



Report

IMPACT EVALUATION: IMPROVING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS TOGETHER IN EMERGENCIES (ILET)

January 2023. Somalia, South Sudan & Niger

Report

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ACRONYMS

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief and Agency
BrICE	Building Resilience: education opportunities in fragile and crisis-affected environments
CEC	Community Education Committee
CoC	Code of Conduct
DMP	Data Management Platform
ECHO	European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid
EiE	Education in Emergencies
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IDP	Internally Displaced People
ILET	Improving Learning Environments Together in Emergencies
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisation
KII	Key Informant Interview
MoE	Ministry of Education
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
QLF	Quality Learning Framework
SC	Save the Children
SCN	Save the Children Norway
SIP	School Improvement Plan
TLS	Temporary Learning Space
ToR	Terms of Reference
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
WASH	Water, sanitation, and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Project Overview. Under their Quality Learning Framework (QLF), Save the Children (SC) identified five foundations providing the basis for the well-being and learning of all children, including i) emotional and psychosocial protection, ii) physical protection, iii) teaching and learning, iv) parents and community, and v) school leadership and management. These five foundations provided a shared articulation of what a quality learning environment should entail when SC expanded and refined the QLF conceptual framework to respond to the education needs in emergency contexts. Thus, the Improving Learning Environments Together in Emergencies (ILET) package (hereafter ILET) was developed based on the 2017 version of the QLF.

ILET is best described as a package consisting of several tools to help programme management teams and school communities improve learning environments. The tools and documents can be grouped into three main elements. The first consists of guidance documents to help relevant stakeholders better understand the core components of the ILET approach. The second consists of data management tools to help programme teams collect, analyze, and present school-level data on key indicators of the quality of learning environments. The data and findings help improve accountability by empowering school communities with information on school needs and who the responsible parties are. The third element consists of program templates, such as Findings Cards and School Improvement Plan templates, to help communities identify essential action items for improving learning environments.

Evaluation Purpose and Objectives. This evaluation assesses how ILET has impacted children's learning environments in South Sudan, Somalia, and Niger, as outlined in Save the Children Norway's (SCN) Terms of Reference (ToR).

Evaluation Approach and Methodology. The evaluation adheres to the OECD-DAC Evaluation Criteria, which guided planning, data collection, and reporting. These criteria are relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, coherence, and sustainability. They provide program management teams and key stakeholders with critical information to understand the program's success and challenges and help determine what should be done next.

Following the OECD-DAC, data collection was qualitative and covered all three countries. The qualitative methods included key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and a comprehensive desk review. Qualitative methods ensured that data were obtained from various stakeholders, including parents, teachers, school management, students, and project staff. In addition, quantitative and qualitative data were obtained from a comprehensive desk review, including project documents, reports, and the ILET Data Management Platform (DMP).

Scope and Data Summary. The evaluation includes all activities implemented during ILET's life cycles in Niger, South Sudan, and Somalia from 2019 to 2022. The geographic scope of the evaluation covers eleven communities and eleven schools in the selected six regions where ILET was implemented. In addition, the evaluation involved engagement with project staff, head teachers and teachers, students, and parents.

Summary of Findings

Relevance. Evidence from all three countries suggests that the activities implemented as part of ILET have been relevant to the school community, including students, teachers, parents, and head teachers. In many cases, the relevance of ILET activities can be attributed to ILET's highly participatory process, which considers the ideas and concerns of children and the school community in data collection and feedback sessions. Their inclusion meant they were a central part of planning and implementing School Improvement Plans (SIP), thus helping ensure that ILET activities were context-appropriate. This is demonstrated by head teachers who agreed that the findings card presented by SC reflects pressing needs in their respective schools.

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There was some evidence that specific activities had been implemented to help marginalised children, such as IDP children, children with disabilities, and girls. For example, in Somalia, data were collected directly from IDP children, and ILET activities provided learning materials and uniforms. However, these groups remain at risk due to cultural practices and discrimination. More group-specific activities should be implemented so these children can continue accessing quality education.

