about child rights and increasing awareness. SOS Colombia meanwhile worked with the Colombian Institute of Family Wellbeing (ICBF in Spanish), a state-funded entity responsible for promoting and upholding child rights. Some caregivers also described as helpful information about child rights on TV and radio programmes and through social networks. A strong achievement of the project was said to be its capacity for creating spaces for dialogue: to hear and be heard, citing activities like positive parenting sessions, safe spaces and life skills (both the joint activity developed by Terre des Hommes and those run by SOS Colombia).

The armed conflict continues to hamper child rights and efforts to advance these in some communities, according to experts interviewed.

Ethiopia

Awareness of child rights was improving in Ethiopia compared to two years ago, although **Save the Children Ethiopia** stakeholders were divided on whether the improvement was slight or significant. FGDs carried out with young people with disabilities noted that not enough attention was given to strengthening their rights.

Protection from child labour, access to education and the support of caregivers for girls' education were all thought to have improved generally. Save the Children

stakeholders judged that any improvements on child rights arose from awareness raising among participating communities by the government, community members, humanitarian sector actors, schools and caregivers. However, stakeholders associated with **ChildFund** considered improvements were the result of the JF-CPiE project's success in simultaneously tackling underlying factors affecting child rights during awareness sessions, while helping caregivers to meet basic needs.

Both sets of stakeholders agreed on the central role played by CVA and other financial support in this. Many said that CVA was helping households better to provide for children, strengthening their capacity to attend school, and giving children more leisure time for play. Specialists noted how CVA and other forms of financial support and training through the project and government programmes are helping communities to "**break the cycle of poverty**", giving households more capacity to uphold children's rights.

Schoolrooms were seen as valuable spaces for discussing child rights with children, who praised the project for enabling them to voice their concerns, strengthen their confidence and learn more about their rights.

South Sudan

Levels of awareness on child rights has grown significantly in communities, according to both implementing partners in South Sudan. Stakeholders pointed in particular to the work of **World Vision South Sudan** to train members of community-based child protection groups. Their role in raising awareness during project implementation appears to have been critical to increasing awareness of child rights among participants. FGD and KII respondents often mentioned the work of community-based child protection groups as the main reason behind the positive change in the past two years. The contributions of teachers, parents and doctors were also noted. Collaboration with local and religious leaders helped to assure the success of awareness campaigns, according to experts associated with World Vision.

Stakeholders with **Save the Children** considered the increased awareness could be explained by the challenging security situation in the country, which may have accentuated the importance of child rights. It was also suggested that child rights have become a topic of discussion among many participants only since the project has been active and through the activities run by Save the Children South Sudan.

5.4 Implementation

The final evaluation domain relates to the implementation process of the JF-CPiE project, and specifically the implications of working through a consortium. All the evaluation questions in this section draw solely on KIIs with project staff of the different implementing partners. Evaluation questions consider the challenges that may have hampered the project in reaching its targets; the extent to which working through a consortium helped or hindered the implementation of a project in emergency settings; whether there were innovations or improvements from consortium working; and finally, general lessons that consortium members and implementing partners can take from the consortium project on child protection in emergencies.

Key findings summary for EQs 13–16 on implementation

- **EQ 13 – Challenges in meeting targets**

  - Determining the needs of communities was difficult, especially regarding the quantity – and to some extent the quality – of services and support required.

  - Almost all project staff found it hard to accurately determine the resources required to meet community needs, and to predict the costs of these, – especially in volatile contexts.

  - A broad range of delivery challenges were identified including: contextual difficulties, coordination and logistical problems, accountability, and the problem of the "last mile".

- **EQ 14 – Consortium helping or hindering**

  - Several general benefits from consortium-working were identified, such as increased bargaining power; sharing knowledge and expertise; collaborative working; and networking.

  - Fewer downsides were mentioned; these centred on a sense that consortiums add complexity to processes and activities, which in turn increases already high workloads.

- **EQ 15 – Innovations or improvements**

  - No specific innovations were identified from consortium working, but several improvements were mentioned regarding programming and project management.

  - The Global Coordination Team was singled out for its positive contribution to the streamlined implementation of the project, particularly its initiatives on M&E, training, and adherence to deadlines and budgets across the project.

- **EQ 16 – Lessons learned**

  - Cross-cutting themes shape the lessons learned: the multidimensional nature of child protection; cultural and local approaches; and learning and adaptation.

  - For projects in dynamic situations such as emergencies, project adaptation is key but data is needed to guide this – which implies the need for systematic evaluation and monitoring.

EQ 13 – What challenges have affected project implementation?

Findings

Project staff of the implementing partners were asked to describe different inJternal and external challenges that may have hampered the project in reaching its targets and objectives. Broadly, the challenges raised can be grouped as community needs, resource needs and delivery needs. These are discussed in turn.

