Redd Barna

LEAVING NO CHILD BEHIND

**NORAD PROGRESS REPORT
2019 – 2022**

**FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT
2019-2023**

QZA-18/0373

Contents

Reader's Information

This is a progress report, covering the implementation period from January 2019 to December 2022. The report focuses on presenting an overview of the achievements, challenges, and learnings gained so far, taking into consideration that 2022 was a "stabilization" year in which program implementation could be rolled out according to original plans, after the disruptions generated by the pandemic. We will explain how the programs have been adapted to respond to the findings and recommendations from the mid-term review (MTR) in 2021 and assess, to the degree this is possible, the results that can already be seen and their expected effects on society. We also share new insights and learnings from qualitative studies carried out in 2022 and other country-led studies, evaluations or other forms of knowledge generation that have taken place after the MTR. This report should be seen alongside the mid-term report submitted last year with data collected to report on progress at outcome level. We are not providing new data in this report as outcome level data will only be collected again at end-line (2023).

The report is structured into 5 chapters, starting with an executive summary in which we address the key questions from Norad's latest reporting instructions from February 2022: brief account on progress as described in the agreement, significant deviations and risks. This information is further elaborated on in the body of the report. The first chapter presents the overarching analysis of achievements and challenges, learnings from MTR and adaptations to programs. This is done for each of the issues/core thematic areas and for the cross-cutting issues under chapter two. In chapter three we then present country specific updates, following the same logic of achievements, challenges, learnings, and brief on materialized risks. Chapter four of the report presents an assessment of sustainability of results and concrete learnings from the reporting period, that will be taken forward in the next framework application to Norad. In the last chapter, we summarize how country programmes have utilized MTR learnings and key findings from evaluations/ studies finalized in 2022.

The "Leaving no Child Behind" program contributes to the following Sustainable Development Goals: Issue 1: 4 Quality Education; Issue 2: 3 Health, 5 Gender Equality, 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; and Issue 3: 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. In addition, under cross-cutting issues: 5 Gender Equality, 10 Reduce Inequalities, 13 Climate Action and 17 Role of partnerships to achieve sustainable development.

Acronyms

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children
ASCATED	Association of Training and Technical Assistance in Education and Disability
ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
ASRHR	Adolescents Sexual Reproductive Health Rights
BL	Baseline
BLN	Basic Literacy and Numeracy
BRICE	Building Resilience in Crisis through Education
CAAC	Children Affected by Armed Conflict
CBCPM	Community-based child protection mechanisms
CBE	Community-based education
CCSA	Child-centred social accountability
CEG	Community Education Committees
CFLG	Child-Friendly Local Governance
CMC	Community Mobilisation Committee
COP	United Nations climate change conference
CP	Child Protection
CRC	Committee on the Rights of the Child
CRG	Child Rights Governance
CRM	Complaint Response Mechanism
CRPD	Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSW	Community Social Worker
CWC	Child Welfare Committees
CwD	Children with Disabilities
CZOP	Children Zone of Peace
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DSC	District Steering Committee
DSI	District Schools Inspectors
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECD	Early Child Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EiE	Education in Emergencies
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
EVAC	Fund to End Violence Against Children
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FRI SIP	Functional Risk-Informed School Improvement Plans

HBL	Home-Based Learning
ILET	Improving Learning Environments Together
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LSCO	Local Civil Society Organisations
LWiE	Learning and Well-being in Emergency
MT	Midterm
NHRI	National Human Rights Institutions
NiEP	National Inclusive Education Policy
OPD	Organisation of Persons with Disabilities
PAT	Partner Assessment Tool
PDEP	Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting
PDET	Positive Discipline in Everyday Teaching
PFA	Psychological First Aid
PHP	Physical and humiliating punishment
PSEAH	Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment
PSS	Psychosocial Support
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
PWG	Partnership Working Group
PwV	Parenting without Violence
QLE	Quality Learning Environment
QLF	Quality Learning Framework
SC	Save the Children
SCN	Save the Children Norway
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SLaM	School Leadership and Management
SMC	School Management Committee
SNAP	Student Needs Action Pack
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health, and Rights
STAR	Societies Tackling AIDS Through Rights
SZoP	Schools as Zones of Peace
T4D	Technology for Development
TDP	Territorial Development Plan
ToTs	Training of Trainers
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
VDC	Village Development Committees
WCPC	Ward Child Protection Committees
WGQ	The Washington Group Questions

FOREWORD

This foreword is being written whilst I am "locked down" in Gaza. I came here together with SCN's Board of Directors to visit the children, partners, staff and projects which we support but within a few hours of our arrival the Israeli military started bombing targets in Gaza and the border was closed. Whilst we were aware that this was a risk it was nevertheless a shock and surprise when it did happen. There was no prior warning, and the sense of unpredictability and unrest was palpable. For the children of Gaza this is their everyday life. They attend school, learn and dream of a better future, all whilst living under the constant threat of bombardment. This is also the reality for millions of children around the world, and it's only getting worse. More and more children are living in war and conflict, having to flee their homes, going to bed hungry, dealing with the effects of extreme weather and not least growing up in an increasingly polarized world.

Despite this, and all the challenges this brings I am very proud to be able to highlight some of the results we have seen from the Norad supported programmes during the past year, and which build on our midterm reporting from last year.

We have reached over half a million children in over 1,000 schools during the past year and have been able to upgrade over 1,200 classrooms. Our safe back to school campaigns have led to increases in the numbers of children attending schools and although huge gaps still exist, children are starting to recoup some of the learning losses they experienced during Covid-19. We have contributed to inclusive education policies and strategies in countries such as Mozambique, South Sudan and Malawi to ensure those children most discriminated against, have their rights to a quality education met. Our work to support girls and boys affected by teenage pregnancies and child marriage has seen us supporting the Ministry of Education in Uganda to revise guidelines relate to these issues and roll them out to supported schools. In Malawi we worked specifically with fathers to challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes which has seen improvements in programme results.

A core element of our work with support from Norad is to strengthen civil society to hold duty bearers to account, and during the past years we have collaborated with over 130 local civil society partners to do just this. Furthermore, we have supported children's clubs and networks to participate themselves in dialogue with decision makers as well as those championing children's rights. It was incredibly motivating to see the establishment of a National Online Platform in Myanmar with the goal of continuing children empowerment and regular consultations with children on the issues that they faced under the new context following the coup. In 2022, these children had an opportunity to meet with UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Myanmar and presented child rights violations and their recommendations. These are reflected in the Special Rapporteur's June 2022 report.

There are more examples like these in the report and I would like to end by thanking Norad for their support during 2022 and for the continued partnership we have on advancing children's rights. As a hear the drones and distant bombs, I am very thankful that we share a common vision on a better and safer world for children.

Birgitte Lange

Birgitte Lange
CEO of Save the Children Norway

Nepalese children at school.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After the pandemic affected program implementation and forced us to find alternatives to program delivery, in 2022 most countries could roll-out their planned activities and catch up on many of the tasks not accomplished in previous years. The exception to this has been Myanmar, where the current political context has demanded enormous capacity to adapt the planned interventions. Without ignoring the enormous challenges that a disruptive year of pandemic has posed for the program; we would like to build on the enormous learnings for the years to come. In that spirit we present this progress report.

To achieve the objective of the program Leaving no child behind, the backbone of all Save the Children's interventions are our working principles of gender and disability inclusion, partnerships, child participation, advocacy and climate and the environment. Our work to promote inclusion of children with **disabilities** has over the past 4 years focused on key areas such as awareness raising among pro-

gramme staff and the communities, building capacity to collect data and generate knowledge, and enabling more children with disabilities into the regular education system, with an increase in enrolment in 8 of 11 reporting countries. During the reporting period we have seen some significant progress in relation to the international legal mechanisms on the rights of persons with disabilities, from countries ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), to the passing of laws and establishment of governmental entities to promote disability rights.

We have also seen a steady improvement in **gender** mainstreaming throughout the Norad program. The MTR showed that all country offices (COs) are collecting sex-disaggregated data and there is increased awareness to promoting gender balance among staff, teachers and volunteers, and that they are concerned with women and girls' equal participation in program activities. One of the major chal-

lenges presented by the pandemic was the increase in child marriage and teenage pregnancies. The programs in Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, Niger and Nepal have worked tirelessly to strengthen the rights of girls at risk of getting married or pregnant and drop out of school, with a wide variety of activities ranging from targeted back to school campaigns, community engagement, to adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights (ASRHR) interventions. We are starting to see results, like increased identification and support for children and youth after child-marriage and teenage pregnancies and increased re-enrolment in schools.

Partnerships with local civil society and governmental institutions is at the core of the Norad program, to ensure sustainability of our investments and the realization of children's rights. To this end, the programme has so far collaborated with 174 partners, of which 41 are government entities and 133 are local civil society organizations (LCSOs). The programmes have also established strategic collaborations with 9 organizations of people with disabilities (OPDs) or disability specialist organizations. Capacity strengthening plans have been developed and rolled out with 95 of the 133 LCSOs we have collaborated during the reporting period (2019-2022).

We are witnessing the results of the program interventions, with children, local communities, partners and Governments leveraging our contributions beyond the Norad program areas, indicating systems-level change. Partnerships at all levels are successfully contributing to creating lasting change for children and have increased capacities and skills to work for the fulfilment of children's rights in their countries. Furthermore, children themselves, parents, and local communities are establishing or finding arenas of collaboration and action to promote children's rights.

The financial report for 2022 shows that 98% of the budget was utilized, that is 268MNOK out of a total project budget of 275MNOK. Program expenditure in 2022 was 56% on education; 13% on Child Protection and Child Rights governance respectively, 10% on M&E and 8% on shared support costs. Major deviations beyond 20% budget flexibility are seen in under-expenditure at head-quarter level, due to postponed evaluations and activities, and in travel costs at CO level due to higher fuel costs and inflation.

Highlights of achievmenet per thematic issues

Issue 1: Children learn and are safe
Based on the results of the MTR, it became clear that the programmes should focus on children's learning losses and further strengthen access to education and learning for children experiencing exclusion, like girls and boys with disabilities. Across the world SC supported governments at national and local level in their 'safe back to school' campaigns with a focus on increasing access also for children that had been excluded or not enrolled before. SC with partners in local education committees and with Ministry of Education shared Covid-19 prevention messages and the importance of re-enrolment and continued learning. Campaigns were held door-to-door, and through media (radio, TV and loudspeakers on vehicles). Special focus was to ensure that also children with disabilities and their caregivers concerns were answered to by supporting schools and training teachers on inclusive pedagogy.

> **Overall, this has resulted in higher enrolment figures in 9 of 11 reporting countries[1] of nearly 30% compared to 2021. In total close to 530,000 children (G:50%/ B:50%) were enrolled in schools in 2022.**

Addressing inclusion from an integrated approach perspective requires close collaboration among different stakeholders and across sectors. In **Somalia, Mozambique** and **Uganda**, the partnership with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) have been further strengthened thanks to the collaboration in the Together for Inclusion (TOFI) programme, around enrolment campaigns, identification and screening and referral to specialized services. Similar approaches were seen in **Myanmar** and **Mozambique** where education and protection services teamed up with OPDs to ensure that children with disabilities are referred to relevant service providers for support and follow up. In **Nepal, Malawi** and **South Sudan** education and health work hand in hand to conduct disability and support referrals when needed.
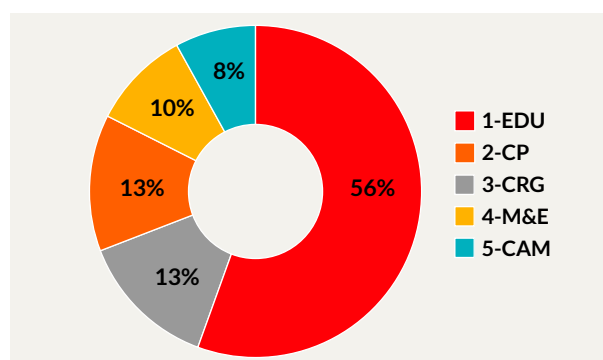
Total expenditure per thematic area in 2022

Legend:
- 1-EDU — 56%
- 2-CP — 13%
- 3-CRG — 13%
- 4-M&E — 10%
- 5-CAM — 8%

---

1 All countries part of the framework agreement, except for Myanmar where enrolment data is not available.

After the pandemic the number of children in need of alternatives to formal education and remedial or catch-up classes increased significantly, and yet education systems struggled with economic (**Lebanon, Somalia**) or political constraints (**Myanmar**). Norad programmes have offered remedial classes for struggling learners, summer catch-up camps and other alternatives such as community-based education in **Myanmar**. Attention to children's wellbeing and need for recreational activities in a context of escalating instability and violence has also been key in programme interventions (**Palestine, Colombia**). Following MTR findings, some of the Norad programs have worked towards increasing male involvement (especially fathers) in their children's learning and improve male participation within the broader program activities (**Lebanon, Colombia, Malawi**).

Mother tongue-based Multilingual education is also a core in ensuring children's right to learn. In countries like **Guatemala** and **Mozambique**, Norad programmes apply mother-tongue strategies in the training of teachers, to be used as supportive means of instructions in the multilingual contexts where the official language is seldom spoken by marginalized (rural) communities. In **Guatemala**, education materials for all levels of primary education, including teachers' guidance, have been adapted, contextualized, and developed for teaching and learning, all based on the competencies outlined in the national curriculum. The Norad program has also contributed to the translation and contextualization of large parts of the national curriculum in mother tongue.

The promotion of *safe learning environments* is a priority for all education interventions under the Norad program.

> **In Myanmar SC noted that 88% of the children (G: 85%; B: 88%) reported to feel safe in the community-based education in 2021, a remarkable difference from 15% (G:20%; B: 9%) reporting likewise when attending formal schools at baseline (2019).**
>
> **In Somalia, all 47 schools supported under Norad have now an adequate and functional child-friendly reporting mechanism such as helplines and suggestion boxes being rolled out and supported by Community Education Committees (CEC's) and programme, witnessing higher reporting by children as expected.**
>
> **The programme in Colombia has worked with teachers and students to break gender stereotypes and promote gender sensitivity and diversity in the classrooms. Several schools report that this has resulted in less bullying related to gender issues and sexual orientation, less absence from schools, and lower suicide attempt rates among students.**

All countries are advancing their activities to support *teachers' professional development (TPD)*. In **Mozambique**, a new approach to TPD has been adopted, combining expert-led training, coaching, classroom observations, and peer learning through learning circles. In **Malawi**, the Inclusive Education training programme was changed from occasional week-long courses to a set of module-based courses consisting of on-going short workshops (3hours) followed by an eight-week period of practice through self-directed and peer learning activities, and coach-led classroom observation and mentoring. Compared to one-off teacher support sessions, this TPD course design appears to be more effective in leading to visible change in teacher practice. The **South Sudan** programme has aligned its TPD component to support implementation of the new national teacher certification based on the new basic education curriculum, while in **Uganda**, SC effectively participated in the development of the National Inclusive Education Policy by bringing on board learning and experience from implementation of teacher training on inclusive education under the Norad-funded program.

In **Colombia** both during and after the Covid-19 pandemic, the use of technological platforms and partnering with a local university and local government, has permitted the programme to reach more teachers than originally planned, with an offer of certified trainings on digital skills and use of technology in the teaching practice. An innovative element has been involving adolescents and young tutors in providing technology training for their teachers, this has allowed for a positive exchange of experiences between teachers and students, a role different from the traditional one.

The Norad programme continues to work *on strengthening participatory school management* to support safe, inclusive quality education, as evidenced in the School Leadership and Management (SlaM) pilot in **Nepal**, which is now in its final year and its being tested beyond the original 14 schools, in total of 91 schools. Learnings will be gathered early in 2024. In **Myanmar**, education interventions take place in non-formal structures, through community and home-based education. Village education committees (VEC) have been established to manage and coordinate education activities, and a strong focus is placed on a gender equitable representation of women and girls among the committee members, the volunteer facilitators and the learners. As a results, women are taking leadership roles in the VECs, more female volunteer facilitators have been recruited, and girls are participating equally in the learning activities.

Norad implementing schools that have functional and risk-informed school improvement plans, have rolled out many activities identified by the school community, ranging from updating or developing school protocols or codes of conduct,

developing school safety, risk management, and security strategies, violence prevention, anti-bullying and psychosocial support. Many hard components of the school improvement plans have also been completed.

> Between 2019 and 2022, 1,568 permanent or temporary classrooms have been upgraded (108 constructed; 1,460 rehabilitated); 268 latrines (49 constructed; 219 rehabilitated) and 295 water sources (102 new water sources established; 193 water sources improved).

Issue 2: Children are protected
Since the MTR, programming under issue 2 has normalized and accelerated across countries. Drawing on the findings and lessons learnt from the MTR several countries have adjusted protection programming priorities to respond to the changing needs of children across contexts.

> In Nepal, there have been two major achievements since last years reporting. Firstly an increase in re-enrolment rates of girls that returned to schools after marriage, from 15% in 2021 to 81% in 2022 and secondly a 3% points reduction in prevalence of self-initiated child marriage, representing a reduction from 21% at

Anti child marriage campaigner Padma writing poem.

> MT to 18% in 2022. Continued program awareness raising and key stakeholders collaboration contributed to these results.

In **Mozambique** and **Uganda** adjustments were made based on MTR findings to strengthen retention and reintegration of pregnant girls and survivors of child marriage. In **Mozambique**, the involvement of parents and caregivers to support teenage mothers to reenrol in school was strengthened and coordination and collaboration across caregivers, schools, community-based child protection mechanisms and health actors to identify and support girls at risk were prioritised.

> In Uganda, mother care groups were supported to carry out home visits and offer psychosocial and child-care support to child mothers facing challenges with reintegration, reaching 437 child mothers in 2022. The Ministry of Education was supported to revise guidelines of management of teenage pregnancies in school settings, and these were rolled out in intervention schools.

In **Malawi** the programme introduced the Responsible, Engaged and Loving father (REAL) approach, as fathers play a vital role in shaping the behavior and attitudes of their children, serving as positive role models and challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes. Through this approach fathers are using their influence in the community to raise awareness about child protection issues and encourage other fathers to get involved. The programme also supported Child-Friendly Mobile courts to allow children to be able to participate in legal proceedings by providing a safe and supportive environment for them to speak out about abuse or violations that they have experienced. The courts also contributed to awareness raising and educating communities on child protection issues, expediting legal processes and ensured that cases are heard and resolved more quickly thereby reducing more harm from the survivors.

> In Nepal, 15 wards were officially declared free of child marriages in 2022, compared to 5 wards at Baseline. This may be attributed to the strong local ownership of both local governments and civil society organisations, as well as children themselves, in the work to end child marriage. A good initiative adopted by all five municipalities was a specific budget allocation for adolescent girls and pregnant women to support preventive efforts through the ending child marriage campaigns. An example of this is, in Kushe rural municipality where 2,5 million NRS (NOK 195, 000) was allocated for adolescent girls and pregnant women.

A learning from the MTR in **Guatemala** was that despite activating community-based child protection committees to prevent and respond to child protection concerns, there were still challenges with inefficient case management processes. Thus, the programme increased its efforts to strengthen the capacity of community-based structures in the process of identifying, registering and referring cases. It contributed to activating 30 CBCPMs in Chortí and Ixil municipalities, enabling the communities to identify, register, and refer cases of abuse to the Adolescent and Child Protection Offices of their respective municipality, thereby promoting access to services for children at risk.

In **Myanmar**, after the coup, SC and CSOs partners stepped in as supervisors for the Community Social Workers (CSWs), providing capacity building, support and oversight. Partners provided regular monthly supervision and coaching sessions with CSWs to strengthen their knowledge, skills and to promote their confident level to work with children, families, community members to build protective environment in the community. The CSWs have provided support to low-risk cases, mobilised available resources for children (including services for children with disabilities) and referred cases. The outcome is that CSWs responded to a total of 407 cases (G: 182/B: 225) at community level.

Issue 3: Child Rights Governance
The programme has supported civil society organizations (CSOs) to strengthen their organizational and technical capacities, as well as governance structures, so that they are better able to hold the government to account on its obligations to implement child rights. This was done through conducting partner capacity assessments, and then jointly with partners identifying gaps, developing capacity enhancement plans, and agreeing on milestones related to both thematic knowledge and skills, and to internal policies and practices to be achieved in the agreed timelines.

In **Colombia**, four local CSOs have gained recognition and are now partnering with other INGOs, while in **Niger**, the local education partner ASO-EPT, is now a strong voice at the national level promoting child rights.

> **Building on the findings and recommendations of the MTR, the Alliance of CSOs established by SC in Lebanon expanded from 16 to more than 40 CSOs, included an advisory committee of academic institutions, and agreed to work towards the child rights of all children in Lebanon.**

With SC support, the coalition NGO CCR has become one of the most vibrant CSO networks in **Malawi**. The network is at the forefront of pushing for child rights, recognized by the Government through the Ministry responsible for children, is

a member of Child Rights Network for Southern Africa (CRNSA), and partners with various other INGOs and UN agencies.

> **In Nepal, SC assisted in the establishment of five local-level CSO networks, which are actively engaged in advocating for child-centric budget allocation, development and endorsement of child rights policies, and monitoring of the child rights situation.**

Norad programmes work also on strengthening children's groups and child participation. This is done with the aim of supporting children's participation in decision making, as a goal on its own and as a step to improving good governance for children. In **Myanmar**, a National Online Children Platform has been established with the goal of continuing children empowerment and regular consultations with children on the issues that they faced under the new context following the coup. In 2022, children had an opportunity to meet with UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Myanmar and presented child rights violations and their recommendations. These are reflected in the Special Rapporteur's June 2022 report.

> **In Malawi, the Norad programme has influenced the Government to develop and launch the National Child Participation Guidelines and Strategy. This policy change significantly influenced the Government of Malawi and other stakeholders to scale up the implementation of Children's Parliament across the country from 3 SC intervention districts in 2019, to 12 more districts in 2022.**
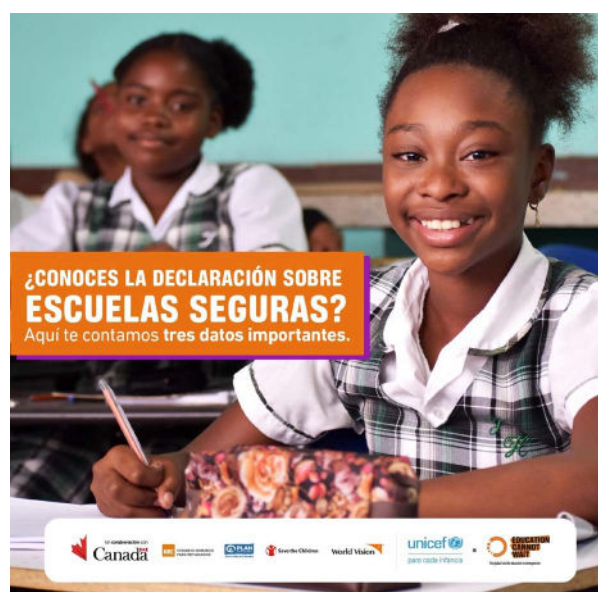
Safe schools declaration - Colombia.

As part of strengthening government institutions to implement children's rights, the program has also advocated for years with the **Colombian** government on the Safe School Declaration. Colombia signed up to the declaration in November 2022, becoming the 117th country to do so.

Thanks to years of advocacy and support, the municipality of Nebaj, **Guatemala** has now a public policy for children and adolescents, which is in force for 10 years from 2022. Last year, the government of **Nepal** endorsed Children's Regulations which guide the implementation of the 2018 Children's Act of 2018 following advocacy and support from SC.

Additionally, the Norad programme engages in advocacy to increase the amount of budget that governments set aside for implementation of child rights in several countries. In **Nepal**, this advocacy contributed to the increase in government expenditure on essential services such as education, health, child protection, and social protection by 8.5%-points, reaching 18 % in 2022. Advocacy around taxation has also continued in **Palestine**, building on the previously reported research around the education tax. This has led to an amendment of the Education Taxation Law so that the money remains with municipalities rather than the ministry.

Moreover, the programmes also support civil society and children to monitor the implementation of children's rights, including through providing additional information to international human rights bodies. In **Guatemala**, this meant supporting child-led and child-informed inputs to be submitted to the Child Rights Committee. As a result, out of the 50 issues the Committee raised with the Guatemalan state prior to its reporting, 37 are on the same topics as the ones in the child-informed inputs and 15 are on the same topics as those raised by children in the child-led inputs.

Challendes ans risks

Despite making significant progress over the past four years, the program still faces numerous challenges in achieving its overall goals for children. Some of these challenges were anticipated at proposal stage and have been addressed through program interventions; others have either worsened or emerged unexpectedly, such as the pandemic and the war in Ukraine. The effects of the latter are weaker economies, increased inflation, and food insecurity. Families facing financial strain have resorted to negative coping mechanisms like child marriage, migration, and child labor, leading to school dropouts, hampering and in some cases reversing the gains made by the programme.

The worsening economic situation has also further limited resource availability for interventions benefiting children, in some cases, compounded with the lack of consensus among different sectors of society, leading to competing advocacy agendas and changes in policy priorities when new governments come into power. The education sector for example, continues to be severely underfunded, impacting the capacity of education systems to provide adequate salaries for teachers, improve working conditions, recruit a diverse workforce, and address the specific needs of children with disabilities or special needs.

Another persistent challenge is the continued shrinking of civic space, with several countries passing restrictive NGO laws and lacking political will or capacity to enact policies that promote children's rights. In **Palestine** and **Myanmar**, restrictions on INGOs and local NGO operations are particularly acute, forcing the programmes in each country to find alternative operational modalities with partners or even terminate cooperation agreements with some of them.

Some of the most significant **risks** that materialized in 2022 were:

- Disease outbreaks of Cholera and Evola in **Uganda, Lebanon** and **Malawi**, disrupting program implementation, impacting health services, water scarcity, and humanitarian aid.
- Child rights violations, particularly violence against children, have increased. In **Lebanon, Colombia**, and **Mozambique** recruitment of children by armed groups has worsened. Teenage pregnancies and child marriages continues to be a major challenge across all countries, compounded with Global resistance to women and girls' rights, exacerbated by worsening economic situation, slowing down efforts to improve gender equality.
- Climate change has led to worsened droughts, floods, natural disasters, and increasing food insecurity. Migration and school drop-out are some of the consequences directly affecting the achievement of programme goals.

Efforts to mitigate the effects of these negative developments have been taken across all programs, in close collaboration with partners and governments, but further work is needed, increased resources, and a gender-sensitive approach to ensure the rights of all children are protected.

Learning and recommendations

As has been highlighted, programmes were adjusted after the midterm results had been analysed and understood. Based on lessons learned from this penultimate year, the main recommendations for the remainder of the agreement period include doubling down on teacher professional development and remedial support for marginalized children, strengthening community-based child protection structures and investments in disaster risk reduction.

To reach our **VISION**

Secure children's right to education and protection, leaving no child behind

Save the Children

Creating **IMPACT**

1. CHILDREN LEARN AND ARE SAFE
in a quality learning environment

2. CHILDREN ARE PROTECTED
from violence and abuse

3. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS
are implemented

Realizing **OUTCOMES**

CHILDREN IN SCHOOL
- Improved learning outcomes for all boys and girls, including children with disabilities.
- Boys and girls are safe in their learning environment
- Teachers use inclusive, gender-sensitive and child-centred pedagogical tools and methodology
- Strengthened participatory school management supports safe, inclusive quality education
- Strengthened government systems have policies that deliver safe, inclusive quality education.

CHILDREN IN COMMUNITY
- Increased access to quality education for girls and boys at risk of or affected by child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy.
- Transformed social, cultural and gender norms reduce violence against children, including child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy.
- Strengthened and coordinated national and community-based child protection systems prevent, identify, report and respond to violence against girls and boys.

CHILDREN IN SOCIETY
- Strengthened civil society including children mobilized to promote children's rights.
- Improved accountability of government and other duty bearers of their obligation to monitor and implement children's rights.
- Strengthened government institutions implement children's rights.

RISKS AND BARRIERS

Applying **STRATEGIES**
to agents of change

RESEARCH, EVIDENCE AND INNOVATION
embedded in a
CHILD CENTRED, RIGHTS APPROACH
working with
PARTNERS – AND CHILDREN THEMSELVES
to be a fearless
VOICE FOR AND OF CHILDREN

Addressing **PROBLEMS**

Teachers lack adequate competencies to support children to learn. Limited awareness on inclusion of Children with Disabilities, results in low enrolment. Schools and communities lack capacity to provide protective environment conducive to children's learning and wellbeing.

Negative social and cultural norms, coupled with conflict and endemic poverty has created a serious protection crisis for girls and boys, particularly vulnerable groups such as children with disabilities and teenage mothers are exposed to violence and rights abuses at school, at home, and in the community.

CSOs lack sufficient capacity to become agents of change. Governments are failing children by not implementing their rights embodied in the UNCRC

Leaving No Child Behind program Theory of Change

1. THEMATIC AREAS

THEORY OF CHANGE ASSESMENT

At the outset of the framework agreement, Save the Children Norway (SCN) set out to develop a Theory of Change (ToC) that would unify perspectives from multiple levels, including Norway, country offices (COs), and the global Save the Children movement (SC), into a coherent and comprehensive strategy for achieving results across all thematic areas. This endeavor was rooted in research and evidence and aimed to be child-centered, co-led with children and partners, and focused on raising a strong voice for and with children.

While the focus on cohesion and unity has led to notable achievements across all key thematic areas, it is important to acknowledge the shortfalls that have taught us valuable lessons. The pursuit of movement-wide alignment and unity may have resulted in a limited reflection of the potential for shifting contexts and external factors to impede our

strategies for change. Furthermore, the ToC could have more deeply acknowledged the challenges in accessing and supporting marginalized and intersectional children.

We recognize that context evaluation should be a continuous, rigorous process that incorporates external and internal data to improve decision-making. SCN has learned that recent years have shown how improvements for marginalized and intersectional children have been rolled back, and the capacity of civil society organizations to raise voices has been aggressively curtailed in some contexts. Additionally, a recent assessment of SCN's work by Chr. Michelsens Institute (CMI, Forthcoming, 2023) identified the lack of explicit interweaving between the over-arching model and the results framework, making it difficult to assess the change being made as a result of programming and other realities on the ground.

Despite these challenges, we have seen how our ToC has created impact across all key thematic areas. For example, in inclusive education, strong partnerships with local organizations and government have led to programmatic innovation and cooperation, resulting in the adoption of national strategies and policies in Mozambique and South Sudan. In Guatemala, SC and partners adapted national curricula to Ixil and Ch'orti languages, and for the visually impaired, expanding access and supporting rights. Governments are now rolling out our contributions beyond the Norad programme areas, indicating systems-level change.

In the Norad programme, there is a strong emphasis on supporting teachers' professional development. Through collaboration within the government system in Uganda, SC has supported the rollout of Continuous Teacher Professional Development modules and ensured that they are included in the national framework for Continuous Teacher Professional Development (TPD). Moreover, SC has worked with the Teacher Education Department to develop a competency framework to strengthen professional competencies of teachers, which will inform all teacher professional support across Uganda and hopefully improve the quality of teachers at the national level.

Within Child Rights Programming - the core of our ToC - we leveraged duty-bearers and rights-holders, utilizing child participation and non-discrimination as key dimensions. Together with partners, we have grown capacities to monitor and demand rights and motivated government actors to strengthen their systems for implementation. We have focused deliberately on disability and gender as cross-cutting issues, reducing barriers for marginalized and intersectional groups. As we move forward, we have identified new hurdles to overcome and will continue to advance non-discrimination with partners.

Overall, while acknowledging the shortfalls in the ToC, SCN believes that the current framework has led to notable achievements, as detailed in this report. Our work is driven by partnerships at all levels, and we are committed to creating lasting change for children, as evidenced throughout this report.

In **Malawi** SC drove progress towards a child friendly justice system, enforcement of the child marriage laws, and restoration of natural justice by investigating and providing remedial measures to 163 children across the country. Child-Friendly Mobile courts helped children participate in proceedings from a safe and secure environment – creating spaces to raise their own voices about their experiences.

In **Nepal** the continued collaboration and mobilization of the Police, Ward Child Rights Committee, child clubs, traditional healers, interactions with adjoining rural/municipalities, and para-social workers played a significant role in raising awareness, reporting, and responding to likely cases of child marriage during this period, successfully contributing to reducing the percentage of girls dropping out of school due to early marriage and teenage pregnancy.

Building on these and other numerous successes, we are focused on developing a theory of change that is adapted for shifting sands and reinforced by continuous analysis and evidence. As we see in Nicaragua and Myanmar, the space for civil society actors can be quickly eroded. And in Uganda we cannot ignore that the rights of intersectional groups such as LGBTQ+ are under constant pressure. SCN recognizes that we cannot stand on our laurels and is working to ensure our theory of change is adapted and strengthened for whatever challenges the future holds.

ISSUE 1: CHILDREN LEARN AND ARE SAFE IN A QUALITY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

| 1. CHILDREN LEARN AND ARE SAFE				
All girls and boys learn and are safe in a quality learning environment				
Outcome 1.1: Improved learning outcomes for all boys and girls, including children with disabilities.	**Outcome 1.2:** Girls and boys are safe in their learning environment.	**Outcome 1.3:** Teachers use inclusive, gender-sensitive and child-centered pedagogical tools and methodology.	**Outcome 1.4:** Strenghtened participatory school management supports safe inclusive quality education.	**Outcome 1.5:** Strengthened government systems have policies that deliver safe, inclusive quality education.

Issue 1 focuses on the fundamental right to education, aiming at ensuring that all children have access to safe quality education and improved learning outcomes, especially in reading and writing. We work holistically in line with the _Quality Learning Framework_ (QLF)that defines SC's understanding of quality education, and in 2022 the QLF was reviewed and updated to make sure it's aligned to current knowledge and experiences and the 3C's: Climate change, Covid-19 and Conflict, all of which are having negative impact on the results achieved for children which we need to mitigate in programme planning and implementation.

The Mid Term Report (MTR) report refers to the many Covid-19 related challenges faced not only by the countries in the Norad agreement but by the entire world. Schools had been closed for longer periods and in Uganda, Guatemala and Colombia, children had no access to in-person education for up to two full academic years before schools reopened by the second quarter of 2022. For many children living in rural areas and areas affected by conflict this meant almost no access to education. Those that are in early grades have been affected the most given they were just entering primary school where they were going to learn foundational skills when education stopped. Based on the results of the MTR it was clear that the programmes should focus on children's learning loss and further strengthen access to education and learning for children experiencing exclusion, like girls and boys with disabilities.

Across the world SC supported governments at national and local level in their 'safe back to school' campaigns with a focus on increasing access also for children that had been excluded or not enrolled before. SC with partners in local education committees and with Ministry of Education (MoE) shared Covid-19 prevention messages and the importance of re-enrolment and continued learning. Campaigns were held door-to-door, and through media (radio, TV and loudspeakers on vehicles). Special focus was to ensure that also children with disabilities and their caregivers concerns were answered to by supporting the school and training teachers on inclusive pedagogy. Overall, this is materializing in higher enrolment figures in 7 of 10 countries where children were in school in both 2021 and 2022.

Approximately 530,000 students (G: 50%/B: 50%) were enrolled in 1,028 schools in 2022. This is a notable increase of close to 30% compared to 2021. The main driver is that children in Uganda came back to school in 2022, substantial re-enrolment in **Malawi** (an increase of more than 40% compared to 2021), and a steadily increase in most of the remaining countries. Additionally close to 10 000 children (G:48%; B: 52%) attended community-based education in **Myanmar**. Comparing with enrolment numbers from 2019 for 11 countries (all except Myanmar, which doesn't have school enrolment data in 2022), there is an overall increase of close to 15,000 students (G: 66%/ B: 34%), indicating that access to education has recovered in many countries after the Covid-19 school closures and even surpassed pre-pandemic enrolment in 7 of 11 countries. Through establishing more community ownership by bringing together school managers, School Councils and Community Coordination Platforms aiming to enabling school's environment for all children, including for children
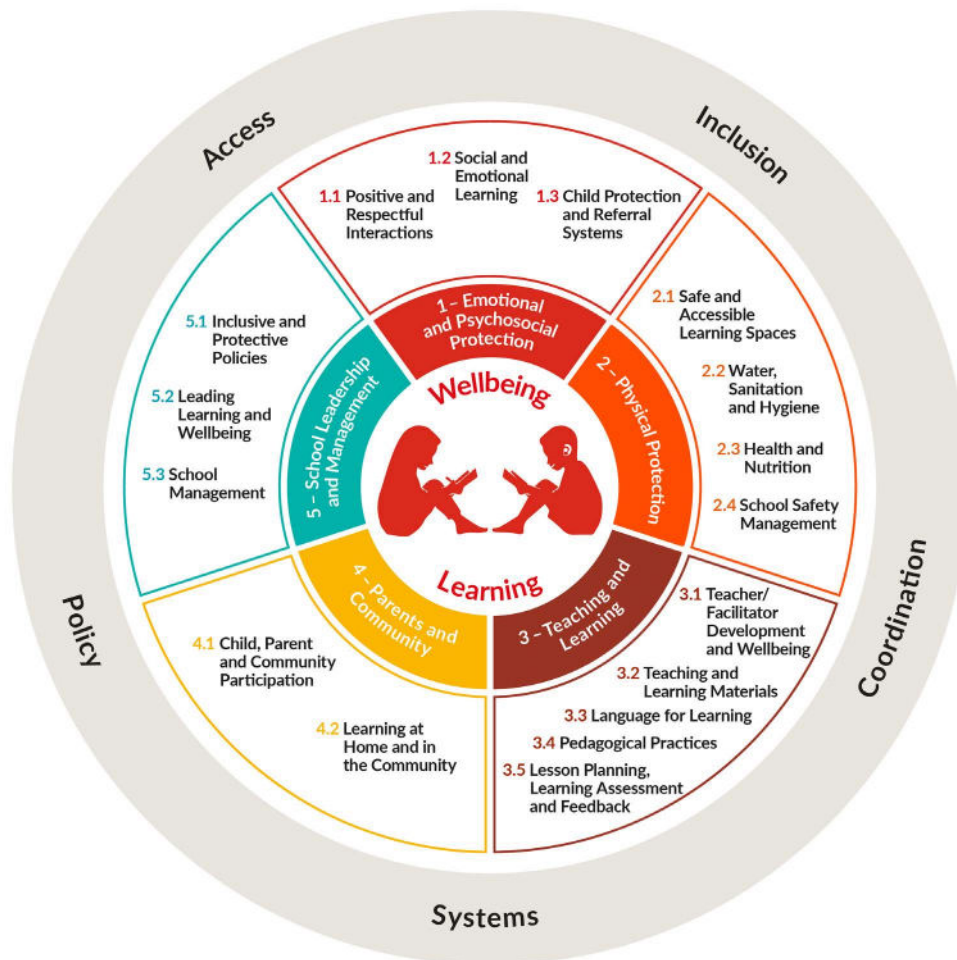
Quality Learning Framwork

with disabilities, the schools in **Mozambique**, ensured that the percentage of children remaining in the 115 primary schools in Norad increased from 89% to 95% and it is gender balanced.

