



Joining Forces for Food Security and Child Protection in Emergencies

JF-FS&CPIe

Global Consolidated Midterm Review Report

Countries covered: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Ethiopia and South Sudan
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This Global Consolidated Midterm Review (MTR) synthesizes qualitative findings from Burkina Faso, Bangladesh, the Central African Republic (CAR), Ethiopia, and South Sudan within the Joining Forces for Food Security and Child Protection in Emergencies (JF-FS&CPIE) project. The report reflects the project's integrated multi-pillar approach (Food Security & Livelihoods; Child Protection; Advocacy & Institutional Strengthening) and draws on a harmonized participatory methodology guided by the global MEAL framework. The midterm reflection workshops were facilitated across all countries by the consortium's Global Coordination Team.

Overall trajectory. Across the five countries, implementation is on a positive trajectory. National teams report: (i) greater household resilience and more inclusive livelihood opportunities, (ii) stronger community-based child protection mechanisms, with improved detection, referral and psychosocial support, and (iii) increased policy engagement and coordination with authorities and humanitarian clusters. The consortium model continues to add value: it encourages coherence across sectors, reduces duplication, and amplifies a common voice on child rights in crisis contexts.

What stands out.

- Integration works. When food security and child protection are designed together and grounded in community structures, results are more durable and equitable, particularly for women and adolescent girls.
- Community ownership is growing. Mechanisms for feedback and complaints (CFFM), child clubs, and local child protection structures are increasingly active and trusted.
- Adaptive management is visible. Implementing partners are adjusting activities to access constraints, seasonal dynamics, and lessons emerging from reflection workshops.
- Persistent constraints. Field teams face access and security challenges (notably in Burkina Faso and CAR), staff turnover, variable data quality between partners, and workload peaks tied to seasonality and competing emergencies. Despite this, validation workshops and cross-country exchanges have helped maintain quality and a learning culture.

Strategic implications for the final phase. The MTR recommends:

1. Deepening integration between livelihood support and child protection to maximize protective outcomes;
2. Standardizing MEAL tools and formulas across countries for consistent analysis and final evaluation and endline readiness;
3. Sustaining community accountability (CFFM, child participation) with clear feedback loops into programming;
4. Documenting promising practices and producing short, practical guidance for replication;
5. Sequencing final-phase actions around access windows, partner capacity, and final evaluation and endline data needs.

The report adopts a purely qualitative narrative approach, drawing directly on the voices, observations, and insights captured during the midterm reflection workshops and MEAL reviews across the four implementing countries. Rather than presenting statistical figures or quantitative indicators, it focuses on the stories of change, operational dynamics, and collective learning emerging from field implementation, such as how community committees maintained child protection services amid insecurity in Burkina Faso, how livelihood coaching improved household stability in Ethiopia, how adolescent peer groups strengthened child participation in Bangladesh, and how mobile child protection teams enhanced access to remote communities in the Central African Republic. This narrative format makes the report not only a synthesis of progress but also a strategic learning product, guiding the final phase of implementation and shaping the design of the upcoming final evaluation and endline.

Key takeaways

- **Integration of CP-FS is driving more durable, equitable outcomes, especially for women and adolescent girls.**
- **Community ownership is strengthening via CFFM, child/youth clubs and local protection structures.**
- **Adaptive management is visible across countries; reflection workshops inform real-time course correction.**





1 Introduction

1.1 Project overview and context

The Joining Forces for Food Security and Child Protection in Emergencies (JF-FS&CPiE) project represents the second phase of the Joining Forces for Child Protection in Emergencies (JF-CPiE) initiative, funded by the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO). This new phase builds upon the solid foundations laid during the first phase, expanding its scope to address the interlinkages between food security and child protection in humanitarian contexts. It acknowledges that when basic needs, particularly access to food, are not met, the risks of violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children and adolescents increase significantly.

The project seeks to reduce these risks by integrating actions that strengthen both household food security and protective community systems, ensuring that vulnerable children and families can live with safety, dignity, and resilience. Through this dual focus, the consortium aims to tackle the root causes of child protection violations by addressing the economic and social pressures that often drive them.

Implemented across five countries, Burkina Faso, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan, the project is being carried out from July 2024 to August 2026. It operates in fragile and crisis-affected settings where conflict, displacement, and climate shocks continue to erode livelihoods and undermine social structures. Within these contexts, the initiative





contributes to restoring stability, self-reliance, and child protection through coordinated humanitarian and early-recovery interventions.

As in the first phase, the project is delivered by the six organizations that compose the Joining Forces Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children, World Vision, SOS Children's Villages, Terre des Hommes, and ChildFund Alliance. Each country programme is implemented through consortium members and their national partners, in close coordination with local authorities and community-based structures to ensure that interventions remain locally owned, context-specific, and sustainable.

Plan International Germany continues to serve as the lead agency, providing overall management, technical oversight, and coordination of the global MEAL system to guarantee consistency, learning, and accountability across all five countries.

1.2 Purpose of the midterm review

The Midterm Review (MTR) was conducted halfway through implementation, during the fifth project quarter, to reflect on collective progress,

identify what is working well, and decide how to strengthen delivery for the remaining period.

The review did not aim to measure progress against the logframe indicators (which rely on quantitative monitoring data to be verified during the final evaluation and endline). Instead, it provided a space for learning and strategic reflection, helping partners to capture lessons from practice and adjust course where needed.

Specifically, the MTR sought to:

- Assess progress and overall direction, highlighting qualitative evidence of change across the two pillars, Child Protection and Food Security with an Institutional Strengthening;
- Identify cross-country trends and shared challenges that can inform adaptive management;
- Capture good practices, innovations, and learning for replication within and beyond the consortium;
- Refine strategic priorities for the final phase and strengthen readiness for the final evaluation and endline planned for mid-2026.

Within this framework, each country team organized a midterm reflection workshop that gathered implementing partners, government officials, community representatives, and, where possible, children and adolescents themselves. These inclusive sessions enabled an open dialogue on progress, constraints, and practical solutions for enhancing programme effectiveness and impact.

1.3 Scope and audience

This Global Consolidated Report synthesizes the qualitative insights and collective learning emerging from the five available country reviews, Burkina Faso, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan.

Intended primarily for the German Federal Foreign Office, the Joining Forces governance bodies, and the national implementation teams, this document serves three purposes:

- To provide a comprehensive narrative overview of project achievements to date;
- To present cross-country analysis and strategic insights that guide decision-making for the remaining quarters; and
- To serve as a reference framework for preparing the final evaluation and endline and future multi-country programming under the Joining Forces Alliance.