Community needs

Challenges were encountered when determining the needs of communities, especially in terms of the quantity of services and support required and to some extent the quality of that support. One project team stated that the community needs relating to case management services (activity 4.2) were seriously underestimated. Community needs for dignity kits (activity 1.5), as well as CVA and non-food item (NFI) support (activity 2.2) were partly underestimated as well. A request was made by camp management for higher quality dignity kits, according to one project team.

Project staff of ChildFund Ethiopia, Plan International Bangladesh, Plan International CAR, and Save the Children and World Vision South Sudan interviewed during the evaluation alluded to problems of this nature. Staff members working for Save the Children South Sudan observed that "**high community expectations remain a challenge though much is being offered**".

"We realised that the needs of the community were more than just what this project addressed – for example, we were also asked to provide food assistance and go beyond our areas of operation, but we did not have the resources to do all this."

– Project staff member associated with World Vision South Sudan

Resource needs

This refers to problems related to determining and mobilising the right level of input needed to deliver project activities for the quantities and quality required. Another problem is in predicting how much it costs for teams to produce the project services or activities.

Almost all project staff interviewed said that it was challenging not only to map out community needs to be addressed at the bare minimum but also to accurately determine the resources required to meet these needs. An unpredictable driver in many project locations such as Ethiopia was inflation and economic instability which often affected the prices of resources.

"There is a lack of resources to cover a large number of beneficiaries. The needs are enormous but resources are few."

– Staff member, Plan International CAR

Examples of resource challenges from project teams include:

■ underestimating the cost of snacks provided to participants as incentives to attend awareness-raising sessions (activity 1.1) or parenting sessions (activity 2.1);

■ not having enough computers and equipment at service points for case management services (activity 4.2);

■ insufficient budget for project team vehicles to travel to target communities;

■ higher than expected costs for setting up and running feedback and accountability mechanisms (activity 0.3) due to communication, administration and fuel expenses.

Delivery needs

These encompass a broad range of challenges related to running the project activities.

Contextual difficulties arise from the fact that the project operates within emergency settings. Environmental challenges, disasters caused by extreme natural events (e.g. cyclones, floodings), and political instability and armed conflicts have seriously affected project operations. Teams must cope with poor infrastructure (communication and transportation) as well as highly volatile contexts. Staff members of ChildFund Burkina Faso mentioned, for example, poor internet that hampered communication with field teams. Project staff of Plan International and SOS CAR said poor roads were a major impediment to conducting project visits.

Coordination challenges refer to the need to communicate, coordinate and collaborate with external stakeholders (such as communities, government) to implement the project successfully. At the endline evaluation, only project teams in Ethiopia mentioned coordination challenges – namely, additional government "command posts" set up in project areas which resulted in the need for "additional approvals". Coordination challenges were chiefly discussed during the mid-term reflection workshops, and focused on coordination and collaboration at the local level.

Accountability as a Core Humanitarian Standard involves (among other things) being transparent about key aspects of project activities including the rationale behind them, and how and why communities are selected. A lack of transparency can lead to community tensions, including with humanitarian staff. A staff member with Plan International CAR described how tensions arose between target communities and field teams due to a discrepancy over what communities perceived their needs to be and what was actually provided. Other implementing partners observed tensions. Plan International Bangladesh encountered situations where community members who were not targeted by an activity would approach field teams to get assistance as well: "we introduce them to the beneficiaries and try to explain how worse their situation is than them".

The problem of the "last mile" alludes to the idea that service delivery challenges do not end once a service or activity has begun. Various barriers will prevent members from accessing the services even if they are in close proximity. Staff members of World Vision Bangladesh explained that opening up community-based centres did not automatically draw in community members. By providing little add-ons such as snacks, they achieved higher participation rates. This led to greater awareness among participants about the activities. Only once awareness rose about the purpose of parenting groups and psychosocial support (and about the snacks), did people start responding more positively.

Logistical challenges refer to the difficulties in managing simultaneously the various delivery issues alongside the complexities inherent in a project on child protection in an emergency setting. Numerous problems were mentioned: poor infrastructure and communication problems when operating in remote locations; language barriers and the need to find (and fund) translation services; high staff turnover and the problem of finding timely replacements; high workloads for staff; lengthy administrative procedures of various kinds that slow down implementation; the knock-on effects of implementation delays arising from all these factors.

"The frequent turnover of staff members often led to delays in the recruitment of replacements, affecting the continuity and efficiency of ongoing project activities. This internal challenge posed significant obstacles to the overall effectiveness and sustainability of the Rohingya response programme."

– Plan International staff member in Bangladesh

EQ 14 – Has the consortium helped or hindered project implementation?