Effectiveness. The programme effectively improved all five Quality Learning Framework (QLF) foundations. Many schools struggled with the emotional and psychosocial protection foundation at the beginning of ILET activity implementation. In response, ILET has effectively improved this component by offering training to teachers, helping to form children's clubs, and increasing the number of recreational activities. Such recreational activities are critical to learning essential life skills and peer socialization in constructive settings. Nonetheless, it is important to point out that there was evidence that ILET had been less effective in addressing these components for at-risk children, including children with disabilities who often face discrimination in school.

Many schools also improved physical protection through ILET activities, including renovating classrooms, constructing latrines, fences, boreholes, and leveling school grounds. However, the effectiveness of these activities has been affected by local circumstances, such as damaged school buildings (South Sudan and Somalia). Communities also noted that remaining infrastructural needs in schools require additional resources that schools and communities cannot access.

Among respondents, a common topic raised through interviews and FGDs was improved teaching and learning in their respective schools. ILET activities improved teachers' teaching abilities by providing teacher training, implementing and monitoring the Code of Conduct (CoC), and distributing school materials. However, one component of the foundation which saw limited improvement was teacher well-being, especially in Somalia and South Sudan. Teachers are paid low wages (or no wages), which leads to a lack of motivation. Although some initiatives have been implemented, including teacher incentives and pooled community funds for teachers, low or no wages remained one of the most substantial challenges in school communities.

There was evidence of improved support from the community and parents at the household and school levels. Several students reported that their families had become more supportive of education by helping with homework, encouraging attendance, and not giving them household chores. This was also noted by some parents who said that after the training sessions provided by SC, they had stopped giving their children as many chores, which allowed spending more time on school activities. However, the effectiveness of this foundation seemed to be gendered. Although both boys and girls reported improvements, it was still noted that girls faced more barriers to education and, in some cases, did not have time to do homework until late at night due to household chores.

Finally, the data suggest that although not many specific activities were implemented to improve the school management and leadership foundation, there has been some improvement. Most notably, all schools had a CoC that teachers seemed to be aware of and adhered to. This was especially true in the case of physical punishment. As all schools banned physical punishment, most respondents agreed it was no longer used or significantly reduced. Furthermore, the data indicate that ILET activities allowed head teachers to improve advocacy skills and create a guiding vision for their schools.

Efficiency. The key strength of ILET is that it can identify the specific needs of each school and subsequently create individualized SIPs. This means resources can be distributed according to a particular school's needs rather than using standardised activities across all intervention schools. In addition, the DMP offers a systematic approach to analysing school-level data. However, programme staff viewed the DMP differently. Many staff members thought it helped compare data from different schools across rounds of data collection. At the same

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time, many technical issues were reported (especially during the first round), which led to delays in collection and analysis. The second round of data collection reportedly addressed most of these issues.

Evidence showed that some schools delayed SIP activity implementation due to tight timelines and limited resources. This was especially true in schools with limited funding as part of ILET and who thus relied on their own resources to implement the SIPs. **Therefore, to ensure that activities are conducted on time and of appropriate quality, it is recommended that SC closely monitor SIP planning and execution to ensure that SIPs are successfully implemented with the resources available.**

Impact. The evidence suggests that ILET has impacted several outcome-level objectives. Firstly, there is evidence that the programme has successfully improved student access to quality learning. A common theme in ILET schools across the three countries was the schools' growth in terms of enrolment in the last three years. Although increased enrolment was also attributed to other potential internal and external factors, ILET awareness-raising activities, teacher quality and conduct, and improved infrastructure were viewed as partly responsible for improved access to the community school.

Secondly, there was evidence of more community engagement in improving learning environments. PTAs and CECs were vital for implementing ILET activities and involving community members. ILET feedback sessions and SIP planning were also essential for the school community to understand that humanitarian actors alone cannot address all school needs and that the community must also play a substantial role in creating solutions. In South Sudan, for instance, some communities demonstrated increased engagement in the school through constructing Temporary Learning Spaces (TLSs) and dykes. However, some communities only participated in the planning stage and were not involved in the construction process due to resource constraints.