What this midterm reflection does?

Integration Midterm learning product: qualitative synthesis to guide final-phase decisions.

Focus on CP-FS nexus across five fragile contexts (2024-2026).

Led by the Global MEAL Coordinator, supported by the Global Coordination Team; implemented by Joining Forces members with national partners.

Audience: GFFO, governance bodies, national teams.



2 Methodology

2.1 Approach

The Midterm Reflection Workshops (MTR) were conducted halfway through the implementation of the JF-FS&CPiE project, during the fifth project quarter between June and September 2025 following a standardized methodology across the five implementing countries. This timing allowed country teams and stakeholders to take a strategic pause, to collectively assess the implementation, validate learning, identify needed adjustments, and prepare the next stages of the project.

As in Phase 1, the workshops were designed and coordinated at the global level by the Global MEAL Coordinator, ensuring methodological coherence and comparability across all five implementing countries. The approach remained participatory, reflective, and learning-driven, rather than evaluative, emphasizing the generation of collective insight and actionable learning.

The methodology combined appreciative inquiry, evidence-based group reflection, and peer

learning, structured around a metaphor of a collective journey:

- The destination symbolizing the shared goal, reducing major child-protection risks in contexts marked by food insecurity;
- The road already traveled representing the first year of implementation, with its progress, good practices, and challenges and;
- The road ahead pointing to the next phase, where lessons and decisions from the reflection will guide the project's direction.

Within this framework, monitoring systems acted as the project's compass, helping teams verify that their trajectory remained aligned with objectives and accountability commitments.

The participatory sessions held during the Learning Event enriched the qualitative analysis and reinforced community accountability, bringing in perspectives from field actors, including children and adolescents.





How we worked?

Harmonized, participatory workshops (June-Sept 2025) across five countries.

Mixed methods: appreciative inquiry, peer learning, youth participation.

Safeguarding embedded; informed, voluntary participation and confidentiality.

Report from the country teams ensured accuracy and ownership.

Particular attention was given to meaningful youth participation: the initial 20% target will be raised to 40-50% for future reflection.

Moreover, the use of child-friendly feedback mechanisms (CFFM), including digital platforms, enabled real-time adaptation of activities, further consolidating the consortium's adaptive MEAL approach.

2.2 Workshop Objectives

The overarching goal of the workshops was to enable country teams and stakeholders to critically assess implementation progress, validate learning, and prepare for the final project stages.

The specific objectives were to:

1. Capitalize on lessons from the first year of implementation by identifying and analyzing good practices, persistent challenges, and areas for improvement in three priority domains:

- The intervention models developed under Outcome 1 to strengthen the resilience and capacities of children and adolescents affected by crises;

- The integration of project actions into existing national systems for child protection and food security; and

- The quality and depth of children's participation in the design, implementation, and monitoring of activities.

2. Bridge field-level learning with strategic planning by linking findings to the consortium's quality standards and preparing coherent follow-up actions for the remaining project period.

3. Promote experience-sharing within each country and across countries to reinforce collaboration, innovation, and mutual accountability.

4. Formulate actionable recommendations for improving coordination among implementing partners and strengthening the interaction between country teams and the Global Coordination Team.

In practice, each workshop provided a structured space to pause, reflect, and realign, helping participants translate learning into concrete forward-looking actions and renewed collective ownership of project goals.

2.3 Process

The methodology followed a standardized five-step process, adapted from Phase 1 but expanded to encompass the new food security/child protection nexus:

1. Global harmonization of methodology and tools: The Global MEAL Coordinator with

the support the Global Coordination Team, refined and shared a unified methodology pack, including workshop guides, facilitation notes, and a standardized reporting template.

2. National workshop facilitation: Each country consortium held a one and half day participatory workshop involving implementing partners, government actors, community representatives, and where possible, adolescents and youth.

3. Cross-country synthesis and analysis: Findings were consolidated globally to identify trends, good practices, and strategic priorities across all participating countries.

4. Cross-country analysis: The Global MEAL Coordinator consolidated country reports to identify convergences, divergences, and emerging trends.

5. Validation and feedback: results reviewed with IPs to confirm accuracy, ensure ownership, and agree on next steps.

This iterative process combined local ownership with global consistency, reinforcing the consortium's learning culture.



2.4 Ethics and Safeguarding

All workshops and data processes strictly followed the safeguarding policy and the ethical protocol for MEAL. Participation was voluntary, informed, and confidential. Facilitators were trained to ensure that all discussions respected child-safeguarding, gender, and “do-no-harm” principles, and that youth contributions were captured safely and respectfully. All illustrative examples were anonymized to preserve confidentiality.

2.5 Workshop challenges

Despite a standardized global methodology and strong engagement across countries, the midterm reflection workshops encountered several contextual and operational challenges that influenced their implementation.

Security and access constraints were among the most significant limitations. In Burkina Faso and the Central African Republic, persistent insecurity and movement restrictions prevented some participants, particularly from remote and high-risk areas, from attending the in-person sessions.

Similarly, South Sudan faced comparable difficulties due to ongoing instability, which made travel from field locations to Juba extremely challenging, particularly for the Save the Children South Sudan teams, whose movements were often restricted by insecurity and logistical constraints.

Another recurring challenge related to logistical and resource constraints. Organizing

inclusive workshops required the participation of government representatives, consortium partners, community actors, and, where possible, adolescents and youth. Reaching such a diverse group of participants was complex, particularly when they were based in remote or hard-to-reach areas. Consequently, facilitation was coordinated jointly by the Global Coordination Team and the national staff, working closely together to ensure consistency and effective delivery. This arrangement proved practical and efficient under the circumstances, but also demanding, as it required balancing neutral facilitation, technical guidance, and coordination responsibilities within limited time and budgetary resources.

While the diversity of participants was a major strength, bringing together actors of different backgrounds, levels of experience, and perspectives, it also introduced facilitation challenges. Discussions occasionally revealed diverging interpretations, particularly when defining the most pressing food-security or child-protection risks at community level. However, these differences ultimately enriched the debates, fostering a deeper collective understanding of contextual realities and sharpening the focus for the project’s final phase.

Despite these constraints, the workshops were widely recognized by participants as fruitful and transformative spaces for reflection. They generated valuable insights that informed the present global synthesis and strengthened the culture of learning, accountability, and adaptation across all country teams.