Findings

In general, staff mentioned several advantages of implementing a project through a consortium. According to a staff member for World Vision South Sudan, "**working in [a] consortium didn't create additional challenges actually, but […] helped strengthen the working force**". The main advantages are described below, along with some caveats that were also expressed.

Project staff from nearly all implementing partners recognised that the JF-CPiE project's consortium approach significantly **increased their bargaining power and scale**, particularly in dealings with external stakeholders. This collective strength was key to establishing a child protection project of such remarkable scope. As one Terre des Hommes Colombia staff member noted, "**a project of this magnitude becomes viable only through a consortium**". This collaboration allowed for a broader reach and more impactful interventions than would have been possible by individual organisations.

Another significant advantage highlighted by project staff was the **sharing of expertise and knowledge** among consortium members and their implementing partners. Staff from World Vision Bangladesh noted, "**The consortium members collaborate and frequently assist each other in addressing challenges. One organisation may provide insights to help another fill a gap, thereby enhancing each other's capacity**". This collaboration primarily took place through informal interactions, but there is potential to create more formalised channels to "institutionalise" some of this valuable learning, further strengthening the collective impact of the consortium.

Collaborative working emerged as a crucial aspect of the JF-CPiE project's implementation. Project staff viewed the consortium positively due to its emphasis on "**collaborative**" efforts (project staff, ChildFund Ethiopia). This collaborative approach brought benefits at both vertical and horizontal levels. For example, in-country implementing partners with strong connections to target communities offered valuable local insights. They served as a "**bridge**" (project staff, ChildFund Ethiopia) between global initiatives and the realities faced by communities in crisis. Their expertise facilitated the mobilisation of local knowledge to enhance global strategies.

Local organisations also held **implementing partners** in high regard. For instance, Plan International Bangladesh partnered with the NGO Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts (BITA), which employs theatre and the arts to tackle social issues, promote cultural heritage and empower communities. BITA staff noted, "**We can share [project challenges] with the Plan team… For example, if there are any restrictions in entering camps, they help us to overcome that**". This collaboration underscores the importance of partnership in effectively addressing challenges and fostering community resilience.

The Global Coordination Team (GCT) was seen to play a vital role in setting standards. Involving project managers within Germany-based consortium members as well as the GCT helped to identify and quality-assure all reporting requirements and deadlines stemming from the consortium. A staff member working for ChildFund Ethiopia explained how "**the Global Coordination Team have established common standards and quality improvement frameworks for consortium members, leading to overall improvements in programming across their organisations**". For example, the GCT would develop a standardised child protection training curriculum that all consortium members would then adapt and implement, ensuring consistent quality across interventions. The GCT also organised regular implementing partner-specific and consortium-wide project calls to discuss project issues.

Networking among project staff at different locations was an advantage mentioned, particularly in connection to the initiatives organised by the GCT. The consortium was described as a "**good network**" (staff member, Plan International Bangladesh).

Downsides of consortium working that emerged from discussions with project staff centred on complexity and workloads. Working through a consortium was said to make project activities more "complex". Staff associated with ChildFund Ethiopia described the complexity of the project M&E framework: "**project staff struggled to collect complete and accurate data from all target beneficiaries due to the time-intensive nature**" of the framework methods. Problems with consortium decision-making processes "**due to the need to accommodate diverse viewpoints and interests**" was also mentioned by a staff member with Save the Children Ethiopia. Such problems added to the high workload faced by many project teams.

However, other reasons – such as partners "finding their feet" in the project – could explain what appeared to be complexities caused by consortium-working. For example, confusion over how best to divide up work in the camps in Bangladesh initially caused delays, but these resolved quickly once the implementing partners reached a decision on this.

EQ 15 – Has the project helped to incubate innovations and improvements?

Findings

Project staff were asked whether they detected any innovations or improvements in the project areas of programming and management. No specific innovations were identified for either project area, but several improvements were mentioned.

In terms of **programming**, project staff noted improved practices, activities and child protection approaches. They also referred to the sharing of best practices and lessons learned, as described in EQ 14.

Improvements within **management practices** helped to strengthen the project implementation according to staff members. The Global Coordination Team was singled out for its positive contribution to the streamlined implementation of the project:

■ The GCT "**enabled real-time monitoring and reporting across consortium members, enhancing project oversight and accountability**" (staff member of World Vision Bangladesh).

■ The GCT established standardised M&E frameworks and data collection tools to be used across the consortium (project manager, ChildFund Ethiopia).

■ It provided "**training workshops or resources on best practices in M&E data collection, analysis, and reporting**" (project manager, ChildFund Ethiopia).

■ It maintained "**strict deadlines**" and "**a lot of budget discipline**", which meant teams stuck closely to budgets (a project member, World Vision South Sudan).

Suggestions were made that the JF-CPiE consortium could facilitate more innovations if shared learning were more open and more institutionalised.