Disability inclusion has been a focus for many Norad countries after it was identified as a gap during the MTR. In **Somalia, Mozambique** and **Uganda**, the partnership with Organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) have been strengthened due to the collaboration in the Together for Inclusion (TOFI) programme, around enrolment campaigns, identification and screening and referral to specialized services. Similar approaches were seen in **Myanmar** and **Mozambique** where education and protection services teamed up with OPDs to ensure that children with disabilities in need are referred to the appropriate services and provided support. In **Nepal**, **Malawi** and **South Sudan** education and health work hand in hand to conduct disability screening, and support referral when needed. In **Malawi**, the programme has piloted the use of Appropriate Paper-based Technologies (APT) to produce assistive devices for children with cerebral palsy. Following

this, specialist teachers report that they have cascaded the knowledge to school children who are now producing assistive devices and supporting their fellow learners with disabilities using the APT. However, even if it increases participation, **South Sudan** reports on challenges in retaining the children in school due to demand of assistive devices, limited support in class due to teachers not able to handle and/or consider the learning needs of CWDs and more awareness required to change behaviour and perceptions towards people with disabilities. These efforts have also materialized in increased number of children with disabilities enrolled in schools from 2021 to 2022 in 7 of 10 countries where children were in school both years. The increase varies from 20 more children (G:9/ B: 11) in Guatemala to 517 (G: 168/ B: 349) in Malawi. Nepal is the only country where these is a slight reduction in children with disabilities enrolled, however this is mirroring the overall decrease in school enrolment in Nepal. With this increase and the re-enrolment of children in schools in Uganda, there were more than 11,200 children with disabilities (G: 47%/ B: 53 %) registered

Girls	Boys	Children with disabilites	Schools
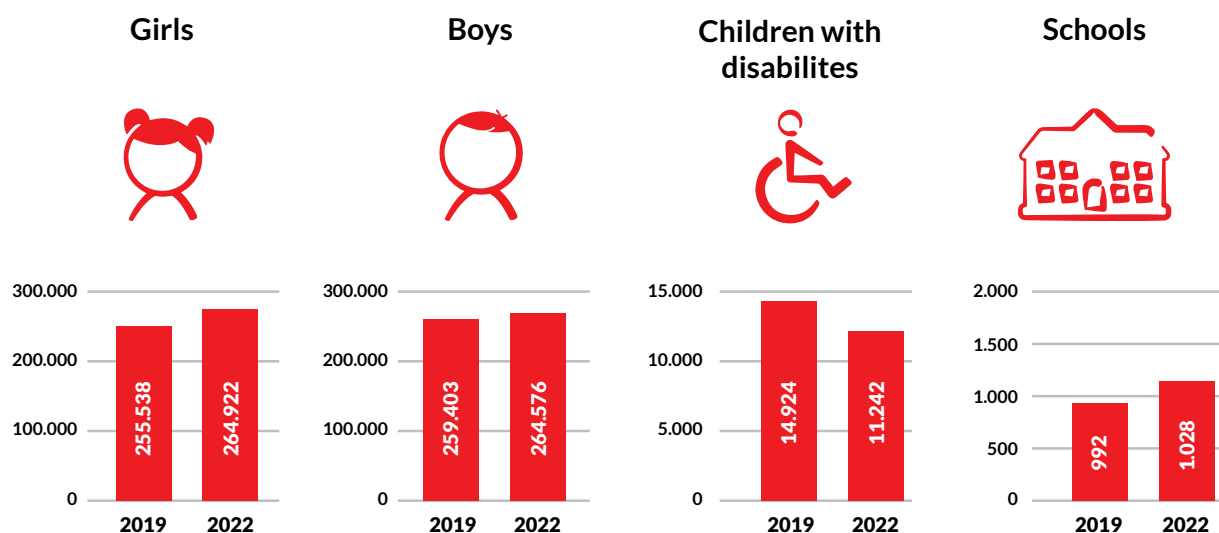
School enrolment 2019 and 2022, by gender and disability (11 reporting countries)

in schools in 2022. Comparing enrolment of children with disabilities in 2022 with 2019 we see similar trends as from 2021 to 2022, there is an increased enrolment in 8 of 11 countries. Overall, there is however a decrease of more than 3600 children (G: 38%; B: 62%) primarily driven by a drop in registered children with disabilities in Malawi. This is partly mirroring the reduction in overall enrolment in Malawi from 2019, but also due to a change in how children with disabilities are registered.

Another side of enrolment is the access to non-formal education in Lebanon which has seen a cumulative improvement in enrolment and completion rates. The programme focused on strengthening the capacities of the partners' staff over the years, and they became more skillful in outreach and in providing quality education services for children. This can also be shown in the ability to maintain a high rate of completion despite the increasing target number of children in need of additional educational services which, in its turn, reflects the increasing need for non-formal education (NFE) throughout the years as the Lebanese education system faces huge challenges with the economic collapse of the country.

Outcome 1.1: Improved learning outcomes for all girls and boys, including children with disabilities.

The aim of the Norad Programme is to ensure that all girls and boys are learning basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Learning outcomes depend on regular access to learning in school or alternative education pathways, this includes schools being open and avail-

able, teachers having resources available as well as the necessary training and support from their school leaders. The MTR showed that the improvement in literacy varies immensely, which is understandable due to the complexities related to learning and the very different context we see for children in programme countries meaning that the mitigation efforts have also varied a lot between countries based on their situation.

In **Nepal**, who showed the highest increase in literacy results from the baseline, the project continued by organising remedial classes for low-performing learners (2421 children (G:1252) in 154 schools), resulting in improved learning performance (based on annual examination result published by schools). Remedial classes provide struggling learners an additional two hours of support per day for a period of three months. Observing the benefits of remedial classes, some of the schools have started organizing remedial support from their own resources. The project also supported to develop Individual Educational Plan (IEP) for children after providing 191 teachers with the necessary training. In **South Sudan**, the focus has been to further target inclusion and addressing challenges particularly met by girls. Since the ministry is not yet able to provide resources to the schools, the programme continues to provide reading and learning materials to enable learning.

To compensate for the learning loss, the Norad Programme in **Palestine**, in agreement with the ministry, introduced remedial education as well as summer camps as a response to the low literacy and numeracy achievements in the MTR. The summer camps were also designed with a focus on children's wellbeing and need for recreational activities in a

context of escalating instability and violence. The programme continues to strengthen the involvement of fathers in their children's learning through the "Daddy read to me campaign". This campaign is directed towards father, grandfathers, uncles, older brothers, and all male figures in the life of children to join a series of different activities e.g., art-based activities, sports competitions, reading and writing activities at school and community libraries. This campaign was introduced as a specific gender intervention to increase male involvement (especially fathers) in their children's learning and improve male participation within the broader program activities.

Another important aspect that sprung from the Covid-19 program adaptation plans was the need to improve adult literacy to ensure that parents could support their children's learning. In Somalia, the program worked with parents of learners to learn basic literacy and numeracy in order for them in turn to be able to assist their children. Reading awareness sessions with parents were conducted, and community volunteers were identified to support adults on basic reading and writing. Five sessions on literacy and numeracy were provided to parents by community volunteers on weekly basis. Similar initiatives were also implemented in other countries like **Malawi**, and **Niger**.

The learning challenges in **Mozambique** have been addressed in the programme, after the MTR results revealed that none of the children assessed met the expected proficiency level in both reading fluency and listening comprehension, a thorough

review was initiated. Similar studies the last 5-10 years revealed common challenges faced by many projects implemented in Mozambique including government lead initiatives. Two main steps have been taken in the Norad programme to improve learning: first, mother tongue strategies are being emphasized in the teacher training to be used as supportive means of instructions in the multilingual contexts where the official language is seldom spoken by marginalized (rural) communities. Second, teachers continue to be the most relevant factor in supporting children's learning, but going forward the teacher support will be complemented by involving and strengthening other agents of change, including children themselves, parents, caregivers, school managers. SC have also had an honest look at the original objectives considering the overall learning context in Mozambique and the geographical area where we work and as a result of this, SC has revised the learning targets.

Mother tongue-based Multilingual education is also a core in ensuring children's right to learn. In **Guatemala**, SC continued supporting children's learning of foundational literacy and numeracy skill in their mother tongue, imperative for their learning. Bilingual and Intercultural Education (EBI) has throughout the period been strengthened in close collaboration with partners and the Ministry of Education. With a basis in the national curriculum for basic education, there is room to develop teachers guide and materials at local level. To meet the need for materials in the mother tongue languages, Ixil and Chortí , education materials for all levels of

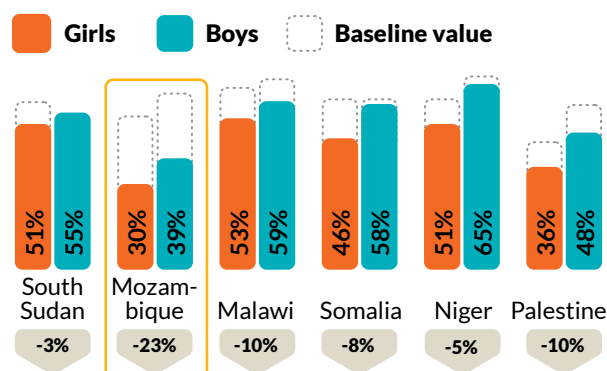8 - year old Palestinian bot with his father.

primary education, from grade 1-6, including teachers' guidance and learning materials, have been adapted, contextualized and developed for teaching and learning, all based on the competencies outlined in the national curriculum. Throughout the program period, large parts of the curriculum have been translated and contextualized in mother tongue. This includes materials for literacy, contextually relevant in terms of history, community, and culture. The materials reached 20 schools in Jocotán and 24 schools in Ixil region, reaching 8,054 (51% boys and 49 %). This should strengthen literacy skills, which in turn supports learning in other subjects and life skills. In addition, this work includes adapting learning materials for children with visual impairments, where SCI and its partner ASCATED have developed audio-stories, based on the contextualized learning material in Ixil and Chortí. The material has been endorsed and certified by the Ministry, and currently the government is rolling out the program in other areas outside the Norad target areas, which is an important step towards sustainability.

In **Myanmar** learning continues through community-based education (CBE). Due to the political unrest, school closure and displacement, education interventions shifted from school-based support to CBE Village education committees (VEC) were formed; community-based volunteers were recruited and trained to support children's learning through Learning and wellbeing reading club. According to monitoring findings, children are very happy to join a reading club session, they have improved their social skills and confidence, and they respect and communicate with others without fear resulting in a positive shift in social and traditional culture. To implement this activity during the pandemic and ongoing crisis where the restrictions are very high, the project used a community volunteer approach, which receive remote support from the via phone calls.

Percentage of children experiencing physical punishment by teachers - MTR data.

> **Outcome 1.2:** Girls and boys are safe in their learning environment

The aim of outcome 2 is to ensure that children feel and are safe within the school environment, and the midterm review showed positive trends. The MTR results showed a reduction of children currently attending school who had been physically punished by a teacher was reduced from 59% at Base Line (BL) to 49%. Improvement was recorded in all reporting countries ranging from 3%-points decrease in South Sudan to 23%-points decrease in **Mozambique** (see MTR data figure)

In line with reduced punishment from teachers, more children report to feel safe and/or well in school in 2021 in all 6 reporting countries. The work

continued into 2022 and 2023 to further reduce the use of physical punishment in school to ensure that children feel safe when they learn.

In **Myanmar**, SC noted that 88% of the children (G: 85%; B: 88%) reported to feel safe in the CBE in 2021, a remarkable difference from 15% (G:20%; B: 9%) reporting likewise when attending formal schools at baseline (2019). As mentioned above, the programme continues using volunteers who are perceived to give more support, compliments, listen, do not threaten, and treat children equally compared to teachers from formal schools. Whereas in **Somalia**, 76% of school children (G:79%/ B:73%) felt safe in and around school in 2021, an increase by 24 percentage points from baseline. To further strengthen the programme, teachers refreshed their understanding of the code of conduct and positive discipline in Everyday Teaching, and materials were translated when needed. More importantly, all 47 schools supported under Norad have now an adequate and functional child-friendly reporting mechanism such as helplines and suggestion boxes being rolled out and supported by Community Education Committees (CEC's) and programme, witnessing higher reporting by children as expected. Through a child participatory approach and with the support of teachers, principals and supervisors a child friendly and inclusive Code of Conduct (CoC) was developed in **Palestine** and disseminated so that students can enjoy a safe learning environment. Some of the main areas of concern identified through this process were inclusion, sanitation access, discrimination and physical punishments all of which were addressed when developing the CoC. The CoCs were rolled out through activities and within schools to enhance the learning enrolment and ensure a positive and safe environment for all.

In **Guatemala**, to promote learning in safe classrooms and learning environment the program focuses on anti-bullying, respectful interactions, conflict resolutions and peaceful learning environment, as

components of Safe Schools programming. The focus is that positive learning environment fosters learning. In **Uganda**, SC implemented various activities to minimize violence against children and building the capacity of teachers and school leaders on positive discipline. The programme rolled out the "Good School tool kit" to all supported schools and communities both in Northern Uganda and Karamoja Sub region to promote positive discipline for children in schools and communities.

Based on MTR recommendations, the programme in **Nepal** conducted a series of discussion with schools to assign a Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) focal teacher, and 229 schools identified teachers who were then capacitated to be GESI champions in their schools, to support on creating gender friendly and inclusive school environment. In **Colombia**, the programme has worked with teachers and students to break gender stereotypes and promote gender sensitivity and diversity in the classrooms. Several schools claim that this has resulted in less bullying related to gender issues and sexual orientation, less absence from schools, and lower suicide attempt rates among students. There is a challenge, however, that many teachers are reluctant to promote gender issues due to the strong machismo culture in the local communities, and therefore this work needs further strengthening. Another aspect from the work during and after Covid-19 focused on positive and non-violent parenting, and giving strategies for stress management and emotions which have a direct impact on learning outcomes and children's wellbeing and safety. In addition, SC focused on capacity building and knowledge with more effective referral mechanisms, identifying types of violence, especially gender-based violence (GBV).

In **Mozambique** the MTR found that while the programme had contributed to reducing violence against children in and outside school, children still reported high levels of violence. Based on this the following measures were reinforced; engaging parents and school management to continuously monitor teachers' behaviours as well as discipline them with use of positive discipline, when they are in violation of internal regulations and establishing the community and school-based mechanisms to denounce, suggest and respond to violence in almost all schools. Through the creation of a training guide for teachers, children's clubs, and communities, on child protection and reporting mechanisms, sessions were conducted with these target groups. Although

Education saves lives - mural in Nora school- Colombia.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

most schools have mechanisms, it is still a challenge to proactively verify the different groups reporting cases from the school.

> **Outcome 1.3:** Teachers use inclusive, gender-sensitive and child-centered pedagogical tools and methodology.

Key numbers from 2019 – 2022:

- **Close to 20,000 education personnel trained**

- **13,477 individual teachers (F:46%; M: 54%)**

- **2,634 Ministry of Education personnel (F:49%; M: 51%) 3,605 facilitators and volunteers (F:68%; M: 32%)**

All countries are advancing their activities to support teachers' professional development (TPD). The internal review initiated in the start-up of the framework agreement was followed up by training of all country advisers and officers in the new SC "Enabling Teachers" common approach that provides a framework to guide this work in two main areas: 1) to ensure that a Teacher Professional Development course is designed to respond to teachers individual learning needs and context, using competencies aligned to a recognized framework, and 2) to enable the environment that ensures teachers are supported to succeed in their roles. Countries initiated different changes in their support to teachers, but with some delay during the school closures due to Covid-19.

The new TPD training activities are a combination of expert-led training, coaching, classroom observations, and peer learning through learning circles. For example, in **Malawi**, the Inclusive Education training programme was changed from occasional week-long courses to a set of module-based courses consisting of on-going short workshops (<3hrs) followed by an eight-week period of practice through self-directed and peer learning activities, and coach-led classroom observation and mentoring. The course cycle is regularly monitored and being revised based on feedback from teachers. Compared to one-off teacher support sessions, this TPD course design appears to be more effective in leading to visible change in teacher practice. Classroom observations are regularly done by the coaches, and the observations conducted after the first cycle showed significant improvements in teacher capacities to effectively deliver reading instruction. Interviews with some teachers indicate that participating in the course has promoted positive relationships among teachers through their interaction during self-directed

and peer learning activities, and coaches have also been motivated to support teachers with minimal resources outside of the program.

The **Niger** programme supports the Regional Directorates of Primary Education (DREN) of Zinder and Diffa through capacity strengthening of pedagogical supervisors in classroom observation and coaching of teachers (256 teachers in 2022), testing methodology (35 supervisors) and in remediation techniques to accompany teachers in the management of children with learning difficulties (40 supervisors). SC also supports the DREN with their yearly assessment of teachers' competences based on the Nigerien Teacher's Competence Framework and delivering Pedagogical Training Workshops (CAPED) leading to capacity building sessions designed to respond to the needs of teachers as identified through the assessment. Due to this, the DREN of Zinder and Diffa have now integrated the TPD methodology in their practice and use it in the CAPED sessions targeting schools supported by SC which have allowed 890 teachers (700 females) to have participated in such trainings since the beginning of the program. Similarly, in **Nepal**, the programme introduced TPD approach with use of coaching and mentoring by mobilizing Pedagogical Resource Persons (PRP). This has already been adopted by local government in Subhakalika, Tilagupha and Chhedagad municipalities, funded by their own resources.

Education Technology is a support to teachers and is being applied in several countries. In **Somalia** and **Mozambique**, using WhatsApp as a tool, to create and sustain teacher learning circles and provide peer-to-peer support. In **Mozambique**, the WhatsApp group is also used to support teachers with adapted materials to support deaf students and students with learning difficulties. Developing teachers' digital skills, a focus in **Colombia** both during and after the Covid-19 pandemic, has given the programme access to more teachers and boosting the teachers' confidence to face the challenges of the digital age. Certified training has been provided by the Francisco de Paula Santander University, which has been a key actor in motivating teachers to participate in the training. An innovative element of involving adolescents and young tutors in providing ICT training for their teachers has allowed for a positive exchange of experiences between teachers and students, a role different from the traditional one. Digital skills training of teachers that started during the pandemic in **Nepal** has also continued and is facilitating further digital fluency of teachers, inspiring them to continue incorporating these digital tools and methodologies during regular school days.

It is encouraging to see the progress in increased awareness and skills on **inclusive education**, especially inclusion of children with disabilities. Collaboration with local partners is key in building awareness and capacity of both government and civil society partners. In **Mozambique**, SCi experts

trained teachers' trainers from pre-service training institutes, as well as the heads of pedagogy in primary and secondary schools on inclusive education approaches and strategies. This, in return, influences the in-service training for teachers on improving their pedagogical practices and confidence to address needs specific to children with disabilities. In addition, teachers developed skills of interacting with parents and the communities to address learning challenges for all children. In doing so, they are facilitating learners with disabilities not only learn, but also retaining them in the classroom. In **Guatemala**, SC is working with the local partner ASCATED with specialized capacity in disability and inclusion. ASCATED has provided training and support sessions on children with disabilities and inclusion for teachers and other partner organisations. The other partners report that they are now more aware and competent to support teachers in inclusive education. In **Palestine, South Sudan**, **Malawi**, and **Uganda**, SC implemented teacher capacity development using the Student Needs Action Pack (SNAP) tool to improve pedagogical approaches for teachers. The training provided teachers with knowledge and skills in supporting learners with special needs. To assist teachers in identifying the subpopulation of children who are at greater risk of not learning based on functional difficulties in different domains, **Nepal** and **Somalia** countries have piloted the Child Functioning Module Teacher Version (CFM - TV)[2].

In terms of contributing to system strengthening and **enabling policy environment** for teachers, the Norad-funded programme is supporting the governments both in the teacher education and policy reforms as well as development of inclusive education policies. The **South Sudan** programme has aligned its TPD component to support implementation of the new national teacher certification based on the new basic education curriculum. The training program, which lasts for 2 years, covers 8 courses with various modules and requires teachers on the programme to undertake the full course to completion for the purpose of being recognized and provided with certification. In **Uganda**, SC effectively participated in the development of the National Inclusive Education Policy by bringing on board learning and experience from implementation of teacher training on inclusive education under the Norad-funded program.

Challenges remain in the education systems' capacity to provide adequate salaries to teachers, better working conditions, and recruitment for a diverse work force, including in crisis contexts. Nationally the low attendance of teachers in Uganda worsened after the pandemic. Despite this, the Norad programme supported areas saw an increase in the proportion of schools with regular teacher attendance increasing from 42 at baseline to 71 in 2022. This is largely attributed to a combination of tracking of teacher attendance records, teacher training and mentoring support, and construction of low-cost houses for teacher accommodation at school. Although there was significant increase in teacher attendance across supported schools, teachers' time on task remains one of the biggest challenges. Low teacher time on task is largely attributed to school leadership capacity gaps for example head teachers lack requisite skills and competence for effective teacher deployment and implementation of the curriculum. Therefore, further development of programme design to support development of effective school leadership and management will be a focus in programming in the next phase. Low numbers of females completing their education in **South Sudan** results in a limited pool of qualified women to be recruited by the MoE. Efforts continue to be made through the Education Clusters at both National and State level for the Ministry to consider recruitment of females with minimum qualifications. Despite training and dialogue with teachers on inclusive education and gender-sensitive approaches, gender equality also remains a challenge in **Colombia**, where teachers often refuse, due to cultural factors, to promote gender issues. Thus, the work on breaking negative stereotypes and gender roles needs to be further strengthened. Finally, adapting to a crisis context, the **Myanmar** programme conducted training of village leaders and community members in CBE, and provided continuous support to volunteers, caregivers, and parents. The volunteers assisted in the distribution of home-based learning (HBL) materials and ensured that parents were supporting their children's learning through phone calls and in-person home visits.

> **Outcome 1.4:** Strengthened participatory school management supports safe, inclusive quality education.

> **Key numbers from 2019 – 2022:**
>
> - **12,368 individual school management committee members trained (F:47%; M: 53%)**

Participatory school leadership and management is when school leaders **lead learning** and **manage the school resources well**. They build positive relationships with the entire school community and ensure that **inclusive and protective policies** are in place

---

2   https://data.unicef.org/resources/module-child-functioning/#:~:text=The%20purpose%20is%20to%20
    identify,participation%20in%20an%20unaccommodating%20environment.

Education program activity in Uganda.

that promote the safety and wellbeing of children and teachers. Building on the learning from the last framework agreement greater emphasis has been placed on the engagement of parents and communities in support of school management.

The **School Leadership and Management (SLaM)** pilot project in Nepal, was initiated in 2019 and has been developed and tested in 14 schools in the Karnali region (ref. ToC see MTR report p.21). The intervention package was finalized in 2022 and is now being tested in a larger sample of 91 schools within the Norad programme in 2023. The endline assessment will be conducted in early 2024. Given the need to develop an innovative programme approach to SLaM in a complex environment such as rural Nepal, Developmental Evaluation (DE) has been used as method, allowing programme participants to actively inform and take part in the development and design of the SLaM model which has been regularly reviewed, tested, documented, and adjusted in close collaboration between stakeholders and the project team.

In **Myanmar** where Save the Children's education interventions have shifted from formal to non-formal structures, supporting provision of CBE and home-based education, village education committees (VEC) have been established to manage and coordinate the education activities. Gender equality was emphasized in the forming of these committees to ensure equitable representation of women and girls among the committee members, the volunteer facilitators and the learners, and gender awareness and sensitization activities were conducted. As a results, women are taking leadership roles in the VECs, more female volunteer facilitators have been recruited, and girls are participating equally in the learning activities.

In **Uganda** Save the Children re-established and trained student councils in 92 intervention schools. Due to the pandemic, these had been made redundant during the long school closures. The student councils are facilitating debates at school level to create awareness on child rights issues in their communities, identified by the children themselves, and have engaged the school leadership and local government duty bearers in these debates.

Distributed school leadership, a key principle of School Leadership and Management focusing on meaningful participation of all concerned stakeholders in planning and implementation of a school's vision, has been strengthened and promoted in several countries through participatory, joint school assessments and school improvement planning and management, including children, teachers, school leaders, parents, and community members. In **Colombia** Save the Children supported consultations in the school communities to identify issues and suggestions for the entire school community which became important inputs to the school institutional improvement plans, the school risk management plans, and the school coexistence manuals.

Another important issue that Norad programme implementing schools are focusing on is how to ensure that school improvement plans are functional and risk-informed, and how participatory school management teams can ensure children's protection, well-being, and learning. The MTR findings showed that of the 240 schools assessed in 8 countries, 34% of those had functional risk-informed school improvement plans in place, a 10%-point improvement from the baseline.

When schools reopened after Covid-19, the programme in **Colombia** prioritised to strengthen the work on developing risk-based school improvement plans by working with authorities at different levels to accompany schools in the formulation and/or adjustment of their plans. This included the development of protocols for school opening and a child friendly guide about safe return to school, and a child-friendly design adapted to children's needs on safe access to school, self-protection during the pandemic. The protocol was endorsed by the Secretariats of Education and made available in their website. The improvement plans also focused on inclusive education which led to more inclusive differential actions which are incorporated into the schools' classroom plans and curricula based on the needs of children with disabilities. Students are also seen as active in peace building in both schools and communities increasing students' motivation and decreasing violence and bullying.

In **Guatemala**, the project has developed a dialogue space as an alternative for conflict resolution, and a space for child protection and safety in and around schools. 18 out of 54 project schools have developed school safety, risk management, and security strategies which has a base in dialogue and coordination securing safe school environment, violence prevention, anti-bullying, and psychosocial support promoting respectful and safe learning environment. Partner ASCATED also supported adding inclusion in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and contingency planning, to ensure that children and teachers with disability are included in the plans, accommodating different needs. Whereas in **Nepal**, Complaint response mechanisms (CRM) have been established in 192 schools and children are reporting effectively and school management teams with relevant stakeholders are taking the lead to find. Some of the issues are referred to municipal judicial committee and police offices which are related to child marriage, sexual violence etc.

In **Uganda**, Save the Children supported all schools to meet minimum standard operating procedures for Covid-19 for school re-opening and facilities. All schools received orientation of code of conduct with a focus of ending school-based violence especially against pupils. In Lebanon, the economic crisis and the constant electricity cuts and cost of fuel for generators, the programme helped in installing solar panels in all learning centres.

In **Somalia**, the programme supported children to voice their concerns and find solutions to increase their sense of safety and protection. For example, in Jilab school in Nugal region, a protection wall was constructed with the help of the programme and through community engagement. In **Malawi**, child participation was a key in Safe Schools programming in half of the Norad implementing schools operating through school management teams working with school improvement plans, assembly meetings, child-led clubs, and working with schools' leadership. Interventions conducted by school management team were yielding positive results such as reducing the numbers of out-of-school children due to child marriage and pregnancies, improved sanitation in schools, reduced absenteeism, and improving the quantity and quality of infrastructure in schools. In **Lebanon** children, CwDs and their caregivers participated actively in developing the school improvement plans in all eight implementing locations, and the improvement plan affected positively children's learning.

> **Key numbers: school infrastructure 2019 – 2022:**
>
> - **1,260 permanent classrooms upgraded: 62 constructed; 428 rehabilitated; 770 provided with furniture.**
>
> - **308 temporary classrooms upgraded: 46 constructed; 20 rehabilitated; 242 provided with furniture.**
>
> - **268 latrines upgraded; 49 constructed; 219 rehabilitated.**
>
> - **295 water sources upgraded; 102 new water sources established; 193 water sources improved.**

Outcome 1.5: Strengthened government systems have policies that deliver safe, inclusive quality education.

The programme has continued to support the government's policies and systems through upstream advocacy and direct action. The QLF recognizes that governments are accountable for defining and implementing policy frameworks. As partners of the government SC works in partnership with other NGOs, CSOs, OPDs and university/research institutions to advocate and drive development across the countries. During the last years the comprehensive work has been affected by the response to the Covid-19 crisis and the school closures.

Inclusive Education is at the forefront of SCs work from the work at the global level were SCN has a key

role in the lead of the community of practice, learning events and updating internal policies, and to the country level working towards ensuring quality in access and learning for all children. SCI **Mozambique** supported the development of the Inclusive education strategy 2020-29 and the dissemination of it. Following the launch SC engaged the strategic partner working on advocacy in education to advocate for improvement of quality of education and for the integration into, and full implementation of inclusive education and especially braille alphabet and sign language, in the curriculum of teacher's training institutes. The program in South Sudan also contributed to the Inclusive Education Policy (2021) giving hope of creating better opportunities for children with disabilities. Based on this, more efforts to engage with MoE were made through training to strengthen capabilities of disability inclusion as well as the need to increase awareness and more visibility for CwD's. The SC Malawi programme continued to support strengthening the coordination of inclusive education at national and district levels through supporting the national Inclusive Education Technical working group meetings, National Coordinating Committee on Disability Issues (NACCOD meetings, and District Disability Forums.

Reflections about sustainability under issue 1- Education

The work supported to ensure children's Right to Education is manyfold and complex. As described by the QLF that outlines the direction of all education programming. Learning relates to the child directly in the way they are provided with the means to access and participate in learning activities. It relates to the support of their parents/caregivers and the society they live in. Quality of education is also defined by the system where the government, in most cases, are the duty bearers to provide a space for learning, provide teachers with the skills to teach and a robust school management system guided by policies and laws. It is widely known that making long-lasting changes within the education system takes time and strong will at

either national or a decentralized level, depending on the governing structure. A robust education system can take on changes that come along. But it was evident throughout the long period of school closure during the covid-19 lockdown that the systems and structured were fragile and children lost the opportunity to learn. Also the long periods of teacher strikes in Malawi and Palestine in the same period were challenging.

To promote ownership and sustainability of results, the **Somalia** programme built the capacity of the partners, community-based structures, teachers, school management, child right clubs and respective line ministries to maintain and sustain the achieved project results after the completion of the support period. For example, this is seen in 2 Primary schools in Puntland where the Leap Learning labs initiative was being implemented. The Community Education Committee members ensured that the tablets and property used were safe and available for use by the learners. After 5 years, all materials are still safe and none is missing, and they are frequently used and supporting children to learn.

Strengthening the support system for teachers as mentioned under outcome 1.3 is an example of how SCI in collaborating with the government system, can reach lasting change. SCI Uganda through the Teacher Education and Training Department (MoE) supported the rollout Continuous Professional Development (CPD) modules through Core primary Teacher Training Colleges. SCI further engaged the Uganda National Institute for Teacher Education for approval of the CDP modules as part of the National CPD framework. At national level, SCI Uganda adopted a system strengthening approach to teacher professional development using existing MoE structures such as the Center Coordination Tutors attached to the Core Teacher Training colleges. Then at the policy level, SCI worked with the Teacher Education Department to develop a competency framework to strengthen professional competencies of teacher trainers and aid delivery in-service and pre- service teacher professional development. This framework will inform all the teacher professional support across SCI Uganda and those of other partners and hopefully improve the quality of the teachers nation-wide.

ISSUE 2: CHILDREN ARE PROTECTED FROM VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

2. CHILDREN ARE PROTECTED

Children are protected from violence and abuse

Outcome 2.1: Increased access to quality education for girls at risk or affected by child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy.	**Outcome 2.2:** Transformed social, cultural and gender norms reduce violence against children, including child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy.	**Outcome 2.3:** Strenghtened and coordinated national and community-based child protection systems prevent, identify, report and respond to violence against girls and boys.

Under issue 2, we aim to achieve a life free of violence for all children. We are working to prevent child marriage and teenage pregnancies and to ensure increased access to quality education for girls at risk of or affected by child marriage and/or teenage pregnancies. We also work to transform social, cultural and gender norms to reduce violence against children by promoting positive parenting to ensure children are safe in their homes. This means working with parents and caregivers, communities, and children to transform gender norms, power dynamic and culturally accepted practices that drive violence. And working with duty bearers to strengthen child protection systems and mechanisms to build protective environments around children at all levels of society. Hereunder, we advocate for enabling legal and policy frameworks to protect children from violence and abuse, strengthen the social services workforce and improve coordination across sectors and child protection actors at all levels.

The Covid-19 pandemic led to school closures all around the world and left many girls and boys without access to quality education for a prolonged period. The restrictions also reduced access to the communities we work in while countries reported increasing rates of violence as a consequence of the pandemic. COs adapted programming based on social restrictions to continue community-based interventions and programming approaches were adapted based on these. Programming, including identifying and reenrolling married girls and teenage mothers under outcome 2.1 was particularly challenging as schools have been closed for longer periods across all countries, and the quality of data varies across countries. Since the MTR, programming under issue 2 has normalized and accelerated across countries. However, drawing on the findings

and lessons learnt from the MT several countries have adjusted programming priorities to respond to the changing needs of children across context, as presented in the following sections.

> **Outcome 2.1:** Increased access to quality education for girls and boys at risk of or affected by child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy.

Child marriage and teenage pregnancy have a complex and negative correlation with education. Evidence shows that girls who stay in school longer are likely to delay marriage, and that keeping girls in school is an efficient strategy to prevent and respond to child marriage. When girls are in school, they are more protected against child marriage and teenage pregnancies and gain important knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in their lives. Under this outcome we therefore work to reduce the number of school-dropouts due to child marriage and/or teenage pregnancies and to ensure that girls who're married or have become young mothers are re-enrolled.

Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, Nepal and **Uganda** are implementing child marriage and teenage pregnancies programming under issue 2. The **2019-2021 MTR** results found that a total of **331 girls re-enrolled to school after dropping out due to child marriage or teenage pregnancies** which was significantly lower than the MT target.

As schools in **Uganda** were closed until January 2021, the programme has not reported MTR data under this outcome. However, an assessment of the risks and effects of teenage pregnancy and child marriage among girls due to school closure and the

Covid-19 pandemic in Karamoja (Moroto, Nabilatuk and Acholio (Gulu and Amuru) regions in 2021, indicated that the rate of pregnancy and child marriages increased for in-school girls aged 15-17 years before and during the pandemic. 22% of the girls cited child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy as the leading cause for their school dropout and key drivers for teenage pregnancy were reported as child marriage, lack of sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) knowledge and limited access to contraceptives. Following these findings, the programme was adjusted by strengthening the capacity of mother care groups to carry out home visits and offer psychosocial and child-care support to child mothers facing challenges with reintegration. The programme also supported the revision of guidelines on prevention and management of teenage pregnancies in school settings developed by the Ministry of Education and supported their roll out in schools and communities and strengthened Adolescent SRHR (ASRHR) programming in Northern Uganda and Karamoja. This included building capacity of both the programme team and implementing partners on r including menstrual hygiene management, to improve the quality of this programming. In **2022**, 437 child mothers were identified, counselled, and supported with re-enrolment to formal schooling. Through massive back to school campaigns in communities, and dialogue meetings aimed at promoting behaviour change against the acceptance of child marriage and teenage pregnancies.

Of the 143 child marriage cases reported in **2022** in **Nepal**, 81% of the children were re-enrolled in schools to ensure continuity of their education. This is a significant increase from the re-enrolment rate of 15% in 2021. The limited progress reported during the MTR was mainly attributed to programming disruptions caused by Covid-19. As all covid restrictions were lifted in 2022, it was possible to implement the programme at full intensity again. Prioritising activities including tracing through child champions, close counselling, follow-up by para-social workers, providing comprehensive sexuality education to prevent early pregnancy, offering scholarship and education support, and providing support for income generating activities. A key achievement from Nepal is the 3%-points reduction in prevalence of self-initiated child marriage which showed a reduction from 21% at MT to 18% in 2022. The continued collaboration and mobilization of the Police, Ward Child Rights Committee, Child clubs, traditional healers, interactions with adjoining rural/municipalities, and para-social workers played a significant role in raising awareness, reporting, and responding to likely cases of child marriage during this reporting period.

To improve the results in SRHR education following the MT, the programme in **Niger** started implementing the Gender Roles Equality and Transformations (GREAT) approach in **2022**. Local groups involving 1,300 adolescent girls and boys in total were created in the communities and in secondary schools and supported by mentors from the programming communities and in schools. These were trained and supported by SC. The GREAT approach is an integrated health and protection approach that aims to improve reproductive health and prevent sexual and gender-based violence among adolescents. Through a package of recreational activities using games and flip books that adolescents can use in small groups, a 50-episode serial radio drama, community dialogues and actions. And by training existing community health workers and facility staff to strengthen their ability to respond holistically to the needs of adolescent girls and boys.