Sustainability. ILET activities can be broadly categorized as "hard interventions" and "soft interventions." The former involves activities that involve the creation or repair of physical infrastructures, such as latrines, dykes, and TLS. In contrast, the latter activities are oriented toward creating processes and systems to improve the learning environment, such as children's clubs and teacher training. The findings suggest that the school community can continue soft interventions, as they require few resources beyond a willingness to participate. Indeed, many of these soft interventions already have high community engagement. In addition, the school community can maintain and sustain some complex interventions already implemented. However, resource-intensive activities like new infrastructure developments will be challenging to support in resource-scarce communities. In addition, ILET helped build a sense of ownership and accountability through its highly participatory and community-led philosophy that encourages school communities to propose and organize solutions to meet community needs rather than relying only on humanitarian organizations.

The findings suggest a relationship between the resources provided to schools through ILET and school community participation. It was noted that the schools receiving more support had less community involvement; in contrast, schools without funding had more extensive community involvement. Although community involvement increases the sustainability of the benefits created through the approach, it was also observed that some of the activities were of lower quality and would not be sustainable.

Coherence. Both the internal and external coherence of activities were high in all three countries. External coherence was facilitated by the systematic assessment used to prioritise more urgently needed areas of the school and by the involvement of the Ministry of Education (MoE) at all stages of the process. This ensured that activities implemented to improve areas of the school were not duplicative of work already being conducted by other organizations or government agencies. In addition, cluster meetings in Somalia and Niger facilitated external coherence. These cluster meetings brought humanitarian actors in a geographic area together. Furthermore, cluster meetings helped inform other actors of ongoing ILET activities, lowering the likelihood of duplication.

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ILET was implemented as part of a more extensive Education in Emergency (EiE) response in all three target countries. Evidence indicates that ILET was a valuable tool for increasing ownership and accountability in the school community and improving the sustainability of the EiE response. However, ILET remains dependent on EiE to provide resources when implementing activities. For example, although evidence from South Sudan shows that the community can take the initiative when implementing several SIP activities, resource scarcity prevents the implementation of resource-intensive activities.

Conclusions

This evaluation found ILET to be a relevant, innovative, and responsive tool that can be implemented as a standalone programme or incorporated into a more extensive development programme, depending on local circumstances. The school community-led approach and DMP tool make ILET unique in the development climate, which can adapt to different contexts, emergencies, funding models, and levels of availability. One of the notable strengths was its relevance and responsiveness to the needs of school communities across the three countries. In addition, its highly participatory and school community-led approach allows school communities to plan the SIPs with support from the implementing organisation. Finally, systematic, inclusive assessment enables the school community's views to shape SIP planning and ensure that Sips are responsive to the community context.

ILET has been successful in both aspects of impact and sustainability. Although the context and more significant EiE responses may have contributed to the school's impact, schools reported that ILET was at least partly responsible for many positive developments. These developments included increased teacher quality, higher enrolment and attendance rates, and increased school community engagement to enhance the learning environment. Unfortunately, these activities' sustainability and benefits are limited by the poverty levels in all the communities and the security situation in Niger and Somalia. Nevertheless, ILET has created a sense of accountability and ownership in the communities, which will be critical for schools to bounce back from these issues and for school improvements to continue.

Recommendations

Government support. Strengthening the capacities of local and government institutions is critical for the sustainability of ILET in the long-term and its adaptation by partners and the government as a viable tool.

Children with disabilities. Children with disabilities in schools should be intentionally included at all levels of implementation. ILET uses random sampling at the data collection stage, which may exclude the participation of children with disabilities. It is recommended that children with disabilities are always included in data collection, even if they were not selected randomly.

SIP implementation. SC should closely review SIPs to ensure they are achievable, given both the timeline provided and available resources.

Gender-related gaps. The inclusion of girls in the ILET process is highlighted in ILET documents as a critical component of quality education. However, cultural contexts can lead to resistance to the participation of girls and women in the implementation process. This resistance can be lessened by understanding and respecting cultural dialogue processes in each implementation country. Each project must understand these cultural contexts and adjust implementation accordingly so the views of women and girls can be included in the process and girls' specific activities are included in the SIPs.

The balance between support and stakeholder involvement. Schools that received more resource support as part of ILET had less community involvement. In contrast, schools that had no funding as part of the approach had more considerable community involvement. Although community involvement increases the school's sustainability, it was also noted that some of the activities implemented were of lower quality. In turn, this "cancels out" some opportunities for increased sustainability enabled by the high level of community

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engagement. To better balance increased community engagement with ensuring that activities meet the requisite quality, SC should continue to monitor and advise schools on activity implementation even if not providing direct funding.