EQ 16 – What are the lessons learned from the JF-CPiE consortium work?

Some cross-cutting learning themes emerged from the evaluation that should be absorbed into future child protection project work.

- Holistic approach and integrated programming in child protection in emergency programming. This highlights that child protection risks can be diverse and multifaceted, manifesting in various forms with distinct root causes that evolve based on the humanitarian context and the protective factors. For instance, fostering resilience among children in emergency situations necessitates not only psychosocial support but also access to income-generating activities. Such an integrated approach is crucial for addressing the complex needs of children affected by crises and ensuring their overall wellbeing and safety.

- Culturally informed approaches. Implementing partners must adopt culturally sensitive methods, recognising local customs and practices while also addressing social and cultural norms that may hinder community-based prevention and responses to child

protection risks. Culture can be a powerful asset in driving positive change for children. For example, World Vision Bangladesh engaged religious preachers to advocate for a holistic and inclusive approach to child protection, which helped to overcome initial resistance to the inclusion of women and girls in the project. This approach demonstrates how leveraging cultural influence can facilitate broader community acceptance and engagement.

- Learning and adaptation. Continuous learning and adaptation are critical in child protection, given that it is a dynamic field that evolves with changing contexts. Child protection risks can shift depending on circumstances. For example, within stable communities, certain harmful cultural practices may pose the greatest threat to children. However, during times of conflict and displacement, these practices may diminish in relevance, only to be replaced by new risks, such as exploitation or violence in displacement settings. Adapting strategies to

these evolving risks ensures that responses remain effective and relevant to children's protection needs.

Projects and implementing teams must be flexible and responsive to evolving community needs. Effective adaptation requires data-driven decision-making, highlighting the importance of systematic evaluation and ongoing monitoring. Currently, implementing partners have yet to fully engage in consistent and comprehensive monitoring practices. To ensure that projects remain aligned with community needs, regular reflection points for joint review and analysis should be integrated into project cycles, allowing for timely adjustments that enhance child protection outcomes.

"A major lesson learned … includes the importance of … flexible adaptation to changing circumstances."

– Project manager, World Vision Bangladesh

6. CONCLUSIONS

In July 2022, the Joining Forces Alliance unrolled the Joining Forces Child Protection in Emergencies (JF-CPiE) project in six countries – Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic (CAR), Colombia, Ethiopia and South Sudan. Each country is affected by one or more crises such as extreme natural events, environmental problems, mass displacement, political instability, armed and gang-related conflict, and widespread violence. Through 12 implementing partners working in tandem with local organisations, government actors, community members, caregivers and children, the JF-CPiE project has reached around 350,000 children in these countries in its first two-year phase.

To mark the end of the first phase, this evaluation was conducted in 2024 using newly collected quantitative and qualitative data, as well as data from baseline assessments and mid-term reflections. Based on this data, the evaluation answers this question:

Has the protection of vulnerable girls, boys, adolescent girls and adolescent boys within project communities improved?

The overall evaluation of the JF-CPiE project indicates that child and adolescent protection has improved significantly over the past two years. Barriers and challenges that have historically affected children's development, wellbeing and vulnerability to protection risks have eased. These positive changes are evident not only among children but also among their caregivers and within wider communities.

Key conclusions drawn from qualitative data, based on in-depth interviews with children, caregivers, project staff and external child protection experts, include:

■ **Increased awareness of child protection risks** – children and caregivers are more knowledgeable about locally relevant child protection issues.

■ **Improved caregiver capacity** – caregivers are better equipped to meet their children's basic needs and foster improved relationships.

■ **Heightened gender awareness** – community members have greater awareness of gender equality and the distinct needs of boys and girls.

■ **Strengthened community response** – communities are better positioned to prevent and respond to child protection risks.

■ **Positive changes across diverse child protection needs** – the JF-CPiE project's range of activities has contributed significantly to these improvements.

Quantitative data from baseline and endline surveys supports these findings. The 12 implementing partners showed at least partial improvement in two out of the three outcome indicators on average, aligning with their activity and output targets within the project log frame.

The project's success in identifying and addressing relevant child protection needs across the six countries highlights the strong theoretical foundation of the JF-CPiE project design.

Areas for attention

While the project has made significant strides, several areas require further focus. These observations reflect the complex and multidimensional nature of child protection work.

Relevance: Addressing national-level gaps

One area needing attention is the project's approach to national-level work, particularly in countries with unique needs like Bangladesh. The project's focus on food security at the national level overlooks critical child protection concerns, especially in cases like that of the Rohingya refugees.

Classified by the government in Bangladesh as "Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals", Rohingya refugees do not receive the full legal protections afforded under international refugee law. This leaves them – especially women and children – vulnerable to risks like gender-based violence, human trafficking and exploitation.