In **Mozambique**, following the MTR, adjustments were made to strengthen retention and reintegration of pregnant girls and survivors of child marriage. This was done by strengthening the involvement with parents and caregivers to help teenage mothers to re-enrol in school and by facilitating improved coordination and collaboration across caregivers, schools, CBCPM and health actors to identify girls at risk and agree actions to provide support. Child marriage and teenage pregnancy cases were managed by this group, mainly to support reintegration of girls into school. ASRHR information and services were made more accessible through comprehensive sexuality education and mobile health brigades while at the same time the programme worked to increase service acceptability among parents/caregivers and continuing advocacy efforts to ensure access to ASRHR services and school youth corners.

Malawi reported a significant increase of school dropouts among girls due to child marriage or teenage pregnancy exacerbated by the pandemic at the MTR. Following these findings, efforts were made to strengthen interventions to return and keep girls and boys in school. Interventions included organising girls' camps, providing psychosocial support to parents and adolescents, group counselling for children who were at risk of dropping out, and distribution of school and sanitary material to support girls and boys to stay in school. A lesson learnt from the MT was the vital role fathers play in shaping the behaviour and attitudes of their children. When fathers were involved in child protection issues, they served as positive role models for their children, helping them to challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes that perpetuate gender-based violence and discrimination. Based on this, the programme strengthened interventions at family level by introducing the Responsible, Engaged and Loving father (REAL) approach. The REAL fathers created a supportive community that values and protects children's rights and they are using their influence in the community to raise awareness about child protection issues and encourage other fathers to get involved. The approach has documented good results in other child marriage programming in the country.

Outcome 2.2: Transformed social, cultural and gender norms reduce violence against children, including child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy.

Under this outcome we are working to transform harmful gender and social norms to reduce violence against children. In **Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, Nepal** and **Niger**, we are working specifically to address the issue of harmful gender and social norms that are contributing to driving the practice of child marriage and teenage pregnancies. Whereas **Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Myanmar, Nepal, Lebanon** and **Guatemala** are implementing programming under the broader violence against children ambition for issue 2, with the aim to prevent children from experiencing physical and humiliating punishment in their homes. Interventions under this outcome is particularly focused at the individual, family- and community level including activities such as structured community conversation groups, parents and children's groups to develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes to parent positively without using violence. We work with children to ensure they feel valued, respected and safe within their family and communities, and we support communities so that they are able to protect all children, girls and boys from violence. Through advocacy efforts and capacity building of duty bearers, we work to strengthen legal and policy frameworks and strengthen knowledge on child rights, child protection, gender-based violence and child marriage.

MT results from **Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, Nepal**, and **Niger** showed overall progress under this outcome. The percentage of community members who believe child marriage is an unacceptable practice increased by 8%-points at MTR. 30% of the communities we work in had taken some sort of collective social action or made a social declaration against child marriage, a 19%-points increase from baseline (BL).

Mozambique was one of the countries that reported the most progress under this outcome at MT. The programme continued intensifying community engagement through a significant increase in the implementation of community dialogues from 56 at MT to 115 in **2022**, reaching 2,316 women and 1,888 men. The programme also continued socialising the Prevention and Combat of Premature Unions Act through media campaigns and working with community structures and leaders to develop strategies to prevent child marriage and strengthen reporting of child marriage cases as law enforcement continues to be a key challenge in the country. Communities' lack of willingness to report cases is caused by the lack of information about the proceedings of reported cases, weak coordination in the response of cases and scarcity of resources to ensure access

to services and assistance to remote communities. To address some of these challenges, the programme has prioritised capacity building of key justice system actors including judges, civil registry, social welfare, attorney and health actors and local civil society organizations to improve their capacity to promote the enforcement of the law. In addition, civil society organisations have been trained on advocacy to promote improved quality and resourcing of services across all sectors to respond to the needs of SGBV survivors. To adopt a more sustainable approach, the programme is also piloting a community-led child protection approach, Seeds, in 2 communities in Manica to strengthen community ownership and leadership in community-based work on child protection issues.

Based on high numbers of SGBV survivors and their dire needs for protection observed at MT in **Niger**, there was a need to adjust programming to complement ongoing preventive initiatives with responses to occurring SGBV cases. Thus, the programme included individual case management responses and initiatives aimed at strengthening the case management systems in Zinder and Diffa. In cooperation with the regional directorates of protection, the programme supported an evaluation on the quality of case management at regional level, which resulted in the drafting of an improvement plan endorsed by all protection actors in the two regions to be followed up by the regional authorities. The programme also contributed to the mapping of protection actors in the regions, establishment of referral pathways and supported regular coordination meetings of protection actors including supporting the implementation of the improvement plan. In addition, 73 regional actors including social workers, case managers and protection agents (F: 24/M: 49) were trained on how to respond to SGBV cases.

In **Malawi**, the programme supported child-led advocates to conduct meetings with the duty bearers to address challenges children face in their communities. The meetings focused on reviewing the previous commitments the duty bearers made to address such challenges and assessing progress made on prior commitments. While **Malawi** has had a strong legal framework in place since 2017 that is banning child marriage, the programme has identified several barriers to an effective implementation of the law relating to the lack of civil cases at the mobile courts, lack of privacy of child victims, and child victims being left to wait for long times without hearing their case. This has contributed to underreporting and the lack of referral of cases to relevant stakeholders in the justice system. To address some of these challenges, the programme has worked to promote a more child friendly justice system to strengthen the enforcement of the child marriage law and contribute to restoration of natural justice by investigating and providing remedial measures to 163 children (B: 66/G: 97) across the country. Child-Friendly Mobile courts have allowed

children to better able to participate in legal proceedings by providing a safe and supportive environment for them to speak out about abuse or violations that they have experienced which has contributed to building their self-esteem and giving them a sense of control over their lives and future. The courts also contributed to awareness raising and educating communities on child protection issues, expediting legal processes and ensured that cases are heard and resolved more quickly thereby reducing more harm from the survivors.

In **Nepal**, progress have caught up after being hampered by Covid-19. In **2022**, 15 wards were officially declared free of child marriages, compared to 5 wards at BL. This may be attributed to the strong local ownership of both local governments and civil society organisations, as well as children themselves, in the work to end child marriage. To sustain these efforts, anti-child marriage campaigns have been carried out at the community level, in collaboration with local governments, law enforcement agencies, religious leaders, parents, and children. All five Regional Municipalities developed and endorsed strategies to end child marriage. Moreover, innovative approaches such as the "Vice Chairperson with Adolescent Girls and Pregnant Women" have enabled local governments to take ownership and prioritise the issue related to children. Interacting and

sharing experiences with adjoining municipalities has also proven to be effective in reducing child marriage cases. A good initiative adopted by all five municipalities was a specific budget allocation for adolescent girls and pregnant women to support preventive efforts through the ending child marriage campaigns. An example of this is, in Kushe rural municipality where 2,5 million NRS (NOK 195, 000) was allocated for adolescent girls and pregnant women.

In **Uganda**, ASRHR information and awareness raising activities were rolled out in all schools largely through the School Family Initiative. This was established in all schools with selected teachers working weekly with a group of 50 learners to educate them on topics related to life skills, growth and development, health relationships, gender norms and SGBV, menstrual hygiene management and HIV/aids and STIs. 19,778 students (B: 9,927/G: 9,851) across the intervention schools were reached with ASRHR information between 2019 and 2022.

Under the broader violence against children work in **Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Myanmar, Nepal, Lebanon** and **Guatemala**, the **MT results** from **South Sudan, Somalia, Uganda** and **Nepal** showed that there was a 21%-points reduction in **children who have experienced physical and humiliating punishment in their homes**.[3] Based on children's self-reporting, **Mozambique** and **Palestine** saw an 8%-points reduction. While

Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights community outreach in Karamoja.   PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

---

3   South Sudan, Somalia, Uganda and Nepal were the countries which had comparable data from BL and MTR, collected through caregiver surveys.

the aggregated MTR target was not reached, progress was still considered positive in the context of the disruptions caused by Covid-19. Looking at parents and caregivers' acceptance of physical and humiliating punishment the MTR target was surpassed by 24%-points.

Nepal reported a decrease in the acceptance of physical violence among caregivers at MT, while the acceptance of psychological aggression was constant. Based on this learning, a priority for the programme was to strengthen their work with positive parenting. This was done along two tracks. Adaptations of the parenting without violence session in radio and community broadcasting were continued while at the same time, the implementation of the structured face to face parent and children's groups were rolled out. In addition, the programme also included follow-up visits at the household level by the community facilitators to complement the group sessions which seems to have had a positive impact on parents and caregivers' attitudes towards all forms of violence. Lastly, ongoing lobby and advocacy are being done to allocate a budget in remaining wards to implement parenting without violence sessions. In **Myanmar**, 1,334 parents (F:1,213/ M:121) in Kayah completed parenting sessions. Following these, programme partners followed up the individual parents where these shared positive reflections on the value of the sessions and how they had contributed to parents becoming more supportive of their children, treating children with appropriate warmth and being equipped with non-violent skills on how to guide them. As a result of this changed approach to parenting, the children become more polite, warm and friendly towards their parents. Parents further stated that

> *"we were really satisfied and shared the takeaways from the sessions with family members and neighbours to help them understand the value of positive parenting…".*

In **Somalia**, the programme documented significant progress related to parents' declining support of physical punishment and psychological aggression towards children at the MT, while at the same time children still reported facing high levels of violence. In **2022**, the programme continued implementing parenting without violence approach, including parent and caregivers' sessions and children's session. 640 parents and caregivers (F: 489/M: 151) and 640 children (G: 330/B: 310) benefitted from children and parent groups sessions. Children who participated in these sessions reported experiencing decreased levels of the psychological aggression at home. Several of the parents and caregivers made public pledges and promises to abandon physical and humiliating punishments towards their children. In parallel to the structured sessions with parents and children, broader community awareness raising activities were conducted disseminating positive parenting messages in Somali. Community-based

structures were also trained on prevention of physical and humiliating punishment, protection and gender issues to better be able to respond to general child protection concerns and support the needs of children, parents, and caregivers. The programme also increased the implementation of community conversation sessions with communities on child rights and child protection issues, with a particular focus on harmful gender and social norms and harmful practices including child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) were expanded, drawing on the community conversation approach that is implemented under the Joint NCA and SC Programme on FGM and Child marriage.

Qualitative study from Somalia on children's perception of their own participation

A qualitative study (2022) from Somalia on children's perception of their own participation documented that advocacy efforts undertaken by child rights clubs contributed to increased awareness on violence against children in the communities. The child right clubs stated that they conducted community sensitization on the importance of child participation on issues that affect children. According to the respondents (including children, head teachers, Child Right Club mentors and local partners), children's advocacy contributed to reducing incidents of violence against children. The study further found that children actively participating in the Child Rights Clubs and other children attending parenting without violence sessions also contributed as "agents for change" in promoting awareness for the abandonment of physical and humiliating punishment. These efforts also contributed to improving the perception of parents towards positive parenting and consequently to reducing violence against children, as stated by SC's implementing partner, Tadamun Social Society. The study found that children's participation in the club had a positive impact on children's themselves such as improved psychosocial wellbeing, empowered participation and improved awareness about their rights.

As part of the social and behaviour change strategy in **Lebanon**, the programme rolled out awareness sessions on child marriage and child labour targeting adolescents, caregivers and community leaders, reaching in **2022**, 788 community members (F:614/ M:174). During the sessions, participants were asking their questions and sharing their concerns with each other. Participants were motivated to take actions towards child labour and child marriage and expressed their interest to take part in events and activities at a community level especially community leaders that suggested the establishment of a committee. A pre and post-test was administered

Children in child-friendly spaces in Somalia.

with participants attending the sessions to measure the increase in knowledge related to child protection issues.

> **Outcome 2.3:** Strengthened and coordinated national and community-based child protection systems prevent, identify, report, and respond to violence against girls and boys.

National child protection systems are key to reinforce the protective environments around the child and their families. Under this outcome, we work to strengthen the legal and policy frameworks, to improve coordination across governments and sectors and to ensure that children have access to timely, safe, respectful, and needs-based case management support. To achieve this, we have implemented Steps to Protect, our case management programming approach, to ensure that the child protection systems have a skilled and stable social service workforce, and we work with community-based child protection structures to prevent and respond to child protection concerns in the communities. A key component of our programmes are also advocacy and capacity building of duty bearers to strengthen policy and legal frameworks on child protection, national actions plans and improved case management systems.

MTR results showed a 17%/points increase in **child protection cases which were responded to.** Most countries also reported progress related to their work on **strengthening community-based child protection mechanisms** with a 19%-points increase at MTR.[4]

Following the increased number of child protection cases reported during the Covid-19 lockdown, the programme in **Uganda** adjusted its child protection programming by further strengthening its child protection systems approach. The CO participated in national level child protection working groups and supported the development and rollout of the National Child Policy that consequently resulted into the establishment of Child Wellbeing Committees. In **2022**, the programme supported the training and capacity building of para-social workers (PSWs) to strengthen local child protection's structures' ability to more efficiently prevent, identify and respond to child protection concerns and cases. PSWs trainings were rolled out in the sub country in Nabiratuk District in Karamoja and Odek Sub- County in Omoro District in

---

4   4 Applied to Somalia, Uganda and Nepal. South Sudan, Guatemala and Myanmar did not have comparable BL and MT data.

Northern Uganda in partnership with the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development and through the coordinated efforts of the CwCs, the national PSWs training was rolled out covering all the nine programme districts in Northern Uganda and Karamoja.

A learning from the MTR in **Guatemala** was that in spite of activating community-based child protection committees to prevent and respond to child protection concerns, there were still challenges with inefficient case management processes. Therefore, the programme increased its efforts to strengthen the capacity of community-based structures in the process of identifying, registering and referring cases using SC's child protection case management approach, Steps to Protect. The programme contributed to activating 30 CBCPMs in Chortí and Ixil municipalities, enabling the communities to identify, register, and refer cases of abuse to the Adolescent and Child Protection Offices of their respective municipality, thereby promoting access to services for children at risk. Additionally, to improve the capacity to respond to the referrals by the CBCPM, the programme the capacity of case workers and supervisors in 20 government institutions to improve the effectiveness and quality of child protection services. Moreover, SC also signed an MoU with the municipal governments of Jocotán and Nebaj to contribute to the programme's sustainability by promoting the coordination between the municipal offices and the implementing partners.

Prior to the coup in **Myanmar**, the programme was making significant progress towards strengthening local government and civil society child protection system. The programme supported the expansion and strengthening of Community Social Workers (CSWs). After the coup, SC and CSOs partners stepped in as supervisors for the CSWs, providing capacity building, support, and oversight. In **2022**, the programme continued with strengthening the community social work model by applying the competency-based approach to CSWs in Kayah and Magway. Partners provided regular monthly supervision and coaching sessions with CSWs to strengthen their knowledge, skills and to promote their confident level to work with children, families, community members to build protective environment in the community. The CSWs have provided support to low-risk cases, mobilised available resources for children (including services for children with disabilities) and referred cases. The outcome is that CSWs responded to a total of 407 cases (G: 182/ B:225) at community level. A key learning from the challenging context, has been the importance of investing in sustainable child protection structures and the adaptability of the CSWs model for the programme to be able to adapt and respond to the child protection needs of children following the Coup in 2021.

Youth club in Guatemala participating in program activities.

Reflections about sustainability under issue 2- Child protection

Issue 2 programming is embedded in the socio-ecological framework which focuses on the child as an active citizen in the context of their family, community and society. By applying this framework, we set out to address the risk and protective factors and drivers of violence that need to be transformed to prevent and protect children from experiencing violence in their homes. By focusing on preventive interventions to change harmful social norms that drive violence, including child marriage, and by working with system strengthening, we strive to achieve sustainable and lasting impact. Across all our programming under issue 2, we work to promote and strengthen legal and policy frameworks that protect children against violence, and we strengthen national rights-based child protection systems to also be able to respond to child protection concerns.

Outcome 2.3 is explicitly aimed at reflecting our child protection systems-strengthening work, but this work is also embedded in the gender-targeted programming on child marriage and teenage pregnancies. Examples of sustainable programming efforts includes cases like Nepal, Myanmar and Uganda. In **Uganda**, the programme made a shift after the MTR to strengthen the system strengthening focus in the Norad program under child protection work, by contributing to the roll out of the para-social workers (PSWs) training and certification in target areas. The PSWs are a structure recognized by the Ugandan government under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, that is mandated to identify, report, refer and respond to cases of violence against children at community level. The rollout of PSWs has created a more sustainable and coordinated community social service workforce and a shift away from the many disjointed child protection structures that previously handled case management at community level. This has resulted into a considerable improvement in case management with a registered rise in the number of cases being timely reported and referred. As highlighted under outcome 2.3, investments in a systems approach to strengthening child protection structures enabled **Myanmar** to adapt its case management services in the post-coup context. Whereas in **Mozambique**, the programme has faced some challenges with community ownership of community-based child protection mechanisms and started to pilot a new programming approach being developed by SC on community-led child protection. The approach aims to strengthen the protective environment for children within communities and help COs to identify and facilitate greater decision-making space and ownership for communities. To build evidence on the effectiveness of the approach in achieving change in child protection outcomes across contexts and settings, SC is conducting rigorous research to gather evidence in a small number of countries over a set period of time to inform the revision of this approach, called Seeds.

ISSUE 3: CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ARE IMPLEMENTED

3. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Governments are held to account by a strong civil society and meet their obligations to implement children's rights

Outcome 3.1: Strengthened civil society including children mobilized to promote children's rights.	**Outcome 2.2:** Civil Society including children, monitor government's implementation of child right.	**Outcome 2.3:** Strengthened government institutions implement children's rights.

Despite global progress towards implementing child rights, governments fall short of their commitments under the Child Rights Convention (UNCRC). To address these challenges, under Child Rights Governance (CRG) work, the Norad programme has worked to strengthen civil society including children to demand children's rights, improve accountability of governments and other duty bearers through monitoring the implementation of children's rights, and strengthen government institutions to implement child rights.

> **Outcome 3.1:** Strengthened civil society including children mobilized to implement children's rights.

The programme has supported 95 civil society organizations (CSOs) to strengthen their organization and technical capacities, and governance structures, so that they are better able to hold the government to account on its obligations to implement child rights. This was done through conducting partner capacity assessments, and then jointly with partners identifying gaps, developing capacity enhancement plans, and agreeing on milestones related to both thematic knowledge and skills, and to internal policies and practices to be achieved in the agreed timelines (ref. table under the partnerships section). At midterm, 71% of capacity milestones had been met, and almost all the countries had met more than 50% of the agreed milestones.

Strenghtening CSOs
The programme has continued to strengthen the capacity of its partners after the midterm, with the aim that they become self-sufficient in the long run. Following the support from the SC in **Colombia**,

four local CSOs have successfully fundraised with other INGOs and are now partners of Plan International. In **Niger**, SC partner ASO-EPT has become a leading national CSO in the field of education, as evidenced in them holding the civil society speech at the July 2022 education sector review between the government and technical and financial partners. Training has been provided on various topics, though not always by SC. Instead, partners have often supported other CSOs in enhancing their capacities. For example, in **Nepal**, Karnali Rural Development & Research Center supported other partners on how to work on child protection and CRG. In **Palestine**, SCi supported Marsad to develop a gender unit, which in turn supported other partners in streamlining gender in their work. Partners, including those that used to think gender irrelevant to their work, documented internal changes in their procedures, and practices. The partners now disaggregate their data based on gender, 20% of partners have established a gender unit, and 80% have endorsed gender related policies.

CSO Networks and Alliances
The programme has continued supporting the establishment and strengthening of CSO networks and alliances, as a means to amplify civil society efforts to advocate for and support implementation of child rights, working with up to 25 LCSO networks across all countries. Building on the findings and recommendations of the midterm, the Alliance of CSOs established by SC in **Lebanon**, expanded from 16 to more than 40 CSOs, included an advisory committee of academic institutions, and agreed to work towards the child rights of all children in Lebanon. In **Malawi**, thanks to SCi support, the coalition NGO CCR went from a coalition that was close to dying out to one of the most vibrant CSO networks in Malawi that is at

the forefront of pushing for child rights. It has a secretariat with four full-time staff, is recognized by the Government through the Ministry responsible for children, is a member of Child Rights Network for Southern Africa (CRNSA), and partners with various other INGOs and UN agencies. And in **Nepal**, SCi assisted in the establishment of five local-level CSO networks, which are actively engaged in advocating for child-centric budget allocation, development and endorsement of child rights policies, and monitoring of the child rights situation. The CO also supported the establishment of a provincial-level CSO network called the Collective Campaign for Child Rights (CCR), which comprises of 33 CSOs working towards promoting the rights of children. The programme in **Uganda** has also strengthened civil society coalitions at both regional and national level. One CSO coalition has been established in Gulu and another in Karamoja, and both have been trained by SCi on various topics. This has promoted coordinated actions to address service provision gaps and prevailing child rights violations. Coalition members have for example undertaken media campaigns on ending harmful practices that endanger children's safety and development, participated in planning and budgeting for children, and supported the probation office in responding to child abuse cases.

Civic Space

In the last year we have also seen significant shrinking of civic space, with governments in several countries passing restrictive NGO laws. **Malawi** parliament passed the NGO Act Amendment Bill which CSOs see as government's move to control and silence them. Among others, the amendment revised the registration fee for CSOs from K50,000 to K5 million (approx. 5 USD to 500 USD) and put in place high demands for accountability of funds CSOs receive. These laws have also resulted in COs having to end or significantly change their partnerships. In **Palestine**, designation of long-standing partner Defense for Children International (DCI) as a hostile organization by Israel, was a major setback to child rights work. To enable DCI to continue supporting children as human rights defenders and national drivers of change and accountability, while at the same time minimizing any risks for SC in Palestine, the modality of their partnership has been changed and DCI is now a direct partner of SCN. At the same time, Palestinian Authorities have also attempted to amend the regulation for non-profit organizations, so as to impose additional prior approval of grants procedures. This was stopped, partly thanks to lobbying from CSOs, such as the Adalah coalition, where the programme's partner Marsad is a member. The CSO registration law of 2022 in **Myanmar** is further eroding civic space, thus limiting SCi partnerships with local CSOs.

Children's Groups/Child Parliaments

In addition to supporting the strengthening of CSOs and networks, the programme also strengthens children's groups. This is done with the aim of supporting children's participation in decision making, as a goal on its own and as a step to improving good governance for children.

In **Myanmar**, a National Online Children Platform has been established with the goal of continuing children empowerment and regular consultations with children on the issues that they faced under the new context following the coup. In 2022, children had an opportunity to meet with UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Myanmar and presented child rights violations and their recommendations. These are reflected in the Special Rapporteur's June 2022 report. At the local level, child groups have been reformed in each of the eight project villages during 2022, and they have reviewed their objectives, rules and regulations, as well as made plans for future work. The groups were also provided with small grants for which they developed implementation plans. These ranged from awareness sessions on COVID-19 and handwashing, to raising awareness around garbage disposal. These child-led activities have amplified children's confidence to speak in public, and the community and their parents have listened to the children and are supporting them. In **Mozambique** several concrete results of Child Parliament's work have been seen in the last year. Following requests from the child parliamentarians, the Machaze district government rebuilt a previously destroyed playground, and the Macossa district government cleaned up the space to build a new playground in 2023.

Joy, 16, president of the child parliament in Mozambique.
PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

Outcome 3.2: Improved accountability of government and other duty-bearers of their obligation to monitor and implement children's rights.

To ensure that governments fulfil their responsibility to implement the UNCRC, civil society plays an important role holding duty bearers to account. This is done through a variety of platforms, such as engaging with international human rights reporting mechanisms, demanding accountability from duty bearers at the local level, and influencing the private sector to implement child rights.

Child Rights Reporting Processes

Civil society plays an important role in providing additional information to international human rights bodies that monitor state's implementation of child rights, through submission of supplementary reports. With Norad's support, SCi supports child-led reports (reports developed and submitted by children), child-informed reports (reports informed by consultations with children) and, where none of the above is feasible, CSO-informed reports (informed by the organisations or networks' previous interactions with children and knowledge of children's issues). At midterm, eight child-led or child-informed supplementary reports were prepared and submitted to international bodies, including two reports (South Sudan UNCRC, Nepal UPR) that were child-led and written by children themselves. In addition, four CSO reports were submitted, in which children were not directly consulted, but where SCi's knowledge of the child rights situation was reflected. Three additional alternative reports were prepared, and they will be submitted following submission of state reports (child-informed Palestine CRPD, child-led and child-informed Malawi ACRWC). Since **Guatemala** is now following the Simplified Reporting Process, civil society has capitalized on the opportunity to submit inputs for the list of issues prior to reporting (LOIPR). The coalition Red Niña Niño, where SCi and its partners are members, and with direct support of the Norad programme through partner CIPRODENI, has sent child-informed inputs to the LOIPR. It has also supported the delivery of a child-led report from CODENAJ – Coordinator for the rights of children, adolescents and youth. Out of 50 issues lifted by the Committee, 37 are on the same topic as the issues raised in the report from Red Niña Niño. Moreover, 15 reflect the same issues that the children have raised themselves in the CODENAJ report. CIPRODENI, together with other civil society organizations, has also sent civil society inputs for the stakeholder report of the UPR. Submission of supplementary reports was also supported in **Uganda**, where such reports were submitted for the UPR and for the ACRWC review. And in **Palestine**, child councils in the West Bank and Gaza participated in discussions around the state's reporting on the second optional UNCRC protocol on involvement of children in armed conflict. In **Mozambique**, SC has mobilized the 3R Platform (coalition of 3 child rights networks) to support the Child Parliament in producing annual child rights reports, with the aim that these will feed into international reporting on child rights. This was the case in December 2022 when CSOs and children were asked to submit their ACRWC supplementary reports in less than four days. To meet this tight deadline, the Child Parliament combined its child rights reports from 2020, 2021 and 2023 into one. SCi also continued supporting the 3R Platform to conduct annual joint monitoring of implementation of concluding observations and recommendations stemming from the UPR, UNCRC, and ACRWC review processes. In **Myanmar**, the programme has adapted and contextualized the child rights monitoring and reporting process, forming a watch group with several child rights organizations to monitor and report child rights violations that have occurred since the military coup. Three periodic child rights reports were produced in 2021 and one in 2022. These have been submitted to and used for advocacy with stakeholders at the UN and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) levels. They have also been reflected in the June 2022 report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Myanmar.

Child-Centred Social Accountability

The programme has also supported children and civil society to monitor child rights implementation at the local and national level and hold service providers and decision makers to account for delivering on their commitments to children. This has often been done through child-centred social accountability (CCSA) platforms.

In **Somalia**, CCSA platforms were trained, assessed the quality of services in education and health, presented their findings to local authorities and other service providers, and jointly developed action plans to follow up on the authorities' commitments. A learning study on CCSA in Somalia has reported perceived positive changes of education services following these interventions. In **Palestine**, the elected child councils in West Bank and Gaza have continued holding accountability sessions with duty-bearers and raising their concerns. For example, the children demanded from the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) and Ministry of Labor to activate inspection committees on child labour, and revisit the age of the child in Laws to ensure consistency. MoSD has raised this issue to the Committee responsible for adapting laws. While in **Colombia**, in November and December 2022, SCi organized roundtables with children in Buenaventura, Riohacha, Arauca, Cúcuta, Tumaco, Cauca and Bogotá. These provided the children an opportunity to influence the National Development Plan, which is currently being discussed in the Colombian Congress. Children's groups have been supported not only to hold government authorities' account-

able, but in **Mozambique**, they have also held to account the 12 CSOs that work on child rights and are members of the 3R Platform. The Children's Parliament led this process and was supported to organize two rounds of national level meetings in 2022. During these, the CSOs accounted to children for their work and children gave them overall ratings on how well they had withheld their commitments.

Child Rights and Business
Moreover, in a few countries the programme works with the private sector to influence them to respect child rights and support their implementation. In **Malawi**, the programme has influenced eight private sector companies to embrace the concept of Child Rights and Business Principles (CRBP). These companies have committed to integrating children's rights into their respective policies, codes of conduct, annual plans and annual budgets. Furthermore, MoUs have been signed with four companies spelling out roles of each party in CRBP's advancement. While in **Uganda**, working jointly with another SCi project, the programme has trained 66 individuals from ten businesses in Karamoja to respect, promote, protect and fulfil the child rights and create a protective environment in their business operations.

> **Outcome 3.3:** Strengthened government institutions implement children's rights

Governments are the main duty bearers responsible for implementing the UNCRC, and this requires laws and policies that translate the UNCRC commitments into a national framework for realization of children's rights, sufficient budget to implement these, and robust public institutions that have the necessary capacities and competence.

Laws and Policies
With continued advocacy and lobbying, by the midterm, the programme had influenced several policy and legislative changes that improve children's lives. Specifically, a total of three changes in laws (Somalia, Uganda & Colombia) and 12 policy changes (Malawi, Uganda, Nepal, Guatemala and Colombia) happened by the midterm. A law against corporal punishment and the Prevention and Prohibition of Human Sacrifice Act are some of the changes in laws which had happened. Among others, the national child policy, child participation policy, education policy, early childhood policy and municipal policy on children and adolescents are policy changes made at national and sub-national level. This advocacy continued after the midterm too. After years of advocacy on the Safe School declaration by SCi and partners, the government in **Colombia** signed up to the declaration in November 2022. Furthermore,

at the local level in Colombia, SCi has contributed to the promotion of the public policy for children and adolescents and family strengthening issues in six municipalities (Hacarí, El Carmen, Convención, Ocaña, Playa de Belén and Abrego). This policy is now reflected in their municipal development plans. Additionally, technical support was provided to contingency plans in the six target municipalities so that in the context of displacement, officials would include children and adolescents, pregnant mothers and victims of the armed conflict in their actions. Thanks to years of advocacy and support, the municipality of Nebaj, **Guatemala**, now has a public policy for children and adolescents, which is in force for 10 years from 2022. Last year, the government of **Nepal** endorsed Children's Regulations which guide the implementation of the 2018 Children's Act of 2018 following advocacy and support from SC. Also, a significant step was achieved towards the ratification of the National Child Rights Policy, with it being endorsed by the Social Affairs Committee under the Council of Ministers in December 2022. In relation to last year's elections in Nepal, after lobbying from civil society, the Election Commission endorsed a new Code of Conduct which restricted mobilization of children and use of school premises in any form of campaigning. In **Uganda**, SC has advocated for and supported the second National Strategy to End Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy 2022/2023 – 2026/2027. While in **Malawi**, SC has supported the operationalization of the 2019 Law to establish the National Children's Commission, the roll-out and dissemination of the National Child Participation Guidelines and dissemination of the National Child Participation Strategy to all 28 districts. In **South Sudan**, SC supported the government to launch the earlier approved National Plan of Action for Children in April 2022. In **Mozambique**, SC supported the 3R Platform to coordinate the engagement of child rights CSOs in the revision of the National Land Policy. These CSOs submitted six child related recommendations, all of which were integrated in the National Land Policy enacted in November 2022.

Public Investment in Children
The programme engages in advocacy to increase the amount of budget that governments set aside for implementation of child rights in several countries. In **Nepal**, Save the Children's budget advocacy contributed to the increase in government expenditure on essential services such as education, health, child protection, and social protection by 8.56%-points, reaching 18.06% in 2022. And in **Guatemala**, the public investment in children in 2022 represented 3.7% of GDP, up from 3.45% in 2018. This increase reflects the contribution made by the CO and partner ICEFI, by maintaining advocacy actions. To compliment the work on advocacy towards higher share of budget going to children, the programmes in Nepal and Guatemala have also

Recomendaciones para aumentar la recaudación de impuestos en Guatemala: a favor de una mayor inversión pública en niñas, niños y adolescentes

Por: César Melgar, Abelardo Medina Bermejo, Ricardo Barrientos

IPNA, niñez y adolescencia, política fiscal, inversión pública

Correo Enviar
Share 0 Twittear
Share

Fecha de la publicación:
Jueves, 21 Julio, 2022

Recommendation to the Guatemalan Government on taxation: https://mail.icefi.org/publicaciones/recomendaciones-para-aumentar-la-recaudacion-de-impuestos-en-guatemala-favor-de-una.

engaged in advocacy towards domestic resource mobilization through taxation (DRMT), as a way to increase the overall state budget. In **Nepal**, a 2-day training was conducted to increase the awareness of local government representatives on DRMT, investment in children, local level resource allocation, identification, and effective mobilization, and an action plan was developed. Furthermore, SCi recently conducted a high-level multi-ministerial dialogue on public investment in children, specifically pondering on the need to create a separate budget code for children in the national financing system, which has been linked with the discourse on DRMT and tax justice. The dialogue was concluded successfully by forming a high-level coordination committee involving different ministries to take this discourse forward, where SCi Nepal has been nominated as a member to technically support the government in devising and defining the next steps. Last year, ICEFI in **Guatemala**, presented recommendations to the Tax Administration Superintendence (SAT) to improve collection of resources to be allocated to children. SAT has

been positive to most of these recommendations, but their implementation remains a challenge. Advocacy around taxation has also continued in **Palestine**, building on the previously reported research around the education tax. This has led to an amendment of the Education Taxation Law so that the money remains with municipalities rather than the ministry.

Strengthening Governments
To ensure governments uphold their child rights commitments, the programme continues to strengthen government capacities. For example, last year in **Colombia**, SCi facilitated an exchange of experiences between officials from the programme's region Norte de Santander and officials from Valle del Cauca, on the issue of recruitment prevention pathways and protective environments. While in **Palestine**, this support focused at national level, specifically ministries were supported on development of strategies (ex. Inclusive Education Strategy update), systems (Special Education System transfer to e-school), guidelines (ex. Dealing

with children with autism) and with kits to ensure access to services for children with disabilities.

In **Nepal**, following the endorsement of the new Child-Friendly Local Governance implementation guideline in 2021, an additional four wards have been declared as child friendly wards following the midterm, upping the total to nine wards. Moreover, through continuous advocacy, three municipalities recruited Child Welfare Officers and two palikas have assigned focal person as provisioned by the 2018 Children Act.

National Human Rights Institutions

One important public institution that the CRG programme has supported in several countries are the National Human Rights Institutions. In **Palestine** SCi has supported the Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR), among other things, to conduct a child rights audit of its work and develop a strategy and action plan for its child rights work. As a result, ICHR received 947 cases related to child rights in the past 4 years and followed them up with the relevant authorities. 70-80% of these cases were filed by children themselves. While in **Mozambique** the programme has supported the National Human Rights Commissions (NHRC) to travel to all provinces to monitor child rights and organize roundtables with children, CSOs and duty bearers. Till December 2022, NHRC has produced 10 reports from these missions. The programme in **Myanmar** had also worked a lot on strenghtening the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC). However, following the coup in 2021, all engagements with the MNHRC have been suspended, after its independence was put to question due to its silence on human and child rights violations committed by the military forces.

Strengthening Data, Statistics and Analytical Study on Children

Recognizing that relevant and sufficient data on children is an essential part of implementation of child rights, the CRG programme in several countries works towards providing such data, often in close cooperation with the national statistics body. For example, in **Guatemala** the website of children's rights is regularly updated by the partner CIPRODENI, and this data has been regularly referred to by at least eight national media broadcasters in their coverage. ICEFI also maintains and regularly updates the website that tracks the status of budgets allocated and executed in programmes for children. And in **Palestine**, the programme continued the support to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, facilitating cooperation between the Bureau and the Child Council, including through the development of an

MoU and joint action plan. The Bureau also consulted children on their child friendly statistical program and developed a report on SDGs relevant to child rights.

Reflections about sustainability under issue 3 - Children's rights

The work done under CRG programming focuses on strengthening civil society, including children, so that they are in a better position to demand and monitor child rights, and in a position where they can function independently without SC support. This work ensures that there will be a strong civil society to perpetually continue the work done within the programme. Furthermore, establishment and implementation of child right's policies and laws, as well as strengthening of robust public institutions, ensure that results continue past the programme's duration and that children outside of the programme's intervention areas benefit. However, this work often requires yearslong efforts and depends on a string of external factors, many of which can be obstacles. For example, while the tax authorities in **Guatemala** have been positive to recommendations to improve collection of resources to be allocated to children, the implementation has stalled due to lack of political will, low capacity of entities in charge of tax collection, and lack of consensus among various sectors of society. **Nepal** has experienced significant delays in policy endorsement, often because the policies and plans developed by prior government representatives are not fully embraced by the newly elected ones. And in **Mozambique**, the work with the NHRC has been affected by the Parliament's political influence, resulting in an NHRC that is not very committed and active. These examples are in addition to difficulties posed by shrinking civic space, as referenced higher up in this chapter.

At times, changes in context have also caused a halt in progress, or reversal of achievements. This has been seen, to some degree, in **Myanmar**. There, among other things, SC has had to halt its cooperation with the MNHRC following the 2021 coup and terminate its cooperation with some partners due to implications of the new CSO registration law. SC also had to suspend all government engagements and national advocacy activities due to safety and security risks. It has, however, engaged in low key advocacy at regional and international levels.

Children with assistive devices- Uganda.

2. CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

Inclusion of children with disabilities

The Norad programme's name Leaving no child behind indicates a strong commitment to reaching the most marginalized children. Children with disabilities have been among the targeted groups and efforts have been taken to reduce the number of barriers and the human rights breaches they experience. The programme has during the reporting period focused on a few key areas in order to improve the situation of children with disabilities and their families throughout the countries where the Norad programme is being implemented. Raising awareness among programme staff and the communities, building capacity to collect data and generate knowledge and enabling more children with disabilities into the regular education system through accessibility measures, provision of assistive devices and training of teachers have been prioritized.