2.6 Workshop methodology

Given the objectives of the midterm reflection workshops, a comprehensive and harmonized methodology was developed. Its ultimate purpose was to create a safe, open, and inclusive space for honest discussion among consortium members, government representatives, local partners, and community actors around the project's progress and strategic direction.

At the core of the methodology were a series of interactive and participatory exercises designed to facilitate contribution from diverse stakeholder groups, including technical staff, field practitioners, and, where appropriate, adolescents and community representatives.

These exercises encouraged balanced participation, mutual learning, and reflection on how the project has addressed both food security and child protection concerns in fragile humanitarian contexts.

2.6.1 Workshop structure

Each country organized its reflection workshop using a height-session structure, each lasting approximately 60 to 90 minutes, covering the following themes:

1. Revisiting baseline priorities and child protection risks

Participants revisited findings from the baseline and early monitoring data to validate the relevance of the project's dual focus on food security and child protection.

Through facilitated group work, participants identified which child protection risks and food

insecurity drivers remained most pressing in their contexts and whether new risks had emerged during the first year of implementation.

2. Monitoring and adaptive management

This session focused on collective reflection about monitoring systems, their benefits, constraints, and adaptation needs.

Participants used a SWOT analysis to examine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in data collection and reporting structures, identifying adjustments required to better capture qualitative changes and cross-sectoral outcomes.

3. Program implementation: achievements and gaps

Country teams analyzed progress against planned activities under each pillar (Food and Child Protection).

Discussions highlighted what worked well, the contextual enablers behind success, and areas requiring intensified efforts or alternative strategies.

4. Challenges and risk mitigation

Participants reviewed the operational and contextual challenges encountered during the first year, including access constraints, supply chain issues, and coordination gaps, and collectively formulated adaptive measures for the next quarters.

This session provided the opportunity to link local realities with broader consortium risk-management strategies.

5. Learning and forward planning

This session invited participants to step back and connect learning from the previous sessions to strategic priorities for the remaining project period.

Teams reflected on how lessons from implementation, coordination, and community engagement could inform the upcoming final evaluation and endline preparation and sustainability planning.

6. Consolidation of lessons learnt and recommendations

Throughout the workshop, facilitators maintained a “learning wall” or “parking lot” where emerging insights were captured.

In the final session, these insights were synthesized into a structured list of lessons learned and recommendations, focusing on:

- Improving integration between food security and child protection interventions,
- strengthening accountability and participation mechanisms, and
- enhancing coordination between country teams and the Global Coordination structure.

2.6.2 Reporting and validation

At the end of each workshop, implementing partners compiled summary reports using the global reporting template provided by the global coordination team. These reports were submitted to the global level, serving as the primary source for this consolidated synthesis.

To validate and deepen understanding of key findings, follow-up discussions were held with country teams, allowing clarification of contextual nuances and ensuring accuracy of the consolidated narrative.





3 Key trends within workshop findings

Across the five countries where midterm reflection workshops were conducted, the process generated deep insights into how the JF-FS&CPiE project has evolved midway through its second phase. Despite very different operating environments, from the densely populated refugee camps of Cox's Bazar to the conflict-affected localities of Kaya, Bossangoa, and Afar, the same participatory framework guided the workshops. Participants were invited to reflect on what had been achieved, where bottlenecks persisted, and how to transform learning into stronger, context-sensitive actions for the remainder of the project.

The sessions unfolded as interconnected conversations rather than discrete modules. Discussions on progress naturally led to debates on monitoring challenges, which in turn stimulated reflections on partnership dynamics, community participation, and the interplay between food security and child protection outcomes. The cumulative narrative that emerged from these dialogues offers a textured picture of implementation across countries: one of steady progress amid adversity, with each consortium adapting creatively to contextual pressures while staying anchored in the project's integrated approach.

What emerged?

Shared progress under adversity; integration of CP-FS is now standard practice.

Participation and accountability mechanisms deepened trust and relevance.

Monitoring gaps persist (capacity, consistency) but are narrowing through joint reviews.

Country teams request more joint supervision and cross-partner learning.

3.1 Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, the reflection workshop brought together national consortium members, WeWorld (member of ChildFund Alliance) and Terre des Hommes, alongside local partners, government child-protection authorities, and community representatives. ChildFund and WeWorld (member of ChildFund Alliance) and Terre des Hommes jointly organized the national midterm reflection workshop in Ouagadougou, with the participation of 42 stakeholders, including, 26 men, and 16 women.

The security situation, particularly in the northern and eastern regions, constrained mobility and limited in-person attendance, yet participation remained vibrant. Stakeholders recognized that the project had succeeded in embedding itself within community structures, ensuring continuity of activities even in hard-to-reach areas.

Participants opened the discussions by revisiting the baseline findings. They observed that the combined effects of conflict, displacement, and food scarcity continued to expose children, especially girls, to early marriage, transactional sex, and child labour. However, community-level awareness and engagement mechanisms had become stronger since the project's inception. Village Child Protection Committees now played a greater role in identifying at-risk children and referring them to appropriate services. The integration of livelihood support with protective actions, such as savings groups for women and caregivers, was widely cited as a turning point. These initiatives not only improved household resilience but also contributed to preventing negative coping strategies like child separation and migration.

As the conversation deepened, monitoring and evidence management emerged as a priority theme. While data collection remained consistent, participants noted difficulties in real-time validation due to connectivity gaps and staff turnover in volatile zones. The MEAL Managers emphasized that the introduction of digital feedback mechanisms under the Community Feedback



and Complaint Mechanism (CFFM) had helped improve accountability, though literacy barriers sometimes limited its full use. Stakeholders recommended increasing joint monitoring visits between child protection and livelihood staff to better capture the multidimensional nature of outcomes.

In reviewing challenges, participants identified restricted access as the primary constraint, but they also celebrated adaptive strategies, such as working through youth volunteers and mobile teams, to sustain presence in red-zone areas. These local adaptations illustrated how flexibility, combined with community trust, allowed the project to advance its objectives despite insecurity.

The session on learning and future planning closed on an optimistic tone. Partners committed to strengthening inter-agency coordination, particularly around social-child protection linkages with government programs. The overall reflection highlighted that Burkina Faso's consortium had internalized the integrated child protection-and-food-security model and was now using it as a standard for cross-sector humanitarian response.

CP committees more proactive; VSLA + CP awareness reduced negative coping.

Access/security constraints persist; mobile/youth-led adaptations sustain reach.