More programme staff training. As noted earlier, ILET comprises five components, three of which (data collection, feedback sessions, and SIP planning) are repeated during each round of implementation. Therefore, training sessions should be repeated at the beginning of each round so that programme staff is familiar with ILET, its mechanisms, and the DMP.

School networks. Establishing school networks of ILET and non-ILET schools within the community can be an essential mechanism for activities implemented in ILET schools to spread to other parts of the community.

Lessons Learned

Coherence. The cluster meetings in Somalia and Niger are critical for other humanitarian actors working in areas where SC operates to keep each other informed on implemented activities and their challenges.

Child participation. While the child participation approach can pose challenges to data collection by increasing the time required for data collection activities, gaining community commitment, and providing appropriate support for children, including children in the entire process is an essential factor in the relevance of project activities.

School management capacity building. Although not many activities have specifically targeted head teachers, evidence suggests they were able to improve the capacity of school management in cases where they were heavily involved in ILET activities.

Feedback sessions and data validation. The feedback process is one of the most critical parts of the ILET project. Firstly, it serves as a capacity-building session for the school community to learn to advocate for their ideas and rights. Secondly, it gives different actors in the school community a chance to share everyday problems to build a sense of community around the school. Finally, this component is critical for the school community to understand that humanitarian actors can help. However, community members can take the initiative to improve schools despite limited resources. This understanding is vital to building a sense of ownership and accountability in the school community.

Setting up school mechanisms. The ILET activities that proved the most effective and efficient were soft interventions within schools and the community, including children's clubs, PTAs, and complaint mechanisms. These were all vital to the success of ILET.

Local capacity building. A critical aspect of ILET, which was used in Somalia and South Sudan and is one of the best practices of the process, was using community members and government officials as data collectors.

Adaptability. ILET can be helpful as a standalone project or an incorporated approach to more considerable EiE programming. It effectively addressed issues within different contexts and for schools facing other challenges.

The role of MoEs. MoEs were critical stakeholders in the ILET process and are essential for the success and sustainability of the approach. Therefore, MoEs must be included throughout the implementation of the approach to increase the capacity of MoE to respond to school needs.

INTRODUCTION

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Background

Project Overview

The Improving Learning Environments Together in Emergencies (ILET) package was born based on SC's Quality Learning Framework (QLF) of 2017. Under their QLF, SC had identified five foundations that provide the basis for well-being and learning for all children, including i) emotional and psychosocial protection, ii) physical protection, iii) teaching and learning, iv) parents and community, and v) school leadership and management. The foundations provided a shared articulation of what a quality learning environment entails. Due to the need to account for the unique challenges of accessing quality education in emergency settings, the ILET package operationalizes these foundations by translating them into simple questions salient in emergency contexts.

ILET employs assessments to improve learning environments in humanitarian contexts through school community participation. According to the QLF, the approach aims to improve access to quality learning opportunities for children affected by humanitarian crises, support children's wellbeing, promote active learning, and engage parents and communities. ILET aims to achieve these goals by filling two gaps common in emergency contexts: i) challenges in data collection and management and ii) the lack of information on the quality of education programmes. The DMP, created as part of ILET, allows for real-time data collection and analysis so that data can be fed back to communities. The ILET package was launched in 2017 and has been implemented in several countries, including South Sudan, Somalia, and Niger.

ILET consists of five different stages. Firstly, programme staff design interventions and explore how ILET is relevant to that specific context. Once a project has been approved, programme staff proceeds to the coordination and training phase. The staff is trained, the broader community is engaged, and an initial ILET work-plan is produced. Upon the start of a project, three stages of ILET occur and can be repeated as needed until a school community is satisfied with the learning environment. First, data are collected from school community stakeholders who respond to the ILET tool. The data is then rapidly processed in the DMP, producing Findings Cards for interpretation and discussion among the programme team. Next, the compiled data will be presented to the broader school community, who will be given opportunities to provide feedback and comment on the findings. Finally, Feedback sessions with the school community are arranged to discuss the data. Based on these findings and discussions, an SIP committee is created, which develops and disseminates SIPs for joint implementation by the programme team and the broader school community. These three steps can then be iteratively undertaken until all stakeholders feel that the desired quality of the learning environment has been achieved.