Avareness raising

There has been a large numbers of awareness campaigns on the right to education for children with disabilities, targeting children, parents, communities, and their leaders, as well as government and partner staff. In **Mozambique**, 1,543 teachers, both pre- and in-service teachers received awareness raising messages through collaboration with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs). In **Somalia**, the program conducted awareness raising and enrolment campaigns through door-to-door visits and drawing on parents of children with disabilities in the awareness raising activities and as positive role models. In **Niger**, the program, in collaboration with the OPD partner Nigerien Federation of People with Disabilities (FNPH), raised awareness on the rights of people with disabilities and to integrate them into their communities and schools. These efforts resulted in a significant increase in enrolment from 332 (G: 140/ B: 192) at baseline to 706 children with disabilities (G: 312/ B: 394) in 2022, more than doubling the numbers, also for girls.

Building capacity on collection of disability disaggregated data

After the collection of data at baseline it became clear that there was need to build the capacity of the country offices and their partners on administrating the Washington Group Questions (WGQs) in data collection. A comprehensive, 16-hour training package was developed by SCN in 2020 and rolled out in 2020-21. The results from an internal evaluation on the training outcome in 2021 showed that we had succeeded building the capacity on collecting disability disaggregated data using the WGQs. Out of the seven country offices that did not manage to collect disability disaggregated data at baseline and that were prioritized for the training, five were able to collect quality disability disaggregated data at midline. While Malawi, Somalia and South Sudan stated that the training enabled them to collect more reliable disability data and to generate disability disaggregated evidence at midline, both Malawi and Somalia stated that they were also able to make adjustments to program contents based on the disability disaggregated data they had collected at mid-term.

Increase in enrolment of children with disabilities in schools

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic and a global regression in school attendance, there are evidence that show a positive development in most of the implementing countries in relation to enrolment of children with disabilities. After the pandemic all the implementing countries carried out extensive back to school campaigns in order to regain the losses seen in enrolment during and after the pandemic and to encourage other typical out-of-school groups of children, including children with disabilities.

There is an increased number of children with disabilities enrolled in school in the majority (8 of 11) countries from 2019 to 2022. The increase ranges from 57 more children (G: 27/ B: 30) in Guatemala to 438 more children (G:196/ B: 242) in Somalia and with six countries having enrolled more than 250 additional children with disabilities, compared to 2019. Malawi and Nepal present a slight reduction, mirroring the decrease in overall enrolment in these two countries. In Colombia the numbers are constant. Another positive trend is the increase in girls with disabilities enrolled, in where girls made up 47% of enrolled children with disabilities in 2022 compared to 45% in 2019. Despite these positive trends, the overall prevalence of children with disabilities in enrolment records remains low, only 2% across the 11 countries.

Quality of education

The Children with disabilities that have managed to enroll and attend school regularly, not only encounter several physical barriers, but they also experience less learning outcomes. Across all Norad programmes we see the same pattern, children with disabilities are learning and performing less on all literacy tests compared to their non-disabled peers. In **Malawi** the data indicates that children with disabilities had ten times less likelihood of passing the literacy tests compared to those without disabilities. In **Somalia**, children with disabilities have a passing rate of about half compared to their peers. Although many of these numbers may not be statistically reliant because of very small numbers of children with disabilities in schools, they are indicating a huge gap in the quality and access of education experienced by children with disabilities.

Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

During the reporting period we have seen some significant progress in relation to the international legal mechanisms on the rights of persons with disabilities. In 2019, the federal government of **Somalia** ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), thereby formally adopting it as national law. As a consequence of the ratification, the federal government established the National Disability Agency, which main objective is to promote disability rights within Somalia. Save the Children Somalia have provided awareness raising and training to both civil society partners and government on the CRPD and the rights of persons with disabilities prior to the ratification. On February 24th, 2023, the government of **South Sudan** signed the CRPD, which is a huge win for the people with disabilities, their representative organizations and the civil society in South Sudan. In **Malawi** the programme had consultation meetings with the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC), OPDs and other stakeholders in the disability sector on how to advocate for the government to ratify the Optional Protocol of the UN CRPD.

Reflections and recommendations for the new Norad programme 2024 - 2028

Many of the country offices provide clear recommendations that address the situation of children with disabilities. Although much is achieved during the 2019-22 period, a lot remains in relation to securing the rights of children with disabilities across all the implementing countries. Many of the programme activities have been school focused, but since most children with disabilities are out-of-school, they have not benefited from these initiatives to the extent we would have wished. There is a realization throughout several of the country offices that the next Norad programme needs to include more interventions directed towards the children that are not in school for different reasons. According to international data, children with disabilities are believed to constitute at least 1/3 of all out-of-school children in developing countries irrespective of context.

Gender Equality and contribution to resolution 1325

SCN has continued to strengthen gender equality in programming throughout the programme period. As a movement we have ambitious goals and aim to mainstream gender in all our programme work and implement targeted approaches when needed. We use our Gender Equality Marker Tool at the design phase of each project and aim to be gender sensitive as a minimum and gender transformative wherever we can.

MTR learnings: During the last four years we have seen a steady improvement in gender mainstreaming throughout the programme, although the level and maturity is still varied among the country offices. The MTR showed that all our country offices are collecting sex disaggregated data, although the level of analysis, interpretation and use of these data vary. Similarly, all our country offices show awareness related to promoting and ensuring gender balance among staff, teachers and volunteers, and they are concerned with women and girls' equal participation in programme activities. An increasing number of country offices have also established a more structured gender approach over the last years and are now working systematically with gender equality across sectors.

Adolescent girls group in Nepal.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

The MTR also demonstrated progress in our targeted programmes, that are especially designed to strengthen the rights of girls at risk of getting married or pregnant and drop out of school. More information on the results of these interventions in Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, Niger and Nepal is to be found in the Issue 2 chapter.

Programme adjustments and improvements:
Several of the learning-points from the MTR have resulted in concrete programme adjustments and improvements, and a few of these will be highlighted below.

A challenge observed in most of the COs is the difficulty of engaging male caregivers in activities related to education, child protection and parenting. Male caregivers might have work obligations at the times sessions are taking place and traditionally they may not see themselves as having a strong role to play in parenting. We do, however, know that the involvement of fathers can have a strong impact on reducing violence against children, child marriage and improve well-being for children. Therefore, in Colombia, we have developed strategies to reach men by involving community leaders and also reaching directly out to fathers through the female caregivers. This has increased men's interest in participating in sessions on gender stereotypes and parenting practices. After participating, many male caregivers have expressed that thanks to the workshops, they have implemented positive discipline practices and played a more constructive role in the upbringing of their daughters and sons. Some of the participants have denounced the use of violence despite the fact that this is a culturally accepted practice in their communities. In Lebanon, a male caregiver stated that after participating in gender sessions he began helping his wife with the house chores and with the children's education, which also improved their relationship and his communication with his children. In Guatemala the MTR showed that only 51 men out of 475 participants took part in parents' school sessions and community protection committees.

After changing the schedule for sessions and promoting increased gender balance the participation of men has increased from 11 to 24%. SCG will continue to have a close dialogue with the local communities to ensure schedules that allow greater participation of men, such as in evenings and weekends. The MTR in Malawi similarly showed weak male involvement in community work, and as a response the CO initiated the Real Fathers approach, emphasizing the inclusion of men in child protection work and promoting gender equality in communities. Now the CO wants to adopt such principles in all interventions.

In some countries the MTR revealed a massive gender gap in school enrolment. Despite an overall increase in school enrolment in South Sudan from BL to MT, there were 61% boys and only 39% girls enrolled at mid-term. As a response the CO initiated gender specific interventions such as menstrual hygiene management through delivering information, kits and girl friendly school toilet facilities, as well as a programme of role models to motivate and promote girls' education. In Somalia the MTR showed that the enrolment of the girls increased more than for boys since BL, which can be attributed to continuous awareness raising and provision of menstrual hygiene kits as well as training teachers on gender sensitive teaching and learning methodologies. A huge challenge in Somalia, however, as highlighted in the MTR, is the very low number of female teachers. To mitigate this the CO has recruited twenty new female teachers and initiated several interventions to strengthen the existing ones through in-service teacher trainings of female teachers. Several advocacy interventions have also been put in place, including a one-day workshop with MoE, resulting in several actions that the government will take to push the female teacher agenda forward.

Resolution 1325
Some of the Norad countries are experiencing protracted conflict or conflict like situations. In Colombia we work in a region strongly affected by the armed conflict and with ongoing reintegration of former FARC combatants in the communities. The presence of illegal armed groups such as the ELN or FARC dissidents complicates our work, but we have also seen that our activities have engaged former FARC members in positive ways. As we have been working with children on peace, conflict resolution and strengthening protective environments in their communities, former male FARC combatants have also taken part in sessions. They have indicated that this work has helped them to recognize and acknowledge past and present practices that can be categorized as GBV, providing them an opportunity to reflect upon the impact of violence as well as issues such as toxic masculinities and the roles of girls, women, boys and men in their community. This work needs to advance gradually and in consensus with the communities to avoid discomfort and clashes between different cultural perceptions. However, it is also seen as welcome by the communities and fruitful in ensuring a protective environment and making attention pathways known in the community.

Reflections and recommendations for the new Norad programme 2024 - 2028

Despite progress, the main threat to the gender agenda in our Norad programmes is the many external risks the world is facing. The global resistance to women and girls' rights persists. The Covid-19

pandemic has challenged our efforts to improve gender equality in programming, and the world's economic situation due to the effects of the war in Ukraine is exacerbating these challenges further. Increased poverty, school closures, home schooling and the many restriction measures disproportionately affected women and girls during the last few years. In many countries we have seen substantial increases in child marriage and teenage pregnancy rates, as well as girls not returning to school after school closures. Our programming has tried to mitigate these negative changes, and a strong gender lens will be key going forward to ensure the rights of children with all genders as societies are recovering from the effects of external global challenges.

Gender review of the Norad portfolio

In 2022 SCN commissioned an external consulting team to undertake an in-depth gender review of our Norad portfolio. The review found that "SCN and the COs ...have made impressive strides toward the integration of gender equality considerations into programming. COs have made substantial headway in designing programmes that strive to be at least gender sensitive and gender transformative". It further states that "SCN has made notable efforts to build its own capacity in gender. This work has been bolstered by the gender-related commitments and strategic directions of SCI across the movement". When scored with the Gender Equality Marker all the Norad country programmes were found to be gender sensitive, and seven country programmes were found to be gender transformative. This is an enormous improvement from the last assessments in 2016 and 17, when only 20% of our programmes were scored as gender sensitive.

Nevertheless, the gender review provides an analysis of a number of areas that require more attention going forward. One important barrier to improving gender equality in the Norad programmes is the challenges related to recruit and retain qualified gender advisers in COs, and the review recommends larger budget allocations for gender advisers.

The review points out that in addition to mainstreaming gender across the programme portfolio, there is high value in targeted programming aiming to improve girls' rights and gender equality in local communities. Targeted programmes have shown concrete results in terms of improved gender equality, and additionally the review found that the strong gender emphasis in the child marriage/teenage pregnancy programmes in five of the Norad countries seems to have led to an improved gender lens across the full programme in these countries. The review therefore recommends expanding targeted programming.

Moreover, the review highlights the important work done by SCN and COs in some countries in Asia related to strengthen the rights of LGBTIQ+ children. There is a clear recommendation that for the next Norad agreement SCN should continue and deepen its support to ensure the sexual orientation and gender identity and expressions (SOGIE) perspective among the country offices that are indicating readiness to work on this and help motivate other countries to include this perspective in their child rights and gender work where it is feasible.

The gender review provides a number of concrete recommendations for future work and for the new Norad programme phase, emphasizing that: "Despite the notable successes highlighted throughout this report, SCN requires a more systematic approach to gender for the next Framework. For example, following SC Sweden's initiative, SCN could develop specific CO gender requirements (that is, establishing Gender Technical Partners, ensuring that each CO has a Gender Focal Point with at least a 30-50% staff level of effort (LOE), and conducting a Gender Analysis at the beginning of the programme to provide specific evidence-based guidelines on what components are required in the next Framework and demonstrate that SCN takes gender equality seriously". The report has been widely shared with the country offices and the recommendations are being considered in the process of designing the upcoming Norad proposal.

The environment and vulnerability to climate change

The climate crisis is a child rights crisis that acts like a threat multiplier for all rights, including education and protection. As a child rights organization, SC endeavours to mitigate and adapt to the consequences of the climate crisis. The UN Secretary General stated at the launch of the latest ICCP report, "our world needs climate action on all fronts – everything, everywhere, all at once". This is the backdrop for all Norad programmes, where climate change has been a common challenge. For example, **Somalia** faced their five consecutive below-average rainy season in 2022, and 54.5% of the country's children are estimated to be suffering from acute malnutrition. In **Nepal**, children's access to school has been affected due to floods and landslides. And in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, like **Niger**, the climate crisis has pushed vulnerable families to the brink, with many forced to adopt harmful coping mechanisms such as child labour, child marriage, migration, among others.

One of the approaches adopted by the Norad programme to mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis is the Safe Schools common approach, devel-

Island destroyed by cyclone Ana in Southern Malawi.
PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

oped to ensure that all children are safe and protected from all hazards and threats in and around school, including climate related hazards and threats. Through our Safe Schools programming we have seen that schools are able to reduce the risks of climate-related hazards, and that learnings from the MTR have been incorporated in a beneficial way. In **Mozambique**, the MTR revealed that the measures taken so far did not guarantee the effective safety of students at school, partly because the safe schools' approach was not fully implemented due to lack of understanding. So, the Norad programme performed extra trainings for the school community, especially the school directors, School Councils, and the Community Committees for the Protection of Children (CCPCs) about safe schools. This strategy proved to be efficient because these members not only acquired knowledge about disaster risk reduction (DRR) and disasters, but also gained the awareness and maturity to take a leading role in mitigating the risks that their children run at school and outside of it. As a result of these trainings, School Committees for Disaster Risk Management (CEGRD) were created in 61 schools and their respective School Emergency Plans (PEBEs) were

elaborated. Likewise, SCI has successfully worked and advocated for the incorporation of elements of DRR into the Basic School Emergency Plan developed and adopted by the government. Thus, making schools safer for children in Mozambique in a sustainable way.

We believe it is essential that to equip children with the knowledge and education necessary to raise their environmental awareness and provide them with the opportunities and the practical skills that will enable them to engage in real world climate issues outside the classroom walls. Thus, through the Green Generation environmental education we aim at engaging children in climate leadership and action. Green Generation was co-developed with WWF in Myanmar and is now being contextualised in Palestinian and soon in **Guatemala**. In **Myanmar**, the Green Generation Club was integrated in the Norad programme, and 1,299 (G:672/B:627) children have participated. As a result of this participation, children continue to practice planting trees, picking up trash, and maintaining a clean environment in their daily lives, creating a multiplier effect as children are also advocating for behavioural change in their families and communities.

Child participation is at the core of our work in the Norad programme, and in our work related to climate. In Nepal, 158 child journalists (G:92/B:66) received training about child rights, protection issues, existing policies, and child sensitive journalism. As a result, the climate stories of three child champions were published in The Mirror daily newspaper UK. Furthermore, we supported **Malawi**'s first ever Climate Summit, which brought together 300 children from across the country, including children with disabilities, to share their own experiences of the impacts of climate change and aspirations for a country fit for children. As a result of this summit, the Malawi Government provided space for children with the country delegation to COP for the first time, and the Minister of Natural Resources and Climate Change committed at COP27 to institutionalise the National Children's Summit to become an annual event. Likewise, in **Colombia**, the Norad programme supported the first Summit on Children and Climate Change.

Moreover, a total of 294 children (G:134/B:160) participated in risk-mapping exercises in **South Sudan** whose processes led to the development of risk mitigation plans and the establishment of 76 Disaster Risk Committees which will have an oversight role of the coming up with mitigating measure of possible hazards within the schools.

Lastly, to work with climate change in a holistic way, SC has also committed to reducing our environmental footprint. As examples of this, in **Lebanon** all SC offices were equipped with a sustainable green energy solution. Additionally, SC was able to

put a waste sorting and collection in place with a clear reporting system to encourage and motivate the team. In **South Sudan** SC is moving towards the use of solar electricity rather than generators. In Nepal, the plastic bottles in field office have been replaced with stainless steel bottles and in **Norway**, 60% of the loose inventory in our new office is either reused or bought second hand. Likewise, in 2022 our goal was to reduce air travel by 30%, and we reduced it by 48%!

Going forward and considering the big impact that climate change is having on both the children and the Norad programme, and the increased commitment in SCN's strategy, even higher efforts need to be done to both mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, as well as supporting and raising children's voice in their fight against climate change.

Partnership and civil society

Strengthening Civil Society is an overarching goal for SC, as it contributes to the achievement of child rights, thus, in 2022 partnership focus has remained crucial. Throughout the implementation period (2019-2022), there has been ongoing collaboration with a total of 174 partners, of which 41 are government entities and 133 are LCSOs. Among the LCSOs, 8 are universities or education institutions and 9 are either DPOs or disability specialist organizations. The programme has supported 95 partners with their capacity enhancement since the start of the implementation. This is based on the development and implementation of capacity milestones plans with the respective partners (Ref. table for details).

Country	Total nr. partners	Gov.	Total nr of LCSO partners reached	DPOs or Inclussion	Other	Active LCSOs Partners as of Dec 2022	Total nr of LCSO partners strenghtened
Colombia	19	5	14	2	1	14	9
Guatemala	13	7	6	1	1	6	5
Lebanon	6		6	0		6	4
oPt	8		8	0		8	6
Myanmar	6		6	0		4	4
Nepal	16	2	14	1	2	5	5
Malawi	13	3	10	0	1	8	7
Mozambique	18	5	13	0		13	11
Niger	9	2	7	1		7	6
Somalia	10	3	7	1	2	7	3
South Sudan	11	4	7	1		7	6
Uganda	15		15	0		13	14
Cambodia	5		5	0			5
Ethiopia	5		5	0	1		4
Nicaragua	7	7	5	1			5
Zimbabwe	13	13	5	1	1		1
Grand total	**174**	**41**	**133**	9	8	98	**95**

Table: Support to Partners.

Work done on SC's overarching goal of "strengthening civil society" investment in development for partners has continued in 2022, where responsibilities are gradually transferred to partners, with the goal for civil society partners to become social change agents for their communities and be independent of SC by the end of 2023. In the annual reporting from COs a wide range of capacity strengthening activities that were needed to implement the ongoing programmes, are featured as well as other training courses focusing on the organisational capacity development of the partner itself. There are also reports on capacity exchange activities between SCI and partners or between partners where one part learns from another part, someone with a different but important skillset. Finally, some COs partners are actively participating themselves with the development of the projects. These are the kinds of success story that SC aim to capitalize on into 2023.

In Colombia work was placed on strengthening 12 partner organisations in the municipalities of Ocaña, Teorama, Convención and Abrego These organisations have been trained in different areas such as protection, child rights governance, communications, MEAL + research, advocacy, education, inclusion, finance, projects, administrative issues, with the aim of creating initiatives that creates protective environments for children and adolescents in each of their territories and in turn, contributes to peace building. Moreover, there is great coordination and a support network between the CSOs Brisas de la Panela, San Juan de Dios and Teorama for their different actions. Moreover, work between CSOs involves articulation based on the exchange or support of knowledge, as well as joint dialogue with public authorities to demand the guarantee of children's rights. The CSOs show great cooperation when it comes to relying on each other's strengths. For instance, if Brisas de la Panela wants to address the issue of inclusion in its activities, it relies on San Juan de Dios, which has more experience in these issues. Likewise, when Brisas de la Panela holds meetings on entrepreneurship they invite other organisations so that they can also benefit. Finally, when it comes to advocacy, these organisations also lead meetings with municipal administrations on children's issues to influence public policy. Other highlights were that each organization involved parents in their initiatives, having them play a leading role. At the end of 2022, a meeting of experiences was held with these organizations and from this conversation results and lessons learned were documented.

In Nepal working with four strategic and implementing partners in three districts, Karnali Rural Development & Research Center (KIRDARC) was found to be one of the more experienced and capable partners. As both a strategic and implementing partner, not only does KIRDARC has a very strong network and rapport in the communities enabling them to smoothly deliver the services to the chil-

dren and also influence the Palika authorities and district-based stakeholders, drawing their attention and roles to consolidate the efforts and bring the impact in the lives of children. Due to their continued efforts, lots of government resources were utilized in the construction, renovation, training, awareness, and support to children in jeopardy (CiJ). The project has benefitted from a strong collaboration with authorities, both on local and national level, to the extent were SC activities and work methods have been taken up by the authorities supported by their own public resource financing. In many cases, KIRDARC as an experienced organization supported other partners on how to work on the agenda of child protection and child right governance and played a vital role to establish a provincial level CSO network named Collective Campaign for Child Rights (CCR) in Karnali. On the issues of children like forced child marriage, KIRDARC and Social Service Center (SOSEC) coordinated and shared information and documents with each other.

The program in Niger has succeeded in creating and strengthening a unifying framework (Consultation Framework) of strategic implementing NGOs, making it possible to have more visibility on the actions of each partner. It also allowed the partners to discuss their themes and experiences, and to see more advocacy actions centred on the child. SC's partnership with the National Federation of disabled Persons (FNPH) allowed the program to address the agendas of political parties for the 2021 General Elections to make them more gender sensitive and inclusive. Further, FNPH led a workshop to map the different actors intervening in Disability Inclusion, and gathered educational actors, all 6 ministries in charge of Education, Civil society organizations, consortium of INGOs as well as representatives of the federations of people with disabilities from neighbouring countries to make commitments for inclusion. In 2023, work will continue to bring forth the role of these partners on their independent fields, to make them leading spokesperson for Child Rights, and to enhance the improvements.

When it comes to partnership and collaboration with civil society, continued efforts to improve were made by the country offices and special attention was given to strengthening the partnership relations. With this as a base and moving forward, focus will be given to the use of input and feedback systems that enable strategic and implementing partners to contribute with input on how the common goals will be reached. Building on the Keystone Partnership Feedback Survey commissioned by SC March 2021, to obtain better information related to the partnership work throughout the organisation, a follow up pulse check was done in 2022. There were seven areas of focus – financial support, non-financial support, administration and finalising

the agreement, relationship and communication, monitoring and reporting, understanding and learning and Covid-19 experience. Results from the 2022 pulse check showed the partners desire to be actively engaged early and for an equal voice in setting terms and plans. They show a high sensitivity to perceived unequal treatment. Mutuality is seen by many practitioners as the ultimate objective in development partnerships and, while every question in the Partner Pulse informs it to some extent, four statements homed in on respect, transparency, equality, and giving credit where credit is due. Scores for all four went up from 2021, which harmonize well with Save the Children's investments in the partnership principle of mutual benefit and equitable partnerships. However, a fourth of all partners indicate that they do not feel like an equal partner. Partners were asked to compare the overall experience of working with Save the Children with other NGOs and funders, producing the only finding in the pulse check that showed a sizable drop. One explanation might be that while there is improvement by specific questions and themes, there is more work to do for Save the Children reach the standards of their peers.

Further work is needed on advocacy for the shift of power tied to increased partnership agency and localisation to underline that potential fear amongst CO's staff about losing their own role as SC furthers the shift of working from self-implementation or working closely with implementing partners to strategic and equitable implementing partners. However, as some of the work in 2022 has demonstrated there is plenty of work and competency building that come from shifting power towards high-quality partnerships that should reassure CO staff. SC will continue to move forward on the Shifting Power agenda in 2023.

Child participation

Children's right to express themselves and to influence decisions and actions that affect their lives is embedded in article 12 in the CRC, as well as being one of its four general principles. As a child rights organization, Save the Children works to ensure that children's insights and opinions directly or indirectly inform our plans and activities and that we are accountable to children in everything we do. In addition, our programmes support children's own agency and activism and strengthen participatory structures and policies at all levels and situations from homes to government, from local to international levels. In our Theory of Change, we aim to be

Child participation in action in Malawi.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

"a fearless voice for and of children" as one of our strategies.

Child participation **as a working principle** is practiced at various levels; on a day-to-day basis when Save the Children staff and partner staff interact with children, through child-friendly reporting and feedback mechanisms, as well as through large consultations with children. To highlight an example, SC engages children in risk assessments, both in terms of natural hazards, school environment, and violent conflict. This way, SC, partners and other authorities learn from the children's own perceptions of risks, and the children learn about their rights, about strategies for mitigation and protection, and about the child protection mechanisms and safeguarding measures in place. In **Malawi**, the programme has supported the organizing of 'open days and dialogues' at schools, which has influenced the school governance structures and community policing to enhance security in schools. One of the notable challenges that was identified by the children was the presence of self-appointed toilet guards, who demanded a fee from children who want to use the toilets. Upon hearing the children presenting these risks, the school administration acted and ensured that the children could access the toilets without fear and exposing themselves to risks.

In **Uganda**, during the commemoration of the Day of the African Child in 2022, children from Northern and Central Uganda met the Speaker of Parliament and demanded legislative and policy actions to end child marriage and teenage pregnancies, prioritize children with disabilities in planning and budgeting and create avenues to listen to children at the national level. In **Colombia**, the programme has supported children from a local participatory structure in Norte de Santander to participate in national spaces such as the children's roundtables for the National Development Plan, the national Environmental Summit and the signing of the Safe Schools Declaration. These experiences have both made the children more aware of their rights and position as part of civil society, and also strengthened their position vis a vis the local authorities. In **Nepal** the programme has established and supported a total of 386 child clubs, five municipal child club networks, and one provincial level child club network, engaging altogether 6,496 children (G:3,520 /B:2,976). The clubs have initiated and led programs such as the Child Assembly to ensure their participation in local level planning, policy-making, budgeting and accountability processes. In **Somalia**, the programme has supported Child Rights Clubs which raise awareness on children's rights and the importance of education, reaching both their peers (including out-of-school children), and the school management and community at large.

In many COs, child participation as a working principle is also reflected in our own governance structures. In **Palestine**, a council of children from the different projects was established, trained and provided with child-friendly materials on Child Rights and on the mandate of SC. Based on their own discussions and experiences, the children presented their inquiries and suggestions to Save the Children staff. In **South Sudan**, focus group discussions with children have been organised for Save the Children staff to properly understand and capture their needs and priorities, for example regarding the best mode of learning during COVID 19. These practices both contribute to the children's own learning and exercising their rights to participate and influence and serve to provide Save the Children and our partner organisations with incredibly valuable insights.

In some of the countries where we work, we are witnessing negative trends in terms of how open and safe it is for children to actively take part in decision making and expressing their opinions freely. This has been particularly notable in **Myanmar** and **Palestine**, yet, the shrinking of the civic space due to changes in power relations and political dynamics is something that in various ways affect children's participation in all countries we work, and something the programmes constantly are adapting to, in order to promote and protect children's rights to express themselves. This trend also highlights the importance of our efforts to promote child participation in our programmatic work.

Prior to the coup in **Myanmar**, children had some space at the local and national levels to exercise their right to freedom of expression and assembly and association. For instance, children conducted participatory action research and presented the key findings with the local authorities, met with the township child rights committee members, engaged in law reform advocacy process and participated in national children forums. After the coup, these spaces closed. Political censorship and internet shutdown, restriction and costs prevent children from participating in online activities. Children have shared that they dare not speak up for fear of repercussions, and parents do not allow them to participate for concern about their security.

Responding to these challenges, the programme has supported the establishment of a National Online Children Platform allowing children to express themselves to national and international audiences on the issues they now face under the military regime. In 2022, children had an opportunity to meet with UN Special Rapporteur UNSR on the situation of human rights in Myanmar and presented their concerns.

Despite such severe challenges in several countries, in 2022, many children have experienced the positive impact of the relaxing and dismantling of Covid-19 restrictions, which has allowed them to rediscover the civic space as arena for their engagement and activism and allowed Save the Children to re-establish participatory spaces and activities. We have also brought forward much learning from the children themselves, including on digital spaces as arenas for child participation. Preliminary findings from Lebanon show how children who participate actively in the programme have increased knowl-

"In relation to freedom of expression, we could speak up our opinion freely in the past. Another thing is that we could claim our rights to the Township Child Rights Committee members. At this time, we not only lost freedom of expression, but we also lost our freedom of movement. We could organise a meeting with only a few children. We had to be careful about the surrounding when we discussed. Who is out there? We had to use earphones to attend the online meeting. In our Magway Region, due to internet connections cut off and the high price of data fees, it is difficult to get information." — Boy, 14, Magway Region

edge on child rights campaigning and activism, and feel more confident to speak up, and engage as activists in general, and engage with adults and decision makers in particular. Many say that they believe that young people have the ability to contribute to change in their societies.

The chairperson in a Child Rights Club in Somalia shares this from her experience of how the club and the schools work together to reach children who aren't attending school:

"here was a boy who experienced bullying and teasing by his classmate in the Haji Ismail school in Abudwak and decided to stop attending the school. After being absent for one week CRC was informed by his classmates. We visited his home and had a friendly conversation about why he left the school. Finally, we convinced him to go back to school. With the support of the head teacher, we continuously provide awareness to all students about the negative impact of teasing using different means. The CRC members are distributed to all classes that helped to identify easily and on-timely dropped and absent out children"

Education technology

2019-2022 have been significant years towards reaching the goal to "effectively harness the poten-tial of educational technology" in SC's education programming and we have collectively worked to support the use of equitable and effective Education Technology solutions.

Over the course of the 5-year agreement, we have committed to following a "twin-track" approach to improving our use of technology in education programming.

Track 1: Development of Education Technology Model
In 2018, SC took the decision to invest in and better understand how technology can impact our education programmes. The first key milestone of track 1 was to conduct an internal landscape review that has informed a strategic position on education technology. The strategic position, including principles for use of education technology and recommendations, was endorsed by SC in 2019, and the education technology team have since worked to operationalise it.

In 2022 SCN has continued to contribute to strengthen the work on EdTech globally by leading the EdTech Community of Practice; an informal community for staff to share experiences on how to utilize technology in education programs, and by leading a newly established EdTech Task Team with the aim of writing a global programme offer identifying how EdTech can contribute to realizing the global SC education strategy 2022-2024. In addition, SCN has continued to support the global Digital Programming Team in relation to Education Technology, for example piloting new tools developed for safe moderation of online groups in our School Leadership and Management program in Nepal. Child safeguarding online is one of the main risk factors identified for EdTech pro-

Save the Children

EDTECH FOR WHOM?
ENSURING SAFE AND EQUITABLE USE OF EDTECH FOR CHILDREN

ADVOCACY BRIEF
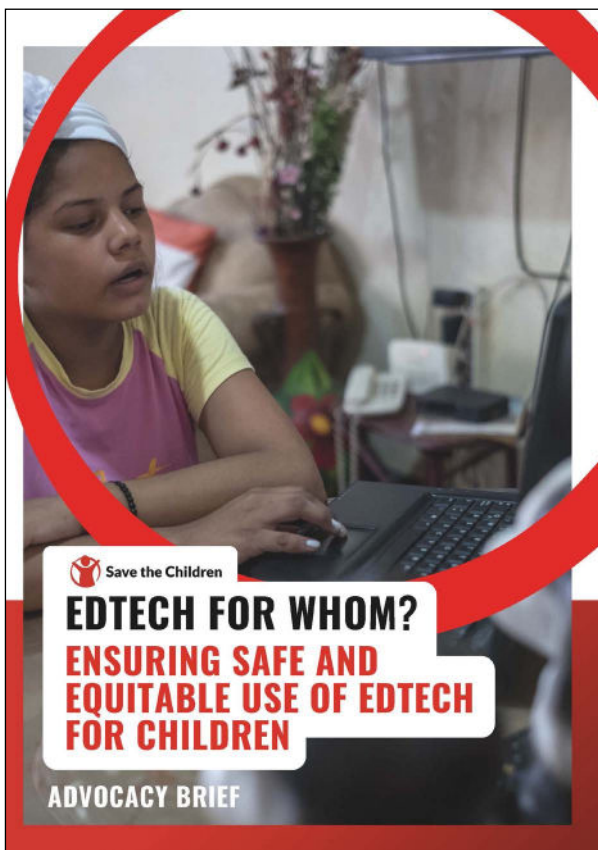
grams, and supporting Save the Children developing tools to mitigate this risk will continue in 2023.

As part of our commitment to Build Forward Better and to highlight the opportunities and challenges of using EdTech, SC in 2022 published an Advocacy Brief: *EdTech for Whom? Ensuring Safe and Equitable use of EdTech for Children*. The brief highlights five areas of focus for global recommendations going forward; Ensuring access and equity, prioritizing inclusive education, shifting power in EdTech programming, ensuring children's and teacher's rights to participate in the design and use of EdTech and ensuring safer EdTech use for children.

Track 2: Innovation and Learning
The second track focuses on ongoing and new pilot projects and approaches. Over the last four years, we have supported or piloted education technology projects across all the countries in the Norad programme. The investments made in this track have primarily focused on supporting teachers and tracking children's return to school and absence monitoring.

In 2020 Save the Children Norway, with funding from NORAD and NMFA established the Attendance Project with the aim of understanding how the regular tracking of attendance data via digital systems could inform programmatic adaptation, monitoring of those programmes, and ultimately

support a reduction in drop-out rates of marginalized children in Save the Children Norway supported programmes. In 2021 we published the *Enrollment and Absence Monitoring Systems Toolkit* intended to support teams looking to utilize these systems. In 2022 we have supported Colombia and Lebanon to pilot attendance tracking programs utilizing Waliku and OpenEmis software.

Another area of focus for innovation and learning has been supporting teachers digitally through technology supported Teacher Learning Circles (Professional Learning Communities). Many countries, including Colombia, Myanmar, Nepal, Lebanon and Somalia, have conducted all-digital or hybrid teacher learning circles, and a majority of the programme countries will continue to implement a contextually relevant hybrid approach in 2023. To enable countries to make this transition in an effective way, SC developed with funding from NMFA a guidance note in 2021 intended to provide pedagogical and operational considerations for teams to consider when engaging with technology supported Teacher Learning Circles in both development and humanitarian contexts. Based on this work, in 2022 we initiated a project to evaluate existing options on how to automate the data collection from WhatsApp groups utilized in Teacher Learning Circles. This project has initial focus on the Somalia context, but the learning we are gathering will also be valuable for the global work.

In all workstreams in track 2 we are working across humanitarian and development contexts, and it highlights that EdTech is a tool relevant in all, including nexus contexts. In SC we see this as an advantage, contributing to the sustainability of our programs.

Risk Analysis

This section presents a brief analysis of the risks that materialised in 2022 and that had a high and medium impact on programme implementation. We describe the response measures adopted and their effects. This chapter builds on the updated risk matrix (See relevant Annex).

Risks that have hindered results achievement

Inflation and weaker economies after the pandemic and the Ukraine war
The pandemic and the Ukraine war have had significant impacts, including weaker economies and food insecurity. The strain financial situation has affected provision essential services and forced families to resort to negative coping mechanisms, such as child marriage, migration, child labour, and consequently increased school dropout. Efforts have been made to address these challenges, by

leveraging different sources of funding and active engagement with donors and governments. However, the impact on the programmes is significant and the results achieved so far are fragile and can easily be reversed or hampered as we saw it happening during the pandemic.

Shrinking space for civil society
In Palestine: Shrinking civil society space as a result of restrictions imposed by Israel on INGOs. In late 2021 one of NORAD partner was designated hostile/terrorist by Israel which resulted in SC seizing all financial engagement with partner. New ways of working had to be established to protect partners and SC staff and to allow us to continue our cooperation with whom we consider to be a strategic partner in the Norad program.

In Myanmar: Armed Conflict in Kayah – pushed communities into Internal Displacement, including Staff being displaced to other places. No operations within Kayah. The office was reallocated to Taunggyi, Southern Shan State. A risk management plan, including a detailed mitigation plan was developed. Community-based volunteers were recruited and trained.

New Association Law - Local CSOs don't want to extend registration with SC. SCVG decided to stop the partnership agreement with SC. All the organizations have faced this issue. If the organization extends registration, it will lose community acceptance and be difficult to implement in the People's Defence Force (PDF) control area. If the registration is not extended, the organization will leave the country, and the employees will face criminal charges. Action implemented: As SC decided to extend the new registration for the purpose of supporting the vulnerable community and children, it organized a community orientation session for volunteers and VEC members.

Outbreak of diseases
As the world recovered from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, other disease outbreaks affected program implementation in different counties. In Uganda a Ebola Virus Disease Outbreak in the Country. In Lebanon and Malawi, Cholera crises have affected the living conditions of all populations, disrupting health, water and sanitation services, exacerbated by systems scarcity, and unaffordability of water, triggering reliance on water sources of unknown safety, and compounded with funding shortfalls to provide needed humanitarian assistance, particularly in vulnerable settings.

In SCI Uganda Country Office worked in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and UNICEF to contain EVD through provision of protective materials, isolation centre facilities and psychosocial supported to children and families. In Lebanon, clean drinking water was provided in all our learning centers and additional measures took place following the outbreak of Cholera, such as provision of chlorine tablets in the water tanks which were continuously maintained throughout the period of the project.

Risk analysis on cross-cutting issues

Human rights / Children's rights
During and after the pandemic, countries have experienced increased risk of violence against children, particularly for those who are already at greater risk of violence – including girls, poor children, children with disabilities. These situations have impacted the implementation and have even prevented access to certain target areas by the project. In Niger, conflict in the Lake Chad basin affected the region of Diffa, posing operational constraints in Diffa by limiting the mobility of the team and beneficiaries, and high costs for security measures. In Lebanon, Colombia, Mozambique, there is increased recruitment of children to armed groups and gangs. In South Sudan, several attacks as a consequence of cattle raiding led to child abduction and killing. There are heightened restrictions on entry and security risks to program staff due to increased conflict. These are not new situations and SC is used to operating under extreme difficult environments, with solid systems for risk management that have evolved and improved over the years. However, efforts are not always sufficient and continues work and adapting management is always needed.