Priority: joint CP-livelihood monitoring to evidence multidimensional outcomes.

3.2 Bangladesh

The Bangladesh reflection workshop gathered

project staff from World Vision and Plan International, child-protection focal points from Camp Coordination, youth representatives, and humanitarian partners. A total of 62 participants attended, comprising, 22 women, and 40 men. Its atmosphere was both reflective and dynamic, illustrating the maturity of implementation after more than a year of intense activity in a complex humanitarian setting.

Participants began by assessing progress under the child-protection pillar. They recognized that psychosocial-support services, adolescent clubs, and awareness sessions had reached large numbers of children, providing safe spaces amid prolonged displacement. What distinguished this phase, however, was the increased inclusion of adolescents in co-designing activities. Youth representatives explained how their input had shaped the content of life-skills sessions and community dialogues. This participatory approach was celebrated as a critical step toward sustainability and ownership.

As the dialogue shifted to food security and livelihoods, facilitators noted that the link between child protection and basic needs had become increasingly clear. Caregivers participating in income-generation activities reported reduced stress and fewer instances of negative coping mechanisms such as child labour, child marriage or CAAFAG/Online gambling. Nevertheless, participants acknowledged that market-based opportunities remained limited inside the camps, calling for stronger advocacy with humanitarian coordination clusters to expand livelihood options for refugees.

Monitoring discussions revolved around data accuracy and the use of harmonized templates. Bangladesh's consortium had piloted digital data tools that allowed near-real-time reporting of

child-protection incidents and feedback cases. Yet capacity disparities among partner organizations persisted, leading to uneven data quality. To address this, the MEAL team proposed targeted training and periodic joint data-review sessions. Participants also emphasized that feedback channels, especially suggestion boxes and child-friendly help desks, should be maintained throughout the project, even beyond the current funding cycle, as they had proven effective in reinforcing trust.

The final sessions underscored strong collaboration between partners but also revealed the operational fatigue of field staff navigating camp bureaucracy. Participants proposed establishing a cross-partner support network to share stress-management practices and collective advocacy messages. The reflection closed with a shared sense of commitment to keep amplifying children's voices and to ensure that humanitarian coordination mechanisms fully recognize the added value of integrated food-security and child protection programming.

Adolescent co-design strengthened relevance and ownership.

Livelihood support links to reduced child labour/early marriage; camp markets remain a constraint.

Maintain child-friendly feedback channels beyond funding cycles

3.3 Central African Republic

The Central African Republic workshop, held in Bangui, assembled consortium members from Plan International and SOS Children's Villages, alongside child-protection authorities, teachers, social workers, and youth leaders, with 39 participants in total, 6 women, and 33 men. Despite logistical and security obstacles, the event managed to capture voices from both urban and rural areas, providing a holistic view of progress and persistent challenges.

Participants began by recalling the severe humanitarian context: displacement, chronic food shortages, and child protection incidents remain widespread. Yet they also recognized that the project had become a reference point for coordinated child-protection and food-security interventions. The introduction of mobile child protection teams, capable of reaching isolated zones, was cited as a major success. These teams delivered awareness sessions on child rights

and gender-based violence while distributing livelihood kits to caregivers, an approach that effectively combined immediate relief with long-term resilience.

When reflecting on monitoring, participants noted considerable improvements in documentation and reporting. The establishment of an inter-agency MEAL working group facilitated standardization of data tools and periodic learning reviews. Nonetheless, limited internet access and insecurity in some prefectures continued to hamper data transmission. The teams mitigated this by using offline data-collection apps and by scheduling centralized data-upload missions in Bangui.

Discussions on challenges converged on two main issues: sustaining community engagement in unstable areas and ensuring adequate psychosocial support for staff. Many participants emphasized that repeated exposure to trauma among humanitarian workers could erode morale and performance. As a corrective action, partners agreed to include psychosocial support sessions for staff in the next implementation plan, viewing wellbeing as integral to quality programming.

Learning sessions underlined remarkable local ownership. Community leaders reported that training sessions had strengthened their ability to identify at-risk children, while women's groups described how livelihood support had allowed them to feed their families and keep their children in school. Importantly, participants stressed that child-protection interventions could no longer be considered in isolation from food security; the success of one depended on the other. The CAR reflection thus captured the spirit of integration at the heart of JF-FS&CPiE.

3.4 Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the reflection workshop was organized jointly by ChildFund and Save the Children, with participation from local government, community facilitators, and national NGOs, bringing together 47 participants, comprising, 23 women, and 24 men. Despite regional instability and recurrent displacement in Amhara and Afar, the workshop achieved strong representation, symbolizing a resilient spirit of collaboration.

The discussion began with a candid review of achievements since the baseline. Participants highlighted the significant role played by child-friendly spaces and livelihood initiatives in mitigating child protection risks in communities affected by drought and conflict. Integrated



interventions, such as training caregivers on climate-resilient agriculture while linking them to child protection referral pathways, were recognized as innovative. These actions not only restored household income but also helped reduce harmful coping mechanisms like early marriage or child migration in search of work.

Monitoring discussions revealed progress in aligning national MEAL tools with the global framework. Ethiopia's consortium had strengthened internal data flows and reporting timelines, yet still faced inconsistencies in how indicators were interpreted at field level. The workshop therefore recommended a refresher training on indicator definitions and better synchronization between the MEAL and programme teams. Importantly, partners noted that regular reflection spaces between field staff and community representatives had enhanced collective accountability, an encouraging step toward a culture of continuous learning.

Participants reflected on the complexities of operating in conflict-sensitive contexts. Access constraints sometimes delayed activity roll-out, while inflation and market disruptions affected livelihood components. However, the consortium's flexibility, allowing reprogramming

between budget lines, enabled continued support to affected communities. Youth representatives shared compelling testimonies about how vocational-training opportunities had improved their sense of agency and reduced exposure to exploitation.

A rich discussion on lessons learned stressed the importance of balancing emergency response with long-term resilience building. Stakeholders agreed that the next implementation phase should deepen linkages with government social-child protection systems and local food-security networks to ensure continuity beyond project closure. Ethiopia's reflection thus illustrated how adaptive management and systems thinking had become central to implementation practice.

CP-livelihood linkages (incl. climate-smart practices) mitigated risks. Clarify indicator definitions; synchronize MEAL-programme teams. Balance emergency response with resilience and systems linkages.