In these contexts, legal status is a key child protection risk (Relevance; EQ 3). The project needs to broaden its national-level focus beyond food security to address these gaps. By aligning project activities with national and regional humanitarian response plans and policies, the JF-CPiE project has the potential to engage in national-level advocacy, pushing for better legal protections and addressing broader child protection challenges.

This alignment provides a valuable opportunity for the project to engage with government officials and policymakers, positioning it to advocate for comprehensive child protection solutions.

Effectiveness: Sustainability

Project participants recognised the potential for sustaining the project's positive effects, provided certain factors are addressed (Effectiveness; EQ 8). One key to this is ensuring adaptability in volatile environments, as seen in Ethiopia, where despite disruptions due to conflict, the project demonstrated resilience in continuing its work in safer areas.

A primary factor in maintaining long-term child protection outcomes is ensuring that households can meet their basic needs. By addressing these needs, families are better positioned to implement what they learn in parenting groups and other child protection activities. Project participants emphasised that when financial assistance, such as cash voucher assistance (CVA), garden kits or savings groups, was provided, it enabled caregivers to actively improve their children's

lives. Participants expressed how this support directly contributed to enhancing their children's wellbeing (**Effectiveness; EQ 6**).

Participants also highlighted the success of initiatives like CVA, food distribution programmes (e.g., school feeding), and income-generating activities, which not only helped families to meet their immediate needs but also empowered them to create more sustainable livelihoods.

To build on this success, participants recommended prioritising and sequencing project activities to address the most urgent barriers to child protection first, followed by less critical needs. This approach would ensure that essential needs are met, creating a solid foundation for long-term sustainability and further strengthening child protection outcomes.

Inclusiveness: Disabilities

Within the project, there only seems to be limited targeting of children with disabilities, as the participant numbers reported by the implementing partners have revealed (Inclusiveness; EQ 9). Furthermore, what data there is on participants with disabilities does not seem to be reliable.

Less than 1 per cent of all participants in the project activities were recorded as people with disabilities. Slightly higher prevalence rates of participation were seen in the endline survey (where household heads self-reported as living with disabilities). This discrepancy in the two data sources raises questions

about whether there are sufficient targets for including people with disabilities, and how data is collected on their status and inclusion. It also suggests that project staff across the different levels are not sufficiently aware of the disability status of the project participants who were targeted. Improving the numbers of people with disabilities included in the project should start therefore with improving how their participation is measured, recorded and monitored.

In general, the project includes gender-aware elements within its project focus. Given the gender-specific child protection needs of both girls and boys (and other identities), this is applaudable. Yet some stakeholders said that gender inequality was continuing to have harmful consequences on children's lives. Some suggested that building up income-generating capacities could support women, along with intensifying awareness-raising activities on gender equality.

Implementation: Room for improvements

Efforts to strengthen child protection in emergencies are complex and require ongoing reflection. The mid-term workshops held in August 2023 and the project workshop in Nairobi in March 2024 were valuable opportunities for implementing partners to review progress and share lessons.

These discussions emphasised the need to "institutionalise learning" across the consortium, ensuring continuous adaptation and improvement.

Effective reflection relies on accurate data. While partners showed strength in reporting activities, challenges remain in tracking less tangible outcomes like participant satisfaction.

In some cases, data on these softer targets was missing, suggesting the need for enhanced monitoring practices. Limited resources, time and budget have contributed to these gaps.

One key challenge is overcoming social desirability bias, where beneficiaries may provide feedback which they think project staff want to hear. Creating safe spaces for honest feedback is crucial, especially for vulnerable participants.

By addressing this bias and improving data collection, the project can gain clearer insights into its impact and further strengthen its child protection efforts.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below are grouped by the evaluation domains of relevance, effectiveness, inclusiveness and implementation, although some may be cross-cutting.

Relevance

Strengthen national-level child protection advocacy.

- Child protection needs at the national level should be integrated into the project framework. This recommendation arises from the observation that while the project aligns with national legal and policy frameworks, certain critical issues affecting the populations concerned are possibly being overlooked, compromising child protection efforts.

- To address this, implementing partners are encouraged to enhance their policy advocacy capacities, pushing for national-level changes that will directly improve the lives of refugees, IDPs and host communities.

Enhance community engagement and gender equality efforts.

- Further efforts are needed to assess community perceptions of project relevance. The insights gathered from FGDs and KIIs in the evaluation may not fully capture the nuances of community needs and priorities. A more detailed evaluation of the relevance of specific project activities would provide valuable insights.

- Income-generating activities should be implemented alongside initiatives aimed at shifting attitudes towards gender equality. To strengthen awareness-raising efforts around gender equality, a holistic approach is recommended – one that considers family dynamics and showcases positive role models for women and men.

Effectiveness

Strengthen project activities for sustainable impact.