Furthermore, ILET is customizable to the specific context of an emergency by varying the types of respondents included in data collection, as well as the number, as the situation permits. To that end, the ILET approach is further broken down into four versions, or models, in ascending order of the number of different respondent types and the number of total respondents: 1) Rapid light, 2) Rapid, 3) Standard, and 4) Standard Plus. In Somalia, the Standard model of ILET was utilized by SC. In South Sudan, there remains variation in that both the Standard Plus and Standard packages are employed, depending on the school community context.¹ In Niger, there is a lack of clarity on which model was used, as SC staff interviewed were unable to articulate an answer and, in one case, did not understand the distinction between the different models.²

Evaluation Purpose and Objectives

This evaluation assesses how ILET activities have impacted children's learning environments in South Sudan, Somalia, and Niger. This evaluation utilizes the OECD-DAC Evaluation Criteria to guide planning, data collection and reporting. These criteria include relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, impact, and sustainability.

¹ Programme staff KII, South Sudan, R1; MEAL staff KII, South Sudan, R1

² Programme staff KII, Niger, R1; Programme staff KII, Niger, R2. Programme staff's inability to explain which model was used suggests that improved training at the onset of ILET implementation may be beneficial.

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They provide management and key stakeholders with critical information to understand the programme's successes and challenges and determine what should be done next. Specifically, the impact evaluation aims to:

1. Assess ILET and provide an independent assessment of the extent to which the ILET approach met the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, i.e., impact, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, and sustainability, for communities and schools.
2. Examine, assess, and document factors and practices that contributed to project successes and/or otherwise.
3. To provide SC with lessons learned and actionable recommendations to guide the formulation of possible follow-up projects.

Evaluation Scope

The evaluation scope included all activities implemented throughout the ILET's life cycles in Niger, South Sudan, and Somalia from 2019 to 2022. The geographic scope covers three countries, eleven communities, and eleven schools in the selected six regions where ILET was implemented. Furthermore, the evaluation engaged with key stakeholders (programme staff, head teachers and teachers, students, and parents) at the community level to learn about their experiences/reflections, views, and suggestions on various programmatic aspects to enrich the evaluation process and findings. Finally, the evaluation planning and implementation took due note of and complied with SC's guidelines, norms, and ethical standards in the international evaluation field.

Country Context

Somalia. Since the start of the civil war in 1991, the country has faced several challenges, including insecurity and violence due to the al-Shabaab militant group, poverty and droughts leading to high levels of food insecurity, and critical levels of malnutrition across the country³. These challenges have also led many internally displaced people (IDP) to relocate from their communities of origin, often sparking tensions with host communities. Between April 2019 and July 2021, Save the Children (SC), with partner Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), implemented a 27-month programme funded by the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO). This programme aimed to increase IDP children's access to quality, protective education and build the resilience of children affected by displacement due to disaster and conflict in Jubaland, Hirshabelle, and the Southwest States of Somalia⁴. ILET was piloted in ten schools in the southern state regions of Somalia as part of the ECHO programme.

South Sudan. South Sudan has faced several challenges since gaining independence in 2011. Hyperinflation, constant food insecurity, natural disasters, and ongoing conflict have led to a large number of IDPs and more than 2.8 million children (70 percent) being out of school⁵. ILET was implemented in 2019 as part of the NORAD Framework Agreement 2019-2023. It was initially implemented in ten schools in Rumbek and Bor, which increased to twenty schools across the two counties in 2022. ILET is implemented at government- and government-church-established schools.