3.5 South Sudan

In South Sudan, the national reflection workshop was co-facilitated by World Vision and Save the Children, bringing together consortium members, government representatives, Child and Social Welfare, local partner organizations, and community leaders. A total of 38 participants took part in the discussions, including 24 men and 14 women. The event was held in Juba, with remote contributions from field teams operating in Jonglei and Upper Nile, ensuring that diverse regional perspectives were captured despite logistical challenges.

Participants began by reflecting on the project's journey since inception, emphasizing how the JF-FS&CPiE initiative had filled a critical gap in addressing the interlinked challenges of food insecurity and child protection. They acknowledged that recurrent flooding, displacement, and local conflicts continued to disrupt livelihoods and children's exposure to exploitation, neglect, and early marriage. Yet, they also highlighted the project's success in maintaining operations and sustaining service delivery in hard-to-reach areas through community-based structures and adaptive implementation modalities.

Under the child protection component, participants recognized tangible progress in awareness-raising and the establishment of Community-Based Child Protection Networks (CBCPNs). These structures played a central role in identifying at-risk children, supporting referral mechanisms, and organizing psychosocial

activities for survivors. The integration of child protection with food and livelihood interventions was cited as one of the project's most effective strategies. Families benefiting from Mother-to-Mother Support Groups (M2MSGs) and kitchen gardens reported improved nutrition, reduced reliance on negative coping mechanisms, and greater household stability. These approaches also enhanced caregivers' commitment in best breastfeeding and protective practices and strengthened the link between food security and child wellbeing.

On the food security and livelihoods front, the workshop highlighted meaningful improvements in household resilience, particularly where agricultural support was linked to training on child safeguarding. However, challenges persisted in sustaining income-generating activities amid recurrent climate shocks and limited market access. Participants recommended stronger collaboration with local authorities and private-sector actors to develop value-chain opportunities for women and youth.

Monitoring and learning discussions underscored progress in data consistency and documentation, thanks to enhanced collaboration between MEAL and programme teams. Participants emphasized the need to further strengthen community feedback and reporting mechanisms, which had proven instrumental in identifying issues early and improving accountability within the Child Friendly Safe spaces.

The final session concluded with a shared commitment to deepen inter-agency collaboration,





particularly with humanitarian coordination clusters and relevant government structures. Participants agreed that sustaining the integrated approach between child protection and food security will be essential to consolidate the gains achieved so far. They also highlighted the importance of capacity-building for community actors to ensure the ownership and the resilience beyond the project's closure.

Overall, the South Sudan reflection illustrated the project's ability to adapt to fragile and complex settings while maintaining a strong focus on children's wellbeing and the household resilience. The workshop reaffirmed that integration, flexibility, and local participation remain key drivers of impact under the JF-FS&CPiE project.

M2MSGs and kitchen gardens improved nutrition and reduced negative coping.

Strengthen value-chain opportunities for women/youth; reinforce community feedback in CFS.

Maintain integrated CP-FS approach and build local actor capacity for sustainability.

4 Cross-country reflections

Across all five countries, common themes emerged that reveal both the robustness and the adaptability of the JF-FS&CPiE model. First, the integration of child protection and food security

has become widely accepted as a best practice, translating into concrete programme design adjustments such as joint participant targeting and shared community committees. Second, child participation advanced significantly; children and adolescents are no longer passive recipients but active informants influencing priorities and solutions. Third, adaptive management and flexibility were key enablers of progress, allowing each consortium to navigate shocks, security incidents, market volatility, and staff turnover, without losing strategic coherence.

However, the reflections also pointed to areas needing reinforcement. Monitoring systems require continued investment in capacity building to ensure consistency and data reliability. Coordination mechanisms between implementing partners, particularly in multi-partner contexts like Bangladesh and Burkina Faso, should be streamlined to prevent duplication. Finally, mental-health support for both staff and participants emerged as a transversal need, especially in protracted emergencies where chronic stress can compromise resilience.

In sum, the midterm reflections reaffirmed that the JF-FS&CPiE project has moved beyond isolated interventions toward a holistic, community-anchored approach to protecting children amid crisis. Each country's journey demonstrates resilience, innovation, and an evolving understanding that safeguarding children's rights requires addressing the root causes of vulnerability, chief among them, hunger and poverty.

Integration embraced; children/youth shape priorities, not just participate.

Flexibility and after-action reviews improved agility amid shocks.

Invest in MEAL capacity and wellbeing support to sustain quality.

5 Cross-country analysis, lessons, and challenges

At the midpoint of the JF-FS&CPiE project, the collective reflections from Burkina Faso, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan reveal a project that has matured into a cohesive, adaptive, and learning-driven initiative. Despite differing humanitarian realities, several strong thematic convergences emerged across countries, each illustrating the growing integration between child protection, food security, and resilience-building.

While the contexts vary, from protracted armed conflict to long-term displacement and climate shocks, the essence of the project’s approach remains the same: protecting children by addressing both their immediate and structural vulnerabilities. The midterm reflections thus capture not only progress made, but also the ways in which consortium members and communities have internalized the project’s integrated philosophy.

5.1 Integration of child protection and food security

One of the most consistent findings across all five countries is the deepening integration between child protection and food-security programming. Partners and stakeholders consistently emphasized that separating these two components is no longer realistic in crisis contexts.

In Burkina Faso and the Central African Republic, this integration materialized through joint interventions that coupled household support with child protection awareness. For instance, women’s savings groups that received income-generation kits also participated in child-protection dialogues, creating a ripple effect within households and communities. In Ethiopia, livelihood interventions became entry points for child protection discussions, especially through trainings linking agricultural practices with positive parenting and gender equality. Meanwhile, in Bangladesh, the integration took shape through the involvement of adolescents in both child protection and life-skills activities that simultaneously addressed household economic resilience.

This multidimensional approach demonstrated clear protective outcomes. Households that benefited from food-security or livelihood support were less likely to resort to negative coping mechanisms such as early marriage, transactional sex, or child labour. The midterm reflections reaffirmed that economic empowerment is not only a livelihood outcome but also a child-protection strategy.

So, what?

The integration of Child Protection (CP) and Food Security (FS) remains one of the most significant achievements of Phase 2.

It has led to a reduction in negative coping mechanisms and an overall increase in household resilience, confirming the essential link between economic stability and children’s well-being.

Community structures (CBCPNs, M2MSGs, child-led clubs) have proven to be the cornerstone of this integration, ensuring local ownership and more responsive action during crises.