- The project should consider enhancing certain activities, particularly those that support households

in meeting basic needs. This recommendation emerged in light of ensuring the sustainability of project outcomes. Participants advised expanding cash voucher assistance (CVA) and food distributions while also developing income-generating initiatives to help households achieve long-term financial stability.

- Improving psychosocial support services to align with the mental health needs of target communities is also highly recommended.

- Schools could be empowered to play a pivotal role in sustaining increased awareness of child-related topics. Training for school staff could reinforce the importance of child rights and gender equality messages within the communities they serve.

Inclusiveness

Strengthen the project focus on people with disabilities.

- In the follow-up phase, this includes improving how the project targets people with disabilities for inclusion and how it measures those targets. Specific targets or quotas of the percentage of participants served who have a disability status would be one approach. Once a measurable target has been specified, progress against this target can be monitored.

Address possible social desirability bias.

- Active measures should be taken to get beyond the problem of social desirability during data collection. Project monitoring staff should be trained on how to best interview and interact with members of vulnerable communities.

Enhance the integration of children's views.

- The voices and views of children could be better integrated into the project through dedicated measures for the project planning and preparation stage.

- These could include child-friendly piloting of project activities and child-driven research capacities.

Share approaches on cultural appropriateness.

- Implementing partners should be enabled to share experiences on handling cultural appropriateness, and to exchange perspectives and suggestions. Sustaining the cultural appropriateness of the project requires that the conversation between implementing partners and participants and communities keeps occurring regularly, furthering trust and engagement. It would be advisable to separate behavioural change from cultural practice to develop a more targeted approach focused on child protection concerns.

Implementation

Enhance child protection project operations and learning.

- Project teams should prioritise safety and security considerations in their operational countries, given the dynamic nature of child protection in emergencies within volatile contexts.

- The project should embrace "institutionalised learning", which involves systematically integrating processes and mechanisms for continuous learning and improvement. This approach should be woven into the operations and activities of both implementing partners and consortium members.

- Monitoring capacities must be strengthened in future phases of the JF-CPiE project. Implementing partners should recognise that many areas requiring monitoring are complex and challenging, particularly at the outset of revising internal monitoring systems, to track both hard and soft targets effectively and to channel resources accordingly.

- The project should pivot from solely reporting its successes to first highlighting areas for improvement and challenges faced. Focusing on project failures can yield valuable insights that inform necessary changes, driving institutionalised learning and reflection.

- The consortium should consider establishing incentives that encourage innovation and the documentation of successful practices. Consortium members and their implementing partners could be motivated to identify gaps, test solutions and create knowledge products that share successful pilot initiatives with a broader audience within the consortium and beyond.

8. ANNEXES

Table A1: The JF-CPiE project logical framework

Impact	
Overall outcome	
Improved protection of vulnerable girls, boys, adolescent girls and adolescent boys (<18 years) through access to quality child protection services and support for prevention, mitigation and response to risks	Indicator 1
	% of children who report at endline increased knowledge of child protection risks and how to stay safe due to participation
	Indicator 2
	% of caregivers who report increased knowledge of caring and protection behaviours towards children under their care compared to the beginning of the project
	Indicator 3
	% of community members who report increased confidence in their ability to prevent and respond to child protection risks compared to the beginning of the project
Output 0	
Children in project locations have access to responsive child-friendly feedback mechanisms in order to provide feedback to project staff and report safeguarding concerns	Indicator 0.1
	% of project staff, volunteers and other associates who are briefed on and sign their organisation's code of conduct and child safeguarding policy at time of hire
	Indicator 0.2
	% of surveyed children and caregivers targeted by the project who report that project activities were delivered in a safe, accessible, accountable and participatory manner
	Indicator 0.3
	% of country teams that demonstrate that the views and inputs of children have been appropriately incorporated into project assessments, implementation, response monitoring and evaluations
Output 1	
Vulnerable girls, boys, adolescent girls and adolescent boys have improved knowledge, skills and capacities to protect themselves from violence	Indicator 1.1
	# of children who receive awareness-raising sessions on key child protection risks
	Indicator 1.2
	# of children who participate in a complete life skills curriculum
	Indicator 1.3
	% of safe spaces established which are inclusive, safe and appropriately staffed
	Indicator 1.4
	# of children who receive psychosocial support through participation in safe space activities
	Indicator 1.5
	% of girls who report satisfaction with contents of dignity kit and distribution process

Output 2	
Improved ability of caregivers and families to meet protection needs of vulnerable children and to reduce drivers of child protection risks through capacity-building, CVA, NFI and nutrition support	Indicator 2.1
	# of caregivers who participate in positive parenting sessions
	Indicator 2.2
	# of households who receive CVA
	Indicator 2.3
	% of households who report satisfaction with CVA and NFI distribution