Niger. Despite a political commitment to improve child rights, children in Niger still face challenges accessing education. Recurrent challenges such as poverty, food insecurity, conflict and violence, and natural disasters mean that many communities face constant difficulties, limiting the communities' abilities to make progress for children⁶. ILET was first implemented in 2019 as part of Building Resilience: Education Opportunities in Fragile and

³ UNICEF Somalia Country Office Annual Report 2021. <https://www.unicef.org/media/116396/file/Somalia-2021-COAR.pdf>

⁴ ILET Endline Evaluation Report - SOM-providing access to inclusive, quality and protective education to displaced girls and boys, 30 September 2021

⁵ UNICEF South Sudan Country Office Annual Report 2021. <https://www.unicef.org/media/116406/file/South-Sudan-2021-COAR.pdf>

⁶ Save the Children Niger Country Summary, NORAD 2019-2023.

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Crisis-affected Environments Programme (BRiCE). The ILET was initially deployed in 35 schools in the Zinder and Diffa regions before expanding to another 47 schools. ILET grew and was implemented in 62 schools in Zinder and twenty in Diffa. The main goal of this programme was to create child-friendly, safe, and inclusive environments to improve the learning outcomes of young girls and boys from disadvantaged communities⁷.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation employed qualitative research methods, covering all locations, and included i) KIIs, ii) FGDs, and iii) a desk review. Qualitative data were also drawn from the desk review (project documents and reports) and the ILET DMP. These methods helped obtain an in-depth understanding of the impact of ILET from the perspectives of various stakeholders. In addition, 65 interviews across the three countries were conducted. Table 1 summarises the interviews allocated to each location by country. Due to the increased exposure of the programme in Niger to ILET, this evaluation had a stronger focus on Niger and, therefore, a larger sample from Niger than those from South Sudan and Somalia.

Table 1. Number of interviews per country

Region	Number of Interviews
Somalia	
Head teacher KII	3
Programme Staff KII	5
Teacher FGD	3
Parent FGD	3
Student FGD	6
South Sudan	
Head teacher KII	3
Programme Staff KII	2
Teacher FGD	3
Parent FGD	3
Student FGD	6
Niger	
Head teacher KII	5
Programme Staff KII	3
Teacher FGD	5
Parent FGD	5
Student FGD	10

Methods

Document Review

The research team systematically examined the material generated by SC and more comprehensive sources as appropriate. These sources helped identify alignment and dissonance between the documented intentions and ILET activities in each country and school context. Furthermore, access to the DMP facilitated the incorporation of quantitative data by analyzing the difference between indicators in the ILET rounds. Other documents reviewed included ILET guiding documents, ILET Lessons Learned reports from South Sudan and Somalia, ILET South Sudan Case Study, and ECHO EiE Baseline and Endline Reports.

⁷ Interim Narrative Report-Strengthening Quality Learning Environments and Education Systems in Democratic Republic of Congo and Niger. May 2021.

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Key Informant Interviews

KIIs were used as the primary method for a cross-section of stakeholders. Interviews focused on understanding the 'why' and 'how' aspects of observed changes, including external changes, and the implementation process of ILET. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with SC staff, other implementing partners (ADRA), and school management at the sampled schools. The semi-structured format of interviews allowed for the inclusion of additional information that the participants considered essential to the evaluation, which did not necessarily come up through the set questions. At the same time, KIIs provided the parameters for gathering data on pre-selected topics for aggregation and disaggregation. The Save the Children Norway (SCN) team produced the stakeholder list to identify key country office staff involved in ILET activities.

Focus Group Discussions

FGDs were the primary data collection method to draw qualitative information from children, teachers, and parents. FGDs were conducted with groups of five to ten respondents, bringing diverse views together and facilitating an understanding of convergent and divergent issues. The discussion sought information about the respondents, their views on education in their communities, experiences with ILET and the community, and suggestions for schools and ILET. Students, teachers, and parents were all included in FGDs. To ensure representation and participation, student FGDs were separated by gender, and children from various grades in school were included. Similarly, FGDs with parents and teachers had multiple individuals/groups to solicit views on ILET. This enabled diverse opinions on vital themes of the present evaluation.

Data Collection Tools

The tools developed for FGDs and KIIs were informed by a thorough desk review and tailored to the respondent type and location. This ensured that FGDs and KIIs gave insight into each respondent's experience with ILET in their respective country/district. However, the tools cover many of the same thematic areas. Local fieldwork managers at each location, the SCN team, and the SC country office staff provided feedback on the tools.