In Colombia, Save the Children periodically trains personnel to strengthen the response tools of work teams in the event of emergencies. These actions have also been strengthened and developed with schools through the adjustment/construction of the PEGIR - School Plan for Comprehensive Risk Management by including prevention and mitigation actions, emergency drills and the provision of prevention material for schools. In South Sudan, SC traced and reunified children with their families, organized peace conference for conflicting communities. In Lebanon, increased referrals to Case management teams have been taking place when a case is identified.

Women's rights and gender equality
Teenage pregnancies and child marriage continue to be one of the largest challenges faced by the Norad program, in all implementing countries, and even more so during and after the pandemic. In Malawi, Uganda high incidences of child marriages, teenage pregnancies resulting into many girls dropping out of school.

Several types of SRHR interventions are being implemented. For example, in Uganda, working with local radio stations to increase awareness using jingles, learners have increased knowledge on SRHR. Community awareness campaigns on ending child marriage and teenage pregnancy and community dialogue meetings that resulted into documented and signed community declarations against child marriage, have taken place.

In Colombia, the presence of deep-rooted, harmful, and sexist gender and social norms in homes and communities, combined with confinement due to COVID-19 and conflict, has intensified and normalized violence as well as teenage pregnancy and early marriage. As gender discrimination is normalized, situations of inequality, exclusion and violence often go unnoticed and are not reported. Since girls are more susceptible to sexual and gender-based violence, they are afraid of exposing themselves to additional risks on the way to and from school given the presence of different armed groups. Boys have reported being recruited by armed groups, harassment among peers, and humiliating punishments by caregivers and teachers. Cultural attitudes coupled by poverty increased discrimination against girls' education and widened gaps between socio-economic groups.

This has been addressed by the implementation of parenting without violence common approach, which is as a key tool to change harmful practices and behaviours. Also, awareness raising on effect of violence and abuses to the children's lives through media were conducted.

Climate change and environment
Prolonged droughts that affect food production, leading to crop failure and loss of livestock, increasing hunger and chronic malnutrition, have been seen particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. On the other hand, excessive rainfall, river overflows, and landslides, have also affected food production and caused malnutrition. Many children fail to attend schools regularly due to hunger, leading to some of the families migrating to urban areas in search of livelihoods and increased migration and absenteeism of children from schools. In Somalia, around 158 schools closed since January 2022. Schools in rural areas are particularly affected, and those that remain open are reporting rapid decreases in enrolment. In Niger food insecurity escalated into a hunger crisis in 2022, confronting SC with the need for interventions to prevent children from dropping out of school and secure their wellbeing. Natural disasters such as Cyclone Gombe and Anna brought floods in project impact districts in Malawi and Mozambique affected program implementation in some of the intervention areas.

In several Norad programming countries, SC and partners have started to implement school gardens with the participation of girls and boys, as an opportunity to look into local food sustainability (Guatemala, Uganda, Malawi). We have also carried out reforestation activities and intensified monitoring with implementing partners and update emergency preparedness plan regularly. In Uganda, supported school feeding initiatives, including school gardens, and strengthened capacity of school to provide learners with school meals. Due to budget constraints, hunger response intervention did not cause a significant reduction in the proportion of populations faced with hunger in both Northern Uganda and Karamoja sub region. In Somalia, SC and the MoE have done water trucking to Rural and IPDs schools. In South Sudan, interventions on adult and child led DRR included in the program. Continuous fundraising and engagement with relevant partners on school feeding programs. In Niger School feeding has been raised as a priority need, but the resources of the programme only allow temporary and insufficient initiatives.

Anti-corruption

The global pandemic created new challenges for fraud prevention as many organizations transitioned to remote work and digitized their operations, creating new vulnerabilities for cybercrime and other types of fraud, and in 2022 we were still faced with the risk of new ways of working due to the pandemic. Additionally, economic disruptions caused by the pandemic have in general made organizations more susceptible to financial fraud, such as accounting fraud and embezzlement. SC have already addressed these challenges/risks over a long time and SC have implemented robust fraud prevention and detection controls, including employee training, data analytics, and regular risk assessments. SC is also staying up to date with the latest fraud trends and adjusts our fraud risk management strategies accordingly.

In SCN we continue to receive fraud and corruption incident reports from our fraud unit and established 8 fraud and corruption cases related to NORAD-funded programs. Total returned funding to NORAD was 89.616 NOK in 2022. SCN has seen

Combating fraud - report messaging in Colombia.

an increase in reported cases in 2022 compared to the two previous years, this could be because we are able to do more on-the-spot monitoring again, as Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

In 2022 SCN also underwent a certification process through GPE (Global Partnership of Education) where they looked at the Fraud System within SCI and SCN. The detailed due diligence did not find any weaknesses related to the fraud and corruption process, a testament to our commitment to accountability and risk management.

SC's work on anti-corruption and fraud management builds on four strategy-pillars: Awareness, Reporting, Responding, and Prevention. In 2022, 2,307 SC staff completed mandatory Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Awareness e-learning module. SC will continue to raise awareness with key supporting functions and business partners, highlighting fraud trends and weaknesses to inform business decisions at all levels of the organization.

At SCN we have rolled out a mandatory fraud, corruption, and bribery course on our Motimate-platform. In addition, we have rolled out a mandatory Transparency Internationals course for key employees on the same platform. We are also planning to introduce a fraud risk assessment, linking this to the corporate governance, and SCNs risk register.

Despite an increase of 21% in reported incidents across the organisation, case closure times were reduced by 37% to an average of 109 days. 37% of fraud cases were substantiated, a slight decrease from 2021 (43%). Programming incidents remain the most common type of fraud, of which 39% involve targeting and registering beneficiaries and COs implementing Cash & Voucher Assistance (CVA) programmes are particularly targeted.

In SCN, we are looking forward to the new Norad +Partnership certification and what this will imply in relation to new fraud reporting guidelines from Norad in the years to come. A simplified and more efficient reporting process is also highly welcomed in SCI as NORADs new stipulated approach is being advocated towards other donors.

By the end of 2022, there still remain open fraud cases towards Norad, however none of them are older than 2022 and we will continue to work with the COs to close all cases in due time.

Cost efficiency-effectiveness

SCN has committed to implementing several initiatives linked to cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness throughout the framework agreement with Norad; this is done in close collaboration with the SC movement. As a complex organization working in challenging contexts, transforming our ways of working has been challenging, but we have made good progress. We have now completed ten of the original 14 projects aiming for a Highly Efficient Organization.

COMPLETED PRIOR TO 2022:

1. Field Office Connectivity –New hardware installed in 400 field offices, improving connectivity for 12,300 users across 61 countries.

2. Single Treasury Unit (STU) –One treasury management function across members and SCI established, facilitating the movement of money, and improving controls across accounts payable, bank reconciliation and fund transfers.

3. Award Management Change Program (AMCP) – standardized process implemented in all country offices and IP members, reducing duplication of effort and improving the quality and timeliness of donor reports.

4. Effort Reporting & Cost Allocation (ER/CAM) –system rolled out to 17,000 staff to record time-spent, and a single, global allocation methodology implemented for charging shared costs.

5. Strong Country Office Management (SCOM) –Standard operating procedures implemented in country and regional offices to deliver quality, compliant and effective programs.

6. Single Identity –Single username and password software for applications across SCI and members, reducing complexity, enabling remote support, and improving information security.

7. Award Management System Re-platform (AMS RP) –A more stable platform for AMS implemented, improving usability as enabling integration with new systems and functionalities.

8. Accelerating Delivery & Improvement –in 2022, 400 more staff across the Movement were trained in core project and change management practices.

9. Oracle HR –completed deployment to all SCI offices and seven members. We now have 76% of the Movement's workforce on the system, including 100% of SCI staff, facilitating core admin, talent management, recruitment and on-boarding of employees and reducing safeguarding risk.

Supply Chain Transformation (SCT) –Transitioned to business as usual (BAU) at end 2021. Originally one of the nine SCT work streams. To date, the Supply Chain Transformation had achieved cumulative financial benefits of $44,7m by end of 2022. These cost savings are expected to recur year on year.

UNDERWAY:

10. Fleet Cost Recovery Model

SC is embarking on an ambitious journey to rejuvenate our fleet – in time this will drive down operating costs and transport charges to donors by eliminating old and expensive to run vehicles. SC will have control of a pool of vehicles that we operate and own, which will ultimately be more cost efficient, environmentally friendly and enhance road safety compared to other options like vehicle hire/rentals. Similar schemes are already in use by WFP, UNHCR, IFRC, ICRC and ECHO.

To this end, SC is introducing a transparent mechanism called the Fleet Service Charge (FSC). The FSC aims to introduce a globally standardized cost recovery mechanism where each award will be charged a fee to the use of Save the Children operated vehicles. The FCS fee is determined by vehicle type and designed to recover the purchase cost of a vehicle as well as the operational costs such as maintenance, the use of fleet management systems and insurance. The FSC is already live in many COs and will be live in all SC Offices with significant fleet by the end of 2023.

The main goal of this initiative is to equip the organization with safe, reliable, sustainable and efficient transport which will provide better value for money, improve programme efficiency, increase both communities' and staff safety and reduce SC's global carbon footprint.

Key objectives of the fleet transformation include:

- Provide better value for money to donors by self-financing our fleet and recovering costs more transparently;
- Increase the amount of funds that will be spent on children's rights programmes by reducing reliance on expensive rental vehicles and driving down operating costs for our owned fleet;
- Improve road safety by ensuring effective tracking technology in our vehicles;
- Reduce our carbon footprint by using newer, fuel-efficient vehicles and introducing more sedans and hybrid vehicles;
- Create a fit for purpose global fleet and refreshed fleet management processes that cover the full fleet lifecycle.

> **Fleet Service Charge in the new Framework Agreement**
>
> Implementation of the FSC means that the new Norad proposal will not include project-specific vehicles but will instead include the FCS charge as the primary way to access SC vehicles. The FSC is benchmarked against local rental alternatives to demonstrate value for money, is ring-fenced and not-for-profit and is allocated to grants based on actual use via logbooks.

11. Source to Pay: (TO BE COMPLETED BY END Q2 2023).

Automated system for procuring and paying for the $400M in goods and services. Provides SC with a safe, online, and automated way to produce and pay for goods and services.

12. Project Management Methodology (PMM): (TO BE COMPLETED BY END 2024).

Will providing us with a consistent project management methodology, process, terminology, and tools for managing programs across the SC movement. The PRIME system, for capturing results, progress, and impact.

13. Coding (TO BE COMPLETED BY END 2025).

When fully implemented, Coding will ensure consistent, higher quality data, improved visibility on spend and better decision-making.

14. Agresso Onboarding – (COMPLETION DATE TBC).

This project will streamline the location of financial management systems and data models across parts of the Movement. SCN is underway implementing the project.

Monitoring salary levels at country offices:
SC actively monitor salary and benefits in the country offices to ensure that SC are in line with local salary benchmarks, and that local and international staff are fairly remunerated. SC has a well-established Talent Management process, where SC actively promote local talent. SC continue to increase female talent in leadership roles. Talent reviews are conducted three times a year for country office leadership to ensure that the talent pool is managed actively. The drive to get local talent is also reducing costs for the country office through reduction in expatriate benefit packages

Safeguarding

**Development and trends in
Save the Children International (SCI)**
Overall, SCI is experiencing an increase in the number of safeguarding cases reported. In 2022, reporting increased by 36% to 921 reported concerns (+ 243 on 2021 results). Key drivers of the increase in reporting levels are unsafe programming concerns, triage level 3 concerns (the least severe cases), adult safeguarding, and reports from countries that previously reported zero to minimal concerns. Reporting volumes are a good indicator of effective awareness raising, trust in the organisation's reporting and response systems, and accessibility of reporting mechanisms. SCI does not expect reporting volumes to go down. However, the proportion of early warnings and low-level cases are expected to go up, especially as we activate safeguarding across the organisation.

**Safeguarding cases in Redd Barna's
international programming**
The bottom table show all of Redd Barna's safeguarding cases that were reported to our donors in 2020-2022. The table does not include the cases that did not meet the threshold for donor reporting (mostly less severe safer programming concerns). Like SCI, Redd Barna sees an increase in the number of cases. This increase is in large part due to the same key drivers as mentioned above. In addition, the clarification on reporting requirements for Norad and NMFA, concerning corporal punishment cases where the suspect of concern (SoC) is not employed by SCI and sexual harassment cases between staff, has also contributed to the increase in cases reported to donor. Like SCI, Redd Barna interprets the increase as a positive development, the result of improved awareness raising and a lowering of barriers to reporting in our international programmes

The table on the right gives an overview of all cases that Redd Barna has reported to Norad from 2020-2022. In our Norad funded programming we see a positive increase of cases from country offices that have previously not reported or reported very few cases.

For 2022, the majority of cases reported to Norad have been physical abuse cases concerning corporal punishment in SCI supported schools. Most of the suspects of concern (SoCs) in these cases are teachers employed by the government. In other words, they are not SCI employees. We often receive reports through feedback or suggestion boxes in schools or through MEAL consultations.

CSG cases Norad programming per category 2022	Number of cases
Abuse/ mistreatment	1
Verbal/emotional abuse	2
Physical abuse (including corporal punishment)	7
Sexual abuse	4
Unsafe programming	1
Child labour	1
Other	2
Total	**18**

In 2022, Redd Barna only reported one Adult and Staff Safeguarding case to Norad, which was a sexual harassment case.

Lessons learned

At the end of the investigation of a safeguarding concern, the country office always notes lessons learned and recommended follow-up actions that should be implemented to mitigate future risk. For corporal punishment cases the lesson learned is too often that teacher was not properly trained in safeguarding and/or not have training in positive disciplining. As a follow up, we are working to better include regular safeguarding and positive discipline training in our programming. Redd Barna is also making sure to bring up safeguarding and discuss implementation and safeguarding systems when visiting a country office. A challenge we often see is that when the SoC is a teacher employed by the government, SCI are often not able to investigate nor sanction them, at least not in countries where corporal punishment is not prohibited by law. Through our advocacy work, Save the Children are campaigning to end corporal punishment and change legislation where possible.

Cases reported to all donors	2020	2021	2022	Total
CSG (Child Safeguarding)	17	13	32	62
ASG and SSG (Adult and Staff Safeguarding)	1	0	13	14
Sum	**18**	**13**	**45**	**76**
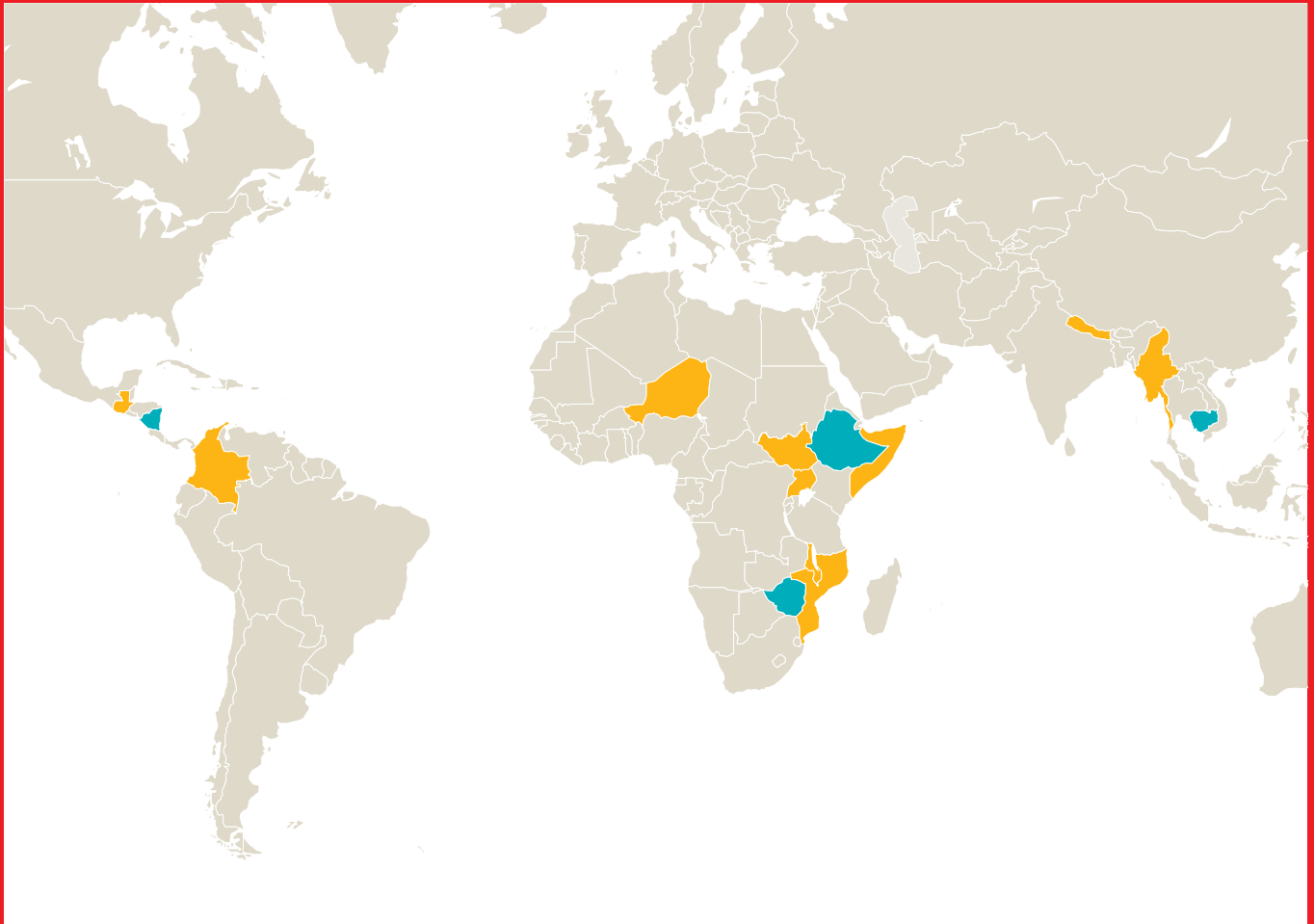
The Norad programme is implemented in 12 countries (in yellow) and during this framework period (2019-2023), we have phased-out from 4 countries (in blue).

3. GEOGRAPHICAL PRESENCE

AFRICA

Assessment of Country Engagement Plans

Restrictions from Covid-19 and the war in Ukraine has taken a great toll in Africa and poverty is increasing for the first time in years while statistics indicates that much of progress made over the last 6 years is lost. With funding from Norad, SC relentlessly continues to support children in marginalized areas in Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, South Sudan, Somalia and Uganda. The conflicts in Mozambique, Niger, South Sudan and Somalia have made the need to focus on both long-term development and humanitarian response necessary and flexibility and adjustments have been needed. Nexus thinking and approaches have become more evident in our work. We foresee that this trend is going to continue, and

that more effort needs to be done to work with triple nexus, especially around the Safe Schools work and the operationalization of the declaration. Also, many parts of Africa are facing the worst food insecurity situation in 40 years and SC had to respond with increased focus on protection to negative coping mechanisms.

During 2022 cooperation with and among LCSOs, led by children and youth, has been strengthened. There has been an increased consciousness and higher prioritization around approaches to "shift the power" in the programmes and we see much demand for support to strengthen work with partners and civil society.

Approximately 60% of the funding to Africa is used for education; this is especially important since 1 in 5 children of school-age are not attending school. Despite the general backlash for education, SCN is able to confirm that children have come back to school where they have access, yet the issues around securing learning remains a challenge, even more so for children with disabilities. Further advocacy has been much focused on Safe Schools and getting children back to education after Covid-19 restrictions were lifted. Schools were closed for lengthy periods in several countries, and as long as two years in Uganda, this takes time to recuperate from. SCN has however also being able to support with input to the security council, especially relevant to the Norad portfolio on Sahel, including Niger, but also on DRC.

SCN is following up the country offices in Africa through close dialogue and support based on needs defined in-country, as well as needs identified by SCN. We have Country Engagement Plans (CEPs) for all the Norad country programs in Africa, including several joint engagements plans with other SC members that support those specific country programs. This enables coordination to ensure synergies in the support provided to the COs. For example, for Somalia, the Nordic members of SC Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway have joint calls with the Somalia CO and agree on who will support on what, as well as what we do together and identify where one member might be best placed to support and engage with the CO. All plans are based on asks and priorities of the Somalia office. Similarly for South Sudan and Uganda, however who takes part among the members varies. The priority is that support from members is adjusted and coordinated to each CO need. For Niger we have a joint engagement plan with SC Denmark based in SC strategy for the Sahel and had a joint visit with SC Denmark and SC Sweden as well as the regional office in Dakar in October 2022 to strengthen and better coordinate our support. This way of working makes us more efficient and strengthens the collaboration with the COs. It also ensures that messaging and support is coordinated with the Regional Offices in Nairobi and Dakar. Typically, SCN will add value through this collaboration in the thematic areas of child rights and education as well as child protection. SCN also supports gap filling in country offices by facilitating, with our own unrestricted funding, deployments between country offices and from SCN. This provides necessary support for COs and facilitates development and learning for staff as they gain experience from this deployment, adding new perspectives and better understanding of country contexts and operations.

Malawi

Contextual update

The Norad program in Malawi is being implemented in four districts of Mwanza and Neno in the South, Lilongwe (Urban and Centre), and Mzimba South in the North. The country experienced violent protests in 2019-2020 which led to closure of the SC offices and disrupted project activities. The Covid-19 pandemic led to closure of learning institutions for months, disrupting learning. More than 40,000 new teenage pregnancy cases and 12,995 child marriage cases were registered during school closures. Additionally, in 2022 the country experienced the effects of climate change, with cyclones and heavy rains, leading to displacement of populations and generating serious cases of cholera, affecting many children.

Malawi - Education- catch-up club session.
PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

Summary of key achievements and challenges

Issue 1 - Education: A total of 215 950 (G: 51%/ B: 49%), including 2067 children with disabilities (G: 40%/ B: 60%) were enrolled in 264 schools in 2022. This is a significant increase of more than 40% compared to 2021 enrolment. Compared to 2019 enrolment it is however a decrease of close to 31 000 students (G: 49%/ B: 51%), primarily believed to be due to economic regression after the Covid-19 pandemic.

The MTR findings showed an increase in both

literacy (BL:14%; MT:21%), and numeracy (BL:9%/MT:52%) results for both boys and girls. A limited number of children with some functional disability also passed the minimum proficiency. The results revealed however a difference between results in Mzimba South (center-north) and the two districts in the south. To address this more tailored intervention for ensuring textbooks in Chichewa and math, boosting the learning camp curriculum books and supporting the camp facilitators and increasing the portion of children benefiting from home intervention, in addition to tailored support for teachers. Going forward, the programme will also look into aspects of how language of instruction vs mother tongue is influencing learning when this is a known barrier to learning.

In 2022, the programme followed up the development of the continues inclusive teacher mentoring training. and adjusted from one-time-off teacher support to a teacher professional development (TPD) course programme, consisting of ongoing short workshops followed by a long period (8 weeks) of practice through self-directed, peer learning activities and mentoring. The training is held at the school and covering all of the teachers. The course (by now) has produced 8 Modules on Inclusive Pedagogy, Reading Fluency and Multiple Pathways to Learning and is rolled out with 1-2 modules at a time giving the teacher time to process and practice. Although thorough study and analysis is yet to be done to see the effects of TPD on improving teacher competencies, it has been positively received by teachers. The programme and the piloting of the TPD programme has also contributed to efforts towards developing the national teacher competency framework based on 'Continuing professional development framework for teachers and teacher educators' by supporting MoE and the Directorate of Teacher Education (DTED) convene a national level workshop of education stakeholders and networking with other relevant stakeholders eg. UNICEF and USAID on teacher competencies. A national taskforce committee of various stakeholders including Save the Children was reconstituted to advance the agenda.

Qualitative study- Participatory school management.

The project works closely with community and school governance structures such as Mother Groups (MG), School Management Committees (SMCs), Parent Teacher Association (PTA) to support learning. A qualitative study conducted to understand how participatory school management supports improved and safe learning in schools revealed that school governance structure plays a key role in school safety. They mobilize communities to support schools with safer infrastructure, tracking learners to reduce absenteeism, fostering cooperation and collaboration between school management structures, parents, teachers and learners, facilitate discussions for positive parenting and school development agendas. A good example is Mlindi School in Neno district, community members championed the construction of ramps on one of the school blocks. At Mphande Primary School in Mwanza, community members led by school governance structures mobilized and installed translucent sheets for standard 6 and 7 classrooms. Similarly, these structures lobbied for recruitment of volunteer/auxiliary teachers in schools using School Improvement Grant (SIG). The school governance structures also report challenges with the lack of interest and ownership on school initiatives from communities and harassment of mother group members by parents during follow up with pregnant and teen mothers. More work needs to be done to raise interest and community participation in school development meetings.

On strengthening government, school-level and community systems in support of Inclusive Education (IE), the program has continued to strengthen efforts towards institutionalization of IE by government by participating in different arenas to increase coordination at national and district levels, like the national IE technical working groups meetings, National Coordinating Committee on Disability Issues (NACCODI) meetings, and District Disability Forums. In addition, the programme strengthened case management in IE through screening of 3001 children for early identification (M:1442/F:1559) and provision of assistive devices to 595 children (M:/F:292). In total 6 resource centers were rehabilitated benefiting a total of 229 children with disabilities (M:1187F:111). In collaboration with the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC), effort were made to achieve ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Through engagement with various DPOs, a disability rights situation analysis was produced and will be submitted to the government through the Ministry of Gender as a petition and call for urgent action on disability programming and response gaps. In addition, the programme supported the launch of a Sector working Group on Disability and a national IE Conference held under the theme: "Early Identification and intervention: Key to Inclusive Education".

In 2022, the programme observed that teachers and social workers who were trained in psychological first aid (PFA) had challenges to properly identify cases of emotional distress among learners and provide relevant support including referrals. In addition, Malawi started registering an increase in child suicide cases due to untreated and accumulated emotional distress. To respond to this, 86 CPWs and SHNHA teachers were capacitated to effectively screen and identify learners under emotional dis-

tress. The programme hosted a panel discussion on mental health and suicide prevention, to raise awareness on the topic. This was aired on various local radio and TV stations in the country.

Issue 2 - Child protection: Under child protection the program works on reducing child marriage and teenage pregnancies through enhanced social, cultural and gender norms and increased access to quality education for girls and boys affected by gender-based violence. At the midterm evaluation we learned that 86% (721 community members out of 837) held a strong stand against child marriages, an increase from the baseline, which was 80% (612 out of 765 community members). The program interventions that can have contribute to these results are awareness raising campaigns against child marriage, improved coordination of child protection case management, gender transformative community dialogue to challenge discriminatory gender and social norms, targeting and engaging traditional and religious leaders, along with counsellors and children from child and youth clubs' districts. Communities developed Gender Action Plans (GAPs) on how to address issues around school re-admission, child marriages, girls' initiation ceremonies, and Teenage pregnancies.

To address the challenges exacerbated by the pandemic, the program intensified efforts by targeting duty bearers, traditional community leaders and parents with advocacy meetings and further dialogue on ending child marriage and reducing teenage pregnancies and strengthening interventions at a family level by introducing the Responsible, Engaged and Loving father (REAL) approach, as a tried and tested approach in addressing child marriages as fathers play a vital role in shaping the behavior and attitudes of their children, serving as positive role models and challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes that perpetuate gender-based violence and discrimination. The Real fathers have created a supportive community that values and protects children's rights and they are using their influence in the community to raise awareness about child protection issues and encourage other fathers to get involved.

The project also supported the District Health Office with running the outreach clinics, facilitating access to SRHR services to adolescents, closer to their communities.

Issue 3 - Children's Rights: The programme continues to hold the State accountable on monitoring and implementation of child rights using the regional and international accountability mechanisms for children to promote child rights in the political agenda. At midterm it was reported that the program, in collaboration with key Government ministries and CSOs invested in the development of mechanisms for the following up of Concluding Observations for both UPR, UNCRC and ACRWC. Further on CRR,

the programme contributed to improvements in the resourcing of the recommendations and Concluding Observations by the State as evidenced from the 60 UNCRC/ACRWC Concluding Observations out of 153 fully resourced by the government at mid-term. One specific example includes the allocation of US$ 110,000 for the establishment of National Children's Commission in 2020/2021, 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 national budget respectively.

There has been a prolonged delay by the Government in submitting its State Party reports. This has affected the submission of the CSOs and Child-led supplementary reports. In response, the programme made a number of efforts in lobbying the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs to fast-track the submission of the backlog of the State party reports. Now both reports are in the final stages to be finalized and submitted.

In line with UNCRC and ACRWC articles the programme has contributed to improved meaningful child participation for both boys and girls in the impact districts and at national level. A total of 5,250 children (B:2,724/ G:2,526) were given the opportunities and conducive platforms to meaningfully participate and express their views and influence the decision-making process by various duty bearers.

With regards to Government legal and policy framework, the programme has influenced the Government of Malawi to institute policy change on child participation by developing and launching the National Child Participation Guidelines and its related National Child Participation Strategy in the country. This policy change has further drastically influenced the Government of Malawi and other stakeholders to scale up the implementation of Children's Parliament across the country from 3 SCI impact districts in 2019, to 12 more districts in 2022. The programme has also contributed to the operationalization of the National Children's Commission following the Act of Parliament No 12 of 2019.

In an effort to improve the respect for children's rights by the private sector, the programme has influenced eight private Sector companies to embrace the concept of Child Rights and Business Principles (CRBP) in the country. These companies have committed themselves to integrating children's rights into their respective policy statements, codes of conduct, annual plans and annual budgets. The programme has since signed MoUs with four companies and is expected to do the same with other four more in 2023.

Lessons learned and recommendations:
Teacher professional development, including teacher mentorship, is a key intervention to improving learning outcomes and should be consider key in education programs.

The programme understand the need to go beyond providing support to the government for

the development of a policy guidance, or dissemination of information. It is crucial to also support their operationalization. Therefore the government should further be supported with activities such as mentoring, coaching and evidence generation. In line with SCs Child Rights Programming (CRP), the programme's direct actions ought to demonstrate the practical way of implementing the policies with clear evidence for the government and other stakeholders to replicate the good practice.

On Public Investment in Children (PIIC), engagement with Parliamentarians after conducting the national budget analysis might be late to lobby for increased budgetary allocations to public child rights related programmes and sectors. The programme ought to develop budget advocacy strategy which clearly spells out advocacy initiatives at each stage of the budget cycle. Furthermore, lobbying for increased budgetary allocations is not enough if the resources are not there. Therefore, the programme also ought to support the government with alternative ways of mobilizing the resources. One such way will be the taxation.

With regard to child participation, now that the government and other stakeholders have embraced the concept of district and national children's parliament, the programme has learnt that the initiative ought to go down to the Traditional Authorities (TAs) by establishing Community Children's parliament at each TA. This initiative will strive to reach out to many children at local level. It will also act as the nursery for the district children's parliament. Much more important, it will enhance the linkages between the community, district and national children's parliament.

On strengthening capacity of CSOs, the programme has learnt that it is necessary to conduct in-depth Organization Capacity Assessment (OCA) and that serve as the basis for the development of Organization Capacity Development (OCD) plans. The OCD plans should further be allocated resources for its efficient and effective implementation. This initiative will contribute to the sustainability of the CSOs partners.

Mozambique

Context update
Mozambique is frequently and seriously affected by natural disasters such as floods, cyclones, and droughts. During 2019-2022, the country faced a triple crisis of climate change, armed conflict in the North and Covid-19. Floods and cyclones threaten the safety of infrastructure and school communities and with more storms forecasted for 2023, this may potentially impact program activities. The conflict in Cabo Delgado, continues to escalate, compounding a fragile situation which is now affecting

areas of Nampula and Niassa Provinces, leading to internal displacement, which directly impacts children. Early and forced unions are a widespread and multifaceted issue affecting both girls and boys, with more cases of girls moving in and out of the country to get married, early pregnancy situations, increased boys' exposure to violence and increased intergenerational vulnerabilities. On the other hand, the Government approved the National Strategy for Inclusive Education and Development of Children with Disabilities 2020 – 2029, which is designed to increase access and retention of students with disabilities in the education system and is working alongside OPDs and CSOs to develop the disability inclusion agenda, policies and management and learning structures. The Government also launched the National Teacher Policy which establishes guidelines on aspects that influence the availability and quality of teachers and professional development. With this, SCI intends to increase its cooperation with education authorities, as well as advocating for the implementation of these important policies.

Summary of key achievements and challenges

Issue 1- Education: The enrolment figures for 2022 show 93 788 children (G: 48% / B: 52%), of which 1 532 are children with disabilities (F: G:2%; B:58%) enrolled in 129 intervention schools. This is an increase of close to 18 000 students (G: 56%/ B: 44%) compared with 2019.

The program has been able to increase access and retention of children in schools from 89% to 95%, between 2019 to 2021. During the same period, the percentage of schools meeting school infrastructure standards increased from 45% to 86%. Despite these achievements, challenges in ensuring quality learning with children in literacy and numeracy persist, partly due to teacher absenteeism or limited professional-pedagogical competence. Specific measures have been taken to address this challenge and it is hoped to see positive changes at endline. The program has contributed to strengthening the education system at national and local level through inputting to relevant policies and documents that will sustainably be used in schools to improve children's quality learning and safety. The main adjustments made after the MTR focuses on strategies and interventions intended to improve students' learning of basic foundational skills, particularly text reading fluency and numeracy. There is also a focus on teacher's training and professional development including mother tongue-based teaching, adjustment of teaching methodologies to focus on writing and orality, monitoring teachers' attendance and motivation, monitoring and supervision of schools, as well as ensuring that the benchmarks used to measure learning are in line with the overall Mozambican educational context. As the programme is nearing

completion, key activities have been adjusted to be more advocacy orientated rather than service delivery. Engaging communities and school leadership is critical in increasing access of children to school, particularly vulnerable children as well as monitoring student absenteeism. Learning targets need to be revised to be in line with the overall learning context of Mozambique and, to achieve children's learning targets, the challenge of teacher's absenteeism, motivation and professional competence will continue to be addressed.

Issue 2- Child protection: The programme has been successful in advocating for the approval of the national law to prevent and combat premature unions (2019) and advocating for the review of family law and penal code which criminalizes violence against children, together with other CSOs. As such, the program has focused on capacity building of justice system actors and training CSOs to strengthen their capacity to advocate on enactment of the law. It also supported the decentralization of the child helpline in central and northern regions to improve access to child friendly reporting mechanisms to improve the assistance provided to children on CP case management. According to the MTR 96% of girls returned to school after delivery/ child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) and adolescents' accessing ASRHR information/services increased by 19%-points. Based on this, adjustments were made to strengthening retention and reintegration of pregnant girls and survivors of CEFM, including collaboration and coordination across caregivers, school, and health actors to identify girls at risk. ASRHR information/services were made more accessible through mobile health brigades and CSE and by increasing service acceptability among parents/caregivers while concurrently continuing advocacy efforts to ensure access to ASRHR services and school youth corners. The MTR found that the programme had contributed to reducing violence against children in and outside school. As children still reported high levels of violence perpetrated by parents/caregivers, the program invested extensively in capacity building of community structures including CBCPMs, school councils, matrons, community midwives and leaders. For the CBCPMs, development and follow-up plans were developed to activate community mechanisms for protection, promotion of children's rights and monitoring. Such activities made it possible to create community ownership to lead and continue with the activities. In addition, the programme is also piloting a new community-led child protection approach (Seeds) in Manica District. The approach aims to strengthen community ownership of child protection and is evidence-informed building on research and guidance by the Interagency Learning Initiative on CBCPMs and CP Systems.

Issue 3- Children's Rights: Programme highlights included (i) introduction of the Child Annual Report since 2020, a countrywide child-led reporting draft process, all organized by the Nacional Child Parliament, (ii) 35 out of 47 Child Centered Social Accountability (CCSA) Groups have completed the cycle and have finalized the implementation of the local action plan, and (iii) CSO joint and annual monitoring of CR concluding observations of CRC, ACRWC and UPR. In 2020, owing to Covid-19, many project activities were not conducted as intended, due to adopted restriction measures. The post pandemic restrictions continued to challenge the project to deliver its activities, including with strategic and implementing partners. One of the ways activities were adjusted to the pandemic was the adoption of Child Centered Daily Covid-19 updates by the 3R Platform (Child-rights network - published daily from April 2020-September 2022). This was used to (i) inform different partners programmatic interventions adjusted to Covid-19, (ii) inform awareness raising interventions, including child friendly Covid-19 messaging and (iii) advocate for special attention be paid to children in the context of the global pandemic, with one of the advocacy interventions asking the Prime Minister for child friendly Covid-19 messaging and the need to pay attention to the most vulnerable children. SCI played a key technical role in supporting the 3R Platform to be able to disseminate this information, a database was created to gather all child-related Covid-19 data. There are two main achievements under Issue 3, (i) the launch and rollout of Accountability to Children Initiative, where SCI and its partners are held accountable by children- encouraging meaningful child participation; and (ii) the child-led best teacher competition conducted in 2019, 2021 and 2022.

Risks and opportunities
The programme continues to monitor the situation in Cabo Delgado in the event of potential displacement but so far this has not impacted on programme activities. As previously mentioned, Covid-19 resulted in modifications being made to programme activities but since government restrictions have been lifted these modifications are no longer required. Malaria and Cholera continues to be a challenge to many Mozambican families in different provinces including Manica. This issue must be continuously monitored and ensure that schools are well equipped with water treatment and awareness raising activities to inform community members on how to prevent it.