Output 3	
Strengthened community-level child protection mechanisms to provide protective environments for vulnerable children and adolescents, promote positive social and gender norms, and to prevent and respond to violence	Indicator 3.1
	# of participatory risk mapping exercises completed and shared with communities
	Indicator 3.2
	# of members of community-level child protection mechanisms who are trained on child protection risks and how to handle child protection reports
	Indicator 3.3
	% of community-level child protection mechanisms which are functional

Output 4	
Vulnerable children and adolescents, including children associated with armed groups and armed forces, child labourers, and child survivors of SGBV, receive access to specialised child protection services, including timely, quality case management services and referrals to multi-sectoral services	Indicator 4.1
	% of child protection case management workers who demonstrate adequate knowledge of key child protection case management principles
	Indicator 4.2
	% of children and caregivers who report satisfaction with case management services (disaggregated by gender and age)

Output 5	
Improved child protection coordination through strategic planning, information sharing, capacity building and strengthening standard operating procedures in order to improve humanitarian programming for vulnerable children and to reduce protection risks to children	Indicator 5.1
	% of trained non-child protection staff who can describe the referral procedure for child protection concerns
	Indicator 5.2
	# of functional child-friendly help desks at multi-sectoral service points

Output 6	
Global, regional and national-level child protection and food security actors are equipped with strengthened evidence, programmatic tools and advocacy for integrated child protection and food security responses that promote children's and adolescents' protection and wellbeing	Indicator 6.1
	% of workshop participants who report commitment to strengthening child protection and food security integration
	Indicator 6.2
	% of online training participants who demonstrated improved knowledge, skills and capacity to integrate child protection and food security responses
	Indicator 6.3
	# of evidence findings disseminated to humanitarian actors

Table A2: The project outputs and activity targets

Output		Activity target
0. Children in project locations have access to responsive child-friendly feedback mechanisms in order to provide feedback to project staff and report safeguarding concerns	0.1	Country teams to conduct start-up and closing workshops
	0.2	Complete baseline and needs assessment, midline and endline
	0.3	Set up 133 functional child-friendly feedback and accountability mechanisms in each project location (CFFM)
1. Vulnerable girls, boys, adolescent girls, and adolescent boys have improved knowledge, skills, and capacities to protect themselves from violence	1.1	Provide 3,634 child and adolescent-friendly awareness raising sessions to children through campaigns, workshops, forum theatres, radio broadcasts, and social media
	1.2	Organise 473 age and gender-sensitive life skills groups for 23,140 children and adolescents
	1.3	Establish 165 inclusive safe spaces (static and mobile) and equip them with inclusive, culturally and age-appropriate materials for children and adolescents
	1.4	Provide psychosocial support and psychological first aid to 84,366 children and adolescents through safe spaces, home visits and other community-based activities
	1.5	Distribute culturally appropriate dignity kits to 32,550 girls, adolescent girls and young women
2. Improved ability of caregivers and families to meet protection needs of vulnerable children and to reduce drivers of child protection risks through capacity-building, CVA, NFI and nutrition support	2.1	Provide positive parenting sessions to 395 groups of female and male caregivers of vulnerable children and adolescents, reaching 10,250 caregivers
	2.2	Conduct household economic analysis and provide 14,995 selected households with CVA and NFI support
	2.3	Provide garden start-up kits, food distribution and access to self-help savings groups for 3,760 adolescents and caregivers
3. Strengthened community-level child protection mechanisms to provide protective environments for vulnerable children and adolescents, promote positive social and gender norms, and prevent and respond to violence	3.1	Conduct 180 participatory community mapping exercises with community stakeholders
	3.2	Identify 317 existing or new community-level child protection groups and networks and provide capacity building to a total of 3,476 members
	3.3	Support 541 community-level child protection groups and networks through financial and material support

4. Vulnerable children and adolescents, including children associated with armed groups and armed forces, child labourers, and child survivors of SGBV, receive access to specialised child protection services, including timely, quality case management services and referrals to multi-sectoral services	4.1	Update and strengthen 105 local child protection referral pathways
	4.2	Provide case management services to 7,830 children who have experienced protection incidents
5. Improved child protection coordination through strategic planning, information sharing, capacity-building, and strengthening standard operating procedures in order to improve humanitarian programming for vulnerable children and reduce protection risks to children	5.1	Train 865 non-child protection sectoral staff, including health, food security, livelihoods, nutrition, camp management and education actors, on child protection mainstreaming
	5.2	Participate in 218 humanitarian coordination group meetings, such as Child Protection sub-cluster and related working groups
	5.3	Establish 107 child-friendly help desks in refugee, IDP and host communities
6. Global, regional and national-level child protection and food security actors are equipped with strengthened evidence, programmatic tools and advocacy for integrated child protection and food security responses that promote children's and adolescents' protection and wellbeing	6.1	Organise 3 country-level workshops with child protection and food security practitioners
	6.2	Develop a global online training package for child protection and food security practitioners
	6.3	Conduct data collection exercises on evidence on linkage between food security and child protection