Sampling

School Level Sampling

A sample of schools was selected to provide a comprehensive view of the implementation and impact of ILET in different emergency contexts. Therefore, sampling was based on school location, specifically, the school region and urban-rural context. The urban-rural distinction is essential, as children in rural areas often face difficulties due to higher poverty levels, fewer resources and facilities in schools, less qualified teachers, long travel distances, and poor infrastructure. These differences can lead to insufficient school enrolment and educational attainment⁸. By controlling for the urban-rural context, the objective is to understand if these factors have affected the specific activities or broader categories of activities (e.g., "hard" vs. "soft" interventions) implemented through ILET.

All selected schools have implemented two rounds of ILET, allowing data collection to capture longer-term impact and the lessons learned between implementation rounds. However, due to a small sample size, it does not control for other relevant factors, such as financial support and school type. Therefore, questions were included in the tools to understand how these factors may have influenced ILET implementation. Table 2 lists the schools in the sample.

Table 2. School sample

Region	District/County	School name	Urban/rural context
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⁸ Sumida, S., & Kawata, K. (2021). An analysis of the learning performance gap between urban and rural areas in sub-Saharan Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 41(2), 1-17. <https://dx.doi.org/10.15700/saje.v41n2a1779>

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Somalia			
Hiran	Baladweyn	Bundo weyn primary school	Urban
Lower Juba	Kismayo	Horyal school	Urban
Bay	Baidoa	Howlwadag school	Urban
South Sudan			
Lake State	Rumbek	Rumbek Complex	Urban
Jonglei	Bor	Ritnom	Rural
Jonglei	Bor	Bor Bright School	Urban
Niger			
Diffa	ICEP Diffa	Fanna Grima	Urban
Diffa	ICEP Chétimari	Chétimari traditionnelle (Boulama Yacouba)	Rural
Zinder	ICEP Zinder 1	Malentendant	Urban
Zinder	ICEP Dan Barto Mixte	Dan Barto Mixte	Rural
Zinder	ICEP Kantché	Kantché Quartier	Semi-Urban

Individual Level Sampling

Due to the qualitative nature of the evaluation, individual-level sampling was purposive rather than random. At the individual level, identifying and recruiting interviewees was essential to generating reliable data. The evaluation sought to maximize representation across three dimensions: the role of the interviewee in the school community (e.g., school versus parents), the role of the interviewee (e.g., active participant versus nonparticipant), and the demographics (age and gender) of the participant. The first two considerations ensured that the data were gathered from informants with varied insights into their communities; the latter ensured that a particular stakeholder voice did not dominate and skew the data.

A mix of purposive and random sampling was used to select FGD participants. For example, suppose participants in FGDs were all randomly selected. In that case, there is the chance that some or many chosen participants may be inactive in the discussions if they were not engaged in their children's school life. Therefore, the selection included some parents involved in PTAs, or some stage of the ILET process, combined with a group of randomly selected parents. Such a sampling choice allowed the consultant team to capture variation in different school community members' perspectives and ensure that some participants were knowledgeable informants about the topic and could lend valuable insights. In addition, the selection aimed to include children involved in ILET and randomly selected children, some of whom were not engaged in ILET. Children with disabilities were also purposively sampled in the data collection process to capture diverse perspectives on ILET. An FGD was conducted with children with disabilities from Malentendant in Niger.

Data Summary

44 FGDs and 21 KIIs were conducted for the evaluation. 263 respondents participated, with 242 FGD participants, eleven school management and head teacher participants, and ten programme staff KIIs. There were 144 male respondents and 119 female respondents. Table 3 summarises the data by gender and FGD/interview type.

Table 3. Data Summary

Interview type	Somali			South Sudan			Niger		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Head teacher KII	0	3	3	0	3	3	3	2	5
Programme Staff KII	0	5	5	0	2	2	2	1	3
Teacher FGD	0	17	17	2	15	17	25	5	30

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Parent FGD	8	9	17	7	12	19	10	8	18
Student FGD	20	23	43	20	18	38	22	21	43
Total	28	57	85	29	50	79	62	37	99
Total				263					
Male				144 (55%)					
Female				119 (45%)					

Limitations

The limited sample size is one of the most significant limitations of the study. Of a population of 107 schools where ILET has been implemented across three countries, data collection took place at eleven schools. Therefore, it is essential to emphasize that this sample does not represent the entire intervention school population. Instead, it provides insights into the impact of ILET in different implementation contexts.