The consortium should further institutionalize joint indicators and reviews to





5.2 Strengthened community engagement and local ownership

Across all contexts, community ownership emerged as a cornerstone of success. The JF-FS&CPiE model promotes not just participation, but genuine co-leadership by communities in identifying risks and solutions.

In Burkina Faso, Child Protection Committees that had been trained in Phase 1 evolved into proactive community platforms, reporting incidents and mobilizing responses in collaboration with social-service structures. In CAR, community leaders described how their participation in project planning had elevated local confidence and accountability; several noted that “child protection is no longer seen as an NGO issue but a community responsibility.”

Bangladesh showcased the transformative role of youth engagement. Adolescents, once treated as participants, are now active co-facilitators of activities, designing peer sessions, managing help desks, and leading feedback discussions. Their participation was not symbolic, it reshaped programme priorities and built long-term ownership. Ethiopia mirrored this approach by integrating community volunteers and local committees in MEAL activities, ensuring that data validation and participant verification were locally driven.

However, sustaining engagement in volatile contexts remains complex. Insecurity, displacement, and economic fatigue often disrupt community networks. To counter this, partners employed flexible outreach models such as mobile teams and satellite meetings. These innovations reaffirmed that proximity and consistency, more than frequency, define effective engagement in crisis settings.

Community-Based Child Protection Networks (CBCPNs), Mother-to-Mother Support Groups (M2MSGs), and child-led clubs have become essential levers of sustainability and community engagement.

These structures facilitate early case detection, referral, and community adherence.

In several fragile contexts, they have ensured activity continuity despite access and security constraints, demonstrating the resilience of the participatory model promoted by the consortium.

5.3 Adaptive management and learning culture

A defining feature of this project phase has been the consolidation of a learning culture. The midterm workshops demonstrated that MEAL

systems are not only tools for accountability but also mechanisms for reflection and adaptation.

All five countries emphasized how regular reviews, cross-partner meetings, and real-time feedback channels have enhanced programme agility. Bangladesh's adoption of digital monitoring templates allowed teams to detect gaps early and adjust activity plans. Ethiopia institutionalized monthly learning sessions between field and national teams, which led to simplified reporting flows and clearer indicator definitions. In Burkina Faso, reflective monitoring exercises revealed gaps in partner coordination and prompted the introduction of joint supervision visits, an innovation now planned for replication in other countries.

The Community Feedback and Complaint Mechanism (CFFM) emerged as one of the most valued tools. Participants across countries noted that it helped build trust and transparency with communities, especially when managed by youth representatives or local volunteers. Beyond its accountability role, the mechanism provided qualitative insights that informed activity redesigns, demonstrating how feedback can directly drive learning and adaptation.

This evolving learning culture underscores a key success factor: the presence of empowered MEAL teams at country level, capable of facilitating dialogue, interpreting data, and bridging operational silos between sectors.

The digital CFFM introduced in Bangladesh and expanded in other countries has significantly enhanced transparency, feedback loops, and real-time learning.

The systematic use of community feedback has informed program adjustments and strengthened trust at the community level.

The adaptive MEAL system emerged as a key practice: teams actively use monitoring data to re-orient programming and document lessons learned, particularly in hard-to-reach areas.

Going forward, countries plan to standardize tools and data flows to strengthen consistency and evidence-based decision-making.

5.4 Coordination and partnership dynamics

The consortium's structure, bringing together six major child-rights organizations, remains both a strength and a challenge. Collaboration between international and national partners has deepened compared to the first phase, yet variations in coordination efficiency persist.

Countries such as Bangladesh and Burkina Faso illustrated strong horizontal collaboration among partners, leading to harmonized tools and joint advocacy. In Ethiopia, vertical coordination with government and local authorities was especially effective, enabling alignment with national child-protection systems and food-security clusters. CAR, meanwhile, highlighted the value of coordination with humanitarian actors outside the consortium, which expanded referral pathways and avoided duplication.

Still, participants identified areas requiring improvement: clarifying partner roles at the sub-national level, streamlining reporting formats, and ensuring that decision-making processes remain inclusive. The midterm reflections confirmed that robust partnership governance, transparent communication, shared accountability, and a culture of collective problem-solving, is indispensable for large multi-agency projects.

5.5 Child participation and empowerment

One of the most encouraging outcomes of the midterm review is the project's growing ability to place children and adolescents at the center of both programming and reflection.

In all five countries, children's perspectives shaped the discussions and the interpretation of findings. They participated not only as informants but as facilitators, evaluators, and advocates. In Bangladesh, adolescent clubs presented their own analysis of challenges and recommendations during the reflection workshop, demonstrating confidence and ownership. In Ethiopia, youth testimonies revealed the psychosocial and economic impact of vocational training, showing how empowerment reduces child protection risks. Burkina Faso and CAR similarly reported that youth engagement improved social cohesion and created role models for peers.

The reflections underscored that meaningful participation requires preparation and safe facilitation. Partners noted that investing in youth mentorship, communication skills, and

safeguarding awareness pays dividends in both programme quality and sustainability. The active role of young people in the MTR workshops symbolized a shift in consortium practice, from doing for children to doing with them.

Partners emphasized the need to simplify cross-cutting frameworks (gender, inclusion, environment) to improve operational ownership.

Future priorities should include:

- Strengthening staff and volunteer training on disability inclusion (visual/hearing impairments);
- Integrating GBV modules into case management systems;

Expanding Early Childhood Development (ECD) in integrated CP-FS programming where feasible;

- Institutionalizing child and youth participation at a target level of 40-50%, with tracking of their qualitative influence on program design.

5.6 Safeguarding and ethical reflection

Safeguarding remained central throughout all workshops. Each country team reported strict adherence to confidentiality and do-no-harm principles. Participants valued that the review process itself modelled ethical engagement, ensuring that sensitive discussions occurred in safe, moderated environments.

In CAR and Burkina Faso, facilitators applied group segregation (youth, community leaders, and staff) to allow freer expression of perspectives. Bangladesh introduced peer-led reflection circles for adolescents, enabling them to discuss sensitive issues such as early marriage or gender-based violence in a secure setting. Ethiopia expanded safeguarding beyond workshops, integrating psychosocial-support components for staff dealing with chronic stress and trauma exposure.

Collectively, these experiences reaffirmed that safeguarding is not limited to compliance; it is an enabler of participation, trust, and quality learning.

In highly constrained contexts (Burkina Faso, CAR, South Sudan), teams adopted flexible delivery strategies, including mobile teams and enhanced community partnerships, to sustain service continuity.

Staff psychosocial support was identified as a critical factor for quality implementation.