Key learnings for the next framework period
Advocacy will be the central part of the project at all levels, this means policy influencing interventions will be embedded into all the next framework selected focus areas. In the current framework three CRG Common Approaches were rolled out with involvement of our partners (Child Rights Reporting, Child Centered Social Accountability and

Public Investment in Children). Some were partner led, with clear link up and engagement between the district, provincial and national levels, so this type of approach will be used in the next framework. The next framework will refocus the idea of retraining teachers and focus more on sustainable systems strengthening. Access and retention in schools particularly for vulnerable and crisis-affected children continue to be a challenge. Therefore, under the new framework, focus should be on ensuring that vulnerable and crisis-affected children have access and most importantly stay in the schools. Violence Against Children also persists and in order to mitigate this, there is a need to address its root causes, particular gender and social norms. This work will continue to be a focus area in the new proposal.

Niger

Contextual update
In 2022, the context in the regions of Zinder and Diffa was marked by the severe food security crisis affecting the whole Sahel and by heavy floods during the rainy season. In Niger, 3.6 million people faced crisis or worse outcome levels, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), an increase of 192% compared to the 2015-2020 average, with Diffa being one of the most affected areas. The food crisis pushed vulnerable families to the brink, with many forced to adopt harmful coping strategies such as child marriage, child labour, survival sex, migration, trafficking and recruitment in armed groups.

Torrential rains and floods displaced nearly 5,000 households in Zinder and Diffa and damaged several classrooms including in targeted schools, resulting in losses of teaching materials and school supplies. In addition, schools served as shelters for the affected populations, particularly in the town of Zinder. Following the floods, a cholera outbreak hit Zinder in September. As mitigation measures, affected schools benefited from rehabilitations and textbooks. Adaptations to SIPs, in coordination with school authorities, ensured that all damaged classrooms were rehabilitated by the start of the school year 2022-2023.

The conflict and security context in Diffa has seen a de-escalation in 2022, even though incursions by non-state armed groups, kidnappings and targeted attacks still occurred. However, the sudden upturn in the confrontations between Boko Haram and ISWAP militants in Northeast Nigeria during the first weeks of 2023 is having immediate consequences in the border areas of Diffa, where Boko Haram fighters established a recruitment base targeting children.

Zinder, despite enjoying a certain stability and security, constitutes a corridor for the passage of arms and drugs between coastal countries facing the Gulf of Guinea and Northern Africa. The region is also in the path of human trafficking towards Northern Africa and Europe, with one of the departments targeted by the programme (Kantché) heavily affected by such economic exploitation and trafficking of children.

Summary of key achievements and challenges

Issue 1 - Education: Despite the challenges in the zones of intervention, the project is contributing to improving access to quality basic education in Niger. Enrolment in the 82 targeted schools improved steadily from 2019 to 2022, with an overall increase of close to 3 000 students or 10 % (G: 9%/ B: 11%) to 31 964 students and with more girls enrolled (16,225) than boys (15,739) in 2022. Factors that contributed to the improving trends are the Back-to-School campaigns organized annually before the start of the school year, pre-registration activities in favour of girls' schooling, and advocacy activities carried out with the support of the Regional Directorates of Primary Education and the partners ASO-EPT and the Nigerien Federation of People with Disabilities (FNPH). The programme has also enabled a significant increase in the enrolment of children with disabilities: from 332 children (148 girls) enrolled in 2019 to 706 children (312 girls) at present. .

To provide teachers with inclusive, gender-sensitive and child-centred pedagogical tools and methodologies, SC implemented the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) approach. Of a total of 570 teachers enrolled (449 women) since 2019, 537 teachers (442 women) completed at least 4 out of 6 cycles of training. The third and last cohort of teachers (302 teachers, 250 women) completed their professional development cycles in February 2022. In cohort 3, teachers rate themselves as having mastery (a "Proficient" or "Advanced" proficiency level) in 80% of the competency assessments, compared to 18% at baseline.

The strengthening of participatory school management and community engagement is pursued through the ILET approach, which is centred on the participatory development, implementation and evaluation of School Improvement Plans (SIPs). Two data-collection rounds were conducted in the supported schools, showing that 59% of the schools (36 schools out of 61 sampled) have achieved the expected threshold for the improvement of the school environment. Across all schools, there is an increase in the ILET score from 64% before intervention to 69% after implementation, mostly registered in the dimensions of a) teaching and learning and b) parent and community involvement. It is challenging to reach satisfactory standards for the quality learning environment in the context of Niger. For a school to be considered as fulfilling safe learning environmental conditions, it must be fenced, with classrooms in permanent materials equipped with tables

Niger girls dancing.

and benches, a reasonable ratio of students/teachers, students/latrine, water points etc. However, the situation in many schools in Niger in general and in targeted schools, do not meet the above-mentioned criteria (classrooms under straw huts, students sitting on the ground, unfenced schools) making it difficult for Niger schools to meet the criteria of improved environment.

Issue 2 - Child protection: Based on the high numbers of SGBV survivors and their dire needs for protection, the weaknesses of the protection systems in Zinder and Diffa, and the necessity of completing the ongoing preventive initiatives with responses to occurring SGBV cases, the programme included, starting from 2022, individual case management responses and initiatives aimed at strengthening the case management systems. In cooperation with the regional directorates of protection, SC supported the evaluation of the quality of case management or Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) at regional level, which resulted in the drafting of an improvement plan endorsed by all protection actors in the two regions and owned by the regional authorities. SC is now supporting the implementation of the improvement plan. SC also contributed to the mapping of protection actors in the regions, the establishment of referral pathways and supported regular coordination meetings of the Consultation

Framework of protection actors. SC also trained 73 (24 women) regional actors (social workers, case managers and protection agents) on the response to SGBV cases. In addition, SC registered and responded to 60 individual cases (G: 44), 7 of which were closed before the end of the year, while 50 girls victim of child marriage who had dropped out of school were enrolled in professional training centres and supported with start-up equipment kits and scholarships.

In 2022, to improve the results in sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) education, SC started implementing the GREAT approach. Local groups involving 1,300 adolescent girls and boys in total were created in the communities and in secondary schools, and associated with mentors identified in the communities and in schools, trained and followed up by SC.

Issue 3 - Children's rights: The implementation of the programme in Niger has been challenged by staff turnover and a lack of capacity in the country office. Spending has been low, and many outputs have not been delivered as originally planned. Some funds have been re-routed to other programmatic areas, mainly to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. In response to these challenges, SC developed in 2022 a modified implementation plan, which is more aligned to the available resources and technical

capacity. To execute and oversee this plan, the Country Office has recruited an experienced Child Rights Governance advisor, who in turn has built the capacity of child rights governance officers in the field and affiliated partners. The revised plan for issue 3 started being implemented end 2022 and is focused on monitoring and reporting on child rights as well as implementing a series of child centred social accountability pilots.

Nonetheless, some notable achievements have been made in 2019-2022. To strengthen civil society in Niger, the program has succeeded in creating and strengthening a unifying framework (Consultation Framework) of implementing NGOs. This framework has made it possible to have more visibility on the actions of each partner. It also allowed the partners to discuss their themes and their experiences, and to see more advocacy actions centred on the child. The Platform Towards Ending Child Marriage Platform served as a framework for SCI to position itself as a lead actor on child marriage issues at the national level, and also invited advocacy action at the local level: as part of the back-to-school campaign, SC conducted awareness-raising caravans visiting 60 villages and doing sensitization about re-enrolment, the consequences of early marriage and teenage pregnancy, and about the importance of keeping girls at schools. The caravans enabled us to reach 2,302 people (896 women, 230 boys and 526 girls) and helped to raise understanding and consideration of human rights in general and particularly the rights of children with disabilities. Moreover, at the national level, SC's partnership with the FNPH allowed the program to address the agendas of political parties for the 2021 General Elections to make them more gender sensitive and inclusive. Further, FNPH led a workshop to map the different actors intervening in Disability Inclusion, and gathered educational actors, all 6 ministries in charge of Education, Civil society organizations, consortium of INGOs as well as representatives of the federations of people with disabilities from neighbouring countries to make commitments for inclusion. Finally, partner ASO-EPT has developed and affirmed itself as a leading national CSO in the field of education. In July 2022, the organization held the speech of the civil society at the education sector review between the government and the Technical and Financial Partners.

Risks and opportunities
The main external risks that materialized are linked to food insecurity, climate shocks such as cyclical droughts and floods and the conflict in the Lake Chad basin affecting the region of Diffa. The latter, despite the relative calm experienced in 2022, has posed operational constraints in Diffa by limiting the mobility of the team and beneficiaries, and high costs for security measures. As an example, to prevent attacks or abductions, overnight allowances are given to non-resident participants at trainings

in Diffa, allowing them to return home the following day and not late in the evening. Heavy floods have occurred each year during the rainy season in both targeted regions, posing the necessity of rehabilitating damaged classrooms, furniture and latrines, as well of replacing damaged educational materials. Food insecurity, which began deteriorating in 2020 and escalated into a hunger crisis in 2022, confronts SC with the need for interventions to prevent children from dropping out of school and secure their wellbeing. School feeding has been raised as a priority need, but the resources of the programme only allow temporary and insufficient initiatives.

Covid-19 has not imposed a heavy toll on Niger, where 50% of the population is less than 15 years old. Schools were closed for 2 months only, in May-June 2020, and the loss of schooling time was partially recovered during summer 2020. The pandemic, however, affected the implementation of the programme by imposing high costs related to sanitation and barrier measures, both to allow the reopening of schools and the implementation of activities. Funds originally destined to CRG activities and to the funding of the SIPs had to be reallocated to cover the unexpected costs.

In terms of internal risks, the high turnover of staff and the difficulties in the recruitment of qualified staff in Niger, especially in child protection, CRG and MEAL, has emerged as a major threat to the programme. Investments in staffing have been made in 2022 and the teams are now considerably reinforced, but the delays in the implementation and the dysfunctions have been significant, particularly with regards to the CRG component. Finally, risks related to the weaknesses of CSO partners have materialized and, in the case of the partner Leadership Challenge that supported the implementation of ASRHR activities, the partnership was discontinued in early 2022 due to dysfunctions in coordination and poor delivery, coupled with administrative irregularities.

Key learnings for the next framework period
The education component of the programme has been successful and achieved overall positive results. In target schools, teachers' competencies have been significantly lifted, the learning environment and community engagement are improved, as well as learning outcomes and wellbeing for children. Despite the close cooperation with the Ministry of Education at regional and national level, further engagement and actions at community and municipality level are needed to secure the durability of the results achieved. The next framework will therefore be opened with a phase out period from the schools and communities currently supported, with a clearly outlined exit strategy and phase-out criteria. In terms of gaps in the support provided, in addition to the already mentioned gaps in school feeding and infrastructural investments, the language of teaching emerges as one of the key elements that needs to be better addressed in the next framework

period. Not least, in regions where more than 40% of children are out of formal schools, in order to leave no child behind it is crucial to widen the scope of the programme and invest into non-formal education, expanding current interventions in accelerated learning and targeting koranic schools.

During the first years of the current programme, the protection component, focused on sensitization and preventive initiatives, suffered from the lack of integrated response activities supporting girls, victims of child marriage, and SGBV. In 2022, this was addressed with the integration of case management activities and a focus on strengthening the formal protection systems in the targeted regions. Such interventions will have to be continued and scaled up in the next framework period.

The action against child marriage will hugely benefit of initiatives targeting the passage between the end of primary school and the beginning of the secondary cycle, as it is observed that many girls drop out of the school system at this stage. While the minority (between 10% and 20%) of girls attending secondary schools appears relatively well protected from child marriage (which explains the moderate number of girls dropping out registered and supported by the programme), out-of-school girls are much more exposed to early marriage and teenage pregnancies.

Somalia

Contextual update

Somalia remains one of the most complex and long-standing humanitarian crises in the world. Covid-19 severely affected the economy of the country which was already in crisis coupled by one of the most devastating droughts that has depleted the livelihoods of most families in the rural areas. In 2022, the country faced a serious food crisis following five consecutive below-average rainy seasons. 6.7 million people (41% of the population) faced extreme hunger, with the UN warning that 300,000 people would likely face famine in the final quarter of the year. Over half of the country's children were reported to be suffering acute malnutrition. With the gravity of the drought and its effects such as displacement, lack of food and water, some children dropped out of school, mostly in the rural areas.

The long-awaited parliamentary and presidential elections in Somalia was concluded peacefully on 15th May 2022, where former President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was elected as a President of the country.

Al-Shabab attacks remain still common, particularly in south-central Somalia. All these factors have caused more children to suffer and face different types of grave violations such as killings, maiming,

Somalia - Children at school.   PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

recruitment and use of child soldiers, and attacks on schools.

Summary of key achievements and challenges

Issue 1 -Education: The current enrolment for learners in 47 supported schools has reached 19,905 (G: 51% / B: 49%) in 2022, with an overall increase of more than 3200 learners (G:65%/ B: 36%) (or overall 19% increase) from 2019. While the enrolment trend shows an increase in all years, the lowest increase was recorded in the 2020/21 academic year, due to the impact of Covid-19 and high enrolment in academic years 2021/22 and 2022/23. This is attributed to the quarterly enrolment campaigns through meetings with community members, door-to-door campaigns and the provision of scholastic and recreational materials to learners.

Enrolment of children with disabilities has shown significant improvement from 1.8% at baseline in 2019 to 4% in 2022 by more than threefold from 289 (G:126/B:163) in 2019 to 810 (G:356/ B:454) in 2022. This increase not only means more children with disabilities enrolled in schools, but that more already enrolled students were identified as a result of increased awareness on disability inclusion and use of the Washington Group Questions (WGQs) for identification of Children with disabilities. This ensures that both newly enrolled and already enrolled children with disabilities will receive the support and services they need to learn on an equal basis with their peers. Somalia also piloted the use of the Child Functioning Module – Teacher Version (CFM-TV) and saw good results in identifying children with disabilities.

As a result of MRT findings and lesson learned from the program implementation and assessment, a coaching and mentoring program was introduced to help teachers professionally grow and get continuous professional development support. Additionally,

quarterly advocacy meetings were held to review policies on recruitment and retention of female teachers. 20 new female teachers were recruited in Galgadud, WhatsApp was introduced as a channel of communication with teachers to share their experiences and dedicated coaches sharing relevant topics in the chats.

As a result of adjustments made and other ongoing support, learning outcomes have improved as observed and tested by SC education technical team and MoEs supervisors in Puntland. In October 2022, random literacy tests were carried out, 75% of learners tested in Al Hanan primary School were fluently reading, while all children tested were reading fluently In Aflah primary school. In addition, 3 students in Norad supported schools emerged among the top 10 best performing students in the national examination.

Issue 2 -Child Protection: The Program continued implementation of the Parenting Without violence (PwV) common approach, through both parents' sessions and children's sessions. Community-based structures and other groups/associations in the community were also trained on prevention of physical and humiliating punishment. Implementation of PwV common approach has resulted in a tangible positive behavioural change overtime toward positive parenting. Parents' attitudes on weather punishment is acceptable have been reduced by half from 86% (F: 87.4%/M:60.0%) at baseline to 43% (F:45%/M:22%) at mid-term. MTR also showed there is a reduction in the number of children experiencing PHP from 98% at baseline to 83% at MTR. Moreover, children who participated in the PwV sessions have reported decreased level of psychosocial aggression at home.

The project recruited and trained case workers among partners to ensure more CP cases are identified, registered, and responded to. The project further supported the daily case management process and provided case management support for children with protection concerns through direct and referral services. Partner caseworkers, local CSO staff, community structures and service providers were trained on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for case management, referral and proper identification, reporting, and follow up of child protection cases. This contributed to timely access to quality CP case managements services for children affected by violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitations in addition to improved capacity of duty bearers.

Issue 3-Child Rights: SC in Somalia mobilized the civil society, including children and Child Rights Coalition members and supported the process of preparing and submitting the UNCRC CSOs supplementary report and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), in 2019 and 2020 respectively. The project further supported CSOS and five children (3 girls and 2 boys) to participate at the 86th pre-session in Geneva.

To ensure social accountability mechanisms are established and functional at community level, the project strengthened and provided training on CCSA to children's groups, CSOs and local government officials. The project also worked with children's groups and education officials who assessed the quality of public services for children (education, health) using a score card, one of the social accountability tools. Findings from the assessment, which among other things included, lack of school feeding programs was presented to the respective local authorities. The Local authorities who took the findings seriously made commitments to improve identified services and took a concrete step by including one of schools in Garawe in the WFP school feeding program.

Following advocacy efforts by SCI and CSOs, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was ratified by the government of Somalia in 2019. The government, following the ratification, established a National Disability Agency that promotes Disability Rights to facilitate implementation of the policy. This is significant achievement as it means the government will now have a legal duty to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of people with disabilities in Somalia

Challenges:

- Natural disasters e.g., recurrent drought, flooding, man-made disasters such as clan conflict that led to increased displacement and drop-out of children from schools, and impact of Covid-19, have all affected program implementation directly or indirectly.
- Shortage of female teachers in the target schools has remained a challenge.
- Weak government systems with limited financial capacity, particularly the Ministry of Education's failure to take over payment of teacher's salaries remains a challenge.
- Low priority for implementation of policies and laws by the government.
- Foreign exchange rates fluctuations affecting implementation of the program as planned.

Risks and opportunities
Ministry of Education were unable to fully take over payment of teacher salaries as originally planned. As part of the NORAD program's sustainability and transition/ exit strategy, it was agreed that payment of incentives to teachers would be gradually reduced on a yearly basis and would eventually be paid fully by the government closer towards the end of the programme phase. The context, however, changed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, as a result of which the economy crippled and the MoE was not able to fulfil its commitment. Consequently, SCI had to continue supporting teachers' incen-

tives until the end of the current framework period.

Other risks that materialized during the implementation period included climate change related flooding, damaging schools and housing.

Key learnings for the next framework period

- More engagement is needed with strategic partners and private sector, including women-led organizations to advocate for the rights of women and girls, including livelihood support such as provision of conditional cash transfers to vulnerable mothers in targeted locations. Such support could contribute to increased enrolment of girls in schools.
- Technical Vocational Educational Training (TVET) programs for youth, especially young boys, and girls in the IDP camps, could significantly contribute to improving their lives.
- In depth gender assessment and analysis is needed to identify different barriers, challenges, needs, and opportunities related to gender in order to design appropriate responses.
- The need to introduce stand-alone climate change component in the program as Somalia is emergency-prone country.
- Scale-up Teacher's Professional Development (TPD) and introduction of new teacher learning cycles to further improve quality of learning.

South Sudan

Contextual update

While the overall security situation in South Sudan has improved, the country continued to suffer from numerous challenging circumstances ranging from communal clashes, impact of severe weather conditions causing widespread flooding, impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and deteriorating living conditions caused by economic crisis.

South Sudan continued to experience climate change related challenges, some areas experiencing unprecedented flooding that limited access and caused mass displacement. Communities in Jonglei and Lakes States where the NORAD program is implemented were affected by the flooding that disrupted learning.

The political situation and hence overall security in South Sudan remained stable following the formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity in early 2020. However, localized security incidents caused mainly by communal clashes have been reported in many parts of the country with some affecting NGO operations. No major security issues have affected the NORAD program areas of operation.

The Covid-19 pandemic and measures put in place to curb its spread continued to affect access to education, further complicating a situation that was already dire. It deepened the education challenges inherited from years of conflict, displacement, and economic crises. The pandemic further affected return to schools by both learners and teachers, which consequently affected quality of learning. This was exacerbated by the withdrawal of the school feeding programme by WFP, which had a negative effect on enrolment in some schools supported by the program.

The economic situation remained unstable with high inflation as the South Sudanese pound continued to depreciate against the US dollar, leading to high costs of goods, worsening living conditions for the people.

Summary of Key Achievements and Challenges

Issue 1- Education: A harmonized government-led in-service teacher training approach focusing on the new curriculum was adopted, reaching a total of 250 (F: 44/ M:206) volunteer and Government teachers. The training program which lasts for 2 years, provides a recognition and certification to the teachers. The program intensified engagements with communities through conducting a series of community dialogues leading to enrolment of 26,693 (G:40%/B:60%) children, of which 455 (G: 332/ B:123) are children with disabilities in 42 intervention schools in 2022. This is a slight decrease of overall enrolment of close to 1 600 learners (close to 1700 fewer boys, and an increase of more than 100 girls) compared with 2019.

During 2022, more emphasis was placed on teachers' engagements with learners as part of the CPD program with routine monitoring and supervision in schools by Ministry of Education inspectors and teacher trainers. Outcomes of the changes in literacy are put on hold until the end of the CPD program which also coincides with the final evaluation of the program.

A total of 455 children with disabilities were reached and the program worked with communities to identify, mobilize and support 60 children with school fees payment.

Main challenges encountered include withdrawal of the WFP school feeding programs in 4 (18%) schools in Rumbek due to funding constraints and this affected overall enrolment. Another challenge was the high demand of infrastructural development in the schools included in school improvement plans (SIPs), which in turn affected resource allocation for quality of learning in targeted schools. The magnitude of natural hazards, mainly flooding, overwhelmed the Government and communities' capacities to respond despite having relevant training and disaster preparedness plans in place.

the program was complemented with funding from the Humanitarian Pooled Funds which implemented Safe Back to School WASH interventions in five of the NORAD supported schools in Bor County. This led to

South Sudan - Children playing in child friendly space.

the provision of boreholes and latrines with changing rooms for girls enabling the program to address some of the quality issues which had been highlighted as gaps. The program improved infrastructure in schools with 8 new classrooms and 3 latrines in Bor assisting schools displaced due to flooding to re-establish in their new sites. 2 classrooms, 1 latrine and school fencing in Rumbek increased the security of schools by improving the learning environment. In addition, the program received 3,718 book donations from Book Aid International which were distributed to the two community libraries constructed in Bor and Rumbek contributing to resourcing of the libraries. The program continued to make provisions for supplementary reading books for lower grades and schools included sessions within their lesson timetables to provide time for reading.

Issue 2- Child Protection: a total of 5 (M:4/F:1) staff from SCI, ACDF and TOCH were trained on the CPIMS+ version and in turn oriented 8 case workers implementing the program. The implementing partners are now accredited to manage their own case management database. With the assistance of community-based child protection networks and child help desk focal persons, identification and support to vulnerable children reached out to 569 (B:294/G:275) children 129 (B:71/G:58) being children with disabilities, assisted through case manage-

ment. Of these, 317 (B164/G:153) cases were closed after successfully implementing case plans and 74 (B:36/G:38) cases have case plans under implementation. 136 (M:86/F:50) community volunteers supported to facilitate parenting without violence (PWV) sessions with children and parents/caregivers. A total of 2,125 (B:1,127/F:998) children and 1,519 (M:554/F:965f) parents were reached in this reporting period. Child participation was enhanced throughout the PWV sessions as child participatory methodologies which included children with disabilities were used in all activities.

In response to MTR results, community-based child protection volunteers were motivated through the provision of branded T-shirts and reflector jackets increasing their community visibility, and recognition in communities. In addition, they were provided with one off non-food items (NFIs) such as mosquito nets, soaps, and blankets to show appreciation for their voluntary work. Challenges encountered included irregular attendance and high drop-out rate of male parents/caregivers in PWV adult sessions as they prioritized other income generating activities, coupled with the perceptions that women are the primary caregivers of children and hence should be the ones participating in such sessions. The high staff turnover of case workers also affects continuity with the recurring need to train new staff.

Issue 3- Child Rights Governance: SCI provided finan-

cial support to the Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare which successfully launched the National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC) 2020 – 2024, paving the way for effective coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and implementation of the UNCRC, the ACRWC and the Child Act for the realization of children's rights. In collaboration with the Child Rights Coalition and the Human Rights Commission, SCI financially supported consultations with children, civil society organizations, UN agencies, INGOs and Government line Ministries in three states of Western Equatorial, Lakes and Jonglei for additional and updated information on the situation of children in South Sudan. The information was submitted to the UNCRC Committee of Experts for an informed decision on recommendations to be provided to South Sudan. The program facilitated 2 Government dignitaries to attend the UNCRC meeting held in Geneva where the initial report of South Sudan submitted in 2020 was considered and a list of recommendations provided for action until the next reporting period in 2027.

To enhance child participation, SCI supported two children (1boy & 1girl) to attend the 2022 Africa Children's Parliament along AU Heads of State Summit held in Zambia. Furthermore, children participated in social accountability processes in which they collected data, validated, and engaged Government Ministries and other stakeholders in dialogue on implementation and ensuring provision of social services that fulfil children's' rights. Such platforms have enabled children to have a voice on matters that affect them and hold duty bearers to account. With no major deviations made for CRG during the MTR, the program continued to push for the realization of children's rights working with both duty bearers and rights holders. The major challenges encountered included a lack of political will to action some of the key policies, attributed to very low and non-availability of budget in different line Ministries. On February 24th 2022 South Sudan took a historic step forward for disability inclusion by signing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD). This means that the government will now have a legal duty to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of people with disabilities in South Sudan.

Risks and opportunities
Unpredictable security situation related to Murle youth attacking communities in Baidit Payam in Bor County, which resulted in casualties, abduction of children and women. The attacks further resulted in vacated schools due to massive displacement, interruption of learning, and delayed delivery of program activities. Tong primary was among the schools affected which resulted in its closure and thus a reduction of schools supported in Bor County. The program responded to the needs of the conflict-affected IDPs through case management, with the provision of non-food items. SC also addressed the

arising issues by participating and leading the interagency child protection rapid assessment in affected areas. SC also supported Jonglei State Education Cluster where different partners consolidated their efforts to respond to the needs of affected populations. Child Safeguarding & Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment risks materialized involving staff members in Rumbek leading to dismissal. This derailed and delayed program implementation as the program had to strategize leading to implementing partners taking on additional activities.

Key learnings for the next framework period

- Working with communities through provision of some level of incentives, led to increased commitment, engagement and attainment of results especially among male participants e.g. PWVs community volunteers and teacher volunteers.
- The number of children with disabilities is huge, however they are not visible in different public settings because of limited resources, support, and a knowledgeable and skilled community to assist them to overcome challenges.
- Education as the main entry point to reach communities revealed that integration is possible beyond CP and CRG with opportunities to include WASH, Health, & Nutrition components.
- ILET Assessment revealed that maximum involvement of community and parent involvement in the program increases ownership and sustainability, however quality is compromised due to lack of capacity of communities to provide their own durable resources/ materials, hence ILET requires substantial resources for quality assurance.

Uganda

Contextual update
Uganda is one of the countries in the world that experienced the longest school shutdown during the COVID-19 pandemic, lasting nearly two years. In addition to learning loss for children and reduced opportunities for children's participation, the pandemic weakened Child Protections systems and structures contributing to increased violence against children. Since the schools re-opened in 2022, Save the Children Uganda has supported the Ministry of Education and Sports on safe-back-to-school campaigns resulting in increased enrolment across project schools in Northern Uganda and Karamoja. However, during 2022, the country faced a prolonged drought season that resulted in acute food insecurity, especially in the Karamoja region. Most of the households in this region lack essential livelihoods and other coping mechanisms. The lack of food and schools' instability to provide midday meals have negatively impacted on chil-

Children at school in Uganda.

dren's attendance in school. The food crisis in Karamoja remains a huge challenge and the region also faces security issues emerging from cattle rustlers and disarmament exercises by the government. The security situation in Karamoja has severely impacted on implementing programs in some communities as some community schools were temporarily closed due to these insecurities. The drought and insecurities have also impacted negatively on child protection due to increased poverty, stress and negative coping mechanism.

Summary of Key Achievements and Challenges

Issue 1- Education: Despite the school closures, the program is on track to reach the target of 59,104 children, with 57,471 children (51,357 (G: 49%; B: 51%) in school and 6,114 out of school children) supported so far though safe back to school campaigns, mobilizing community structures including Parents Teacher Associations (PTAs), School Management committees (SMCs) and institutional leaders. During the school closure, the program provided technical support to the National Curriculum Development Center to develop home learning packs which the government distributed country wide to schools, engaging both parents and teachers in a large school out of school learning exercise that reduced the learning loss. The back-to-school campaigns led to a 24% increase (close to 10 000 students (G: 52%; B: 48%) in students' enrolment in the 92 program schools from 2019 to 2022 reaching 51, 359 (49%/ B: 51%) including 3,317 (G: 49%/ B: 51%) children with disabilities registered in schools.

A considerable number of teachers left the profession during Covid, and according to findings from the

Teacher Situational Assessment conducted in June 2022, only 49.4% of teachers feel motivated to teach. In response, the program delivered teacher training in literacy and numeracy instruction, Inclusive Education, and Teacher Professional Development (TPD). 388 (F: 181/ M: 207) teachers and head teachers have been trained so far. A teacher's certification course for non-formal teachers in community schools was completed benefiting 73 (F: 25/ M: 48) teachers in the Karamoja region, who are now eligible to be admitted into the teacher training program under the new National Teacher Policy. As a result of rolling out the SCI Literacy and Numeracy boost teacher training approach, the proportion of teachers who demonstrated professional teaching practices increased from 26% at baseline to 72.3% in 2022. At the policy level, SCI is supporting the development of a national teacher education curriculum and leveraging the Norad-funded Together for Inclusion (TOFI) project in facilitating the Ministry of Education to develop an Inclusive Education Policy. Once approved and signed, the policy will guide inclusion in education institutions.

Issue 2- Child protection: The programme was successful in strengthening national level engagement around policy reviews, formulation and implementation including on social service workforce strengthening, parenting and information management. The program participated in national level child protection working groups and supported the development and the rollout of the National Child Policy that consequently resulted into the establishment of Child Wellbeing Committees and rolling out para-social workers covering all the nine Norad program districts in Northern Uganda and Karamoja. The continuous capacity strengthening

of the PSWs saw an increase in the number of child protection cases reported from 1091 in 2021 to 1345 in 2022 in the 9 districts. Save the Children made a deliberate shift during the reporting period to approach child protection programming from a system strengthening approach to ensure scalability and sustainability of results for children.

The programme has also increased access to quality education for girls and boys that have been affected by gender-based violence including child marriage and teenage pregnancies by supporting their return and continuation in formal learning. A total of 437 child mothers were identified, counselled and supported in their re-enrolment to formal schooling. Through massive back to school campaigns in communities, and dialogue meetings aimed at promoting a positive behaviour change against child marriage and teenage pregnancies, the program, further supported a total of 1028 (G: 506/ B:522) most vulnerable children, who were out of school, to re-join formal schools by providing psychosocial support and requisite materials that enabled their access to quality inclusive learning. Support was also provided on menstrual hygiene management and adolescent sexual and reproductive health to support retention of girls in school.

The program also rolled out the Parenting without Violence (PwV) common approach and reached a total of 11,925 (F: 6,077/ M: 5,848) parents with PwV sessions and community awareness dialogue meetings that resulted in considerable decline in the proportion of parents who use violent ways to discipline their children in the community. However, Covid-19 halted these results. Cases of violence against children went up during the pandemic. Likewise, a study on effects of Covid-19 on child marriage and teenage pregnancies conducted in 2021 revealed a significant increase in teenage pregnancies among school girls. This was mainly attributed to school closure and limited access to ASRHR knowledge and services amongst the young people. To respond to these findings, the program carried out interventions positioned towards improved protection of girls and boys from the effects of gender-based violence, forced child marriage, teenage pregnancies, and traditional harmful practices, in partnership with Thrive Gulu, Straight Talk Foundation and Karamoja Integrated Development Program.

Issue 3- Children's Rights: Since 2019, the program contributed to strengthening the legal and policy environment in the country. Save the Children provided technical and financial support during national legislative process which resulted in the enactment and strengthening of important laws and policies, including the Prevention and Prohibition of Child Sacrifice law by the Ugandan parliament, and the development of the National Child Policy under the MGLSD. Through

our partner Uganda Debt Network, the program increased public resources allocated to children: 32% of the Uganda national FY budget 2021/22 was to key child rights sectors (Education, Health and Social Development) - up from 28% allocation in FY 2019/2020, showing a 4 percent points increase. Within these sectors, Education and Health received bigger percentages of the budget for 2021/2022 with 11.2% and 9.8% allocations respectively. The increase in education budget (of more than 11%) is geared towards transforming education delivery to improve learning outcomes. Together with Ugandan NGOs, SCI developed and submitted two child-informed supplementary reports on the rights of children in Uganda (to the Universal Periodic Review mechanisms at the Human Rights Council, and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities). To support the implementation of the National Child Participation strategy, the program promoted and amplified children's voices at school, community, district and national level. At school level, child rights clubs established in all the 92 schools act as a springboard for children to raise awareness on their rights, report child rights violations. Children have advocated for their rights at district level, for example in Moroto, Omoro, Napak, Nwoya during the "child rights days" and called upon district leaders to protect them and improve their education. Child representatives participated in national level advocacy dialogues with policy makers including the Speaker of Parliament.

Risks and opportunities
The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on programming across the three programming tracks, and the on-going hunger situation in the Karamoja region remains a major barrier to education and child participation in programme activities. In addition, the Government's limited capacity to transition programme supported community schools in Karamoja to become public primary schools is a risk likely to affect sustainability of results. With one year left to programme transition, only 22 out of 40 supported schools in Karamoja appear on the government provision list for the new schools to be coded in 2023. On the other hand, the good working relationship with the different government ministries enables Save the Children to take centre stage in policy influencing and supporting its roll out both at national and local government levels. In addition, NORAD programming is supported by several National frameworks like the National Child Policy, National strategy to end Child Marriage and Teenage pregnancy, Social Service workforce framework, National parenting framework and Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Teenage pregnancy in school setting in Uganda. SCI operational presence in many parts of the Country (21 field offices) makes it possible for the Uganda NORAD programme to

leverage operational resources and synergies with other programs like Joining Forces Alliance (JOFA), Together for Inclusion (TOFI), Ready to Learn and Work No Child's Business which operate within the same geographical location.

Key learnings for the next framework period

Improve children's access to quality education: The back-to-school campaigns, community awareness and mobilization strategies produced a sharp increase in enrolment where some schools registered learners beyond what the available physical learning environment can accommodate. The need for expansion of quality physical learning spaces in schools therefore must be addressed. To provide safe access to schools and regular school attendance, school feeding, and livelihood needs must also be integrated as components in the next framework, particularly in Karamoja and Northern Uganda. To address low learning outcomes, focus on remedial learning to support children who are lagging behind after the pandemic and other events is essential. In order to ensure school readiness and children's smooth transition to basic primary education, the programme design should consider the possibility of mapping and linking Norad-supported schools with pre-schools (ECCD). Further, as community reading clubs rely on motivated community volunteers, more innovative motivation and incentive strategies should be implemented to ensure dedication. Finally, a vital component will be to continue the focus on strengthening Teachers' Professional Development (TPD) to enhance teacher's motivation and pedagogical skills. **Child protection system strengthening:** The National Child Policy of 2020 provides for systems strengthening for planning and delivery of quality and comprehensive protection services to children. Therefore, the next Norad programming should continue with a system strengthening approach at National and District level. Child Wellbeing Committees and the Para Social Workers (PSW) should be prioritized as the major structures will fully mandate to coordinate and support case management at community level. **Improve child participation:** The next framework needs to strengthen child participation structures and engagements beyond the confines of the school environment to national and international level engagements. The program should support formation and sustainability of Children Reference Groups in all districts and national level, and securing government budget for the same.

MIDDLE EAST

Assessment of Country Engagement Plans

SCN maintains system strengthening as an important pillar of the Norad programming in the Middle East. SCN has prioritized strategic investments in enhancing the area of child rights governance (CRG) at country level in **Palestine** and **Lebanon**, while leveraging linkages with SIDA and DANIDA CRG programming.

In 2022 SCN initiated CEPs to identify areas of support to frame our engagement with the COs. The CEPs guide the overall commitments made towards Palestine and Lebanon, and priorities in 2022 included support to the COs in the areas of advocacy, civil society strengthening, child participation and nexus. For 2022, we had a particular program focus on addressing learning loss and negative coping mechanisms such as child labour following Covid19 and deepening financial and political crisis. Advocacy priorities were centred around shrinking civic space and the CAAC (children affected by armed conflict) and CAAFAG (children associated with armed forces and groups) agendas, particularly relevant due to Norway's seat in the UNSC and as chair for the CAAC Working Group. A new strategic uplift area in the CEPs was climate programming.

To foster joint collaboration with SC's Nordic members, several meetings, joint travels and dialogue took place during 2022. Advocacy remained a cornerstone for Nordic member collaboration, with common messaging and briefings targeting international audiences (such as EU states, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Parliaments). As an organization firmly committed to advocate against child rights violation, SCN continuously supports the COs advocacy efforts at country level and global level. In support of SCN's commitments towards **Palestine**, our Senior Humanitarian Advocacy Adviser attended the Country Consultation Group meeting in Ramallah in March, which convened SC Members, SCI staff, and partners. The issue of shrinking civic space in Palestine remains high on the Nordic member's agenda. After the Norad partner DCI (Defence for Children International) was among one of six national organizations designated as hostile by Israel in late 2021, SCN engaged in extensive legal consultations and dialogue with Norad and NMFA to assess risks and possibilities for continued partnership. By late 2022, a direct partnership with DCI in Geneva was established to secure continuity of program implementation with funds from Norad. SCN is currently also facilitating SC Sweden's core funding to DCI, ensuring a cost-efficient follow-up led by one SC member, as the CO in Palestine cannot hold the partner agreement with DCI due to legal risks.