Table A3: The locally relevant child protection risks by country and implementing partner

	Plan International Bangladesh			**World Vision Bangladesh**		
	Baseline set	Mid-term set	Joint set	Baseline set	Mid-term set	Joint set
1	Abduction	Abduction	Abduction	Child labour	Abduction	Abduction
2	Child labour	Child labour	Child labour	Intra family conflicts	Child labour	Child labour
3	Child marriage	Child marriage	Child marriage	Legal status	Child marriage	Child marriage
4	Neglect	Substance abuse	Neglect	Substance abuse	Intra family conflicts	Intra family conflicts
5	Separation from family	Violence	Separation from family	Violence	Violence	Legal status
6			Substance abuse			Substance abuse
7			Violence			Violence

	ChildFund Burkina Faso			**Terre des Hommes Burkina Faso**		
	Baseline set	Mid-term set	Joint set	Baseline set	Mid-term set	Joint set
1	Child labour	Child marriage	Child labour	Intra family conflicts	Neglect	Intra family conflicts
2	Child marriage	Neglect	Child marriage	Migration	Substance abuse	Migration
3	FGM	Violence	FGM	Neglect	Violence	Neglect
4	Neglect		Neglect	Violence	War	Substance abuse
5	Violence		Violence	War		Violence
6						War

	SOS CAR			**Plan International CAR**		
	Baseline set	Mid-term set	Joint set	Baseline set	Mid-term set	Joint set
1	FGM	Child labour	Child labour	FGM	FGM	FGM
2	Intra family conflicts	Child marriage	Child marriage	Legal status	Neglect	Legal status
3	Legal status	Legal status	FGM	Neglect	Violence	Neglect
4	Neglect	Neglect	Intra family conflicts	Teenage parenthood		Teenage parenthood
5	Violence	Violence	Legal status	Violence		Violence
6			Neglect			
7			Violence			

	Terre des Hommes Colombia			SOS Colombia		
	Baseline set	Mid-term set	Joint set	Baseline set	Mid-term set	Joint set
1	Migration	Child labour	Child labour	Intra family conflicts	Intra family conflicts	Intra family conflicts
2	Neglect	Child marriage	Child marriage	Migration	Migration	Migration
3	Substance abuse	Migration	Migration	Neglect	Neglect	Neglect
4	Teenage parenthood	Neglect	Neglect	Separation from family	Violence	Separation from familY
5	War		Substance abuse	Violence		Violence
6			Teenage parenthood			
7			War			

	ChildFund Ethiopia			Save the Children Ethiopia		
	Baseline set	Mid-term set	Joint set	Baseline set	Mid-term set	Joint set
1	Child labour	Abduction	Abduction	Child labour		
2	Child marriage	Child labour	Child labour	Child marriage		
3	Neglect	Cultural practices	Child marriage	Cultural practices		
4	Trauma	Separation from family	Cultural practices	Migration		
5	Violence	Substance abuse	Neglect	Violence		
6			Separation from family			
7			Substance abuse			
8			Trauma			
9			Violence			

	Save the Children South Sudan			World Vision South Sudan		
	Baseline set	Mid-term set	Joint set	Baseline set	Mid-term set	Joint set
1	Abduction	Abduction	Abduction	Child marriage	Child labour	Child labour
2	Child marriage	Child labour	Child labour	Neglect	Child marriage	Child marriage
3	Neglect	Child marriage	Child marriage	Teenage parenthood	Neglect	Neglect
4	Trauma	Neglect	Neglect	Trauma	Substance abuse	Substance abuse
5	Violence	Violence	Trauma	Violence		Teenage parenthood
6			Violence			Trauma
7						Violence

Table A4: The applied grouping strategy to cluster perceived relevance and budget allocations

Level 1 refers to activities with children and young people; level 2 to activities aimed at caregivers; level 3 to community-focused activities

Budget data		
Activity		Level
1.1	Awareness-raising sessions	1 – children
1.2	Life skills groups	1
1.3	Safe spaces	1
1.4	Psychosocial support and psychological first aid	1
1.5	Dignity kits	2 – caregivers
2.1	Parenting sessions	2
2.2	Cash vouchers and NFIs	2
2.3	Garden start-up kits, food distribution and savings groups	2
3.1	Participatory community mapping exercises	3 – communities
3.2	Capacity building to child protection groups	3
3.3	Financial and material support to child protection groups	3
4.1	Supporting local child protection referral pathways	3
4.2	The provision of case management services	3
5.1	Child protection mainstreaming	removed
5.2	The participation in coordination groups	removed
5.3	The establishment of help desks	3

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