Institutionalizing measures for staff well-being and safety will be a key priority in upcoming phases.



5.7 Key cross-cutting lessons

■ The synthesis of reflections yields a set of overarching lessons applicable across the consortium:

■ Integration is transformative when intentional. When food-security activities explicitly include child protection components, they strengthen family stability and reduce violence.

■ Local capacity determines sustainability. Community structures that co-manage activities ensure continuity even when access is limited.

■ Learning thrives in open systems. Regular reflection spaces build confidence, accountability, and innovation among partners.

■ Youth engagement must be institutionalized. Adolescents are not transient participants but long-term partners in achieving social change.

■ Safeguarding extends to staff. Psychological safety for humanitarian workers enhances programme quality.

These lessons now inform the consortium's strategic reorientation for the project's second half, where adaptive management and resilience-based programming will be further reinforced.

5.8 Persistent challenges

Despite progress, several challenges continue to shape implementation. Security instability in parts of Burkina Faso, CAR, and South Sudan restricts field mobility and affects community outreach. Resource limitations, including constrained budgets for workshops and monitoring, challenge the ambition of inclusive reflection spaces. Variations in partner capacity, especially in data management, create discrepancies in reporting and learning consistency.

At the structural level, humanitarian volatility continues to strain staff wellbeing and retention. Many teams operate under protracted stress, which affects morale and turnover. Finally, advocacy limitations within some contexts, such as restricted civic space in Bangladesh and CAR, constrain opportunities to engage government counterparts in policy dialogue.

Nevertheless, these challenges coexist with growing institutional maturity. Partners increasingly rely on adaptive management rather than reactive programming, using evidence from the MTR to inform course corrections in real time. The commitment to continuous improvement, anchored in learning, inclusion, and accountability, has become the project's defining strength.

5.9 Conclusion of the cross-country analysis

The JF-FS&CPiE Midterm Review confirms that the consortium has evolved into a dynamic, evidence-driven alliance capable of working coherently across crises. The integration of child protection and food security has matured from a conceptual innovation into a tested operational model.

Communities, youth, and local authorities are no longer passive recipients of aid but active agents of change shaping interventions to their realities.

The reflections captured across the five countries affirm that progress is not only measurable in outputs but visible in the transformation of relationships, mindsets, and systems. While challenges remain, security, resourcing, and coordination, the consortium's shared learning journey has solidified a collective capacity to adapt, collaborate, and deliver impact where it matters most: ensuring that every child can grow, learn, and thrive in safety, even amid crisis.



6 Keys strategic recommendations and way forward

The JF-FS&CPiE Midterm Review provides a unique opportunity to refine strategies, consolidate learning, and strengthen collective impact for the final implementation period (September 2025 - August 2026).

The recommendations below are drawn from the five national workshops, the cross-country synthesis, and the methodological reflections of the Global MEAL Coordinator. They are presented as actionable directions for programmatic adjustment, operational efficiency, and strategic positioning of the consortium.

6.1 Strengthening the integration of food security and child protection

- Deepen joint targeting and monitoring: Encourage all country consortia to systematize shared participant mapping and joint household follow-up between food security and child teams. This will help ensure that economic interventions directly benefit the most vulnerable children and caregivers.

- Develop integrated indicators: Establish a short set of harmonized qualitative indicators capturing the link between improved household food security and reduced child protection risks.

- Promote local food systems with a child lens: Expand livelihood models that combine agricultural recovery, nutrition education, and

parental engagement to reinforce children's well-being.

- Document impact pathways: Country MEAL teams should map how income-generation or food-security activities translate into child protection outcomes, using participatory storytelling and case documentation.

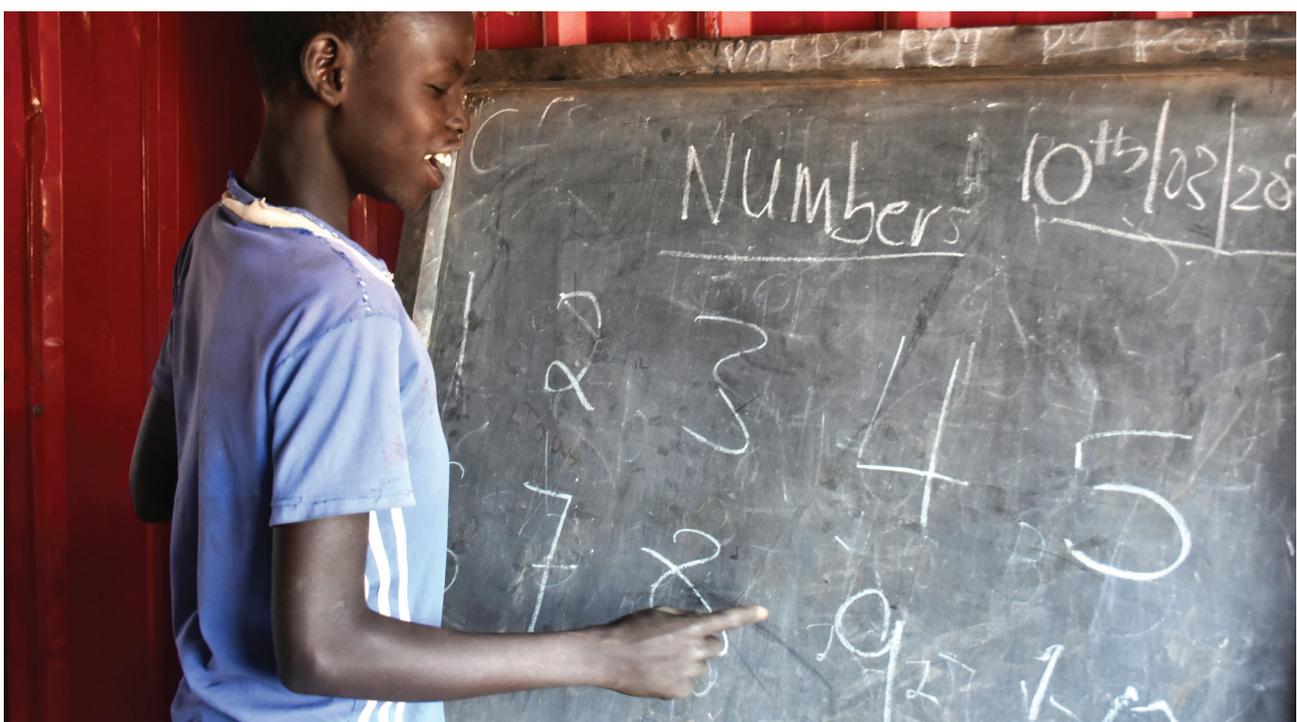
6.2 Enhancing community ownership and sustainability

- Consolidate community-based child protection mechanisms: Support Child Protection Committees and community-based organizations to gradually assume leadership in monitoring and response. This includes tailored capacity-building and structured linkages with local authorities.