In September 2022, the Nordic SC members conducted a joint visit to **Lebanon**, attending the Country Consultation Group meeting in Beirut. A key area for joint support and discussion with the SC Lebanon country office is related to how SC can align development and humanitarian programs in a context with many layered crises, triggered by a financial and political crisis and exacerbated by raising food prices and increasing poverty rates. This includes advocacy efforts aiming at improving coordination mechanisms through a more holistic aid architecture, enhanced support to local civil society and other national actors, and child participation. As Nordics, we visited each other's education, child protection and child rights projects with an aim of creating synergies and develop more of a joint ownership. In line with commitments made in the CEP 2022, SCN has contributed to bolster climate initiatives in **Palestine** CO with contextualization of the environmental education pilot "Green Generation" and regional research on the impact of climate change led by Lebanon CO. Through the CO in Lebanon, we also supported child led consultations prior to climate summit in Egypt (COP27) in November, through the regional Manara Network, a partner funded by Norad in Lebanon. Climate programming in the MENA region is being explored as an avenue for joint member collaboration and was also discussed in a Nordic Member meeting in Stockholm in November.

Lebanon

Contextual update

The economic crisis, currency depreciation and unprecedented levels of food insecurity in Lebanon is exacerbating vulnerabilities and exhausting coping strategies of the population. The multidimensional crisis has detrimental effects on all aspects of children's lives.

School closure and recurrent teachers strikes, have created learning loss for most school-aged children. The Covid-19 pandemic compounded pressure on the already vulnerable education sector in Lebanon. Remote learning proved to be challenging due to several factors including instructors not trained on remote teaching, limited internet access and the rationing of electricity, which left many homes with minimum or no power for many hours during a day. The spike in fuel prices has also impacted many households' ability to pay

Lebanon - Child participation. PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

for transportation to school. In 2022, the cost of transportation and education materials were identified amongst the main barriers to education. A significant increase in dropout rates is evident, with school closures and rising poverty being the main drivers. According to UNICEF (2022) "3 in 10 young people in Lebanon have stopped their education, while 4 in 10 reduced spending on education to buy essential items like basic food and medicine." Teachers have suffered tremendously over the past two years, with loss of jobs, low wages and poor working conditions.

Child protection concerns continue to deepen, as the situation in Lebanon deteriorates. Child labour was the most prominent child protection issue in 2022 as reported by protection actors (Protection Cluster August 2022). With three-quarters of the Lebanese population living in poverty, with rates reaching 93 % among Palestinian refugees, coupled with collapse of public services, high number of child marriage among girls are prevalent, and violence and abuse against children at alarming level. The crisis is fueling drug abuse among young people, including in the refugee camps, and there is increased trend of children being associated with armed groups involved with drugs, creating an unsafe environment for children.

Adding to this, the cholera outbreak in October 2022 put the health of the population, particularly children, at further risk by disrupting health and sanitation services and overwhelming the fragile water infrastructure.

Summary of key achievements and challenges

The overall objective of this programme is heightened capacity of the civil society in Lebanon to better respond to the rights of Palestinian refugee children. This programme is being delivered in collaboration with four partners, PWHO, Nabaa, Tadamon, and Development for People and Nature Association (DPNA), a new partner in 2022, tasked to lead child

led research on the impact of climate and capacitate programme partners on climate change and environmental issues. Over the course, the programme has been adapted to shifting needs particularly linked to Covid-19 and the economic breakdown.

Issue 1- Education: With the aim to ensure continued access to quality, safe and inclusive education this programme has since 2019, supported 8379 children (G:4255, B: 4124), including 697(G: 352, B:345) children with disabilities with a range of learning activities in 8 learning centres Of these, 2 642 children (F: 1 285/ B: 1 285) were enrolled in 2022, more than double than what was registered in 2019. The education component has been coupled with protection activities.

School closures during the Covid-19 pandemic and lack of non-formal education options impacted the learning outcomes of children, particularly for marginalized girls and boys. Children attending Retention Support (RS) designed to reinforce their formal education, became more vulnerable as this in periods was their only access to learning. Not surprisingly, the MTR results for RS were low, and while remote support was provided, challenges due to poor internet connection and lack of devices affected achievements. In January 2022, the education authorities permitted resuming face-to-face education at public schools and non-formal education centers. SC's partners Nabaa, Tadamon, and PWHO launched cycles of Retention Support (RS), and Basic Literacy and Numeracy (BLN) aimed at strengthening children's foundational skills, as well as Early Childhood Education (ECE) which is vital to prepare children for basic education. Guided by the MTR findings, these cycles have been expanded to address learning loss the past two academic years and subsequently reduce the risk of drop out. After children targeted by the RS returned to formal education, their achievement results improved.

Capacitating teachers to improve their instructional quality remained an integral part of this programme. Because teachers' performance was lower than target of the MTR, programme partners introduced a comprehensive skill-building approach. Regular Teachers Learning Circles (TLC) to equip teachers through peer coaching, have been organized by partners. These sessions have been complemented with well-being sessions to strengthen teachers' coping mechanism, which has also improved the teaching quality in classroom. Based on satisfaction survey, teachers indicated 93.1% benefit from the TLCs. Increased focus has been placed on gender sensitive and inclusive teaching to foster equal learning opportunities for all children. Children with disabilities have been actively recruited to the learning centers, with attendance increased from 3.3% at baseline to 8.6% in 2022, as well as increase in learning outcomes almost equal to their peers has been observed during 2022. This

is a result of adapted physical premises and inclusive learning environment. Classrooms are designed to be interactive and programme partners ensure that transport to and from the learning site is safe for children, including CwD's.

In the context of deepening protection concerns, several programme activities have been adapted. Child and youth resilience sessions coupled with awareness sessions on child marriages have been provided. Pre-and post-test of these sessions indicates significant changes in attitudes toward gender rights and child marriage. To address rising cases of child labour, cash for protection was introduced to case management, and provided to 94 households (G: 28/ B: 66) in 2022. This has been provided based on a vulnerability assessment with close follow-up with the child and their household, followed by development of individual action plan. As part of the capacity building of partners, dedicated child protection staff have been recruited at centers where protection activities are being implemented.

As the MTR indicated increased levels of distress and anxiety among caregivers, emotional support sessions have supplemented existing positive parenting programmes to enhance their well-being. Securing participation by male caregivers remains a challenge, however, to mobilize more fathers a programme specifically designed for men, Programme P, have been delivered. Programme partners have additionally recruited male staff and changed timings of sessions to late afternoons and weekends to accommodate higher number of male participants.

Issue 3- Children's Rights: Empowering children and a strengthened civil society to promote and demand that duty bearers implement children's rights, lies at the core of this programme. Child participation has increased with training in Participatory Action Research (PAR). To ensure that the distinct needs and perspectives of boys and girls including children with disabilities are reflected in the PARs, the training aimed at fair share of both genders. This was particularly important as results of the research inform advocacy initiatives carried out by the children. The MTR findings highlighted positive experiences by children engaged in the PAR and other programme activities under Issue 3. Climate change and the impact on children has been added as a new area in the PAR.

As part of this programme, SC led the formation of the alliance of Civil Society Organizations responsible for promoting and holding duty bearers accountable for implementing child rights in Lebanon. As such, the alliance committed to implementing a national child rights governance plan, strengthening capacity of CSOs and other stakeholders, improving monitoring and reporting mechanisms, and advocating for policy reforms. Building on MTR recommendations, the alliance has been expanded from 16 to more than 40 CSOs and included an advisory

committee of academic institutions. One challenge of the alliance has been to be persistent as it lacks a structured entity and struggled to convene the CSO representatives due to the crisis in Lebanon. To further support partners, SC has developed online Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA), which serve as basis for capacity development plan for each partner. Upon completing assessment, SC reviews and approves the partner plan, which is uploaded to the online partnership tracking system for monitoring and follow up.

Risks and opportunities
The economic crisis has created a volatile political and security situation inside the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, with crime rates increasing. As mitigation measures, SC has prepared a risk reduction plan and in 2022 a mapping of community leaders was completed to ensure close coordination with the community in relation to conflict sensitivity.

UNRWA's funding crisis, add constrains on services available for the Palestinian refugees. SC has maintained regular meetings with UNRWA for programme delivery purposes. SC's tools and programme approaches such as BNL and RS have been discussed with UNRWA prior to being carried out. Referral and coordination between SC and UNRWA are also taking place. Lack of necessary protection services posed a major risk for children. SC and programme partners regularly update service mapping and has adapted programme activities based on emerging needs. To support access to services, SC when necessary covered transportation to services outside the camps.

The pandemic and outbreak of cholera in late 2022 had implications on the programme. To mitigate the negative effects and contain the spread of the virus among partners staff, partners were trained on Covid-19 protocols and protective gears distributed. The cholera cases placed additional burden on overwhelmed services inside the Palestinian camps. Clean drinking water was therefore provided at all our learning centers and additional measures put in place following the outbreak of cholera, such as provision of chlorine tablets in the water tanks which were continuously maintained throughout the period of the project.

Key learnings for the next framework period
Based on learnings from the past four years of the NORAD programming, SC in Lebanon has preliminary recommendations for future programming. Expansion of BNL programme to other geographic areas, in particular to South of Lebanon, to address existing gaps is considered important. Consultations with caregivers in the camps revealed the need for basic literacy and numeracy sessions and to add livelihood components aimed at supporting caregivers to become self-sufficient to meet their basic needs. Learnings also indicated continued and enhanced protection programming, including

cash for protection and case management. The recommended approach for child protection programming is community led which may include establishment of community networks and committees. Capacitating community structures on protection issues are equally important to support quality services and sustainability. Moreover, addressing the growing impact of climate change and environmental issues among communities is also recommended.

To further contribute to sustainability, SC recommends investing in organizational capacity development of local partners and the CSO alliance. Overall, maintain focus on child participation including child led research opportunities to ensure that children's own voices are heard and empower them to become agents for change.

Palestine

Contextual update

The protracted crisis coupled with dire economic and fiscal situation and stagnating aid levels in Palestine, is deepening poverty and are eroding coping strategies of the Palestinians. Recurrent exposure to violence is causing both mental and physical harm, exacerbating the vulnerabilities of communities. Children, in particular, are bearing the brunt of these crises.

Escalation of violence in the West Bank especially in Jenin and Nablus erupted in 2022 with frequent raids, mass-arrest and killings by the Israeli military personnel. According to UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 2022 was the deadliest year for Palestinians. While in Gaza, the military conflict in August 2022, resulted in loss of lives and major damages to houses which left many Gazans displaced.

Periodic closure of schools due to rising Covid-19 cases combined with recurrent teachers strike resulted in learning loss for many children. The teachers' strikes reflect the deepening of the economic crisis, with demands for salary rise as teachers struggle to make ends meet. While remote learning was provided during the lockdown, a key challenge was lack of necessary equipment, as only 35% of Palestinian households have access to home computers. Moreover, the threat of demotions of schools in the West Bank and East Jerusalem is rising. In 2022, a Save the children supported school in Massafer Yatta was demolished which served children from four different villages.

The shrinking of civic space in Palestine is a growing concern. Israel's use of counterterrorism strategies to restrict the role of civil society, became evident when six Palestinian organizations, three being human rights organizations including one NORAD partner, were designated in late 2021.

Summary of key achievements and challenges
With the overall objective to enhance learning outcomes for children, heightened capacity of the civil society to promote children's rights and strengthen national stakeholder's capability to fulfill children's rights, this programme has over four years reached 51.000 children and 75.000 adults. This was achieved in close collaboration with seven programme partners. Additionally, strategic engagement with the Child Ombudsperson, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and relevant ministries have been carried out. Adaptations have been made to meet the needs of children, following Covid-19 and changes in economic and the political situation.

Issue 1- Education: The enrolment figures for 2022 show 29 999 children (G: 55%/ B: 45%) of which 1 624 are children with disabilities (G: 55%/ B: 45%) enrolled in 50intervention schools. This is close to double the enrolment compared with 2019, with close to 13 500 more students (G: 50%/ B: 50%). The main driver for this increase is the expansion from 30 to 50 implementation schools in 2021, and yearly enrolment campaigns.

The program seeks to improve learning outcomes for children including children with disabilities (CwDs) in a safe and violence free learning environment. As essential to children's learning, a vital part of this programme is to build the capacity of teachers to enhance the quality of instruction and classroom practices. As such teachers have been trained in inclusive and gender sensitive education, literacy and numeracy as well as life skills. Although originally planned for 2020, due to Covid-19 and subsequent access restriction imposed by the Ministry of Education, these trainings started once schools reopened and were thus not fully reflected in the MT assessment.

Remote and blended learning, combining classroom teaching with virtual, when possible, was provided to children during the pandemic. This was however inadequate to recover student's proficiency level. In Gaza, only pre-recorded unified classes were available at UNRWA schools, with no interaction between teachers and learners nor follow-up teaching taking place. As highlighted by the MTR, this approach proved to be inefficient, leading to loss of motivation among many children. CwDs were especially impacted by remote learning as many caregivers were incapable of prioritizing IT equipment, coupled with lack of proficiency among teachers in virtual modalities in general and to employ inclusive methods in online teaching.

To address learning loss and gaps linked to the pandemic and teacher's strikes, Remedial Education (RE) was introduced and adapted to meet the distinct needs of girls, boys and CwDs. The RE was informed by findings from the MTR which indicated decline in

literacy and numeracy performance among students, with literacy achievements of boys being lower compared to those of girls. Involvement of parents and children in planning of the RE was secured. Qualitative data gathered from schools targeted with RE, indicated improved language and math achievements by 70-85%. In total, 2738 (F:1354 /M:1384) children have benefitted from Remedial Education. In further support to improve children's basic skills in education, SC and partner Tamer introduced summer camps in the West Bank and Gaza combining literacy and numeracy sessions with recreational activities. Adding academic content to the summer camps, was a request from the MoE due to low achievement rates among students at national level. In the context of recurrent hostilities, recreational activities such as arts and sports are vital to support children's wellbeing which in turn contributes to improving academic performance. Preliminary lessons from the summer camps suggest that the timing needs to be coordinated with other actors organizing camps, to ensure higher attendance.

An important platform at schools which facilitates joint engagement between children, teachers, parents and community members is the School Development Committee. The primary purpose of the Committees is to improve the overall learning environment. During the pandemic, follow up of the SDGs was maintained through social media platforms, such as WhatsApp, however as the MTR indicated, the Committees were not operating properly. To enhance its functionality, initiatives aimed

at improving school safety were introduced in 11 schools in Gaza. The primary task was to develop a disaster risk reduction plan (DRR) for each school. Building on the DRR plans, climate and environmental activities combined with awareness and outreach activities in communities have been carried out. The Committees aimed at a fair share of boys and girls, and included CwDs. Field observation by SC and partners suggest increase in children's involvement in committee meetings and in revising schools' plans. Therefore, it was suggested to extend these initiatives to cover all 50 schools targeted under this programme.

Issue 3- Children's Rights: Empowering children to become agents for change lies at the core of this programme. The Child Councils in the West Bank and Gaza respectively, are elected by the children's groups formed under previous NORAD (2015-2018). The last election was held in June 2022. During this programme, SC alongside partners, Defence for Children International (DCI), Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR) and al-Marsad, have equipped the Child Councils to conduct data collection and analysis, carry out initiatives including media advocacy to address gaps and violations of child rights in Palestine. Over the past four years, the Child Councils held a series of accountability sessions with decision makers to raise issues on inclusive education, child protection concerns such as child labour, early marriage, corporal punishment and other forms of violence in schools,

Child hearing in Gaza.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

and conditions in juvenile detention centres. The council members also participated in a survey on the UNCRC's General Comment no 26, focusing on climate change, which expanded the Council's area of engagement. To measure the impact of the training provided, council members completed pre-and post-tests, which over the course indicated more than 50% increase in knowledge. A key challenge related to the Child Council, was the designation of DCI as hostile by Israel. This had serious consequences and required SC in Palestine to seize all interaction with DCI due to legal risks. Nevertheless, DCI continued to implement planned programme activities with the Child Council in the West Bank.

At system level, SC continues to support duty bearers to implement child rights. Central to this, is contributing to a conducive learning environment for children with disabilities. As such, SC supported the MoE in updating the Inclusive Education Strategy and contributed to upgrade the database for special education. Additionally, SC through specialized consultants, supported the Ministry in developing manuals and guidelines on autism, and transforming curricula into Braille language. To enhance learning opportunities for CwDs, SC have supported specialized resource centers and resource rooms at schools established by the Ministry with necessary educational equipment including talking and diagnostic kits. Five sensory rooms designed to support children with mental and visual disabilities, have been developed at schools. A success has been to make these rooms available for all children, which contributed to reduce stigma associated with disability.

While SC maintains a strong relationship with different ministries, staff turnover and reorganization of relevant ministries, as well as internal rifts posed challenges and caused delays of some processes. As mitigation measures, frequent consultations and follow-up meetings were held with relevant ministries at high and mid-management levels to reach agreements. Equally important was to understand the power dynamics to identify the room for maneuver.

Risks and opportunities
The escalation of violence which erupted in Jenin in 2022 affected implementation in the area, causing some delays. To reduce the impact, SC rescheduled programme activities to ensure these were still implemented in a timely manner. There was also another military conflict in Gaza in August 2022. To mitigate the risks of conflict eruption, SC's closely monitors the situation and emergency, and contingency planning is regularly updated in dialogue with relevant sector stakeholders. As a response to this conflict, SC immediately utilized its pooled funds and applied additional humanitarian funds including from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Norway, to provide humanitarian assistance to impacted children and communities.

Restriction on access was imposed during the Gaza conflict. This, however, did not impact the pro-gramme. SC's Security Manager closely monitored the situation and was in continued dialogue with the military coordination unit (COGAT) for entry/exit from Gaza.

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted the education programming. However, to reduce the affects, SC in collaboration with programme partners applied digital modalities and social media platforms for communications and to maintain some educational and awareness raising activities. For instance, a set of online interactive reading materials in Arabic was launched to boost literacy skills among children. Another example is the development of short, animated stories to foster positive parenting which were shared with caregivers through social media platforms.

Key learnings for the next framework period
Based on learnings from the past four years, SC has initial recommendations for future programming. Remedial Education is a valuable instrument to address learning loss and is recommended to be continued on a regular basis. The RE is especially beneficial for marginalized children. Because capacity building of teachers is crucial for children's learning outcomes, establishing a feedback mechanism for teachers and a community of practice to facilitate exchange of teaching practice, is also recommended. Equally important, is ensuring involvement of community members outside the school to support in mitigating risks and challenges caused by crisis. Institutionalizing knowledge and skills at the ministries and CSOs, is a good approach to maintain services specially to marginalized populations.

Based on learnings from the past four years, SC has initial recommendations for future programming. Remedial Education is a valuable instrument to address learning loss and is recommended to be continued on a regular basis. The RE is especially beneficial for marginalized children. Because capacity building of teachers is crucial for children's learning outcomes, establishing a feedback mechanism for teachers and a community of practice to facilitate exchange of teaching practice, is also recommended. Equally important, is ensuring involvement of community members outside the school to support in mitigating risks and challenges caused by crisis. Institutionalizing knowledge and skills at the ministries and CSOs, is a good approach to maintain services specially to marginalized populations.

In protracted crisis, contingency and preparedness plans are critical to manage and mitigate risks during emergencies. For future programming, embedding crisis modifiers to enable early and rapid response, is recommended. Moreover, advocacy to raise the issues of shrinking civic space and counter-terrorism legislation remains important. SC recommends collecting more evidence on the impact of these issues on child rights.

ASIA

Assessment of Country Engagement Plans

An important aspect of the country engagement plans in Asia is the Nordic collaboration. SCN participate actively in a Nordic Asia network to share information and learning, and to cooperate closer with likeminded SC members. There is a special focus on the work on strengthening civil society from the Nordic members. The CO in Nepal has been able to secure SIDA funding building on the experience working with partners with Norad. SC has managed to secure UNICEF funding in Nepal using the experience from SC Finland has on Social Protection funded by the Finnish MFA. The work SCN has been doing with LGBTIQ organizations through support from NMFA with FRI has been included in funding from SIDA and USAID. Nepal is one of the focus countries for SCN on climate, and SCN has used private funding for a pilot programme on climate. This is in line with the Asia regional engagement on climate.

The situation in Myanmar has been challenging after the coup d'état in 2021. The Nordic members have been able to support the country office in Myanmar throughout the year, with SC Norway having a lead role. The country office has managed, as in Nepal, to get SIDA funding working on partnership in a challenging context. SC Norway supported the country office some years back on their partnership strategy, a strategy that has been crucial during the time after the coup. The Nordic members work together on advocacy and to obtain new funding, especially on protection and education.

Myanmar

Contextual update
The Covid-19 pandemic had severely hampered the project's implementation in 2020-2021. The government imposed a strict prohibition and a stay-at-home policy. Under these strict constraints, the project-maintained continuity through an alternative approach and adaptation. The humanitarian situation in Myanmar deteriorated throughout 2022. According to a UN report, the number of people displaced more than doubled in 2022 from over 700,000 in January, rising to over 1.5 million by the end of the year. The northwest (Sagaing and Magway) and southeast (Kayin and Kayah) regions were the most impacted. By the end of December, the further deterioration of the security situation in the southeast led to almost 284,000 people being displaced and living in challenging situations with extremely limited access to services. Humanitarian access continues to be significantly constrained with movement restrictions and interference, particularly in rural areas. Air strikes, artillery fire, use of IEDs, and drone attacks persisted, resulting in new displacement. The widespread destruction of houses during military raids continued, preventing the return of displaced people to their villages of origin. Peaceful demonstrations continued to take place in several locations, including in urban areas of Magway and Sagaing regions. Severe bureaucratic and administrative restrictions, constant conflict, and threats against aid workers continued to hamper humanitarian operations. Many schools under the Ministry of Education have reopened across the country in June while many remain closed, particularly in rural areas. UNICEF reported the estimated status of school reopening in Kayin is 71%, Mon is 92%, and Rakhine is 96%, while also the estimated status of school reopening in Shan and Kachin States is high, around 80%. On the contrary, in Kayah (18% reopened) and Chin (35% reopened) States, many schools are still closed, while in Sagaing Region around half of the schools are still closed due to conflict-related reasons. Seventy percent of schools reopened in the Magway region except from in the Martial Law Act Area (Pauk, Myaing, Htee Lin, Saw and Gangaw). In these areas, all the military schools are still closed but children attend NUG schools in some villages. More than 125,000 schoolteachers in Myanmar had been suspended by the military authorities for joining a civil disobedience movement to oppose the military coup.

Summary of key achievements and challenges
Save the Children implements the "Leaving No Child Behind" project in six townships in two areas: Kayah State and Magway Region, in collaboration with four civil society organizations. This integrated program focuses on children's learning and safety in school, the protection of children against violence and abuse, and child rights governance.

Issue 1- Education: The project shifted its approach from school-based to community-based education, implementing home-based learning activities including reading clubs and caregiver sessions (LWIE) to ensure the continuity of children's learning during the crisis. The project distributed Education in Emergencies (EIE) kits to 300 children (G: 137 / B: 163), and student kits to 4840 children (G: 2419/ B: 2421) in 2022. All together 9 732 students (G: 4626/ B: 5106) were registered at community-based learn-

ing activities during 2022. In order to implement community-based education, village education committees (VEC) were formed and community-based volunteers were recruited and trained to support children's learning. The LWiE reading club consisted of 15 sessions for each round. The community and volunteers accepted that the reading club session was a new learning space for their children. The children have improved their social skills and confidence, and they respect and communicate with others without fear, resulting in a positive shift in social and traditional culture. The activities related to school safety were suspended, and instead, SCI adopted safe learning environment activities.

Issue 2- Child protection: Prior to the military coup, the project worked with its counterpart departments - DSW at National level, and Child Rights Committees at township, District and State/Regional levels to strengthen township-level protection system at six townships in Kayah state and Magway region. Project has facilitated for a strong linkage between Township Child Rights Committee (TCRC) and village level administrators (under General Administrative Department) bringing them together to discuss child rights and protection issues at their regular meeting. Based on the request from village administrators, the members of TCRC such as DSW and the Township Law Officer organized an awareness session on Child Rights, Child Protection, and Case Management system and shared the information of services from of government departments which available for the children and community members.

The project continued to establish the community social work model by applying the competency-based approach to Community Social workers in Kayah and Magway. Partners held regular monthly supervision and coaching sessions with community social workers (CSWs) to improve CSWs' knowledge, skills, and behaviour, and to promote their confident level to work with children, families, community members to build protective environment in the community. CSWs have demonstrated their ability to support low-risk cases, mobilize available resources for children, including services for children with disabilities, and able to refer to needed services in safe and confidential manner.

Of the total number of people across Myanmar affected by armed conflict and political crisis, an estimated 37% are children, many of whom are living in the jungle under makeshift shelters. Most children live in situations where child protection systems are weak and monitoring their situation is challenging. Despite the difficult circumstances, the three partners Younity, SCVG and Guardian raised awareness on "Appropriate case response services and safe reporting" in all target areas. The sessions provided concepts on basic child rights, child protection, violence against children and case management,

with the aim to identify child protection concerns at the community level and to provide appropriate, safe and timely response to the children and their families. Since COVID-19, the project has adapted distance case management modality and after the coup and due to rising conflict, the project has scaled up case management and case-based support to address the urgent needs of children. Partner staff have delivered positive parenting sessions to parents and caregivers, who were interested and eager to attend, except in the armed-clash areas. Due to escalating conflict in the targeted communities, instead of doing sessions on child resilience, the Child Protection program adopted Psychological Support (PSS) activities to better respond to the context. The competency-based approach was applied to build soft skills to project staff, partners, and animator regards to facilitate PSS group activity in fun, safe and inclusive manner. The package was piloted and finalized in December 2022.

Issue 3- Children's Rights: Prior to the coup and under the civilian government, the program made significant contributions to policy changes by influencing government stakeholders at various levels and members of parliament. One noteworthy policy change is the enactment of Myanmar Child Rights Law (2019) which reflects most of the recommendations by SC and NCRWG (NGO Child Rights Working Group). By promoting constructive engagement with MNHRC (Myanmar National Human Rights Commission), SC and NCRWG put strong efforts into enabling MNHRC to be a more independent institution and focus on children's rights as part of human rights. Significant improvements were observed; however, after the military coup, MNHRC has been silent, and no significant defence for human rights by MNHRC has been noted. All engagement with the government has been suspended due to security reasons to instead focus more on regional and international private advocacy. CSO strengthening and children's empowerment activities have continued. Child Rights Monitoring and Reporting has been contextualized to monitor child rights violations continuously. A private network, Myanmar Child Rights Watch, has been established and has prepared periodic child rights violation reports. The reports have been shared privately with stakeholders at regional and international level as the formal UNCRC and UPR reporting cycles have been suspended for Myanmar and we cannot rely on international accountability mechanisms.

A National Online Children Platform has been established with the goal of continuing children's empowerment and regular consultations with children on issues relevant to them. Whenever possible, children will speak out at regional and international level on the issues and their concerns to the broader international community to promote accountability for child rights. During the Covid-19 outbreak in 2020,

a child voice survey which included children with disabilities called "Our Rights, Our Voice" was conducted, and the report was shared shared with parliamentarians and local governments. At the local level, township children's networks and community level child groups were established and strengthened through local partners and volunteers. Children participated in regular child rights monitoring (CRM) conducted by local partners. CRM data are analysed, reported and shared by local partners at local levels.

Risks and opportunities

Memorandum of understanding – Probability and impact on implementation: Potential delays. Most operations are conducted in a low-profile manner, risking the lives of many staff in field areas. Action implemented: Create re-orientation package to advocate for the community, collecting information. Developed a security preparedness plan. Building informal relationships with authorities. Monitored the community's acceptance and response actions.

Armed conflict - resulted in delayed implementation, low-profile operations can be harmful in the long run, and negative consequences include loss of staff lives and arrests of staff. Action implemented: More focus on volunteering and providing technical support to them to enable remote implementation. Program adaptation to be in line with the armed conflict situation.

Government restrictions and property raiding or searching - can result in staff and family members being arrested and delayed program implementation. Action implemented: Activities keep a low profile and follow local guidelines.

COVID-19 restrictions made it difficult to conduct awareness-raising and events, and lockdown can delay program implementation. Action implemented: Ensure that office arrangements and social distancing comply with COVID-19 guidelines, staff work from home.

Armed conflict in Kayah, internal displacement, including of staff. There are no operations in Kayah. Potential negative effects on the reputation of the organization and prohibition of its activities. Staff can be arrested by military junta/EAOs. Action implemented: The office was reallocated to Taunggyi, Southern Shan State. A risk management plan, including a detailed mitigation plan was developed. Community-based volunteers were recruited and trained.

New Association Law - Local CSOs don't want to extend registration with SAC. SCVG decided to stop the partnership agreement with SC. All the organizations have faced this issue. If the organization extends registration, it will lose community acceptance and be difficult to implement in the PDF control area. If the registration is not extended, the organization will leave the country, and the employees will face criminal charges. Action implemented: As SC decided to extend the new registration for the

purpose of supporting the vulnerable community and children, it organized a community orientation session for volunteers and VEC members.

Key learnings for the next framework period

Issue 1: The program should focus on working in geographical areas with less active conflict. It should include conditional cash support, provision of student, community mobilization and awareness raising on the importance of education during crisis and adapting. safe school approaches. Catch-Up-Clubs (CuCs)/remedial education for those children who need additional support and including Enabling Teacher Approach. Community-based Education activities using volunteers. The project should include activities to support children and teachers on SEL and MHPSS. The project should provide support for school infrastructure, WASH facilities, school furniture, and teaching learning materials.

Issue 2: Community-based Social Worker model can be applied or scaled up when designing the new framework. Developed and adopted competency-base approaches to build required soft skills for PSS group activity to the partners and community facilitator/animators within current framework. Case Management service must be expanded to address the protection needs of child/family in a safe, age- and gender-appropriate manner. To build wider protection networks for vulnerable and marginalized children, safe identification and referral should be embedded in the volunteer program.

Issue 3: SC needs to pivot its operations and partnerships to navigate the political climate, while still prioritizing the promotion of child rights. The new NORAD should consider the program design in line with the current situation and context. To identify rights violation issues in community and to provide necessary services and supports under CRG budget plan. More focus on international advocacy process to raise the children rights situation.

Nepal

Contextual update

Political and external context changed significantly during 2022. The country witnessed elections, dengue outbreak (approx. 10% of cases reported nationwide were from Karnali), COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters (floods, landslides, thunderstorms). Despite the turmoil, the project interventions were not hampered as adaptation strategies applied during COVID-19 were implemented also during 2022.

Following the election held in May 2022, new leadership with different political ideology replaced its predecessors in all working palikas; only few

Child champions in Nepal.

representatives were re-elected to the office at local level. Given the changed political scenario, to ensure understanding and to create sound ground for coordination and collaboration, the newly elected leadership received orientation about the project goal, progress and working modality. Similar orientation was provided to the Chief Minister at provincial level in Karnali. The project observes positive response from the local and provincial governments, including reiterated commitment to support the project. Moreover, the local level governments continue to commit financial support for some interventions in the project areas, on overall at the same level as before or slightly increased in some project locations.

The security situation in the project locations is constant without significant disturbance, risk or threat to the project, partners, and SCI, despite presence of radical political faction. No extortion related activities were reported till the reporting period. Bandh (closure) or strike organized in some locations during 2022 against the governments by agitating groups did not hamper implementation.

Natural disasters continue to occur and present a real threat to the local communities. In September 2022, a landslide and flood hit some of the target areas. The disaster washed away more than 250 households in the working palikas, causing loss of 21 lives. Further, the national highway and district roads linking the project locations crumbled away causing delays in field movement of the project team and transportation of project materials. Since mid-2022, the spread of Covid-19 reduced significantly in the entire Karnali province, including the working palikas, leading to less fear for contagion, reduced stress levels and improved wellbeing of staff, and as a result – increased reach to the target communities. Decline of the pandemic situation is followed with an increase in labor migration from working palikas to India and other countries has been observed.

Summary of key achievements and challenges

Key Achievements:

- In collaboration with the governments, the project organized a Palika and Province level ECCD conference and formulated a Palika and Province level ECCD teachers' network to provide opportunities for learning and knowledge sharing at Chhedagad, Kushe and Karnali province.
- In 2022 a total of 31 754 (G: 50%/ B: 50%) including 217 (G: 55%/ B: 45%) children with disabilities were enrolled in 250 intervention schools. This is a slight decrease of 2 450 children (G: 68%/ B: 32%) compared to 2019 enrollment, primarily due to out-migration from the implementing areas and a decreasing birth-rate.

- The project enrolled a total of 436 out of 456 out-of-school children during the project period, and 10 children with disabilities were referred and enrolled into resource schools nearby their hometown. Furthermore, 30 (G:16 and B:14) children with disabilities are continuing their education through School at Home, a concept which has been taken ownership by the local level government where five out of nine School at Home classes are being supported by Kushe RM. Out of 49 target wards, nine declared 100% enrollment in collaboration with the local governments.
- "Home Schooling" approach initiated by SC was adopted by the federal government through Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD) developing a Procedure on Facilitating Home Schooling. The concept is currently being scaled up by other projects of SC as well as like-minded organizations (Plan International, World Vision).
- The project initiated the concept of providing professional development support to the teachers through coaching and mentoring mobilizing Pedagogical Resource Persons (PRP). Considering the effectiveness, Subhakalika, Tilagupha and Chhedagad have managed PRP from their own resources. In addition, Chhedagad Municipality has assigned Local Resource Teachers (LRT) to facilitate and ensure teachers attendance and regularity in each ward.
- The local governments in all five working palikas increased public budget allocation by 10.63 % compared to 2019 (8.12%) of total budget, focusing on children and their education.
- All five R/Municipalities developed and endorsed strategies to end child marriage. The local governments and CSOs including children have taken ownership towards the anti- child marriage campaign. In 2022, a total of 379 child marriage cases were stopped by joint efforts of law enforcement agencies. Out of 143 (G:112 / B:31) child marriage cases, 116 (G:89 / B:27) (81.11%) cases were re-enrolled back to schools. This is an significant increase from 11,5% (G: 15%/ B: 5%) re-enrollment rate in 2021.
- 89 policies related to children's right and protection were developed and endorsed. The policies lay foundation for child sensitive planning and budgeting to end child marriage, child labor, violence against children, 100% enrollment of 4-12 years old children and alternative ways of learning during COVID-19 pandemic.
- 158 child journalists (G:92 and B:66) were sensitized on child rights, protection issues, existing policies, and child sensitive journalism. As a result, climate stories of three child champions were published in MIRROR daily newspaper UK .

- PwV sessions and adjoint activities show promising results. Only 2% of caregivers believe PHP is acceptable after attending the programme, as opposed to 31% of caregivers surveyed in 2021 who saw PHP as a way to maintain discipline for children.

Key challenges:

- Newly elected local government representatives have not fully embraced the policies, strategies and plan developed by prior government representatives. Furthermore, the frequent changes in provincial government ministers and officials have resulted in significant delays in policy endorsement.
- Political affiliation of teachers has resulted in decrease in the quality time of teachers in the classroom, as well as a lack of accountability towards children's learning. Due to political interests, local representatives are hesitant to increase the scope and rate of taxation.
- Due to unavailability of services at the local level and challenging geography, cases involving multiple disabilities were not adequately addressed through formal and informal CP mechanisms. As a result, some cases have not been well responded to.

Risks and opportunities

RISKS: Insufficient financial and human resources at the local level hinder effective delivery of services and programs aimed at promoting child rights and welfare. Inflation and price hike of commodities lead to budgetary implications which was dealt through collaboration and fund matching with other projects and local government. Natural calamities like landslide and flood posed big challenge for staff safety as well as delay in program implementation.

OPPORTUNITIES: The local governments of all working palikas have included the project activities in their respective programs and policies and allocated matching budget for common project activity implementation. Similarly, the Memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the implementing partners and the local levels has enhanced the ownership and sustainability of the best practices from implementation. The interest of newly elected government representatives in all palikas offers opportunity for continuing collaboration and influencing resource allocation to align with the project goals. Chhedagad and Kushe palikas have access to phone and internet services which has made communication among project staffs and partners easier.

Key learnings for the next framework period

- Providing technical support to local governments to develop and roll out a compre-

hensive teachers' professional development plan using the enabling teachers' common approach 20:30:50 model. The project can collaborate with CEHRD to develop online modular course on professional development to the teachers.

- To address the needs of CIJ as per the care plan, develop Vocational Training (VT)/Micro enterprise (ME) package especially for children with disability and extreme poor families.
- COVID 19 pandemic proved to be a good opportunity to explore innovative activities such as Home Schooling, and best use of digital mass media like radio program Children's Platform - Baal Chautari, conduction of radio programs like Kalila Muna for project activity PwV.
- To advocate on children's issues, child clubs and child champions need to be capacitated on current issues. Child-led initiatives can be promoted to build children's agency and voice.
- "Digital Hangouts" to be enhanced to talk about children's concerns, specifically safe digital childhood and to bring the policies to address this problem. Additionally, the project needs to pay attention to the linkages between online and offline violence against children.
- DRMT discourse can be strengthened further to increase public budget for children in social protection, education, health, and protection sectors. This is linked with broadening the

horizon to promote universal health coverage, with changing attitudes of people to pay taxes and with digitalizing the systems in collaboration with the national level government ministries so that the internal revenue will be improved.

- Capacity building and engagement of local officials on project life cycle and child sensitive planning should aim at influencing the local governments to prioritise child sensitive budget allocations and development of child sensitive policies /procedures.
- Create a targeted awareness program for parents of children aged 15 and above, as this age group is particularly susceptible to issues such as child marriage, peer pressure, substance abuse, and online abuse.
- Baal Kachahari (Children's Forum), an inter-generational dialogue among local service providers, elected representatives, among others, has been successful in sensitizing elected representatives on their role to increase public investment in children, and curb harmful social norms, and are proven mechanisms of CSO and child collaboration to leverage children's voices and leadership.
- The project needs to support the Rural Municipalities to analyze implementation status of endorsed policies and hold the respective stakeholders accountable.