- Institutionalize child and youth participation: Establish permanent youth advisory groups at country level, linked to community structures and partner planning meetings. Their role should extend beyond consultation to co-designing and reviewing interventions.

- Localize accountability mechanisms: Strengthen the reach of the CFFM by training community volunteers to manage child-friendly feedback channels in local languages.

- Plan exit strategies early: Develop transition frameworks that outline how community structures will sustain results beyond the project's lifespan, integrating them into government systems or other ongoing programs.



6.3 Enhance inter-agency coordination and engagement with national clusters (CP, FSL, Nutrition) through shared indicators and action plans

- Clarify partner roles: Revise national coordination frameworks to ensure clarity between lead and co-implementing partners, reducing overlaps and reinforcing mutual accountability.

- Enhance cross-country exchange: Institutionalize biannual technical learning sessions between MEAL and program teams across countries to share innovations and lessons on integrated programming.

- Leverage global coordination mechanisms: The Global Coordination Team should maintain periodic review calls to track progress on MTR recommendations, ensuring adaptive management remains a consortium-wide practice.

- Invest in capacity alignment: Provide targeted technical assistance to partners with limited MEAL or reporting capacity to standardize data quality and analysis processes.

6.4 Promote community co-investment models (VSLA/AVEC) to strengthen household livelihoods and project sustainability

6.5 Investing in MEAL and learning systems

- Strengthen the MEAL infrastructure: Expand the use of digital data tools to improve real-time data validation and feedback collection.

- Promote learning loops: Encourage the use of reflective tools such as After-Action Reviews (AARs) and country learning briefs to continuously document emerging practices.

- Advance qualitative learning: Prioritize outcome harvesting and participatory reflection methodologies for the final evaluation and endline to capture behavioral and systems-level changes.

- Integrate safeguarding into MEAL: Standardize safeguarding checks within monitoring protocols to ensure child protection principles are observed across all data-collection exercises.

6.6 Addressing staff well-being and operational resilience

- Institutionalize staff care: Integrate psychosocial support for humanitarian workers within all country workplans, including peer-support groups and counselling partnerships.

- Enhance security protocols: Develop adaptive access strategies and flexible work modalities to safeguard teams in volatile contexts like Burkina Faso and CAR.

- Promote team resilience: Use reflection workshops and staff retreats as opportunities to reinforce solidarity, recognize achievements, and maintain morale.



6.7 Advancing gender, equity, and inclusion

- **Strengthen gender analysis:** Build capacities of MEAL teams to systematically collect and interpret sex- and age-disaggregated data across all pillars.

- **Ensure inclusive participation:** Develop tailored engagement approaches for children with disabilities and marginalized groups, particularly in refugee and remote communities.

- **Mainstream gender-transformative approaches:** Ensure that child protection and food-security interventions address unequal power relations and promote positive masculinities.

6.8 Preparing for the final evaluation and endline

- **Align country MEAL systems:** Each national consortium should review and update its data-collection tools to ensure compatibility with the final evaluation and endline methodology.

- **Bridge qualitative and quantitative evidence:** Combine outcome-tracking data with qualitative evidence from midterm reflections to build a robust baseline for final evaluation and endline comparison.

- **Develop a global evaluation plan:** The Global MEAL Coordination Team will coordinate a unified final evaluation and endline calendar, tools, and ethical review to ensure consistency and rigor across all countries.

- **Use the MTR as a benchmark:** The findings and recommendations presented here will serve as a narrative and analytical baseline for assessing impact and sustainability at final evaluation and endline.



7 Country Highlights

Country	Highlights
Burkina Faso	Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA/AVEC) combined with CP awareness activities strengthened economic resilience and reduced negative coping mechanisms
Bangladesh	Digital CFFM systems and adolescent peer groups improved community trust and promoted co-designed solutions
Ethiopia	Community protection committees are now linked with livelihood initiatives; collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs improved indicator alignment and referral systems
Central African Republic	Mobile protection teams, supported by MEAL officers, extended reach to remote areas. Engagement of community leaders ensured program continuity and accountability
South Sudan	The “One Voice” approach between World Vision and Save the Children successfully operationalized CP-FS-Nutrition integration through kitchen gardens, CFS-based nutrition sessions, and mobile PSS services. Harmonized MEAL tools and regular technical visits enhanced data-driven decision-making, local ownership, and sustainability



8 Implications for the Final Evaluation an endline

The Learning Events confirmed several critical dimensions to be explored in the endline evaluation:

- The link between economic stability and child protection outcomes;
- The extent and influence of youth participation;
- The role of community systems (CBCPNs, M2MSGs, child clubs) in sustaining impact;
- And the extent to which MEAL feedback systems contributed to adaptive management and improved program quality.

These findings will guide the design of the final evaluation, ensuring that it captures both the quantitative outcomes and the qualitative dimensions of community transformation.

9 Conclusion

The Global Consolidated Midterm Review reaffirms that the JF-FS&CPiE project stands as a pioneering multi-country initiative that successfully links humanitarian response with long-term systems strengthening.

By combining food security and child protection, the consortium has moved beyond traditional siloed programming to deliver integrated outcomes that contribute to the well-being of children and their families.

The second phase of the project has demonstrated that learning and accountability are not peripheral functions, they are the driving forces behind

quality and sustainability. The midterm reflections have revealed a dynamic consortium that adapts, collaborates, and learns collectively in the face of evolving challenges.

As the project moves toward its final year, these lessons and recommendations form a clear compass for sustaining impact, deepening integration, and reinforcing the protective systems that ensure every child's right to safety, nourishment, and dignity.

The consortium now operates an integrated, evidence-driven model.

Learning and accountability are core delivery mechanisms, not add-ons.

Final year: deepen integration, protect staff wellbeing, and cement community ownership.

Goal: sustained child safety, nourishment, and dignity beyond project close.

10 Annexes (Outline)

Annex 1. Global midterm review methodology framework

Annex 2. Country workshop reports and participant profiles

Annex 3. Photos and illustrative stories from the workshops





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