LATIN AMERICA

Assessment of Country Engagement Plans

The Country Engagement plans in the Latin America region have a focus on strengthening country offices on different thematic issues, especially child and youth participation, education, and child protection. The plans focus on a strong coordination with SC Spain, SC Sweden and the Latin American and the Caribbean SC regional office, to support the work in the region, in particular on programmes funded by European donors. SC Sweden has a regional SIDA programme in LAC working to strengthen local partners on child rights. The Norad programme in Colombia paved the way for SIDA humanitarian funding in the same implementation region, Norte de Santander, and the Norwegian and Swedish Embassies travelled together to the conflict-affected region in 2022.

Colombia is one of the countries where SC Norway has funding from both Norad and the NMFA. In addition, SC Norway is the grantee for funding from Education Cannot Wait. The CO has a close dialogue with the Norwegian Embassy in Bogota. The CEP for Colombia in 2022 had a focus on advocacy towards different stakeholders on the peace process in Colombia, including Norway, due to the seat in the UN Security Council.

Guatemala is in a different situation then Colombia, with less donor interest. The Country Engagement Plan for Guatemala focus on support to strengthening the work with marginalized groups, especially in indigenous dominated areas of the country. The Norad agreement in Guatemala has its largest component in the same area as a large SCUS funded project. This means that acceptance from the community is good, an advantage for the Norad partners. The Domestic Resource Mobilization through Tax pilot has been especially followed-up, and coordination meetings have taken place together with SC Nepal, which is also running a similar programme component. The Norwegian Embassy in Mexico covering Guatemala, has been kept informed throughout the year and visited the Norad project late 2022. .

Colombia

Contextual update
There were significant political and socio-economic changes in Colombia during 2022, where some regional crisis intensified. Armed conflict, natural disasters, and inflation following the pandemic have been major challenges for the guarantee of human and children's rights. Colombia elected the first president in history from the left, Gustavo Petro, who has pushed for important reforms that seek to have direct effects on the armed conflict and the peace process ("Paz Total"), as well as on children's rights.

The inflation greatly impacted the most vulnerable families and their ability to meet their basic needs, including education. There was an increase in poverty rates from 36% to 39% and more than 243,000 students dropped out of school. There's been an increase of 13.7% in cases of non-attendance at the national level, reaching up to 30.1% in rural areas. Despite the Peace Agreement, security and the humanitarian situation remain unstable, with pockets of armed conflict, violation of rights, and forced displacement. These situations have led to the displacement of 1.4 million children (G: 686,000/ B:714,000) of this, 42,000 are children with disabilities.

In the Norad programme implementation area of El Catatumbo, the armed conflict and natural disasters continue to be two of the primary causes of humanitarian crises. In 2022, there were more than a dozen events of forced displacement in the Catatumbo area, affecting around 4,440 people. Municipalities such as Teorama and Convención, which are part of the target municipalities of the programme, have restricted access for humanitarian organizations.

Summary of key achievements and challenges

Issue 1- Education: The enrolment figures for 2022 show 17,595 children (G: 52% / B: 48%%), of which 228 are children with disabilities (G:46%/ B:54%) enrolled in 15 intervention schools. This is 200 fewer children than enrolled in 2019, which is believed to be due to natural demographic fluctuations.

The pandemic had a very significant impact on the education system as a whole as well as on the program. For two full academic years, children had no access to in-person education. For many children living in rural areas, areas affected by the conflict this meant almost no access to education. Those that are in early grades have been affected the most given they were just entering primary school where they were going to learn foundational skills.

The education programme had a major shift in approach during the pandemic years, from in-person implementation to remote implementation. To ensure that the most vulnerable can continue learning, SCC supported children with printed learning materials with close monitoring. Teacher trainings were done virtually and included sessions on social

Children, teachers and staff in Norad supported-school for mural painting day - Colombia.

emotional learning, stress management as well as use of online platform to teach effectively. Campaigns were held on hygiene promotion to prevent spread of Covid-19, complemented by distribution of hygiene materials in schools. One important achievement was the development of protocols for school opening and a child friendly guide about safe return back to school. The school opening protocol was endorsed by the Secretariats of Education and uploaded on their websites for all schools in Norte de Santander to access.

Following the MTR the Project focused on strengthening the education community's participation in forming and adjusting school governance instruments, such as institutional improvement plans and coexistence manuals. These efforts promoted child participation at the school level where children's opinions, needs, and perspectives for solutions were included. Likewise, these spaces promoted dialogues and actions around gender and inclusion from school governance to improve the pedagogical practices of teachers inside the classroom on these issues.

Responding to MTR findings, the focus of some of the project activities were also extended to achieve better impact on protection outcomes in schools. To this end, the trainings on gender and inclusion that were initially targeted for teachers in primary schools were extended to secondary school teachers. Additionally, meetings were held to exchange experiences, challenges and results among schools as an initiative to motivate participation and collaborative learning.

To address positive parenting issues with fathers, mothers and caregivers, four community working groups were consolidated with the participation of 94 caregivers, identifying from the analysis of their strengths and weaknesses the relevant issues and aspects to advance in training, support and capacity building processes. These spaces have contributed not only to the knowledge and transformation of practices such as good treatment of their sons and daughters, family members, allowing the participation of children at home, listening to them and recognizing them as subjects of rights and accessing the services provided by state entities, but also to the creation of support networks at the community level, especially to address issues related to violence and specifically GBV, bringing institutions closer to their communities through service fairs, for access to education, health, protection and justice.

Issue 3- Children's Rights: The Child Rights Governance component has made significant progress in coordination between the education and

protection ecosystem around the guarantee and promotion of children's rights; consolidating spaces for children's participation, including children with disabilities; and strengthening civil society organizations for their consolidation, visibility, and implementation of initiatives on behalf of children. At the same time, support was provided to local authorities and advocacy actions at the national level have made it possible to discuss priorities and needs with the proposals and central elements of the new National Development Plan, or the signing of the Safe Schools Declaration.

In the Child Rights Governance component, the main change has been related to the methodological adjustments for training sessions on rights with local authorities. Schedules were adjusted, in addition to the ways of working and their particular interest in the topics. Grassroots organizations were strengthened, and efforts were made with other agencies and entities such as the Territorial Renewal Agency. Furthermore, the organization has entered into new municipalities and spaces such as the Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation (ETCR in Spanish), where former FARC combatants and their families are located.

Risks and opportunities
In 2022, the main risks to the implementation of the project in Colombia were related to (i) the presidential election; (ii) the increase in violence and criminal activity; and (iii) natural disasters. Points 2 and 3 had the largest impact on the project's implementation, by prevented access to certain areas of the municipalities targeted by the project, such as El Carmen, Convención and Teorama.

A risk that materialized post-pandemic was the loss of learning and increased drop-out. Children who have missed extended periods of school due to the pandemic face particular barriers for their reintegration, as they may not be ready to re-enter regular classrooms in accordance with their age. They require accelerated education programs that are not necessarily available.

The presence of deep-rooted, harmful, and sexist gender and social norms in homes and communities, combined with confinement due to Covid-19 and conflict, has intensified and normalized violence as well as teenage pregnancy and early marriage. As gender discrimination is normalized, situations of inequality, exclusion and violence often go unnoticed and are not reported. Since girls are more susceptible to sexual and gender-based violence, they are afraid of exposing themselves to additional risks on the way to and from school given the presence of different armed groups. Boys have reported being recruited by armed groups, harassment among peers, and humiliating punishments by caregivers and teachers.

Among the strategies implemented to respond to these impacts are the reinforcement of the work with local authorities and actions focused on greater coordination to respond together with public officials, local authorities, and leaders. With respect to risks associated with natural disasters, SC periodically trains personnel to strengthen the response tools of work teams in the event of emergencies. These actions have also been strengthened and developed with schools through the adjustment/construction of the PEGIR - School Plan for Comprehensive Risk Management by including prevention and mitigation actions, emergency drills and the provision of prevention materials for schools.

Key learnings for the next framework period
With respect to education, it is necessary to continue investing and developing the educational community, that is teachers, principals, parents, community leaders, local actors as relevant contributors to safer and more inclusive schools. There is also a need for strategies to recover basic learning following the impact of Covid-19 and the extended school closures.

Regarding child protection, strengthening community spaces for the consolidation of knowledge for the prevention and response to cases of violation of rights, activation of care routes and construction of protective environments and social fabric, giving the increase in number of cases of children in process for the restoration of their rights increased registered in the country.

In the case of child rights governance, activities related to child and adolescent participation, advocacy from civil society organizations and coordination with national priorities are fundamental. We will continue the work done with children and adolescents, including children with diverse abilities, which has allowed their voices to be heard in initiatives of civil society organizations and decision-making processes, and community spaces such as radios, where children talked about the issues in their schools such as bullying, and ways prevent it. These different actions allowed children to make issues important to them visible and advocate for solutions to guarantee their rights.

Guatemala

Contextual update
In 2022, it became evident that Children's education has been seriously affected. According to the World Bank, after COVID-19 there was a great setback dropping the average school years of the population from 6.3 to 4.3 years. In Guatemala, there is also a clear lack of compliance, protection, and safeguarding of children. From January to August 2022, 743 cases of child abuse were registered of which 60% were girls and female adolescents. There is an alarming situation of sexual violence and increase of pregnancies among girls and adolescents, a total of 76,105 cases reported in 2022 (2% girls between 10-14 years old). During the same period, 453

Children in programme activity - Guatemala.
PHOTO: REDD BARNA

murders of girls, boys, and adolescents had been reported in the country.

The pandemic and inflation have substantially impacted livelihoods throughout the country, with rising prices in food, fuel (including domestic propane gas) and fertilizers which are hampering full recovery. Food insecurity is concentrated in rural, indigenous communities which have been the main victims of social, political, and economic marginalization, with limited land availability. The families from the municipalities where SC works were greatly impacted by drought, storms, and Covid-19. Climate change and dry weather conditions, affects both the harvest and labour market. According to the FAO, the Dry Corridor has experienced one of the worst droughts in the last ten years, with an estimated 915,000 people living in moderate to severe food insecurity. There are 4.6 million people in need of assistance, including one out of two children suffering of malnutrition.

Summary of key achievements and challenges

Issue 1- Education: The enrolment figures for 2022 show 8 054 children (G:49 % / B: 51%), of which 57 are children with disabilities (G: 47%; B: 53%) enrolled in 56 intervention schools. This is close to an increase of 1 200 (G: 49%/ B: 51%) students compared with 2019.

- The Intercultural Bilingual Education has been successfully supported in Jocotán and the Ixil Region through the implementation of coordinated actions with partners and the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC): developing teaching materials and curricular concretions in Ixil and Ch'orti' languages; contextualizing literacy and basic communication skills; training bilingual teachers and asking support from

authorities to place them in bilingual schools. The training and materials have been certified by the MINEDUC, which will be implementing them in schools beyond the project coverage. We have supported Community's Linguistic commissions in the Ixil area to demand the children's right to bilingual education and a bonus for bilingual teachers. All of these represent a strong step towards sustainability and institutionalization.

- We have continued working with the Project Educational Communities including parents, teachers, and children, helping them to identify and understand their strengths and weakness within socio-emotional skills in topics such as: safe learning environments, leadership and participation, prevention of violence, peaceful environments, and psychosocial support. In general, parents have reported an improvement in parenting without violence and the use of positive discipline. However, in a total of 475 participants, only 1 every 10 participants were fathers; a key learning and a clear opportunity for improvement in the future.

Challenges

- After three years of pandemic, teachers will have to move from the emergency curriculum back to the National Base Curriculum (NBC). SC will support with programmes such as the Literacy Boost common approach to support teachers improving quality education.
- The 54 schools of the programme still suffer from limited infrastructure and lack of basic services like drinking water. One of our priorities is to continue advocating for these services with local authorities.
- Registration and retention of boys and girls who were outside the education system after the pandemic. Our partner ASCATED developed a radio spot to promote registration of CWD and supported teachers to identify and provide special attention to them.

Adjustments

- SC and partners have developed communication campaigns specifically targeted to the indigenous population in Ixil and Chortí languages to encourage parents and caregivers to enrol children in school.
- The education model relies in the promotion of awareness among the education communities to involve parents and caregivers in children's learning through the "inverted model" of education, which in turn helps inform school principals and teachers to adapt the contents of the curriculum.
- Safe Learning Environments has promoted safety and well-being of children inside and

around schools, considering that during 2022 most of the schools were in an online/in-person blended mode.

Learnings

- To effectively strengthen teachers' capacities, it is necessary to implement a systematic Teachers' Professional Development (TPD) process, adapted to the children's needs and context. It must include formation workshops, learning groups, and pedagogical support.
- The coordination with local education authorities is key to help sensitized them about the importance of allocating resources and improve investment to increase learning opportunities. In these activities, the advocacy work of partners and the voice of children have been fundamental.

Issue 2- Child protection:

Achievements

- Helped organise 30 Community Child Protection Committees in the Chortí (19) and Ixil (11) area enabling the community to identify, register, and refer cases of abuse to the Adolescent and Child Protection Offices of their respective municipality, increasing community participation and protection mechanisms. 20 different government institutions (11 in Chiquimula and 9 in Quiché) have been supported through the Steps to Protect common approach, which will impact on effective and quality protection services. SC signed a MoU with the municipal governments of Jocotán and Nebaj to contribute with the project sustainability.
- Conformed 38 safe schools' teams (of 54 schools) increasing protection and risk management in and around schools for children.
- Support parents, caregivers, community leaders, and municipal offices to promote change in the social imaginary and cultural practices to reduce violence. Training and strengthening actions reached a total of 945 parents (16% male and 84% female), 150 community leaders (35% male y 65% female) and 228 teachers (45% male and 54% female), in topics such as children rights, gender norms, and protection.

Challenges

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, it was difficult to reach the target at community level, as the virtual meetings hindered the results of the training sessions.
- Constant rotation of governmental staff in charge of the diverse units of warrantor institutions make collaboration and training more complicated.

Adjustments

- After reviewing the MTR results, where 88% of parents surveyed admitted resorting to some kind of violence to educate their children, one SC priorities was to support parents, caregivers, community leaders, and municipal offices to promote practices to reduce violence and implementing the Parenting without violence common approach.
- Despite the implementation of Community Child Protection Committees, referred cases still were processed very slowly. SC needs to keep supporting the CCPCs as well as local and national authorities.

Learnings

- To strengthen the child protection system, it is necessary to certify and implement protocols and manuals that will be used by warrantor institutions to manage cases of violence against children.
- It is necessary to include information about the CCPCs in the education component so that all the children participating in the programme know how and where to report a case of violence.

Issue 3- Children's Rights:

Achievements

- At the national level, the civil society coalition drafted a bill for the national comprehensive protection system. This work is being led by Save the Children, as part of the Joining Forces Alliance.
- At the local level, SC supported the government of Nebaj to establish the Municipal Children and Adolescents Commission. The project supported the Commission to carry out an analysis on the situation of children's rights, which in turn influenced a municipal agreement on objectives and actions to improve children's rights the next ten years.
- SC, together with its partner ICEFI, work together advocating for the increase of public investment on children and adolescents. This work has been reflected on the last years, with an increase from 3.45% in 2018 to 3.7% of the national GDP in the Public Investment in Children and Adolescents.
- SC and our partner CIPRODENI supported the sending of one child-informed and one child-led report to the Children's Rights Committee (CRC). The Committee has included many of the issues highlighted in these two reports in their list of issues prior to reporting that Guatemala state needs to respond to. Regarding the Universal

Periodic Review Report, our partner CIPRODENI, together with other civil society organizations, reviewed the progress in compliance with recommendations and sent civil society inputs for the stakeholders report to the Human Rights Council.

Challenges

- Implement municipal legislation by local governments who must allot or negotiate financial resources targeted specifically for children's programs and projects.
- Risks and opportunities
- Because the schools have been closed for 3 years or partially opened, many factors have diminished the children's education, making it difficult to retain or bring them back to school. However, this has increased the use of technology whenever possible or alternative strategies such as the use of radio.
- The Chorti region, part of the "dry corridor" has been affected by prolonged droughts that affect food production, increasing hunger and chronic malnutrition. On the other hand, the Ixil region is affected by excessive rainfall, river overflows, and landslides, affecting food production and causing malnutrition. SC and partners have started to implement "school gardens" with the participation of girls and boys, as an opportunity

to look into local food sustainability. We have also carried out reforestation activities with groups of children and adolescents.

Key learnings for the next framework period

- Keep including SC common approaches throughout our work as well as implementing integral actions, including gender, psycho-social support, participation, and inclusion.
- Improve our work with partners, using their local knowledge and expertise to strengthen our work, while helping build their capacities.
- Increase, explore, create and innovate our work related to climate change, disaster prevention, risk management, and sustainability.
- Continue supporting local networks such as the Communal Committees (youth, parents and local leaders) to help promote sustainability of the implemented actions by the program.
- Continue promoting inclusive participation of children, adolescents, and youth to generate feasible proposals that improve enforcement of their rights.
- Boys and girls face different types of violence, the project will propose to assess root causes to define potential interventions for violence prevention. Continue with actions to strengthen the child and adolescent protection system.

4. SUSTAINABILITY, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

Sustainability

In order to ensure that changes achieved live beyond the life of the programme and create lasting change, elements of sustainability need to be defined in the design phase. SCN has developed a set of sustainability principles which have been used to guide country offices with their planning. Examples from selected country offices are included below to demonstrate how these have been addressed during the reporting period.

In Colombia, Save the Children Colombia (SCC) is working on developing apps, guides and manuals with technical and practical guidelines that schools and local authorities can follow to strengthen, plan and monitor the processes aimed at transferring skills, knowledge, and practices. SCC's partner organizations have also been supported to improve their overall administrative, management and implementation skills. In Uganda, the program promoted its localization agenda through partnerships with local NGOs and other child rights actors, which will enable them to continue addressing the needs and rights of children after the program transition. The program also empowered school governance and leadership structures, which will continue to support schools' development planning, supervision, performance monitoring, and peer learning and reflection after program transition. In Somalia, the project built the capacity of partners, community-based structures, teachers, school management, and child rights clubs to maintain and sustain the achieved project results after the completion of the support period.

I Nepal, the Kushe Rural Municipality successfully implemented a school-at-home program and developed a pedagogical resource person model to offer coaching and mentoring support to teachers, which has been adopted by other municipalities. In Palestine, to ensure a sustainable and holistic approach to the education component of the program, the country offices has focused on capacity development of partners, Ministry of Education and UNRWA personnel including supervisors and teachers. This should ensure that future teachers receive will receive proper training on proactive teaching and learning methodologies. Working more with parents and community members has also strengthened the education components and can be used as a mitigation mechanism during challenging times.

Lessons learned

In Colombia, we learned that it's important to understand each school's situation and capabilities to address their specific needs. We provided technical support to improve coexistence manuals. We also improved the monitoring and follow-up processes to ensure that new practices were adopted. It was crucial to involve parents and caregivers of children with disabilities in committees to create plans for managing risks at school. We took a comprehensive approach to school planning, considering risks, needs, and actions to protect children's well-being.

In Malawi, we noticed that there was limited participation from men in community-focused activities, so we introduced a new initiative called Real Fathers to improve male involvement. We also empowered children to hold the government accountable through learners' councils and child parliaments. It was important to make government policies more widely known and integrated into projects.

In Myanmar, our program focused on providing quality education, creating safer learning environments, protecting children from violence, and upholding their rights. The military coup and political changes forced us to adapt our approaches to suit the new circumstances. We found that a community-based approach worked best during times of crisis. We also focused on building the capacity of local volunteers and Village Education Committees (VECs) to ensure sustainability.

Reading clubs and sessions on social and emotional learning (SEL) helped improve children's literacy, numeracy, social skills, creativity, and emotional well-being. However, due to the economic crisis, we expected a high dropout rate among volunteers and VEC members.

In Mozambique, we learned that involving communities and school leaders was crucial to improve access to education for vulnerable children. We addressed issues like teacher absenteeism, motivation, and professional competence to ensure better learning outcomes. Collaborating with parents, communities, schools, and education professionals was essential to create inclusive and welcoming environments for all children, including those with disabilities. We suggested investing in technology to strengthen the government's capacity to address protection problems. Engaging government authorities at all levels and prioritizing services for survivors of gender-based violence were important for achieving program goals.

Examples of recommendations for the remainder of the programme

In Uganda, the programme should focus on strengthening teachers' competencies through professional development. It should provide remedial learning support for marginalized children affected by the pandemic. A community mobilization strategy, inclusive education, and improved physical learning environments are important. Integrating school feeding and livelihood components can address hunger and enhance attendance. Child protection should follow a systems strengthening approach with Para Social Workers and child wellbeing committees. Strategic partnerships, increased budget allocation for children, and disaster management plans are needed.

In South Sudan the programming should focus on prioritizing specific schools or communities to provide comprehensive and quality services. Efforts should be made to address gender disparities in education through mentorship programs and advocating for the recruitment of female teachers. Introducing innovative approaches can strengthen community-based child protection structures and increase male participation. Climate change impacts necessitate investing in disaster risk reduction with technical expertise. Disability inclusion programming should be supported through research, partnerships with disability associations, and adopting appropriate approaches. Alignment with government priorities, ongoing support to the Education Cluster, and enhancing data collection systems are crucial for effective implementation.

In Palestine, to enhance our education interventions we'll engage with students, caregivers, and teachers in person and explore online options for those affected by disruptions. Retention support will help vulnerable children at risk of dropping out, with additional teachers in UNRWA schools. Empowering partners through coaching and a dedicated teacher will promote leadership. Gender-sensitive training will overcome barriers to quality education, while advanced training will aid teachers in supporting students with difficulties. Parent involvement will be strengthened through community activities. Teachers will receive gender equality training, and specialists and focal points will assist children with disabilities. Collaborating with the CSO alliance, we'll report on the UNCRC implementation amid economic challenges. Involving children in reporting and enhancing peer support during data collection will also be supported.

5. RESULTS AND EVALUATIONS

Midterm Review 2021 - organisational learning from a country office perspective

Facilitate for programme learning was a one of the key objectives for the midterm review in 2021. In all countries, data-collection, analysis and dissemination of results were led by SC and partner colleagues where the findings were considered actions taken at different levels.

Sharing with stakeholders
Information sharing meetings were held at various levels. The majority of countries conducted review sessions with partners to verify and reflect on findings, collect feedback from participants, analyse changes observed, and recommendations for going forward to inform annual plans.

Beyond partners, other key stakeholders were also involved. These are representatives from relevant ministries at national/ regional and district level, local educational personnel (head teachers etc.) and traditional community representatives. In countries, such as **Nepal, Mozambique** and **Somalia** emphasis were on joint prioritization, in others like in **Malawi**, they worked to highlight increased ownership and internalization of the work – key to sustaining programs over time. An underlying assumption was that the learning participants also will bring new ideas back to their routine work.

Programme and organizational learning – continuing, scaling or adapting
Progress documented was acted upon in various ways. Where progress was deemed successful, the work was either continued or scaled-up into larger implementation areas. There were also unique learnings, such as in **Uganda** where two years of closed schools resulted in improved community engagement for education. Participants identified the need to maintain this level of engagement after schools re-opened. In **Nepal** community approaches on parenting without violence and adolescent sexual and reproductive health were replicated in new communities based on the results seen at midterm.

For areas where satisfactory progress was not seen, country programmes took action to adapt and adjust activities going forward. **Somalia** included new disability inclusive activities in 2022, based on the learning gaps identified during the midterm. In **Mozambique**, teacher training curriculum was adapted to emphasize lower-level reading competencies than previously applied, and the teachers were trained in closer, one-to-one follow-up with their pupils, as a consequence of low literacy scores among children. In **Colombia**, Municipal Children's Paricipation Committees were established to enhance their citizenship training.

For organizational adaptations **Guatemala, Malawi, Colombia** and **Mozambique** all initiated closer collaboration within child protection between partners, child protection committees and/ or government entities after the review. Additionally **Malawi** and **Mozambique** specifically increased cooperation between child protection and education actors, and in the latter also closed cooperation between national and regional levels.

Evaluations and studies
In 2022 Save the Children Norway (SCN) made significant progress on the evaluation and learning plan after the delays during and in the aftermath of Covid-19

Surket, Nepal, March 2023: A total of 52 social mobilisers from partner organisations in five districts share their achivements, reflections and suggested ways forward for the Norad programme during a four day learning event.

reported in the Midterm Report.[5] Five reviews/studies were finalized and/ or conducted during the year, and an additional six were initiated and finalized in 2023.

While Covid-19 created challenges and certain studies were assessed as infeasible, funding was reallocated for emergent needs: a review of gender programming, a baseline of SCN's Localisation work, and a value-for-money methodological test for the "Safe Schools" Common Approach.

Below are summaries and learnings from reviews, examples of how previous studies have informed continued programme practice and a list of studies/ reviews initiated in 2022.

Finalised studies/ evaluations:

Review of Save the Children Norway's Gender Work – "Leave No Child Behind" – 12 Norad-funded Countries / Issue: Cross-Cutting

In 2021 Save the Children Norway (SCN) commissioned a review of the gender approach.

The review shows that SCN and the Country offices (COs) implementing the Norad Framework Agreement have made strides toward integrating gender equality considerations into programming. SCN and country offices have made substantial headway in designing programmes that strive to be gender-sensitive or gender transformative. The review found notable efforts to build capacity in country offices in approaches to gender, equality, and inclusion. An emerging learning culture was also apparent throughout the review, underpinning conversations and dialogue. SCI's gender-related commitments and strategic directions across the movement have bolstered this work. Nevertheless, the focus on these issues remains highly relevant and necessary.

Many challenges remain. The review found that the Gender Equality Marker (GEM) scoring tool is helpful for some COs in planning and designing gender-sensitive or transformative programmes, while other COs view the tool as a "box-ticking" exercise with little perceived value in their context. Programme responses to LGBTQI+ and SOGIE rights vary across the country

---

5   In the Midterm Report (2021), summaries of following finalized studies were included: School Leadership and Management (SLaM) Pilot Project in Nepal – using a Developmental Evaluation Approach (InformEd); Save the Children's Programme to end Child Marriage and Adolescent Pregnancies in Malawi (CMI); The Keystone Partnership Survey 2021 (Keystone); and summaries from the four independent evaluations reports of the phase-out of Norad funding in Cambodia, Nicaragua, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe (SCN).

offices. This review emphasized the importance of supporting some country offices to strengthen existing responses and gently supporting other countries considering such responses or where no such responses exist.

The review suggests several ways of strengthening and expanding targeted gender programming: (i) establishing Gender Focal Point positions in all COs, (ii) ensuring that COs conduct context-specific gender analysis throughout the programme cycle -strategic planning, proposal design, implementation, accountability, and learning phases, and (iii) strengthening CO partnerships with relevant national organizations. Save the Children Norway facilitated an extensive presentation of the findings for staff members, included a workshop on gender on the all staff meeting programme, and arranged several workshops with country offices to utilize the recommendations to further work on gender.[6]

Save the Children Norway Localization Baseline 2021 / Issue: Cross-Cutting

This evaluation reviewed localization practices to provide a baseline for future assessments and serve as a programming aid for defining objectives and measuring progress toward a better localization approach. It utilized the NEAR Network's Localization Performance Measurement Framework, assessing seven components: *partnership, funding, capacity, coordination, policy and influence, visibility, and participation.*

The study reviewed awards from the Norway Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA) and Norad, sampling six country offices (Lebanon, occupied Palestinian Territories, Nepal, Somalia, South Sudan, and Venezuela). The review examined documentation from SC Norway, the COs, and partners for the baseline year of 2021, supplemented by surveys and interviews with SC Norway staff.

The best results were linked to *funding* and meeting global commitments for partner funding. *Capacity* building also saw high marks, with most partners engaging in various capacity-building activities. *Coordination* was another successful area, with support for network building noted at all country offices. On *participation*, the review showed feedback in place but needed improvement. Regarding the *partnership component*, the review emphasized a need to develop and formalize strategic partnerships. Finally, for *policy and influence*, there was limited evidence of partner engagement in humanitarian coordination and influencing policies. Lastly, the *visibility component* showed poor results, with only a sample of partners mentioned in donor reports.

For post-review learning, SCN facilitated a presentation for leadership, arranged an extensive workshop, and held two unique presentations for staff to discuss and improve future localization. In addition, a management response plan was produced responding to recommendations from the review.[7]

Assessing Stakeholders' Perception of Technology in Learning Labs Schools for the Norad Programme in Puntland, Somalia / Issue 1: Children Learn and Are Safe

SCN and SC Somalia implemented the Leap Learning Lab project in two schools in Garowe, Puntland, Somalia. The project aims to improve children's learning through kinesthetic or tactile learning and incorporate technology to stimulate engagement. In 2022, SCN commissioned a review of this work, consulting with stakeholders, such as headteachers, facilitators, teachers, community education committees (CEC), the Regional Education Officer (REO), and the Save the Children (SC) education program team.

The review examined how learning labs enabled stakeholders to develop their technical ability, perceptions of technology, integration of learning labs into teaching practices, and the benefits and challenges of using technology in the classroom. The lessons learned focused on the benefits and challenges experienced with integrating technology into teaching and possible improvements to the program. Stakeholders highlighted improvements in students' literacy and numeracy skills, suggesting that the labs inspired students to engage with the teaching material, thus contributing to positive learning. Students found tablets to be an accessible learning tool. Lab facilitators worked to combine tools and learning materials for a student-centered environment of active participation and independent learning. Finally, the labs indirectly supported teachers by motivating children to promote exploratory learning, memory, cognitive thinking, and imagination.

One drawback identified is the lack of guidance linking new tools to the official Puntland curriculum. Closer alignment during design was recommended. Another challenge was that many educators were new to the program and unfamiliar with utilizing the learning labs. Teachers with more experience worked to improve learning outcomes, mainly through facilitators. A presentation for staff members was provided regarding learning from the review, and a management response plan is being developed to improve technology approaches.[8]

---

6   See Cross Cutting section for more information; and report attached: Review of Save the Children's Gender *Leave no child behind*, Stephen Van Houten and Sarah Pugh, 20. February 2023.

7   See Report attached: *Save the Children Norway Localisation Baseline 2021*, Patrick Crump and Zakir Hussain, 30. September 2022.

8   See attached report: A*ssessing Stakeholders' Perception of Technology in Learning Labs Schools for the Norad Programme in Puntland*, Somalia, 2022.

Review on Disability Data and Inclusion / Issue: Cross-Cutting

To evaluate the effectiveness of SCN's capacity building with our partners on using the Washington Group Questions, SCN conducted an internal review to assess progress in disability data collection and its utilization in program planning decisions. In addition, the aim was to determine future needs and improve our training regime.

The review first assessed the disability data collected by each country and its quality at baseline/midterm using an assessment framework. Among COs that did not collect reliable data - Malawi, Mozambique, Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda - all could collect reliable disability data at midterm, except for Mozambique, which struggled with translation challenges. As a result, Lebanon, Malawi, Somalia, and South Sudan were selected for further interviews and group discussions.

Based on disability disaggregated data generated at midterm, the country offices demonstrated adequate progress in adding new disability-inclusive activities or adjusting some existing activities for a more disability-inclusive program. However, the review found that further capacity building would be beneficial, including (a) training on communicating disability disaggregated evidence with thematic advisors and (b) utilizing disability disaggregated data in programmatic decision-making. SCN is already working to support CO counterparts for endline data collection.[9]

Save the Children Sustainability Principles: A synthesis report of sustainability of the Norad-Funded Programs in four Phase-out Countries / Issue: Cross-cutting

From 2010 to 2020, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) funded comprehensive children's rights programs in Cambodia, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, and Zimbabwe. These programs were implemented through three successive framework agreements in collaboration with SCN and SC country offices; however, in 2019, phase-out frameworks were implemented to ease program transfers to national government agencies and locally based civil society organizations and phase out Norad funding by 2020/2021.

Evaluations (2021) conducted in these countries found that the framework facilitated program transfer in line with six sustainability principles. First, the Norad-funded programs strengthened governance capacity through capacity building and advocacy. Second, the core programs were aligned with national plans and policies, avoiding building parallel and incoherent structures. Third, capacity-strengthening programs benefitted local communities and contributed to making resilient civil society organizations that can bring programs es forward. Fourth, CRG principles were integrated as cross-cutting elements, laying the foundations for sustainable positive change toward decision-making and accountability to children in countries. Fifth, concepts and approaches were transferable to the local context and widely adopted by locally based stakeholders. Lastly, the focus on advocacy, documentation, and knowledge-sharing benefited stakeholders at the local and national levels. Finally, knowledge sharing facilitated the creation of accountability mechanisms conducive to sustaining targeted programs for children.

Several notable challenges were also identified. For example, where the foundation for the transfer has been catered for, external factors such as shrinking space for civil society (as exemplified in Nicaragua) and low availability of funding (in all countries, for both government and CSOs) may threaten sustainability going forward. Similarly, there is a risk that SCN's withdrawal on selected components was premature and may hamper sustainability in a longer-term perspective.

The reports also examined the notion of "legacy" in several Norad-framework agreements and sustainability. This leads to one caveat: the reports may have elevated successful examples at the expense of a more stringent sustainability assessment. This will be addressed in 2023 when SCN will do a follow-up review in these four countries. The 2021 evaluations will be used as a baseline for the 2023 evaluations, where sustainability will be assessed two years after SC's withdrawal of funding.[10]

Studies reported at midterm in 2021

School Leadership and Management (SLaM) Pilot Project in Nepal – using a Developmental Evaluation Approach/ Issue 1: Children Learn and Are Safe

As reported in the midterm report (2022), the Developmental Evaluation approach (DE) successfully ensured contextualized programme development, secured buy-in, and built consensus among the programme participants in the larger school communities, in the School Leadership and Management – pilot in Nepal

Throughout 2022 Save the Children Nepal and SCN built on the learnings and continued using a DE approach to refine SLaM further. This includes

---

9 See attached report: *Quality of disability data and disability inclusion in countries included in the Norad Framework Agreement 2019-2023*, Save the Children Norway, August 2022

10 See attached report: *Save the Children Sustainability Principles: A synthesis report of sustainability of the Norad-Funded Programs in four Phase-out Countries*, Save the Children Norway, December 2022.

finalising modules on Parent-Teacher Meetings and Virtual Community of Practice that were delayed due to Covid-19 and an overall review of SLaM in October 2022.In this review, representatives from the school communities were asked to provide feedback on changes they had seen, changes they would have liked to see, and recommendations for future iterations of SLaM. Additionally, it documented observable changes in schools or among students.

These findings were incorporated into a final Nepal SLaM Package at the end of 2022. As a result, in 2023, the SLaM programme will be scaled up to an additional 91 schools, including in three new districts within the Norad programme in Nepal, and an impact assessment is planned at the start of 2024.

Ongoing studies and reviews 2022/ 2023:

Child Function Module -Teacher Version (CFM- TV) Pilot: a study of inter-rater reliability / Issue 1 Children Learn and Are Safe/ Cross-cutting.

Save the Children Norway is currently an active partner of the Washington Group Secretariat (WG) in pilot testing the Child Functioning Module – Teacher Version (CFM-TV) alongside other partner organizations. CFM-TV was developed to collect disability data about children attending school by using teachers as proxy respondents. Save the Children Norway (SCN) has been pilot testing the tool in Norad-supported programmes in Somalia and Nepal and conducts an internally led study accompanying the pilots. A draft report is being written on Somalia, and data collected from Nepal is expected to be shared with SCN in May 2023. The purpose of the study is to examine if there was an agreement between two different teachers who were assigned to independently assess disability status in the same group of children using the CFM-TV. Thus, a study of inter-rater reliability. The additional purpose is to document lessons

learned for developing the CFM-TV technical guidance document.

Remaining Studies/Reviews for 2023

Issue 1: Children Learn and Are Safe

Teacher Professional Development (TPD): the study continues mapping TPD activities across the Norad programme in 2021. Fieldwork in Uganda will document a contextualized TPD approach exploring how teachers themselves experience the programme (SCN internal).

Inclusive Education: the study assesses barriers children with disabilities face regarding access and participation, and learning in school and how SCN can better programme to meet these challenges. External consultants conduct fieldwork in Mozambique, Palestine, and Guatemala.

Value for Money – Safe School Common Approach: The study will assess the cost efficiency and effectiveness of the Safe School programme in Colombia. The study will inform future safe school programming as well give guidance on methodological approach for value for money evaluations (SCI)

Issue 3: Child Rights

Child-centered Social Accountability: the study will explore how the Child-Centred Social Accountability programme is implemented in Ethiopia, Somalia, and South Sudan, including documenting best practices and lessons learned (SCN internal).

Child Participation: the review explores the perception and experience of children participating in Save the Children's work based on the "9 basic requirements for child participation". An evaluation tool for children, developed by children to assess their participation, will be part of this (SCN internal).

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: FInancial and auditors report

ANNEX 2: Updated Result Framework (updated education menu of indicators is the only update for this report)

ANNEX 3: Updated Risk Matrix

Studies:

- Review of Save the Children's Gender *Leave no child behind*, Stephen Van Houten and Sarah Pugh, 20. February 2023

- Save the Children Norway *Localisation Baseline 2021*, Patrick Crump and Zakir Hussain, 30. September 2022.

- Assessing Stakeholders' Perception of Technology in Learning Labs Schools for the Norad Programme in Puntland, Somalia, 2022.

- Quality of disability data and disability inclusion in countries included in the *Norad Framework Agreement 2019-2023*, Save the Children Norway, August 2022.

- Save the Children Sustainability Principles: *A synthesis report of sustainability of the Norad-Funded Programs in four Phase-out Countries*, Save the Children Norway, December 2022.