ILET has been implemented in distinct contexts, and the schools have received additional support from SC beyond ILET. The potential mixture of interventions and the variation in context meant that it was challenging to consider all these different factors within the evaluation's sample due to the small sample size. The evaluation thus aimed at selecting schools with the most contact/support from ILET to understand its impact when given the time and resources to succeed. In addition, the assessment used secondary data to account for possible biases in primary data due to the selection of schools with the most exposure to ILET. Secondary data used for triangulation included lessons learned reports and the documented funding each school has received. This helped the research team better understand the context within which the schools operate.

The qualitative nature of the evaluation also limits the sample size of individual respondents. Data were collected from a limited number of respondents due to the in-depth engagement with each participant. Although in-depth engagement allows for a deep understanding of each respondent's views and perspectives, it limits the ability to generalize to the broader school community. Therefore, the data may not represent the entirety of the respondent type or the entire school community. Instead, the evaluation focused on the richness of the data by using a mix of purposive and random sampling. This involved purposively selecting respondents directly involved in ILET implementation at their school and randomly selecting the rest of the participants for the evaluation.

Another issue faced throughout data collection and desk review was that activities implemented via ILET were complemented by other activities implemented by Save the Children in the sample schools. Consequently, ILET was incorporated into a more significant EiE response in all three target countries. The mixture of interventions meant it was sometimes difficult for respondents to differentiate between activities implemented as part of ILET and those implemented as part of EiE. Therefore, it was challenging for the consultant team to distinguish the effects of ILET compared to those of the broader EiE response. The consultant team addressed this issue by triangulating data from each respondent type at each school to programme documents outlining specific activities implemented under ILET.

Finally, in addition to KIIs and FGDs, the evaluation sought to peruse school SIP data. However, there were difficulties obtaining these, as many SIPs were unavailable. For example, SIPs from the two South Sudan schools were destroyed by floods. Therefore, instead of primary data from schools' improvement plans, the evaluation team turned to secondary data from the SC country offices that listed the ILET activities implemented at each school and the required funding.

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Relevance

The relevance criterion of the OECD-DAC evaluation framework refers to how the objectives and design of the intervention respond to children, school community, global, country, and partner/institutional needs⁹. ILET is a school community-led approach allowing stakeholders in the school community to identify their needs and propose appropriate solutions. Therefore, this criterion focuses on how ILET's objectives and design have responded to the needs of students and the school community. This impact evaluation found that the SIP has been relevant to the school community's needs because of its involvement in all process stages.

The intended target of the approach. ILET aims to improve the conditions of children, teachers, head teachers, and the school community. School community members are involved during ILET implementation through training, data collection, feedback sessions, SIP planning, and performance. A strong theme identified in the interviews and discussions was that students and school community members who had participated in data collection and feedback sessions felt they had an opportunity to express concerns and that they had been incorporated into the SIP¹⁰. Furthermore, programme staff highlighted that ILET activities were specific and relevant to each school¹¹. Due to the formal and systematic nature of the approach, SC and school communities implemented school-specific activities (rather than standardised activities) across all the schools¹². For example, one SC programme staff highlighted that children had brought up the need for first aid kits at the school. As a result of this request, SC brought first aid kits to the school and conducted capacity training for children on using these kits¹³. This section discusses the extent to which the ILET tool objectives were relevant and responsive to the school community.

Students. Students at the schools participated in the approach directly by being included in data collection, feedback sessions, and the SIP team, and more indirectly, through the suggestion boxes in schools. Although few of the students interviewed had directly participated in data collection or feedback sessions, those involved agreed that they could express their ideas and said their requests had been considered¹⁴. Students also noted improvements in school over the last three years that were directly relevant to them, such as improvements in teacher quality, behavior, and infrastructure¹⁵.

Similarly, programme staff highlighted that "Child participation was much enhanced during the ILET process, as this is often limited in other approaches. [Children's direct involvement] helps [other stakeholders] to understand the needs of children more directly"¹⁶. ILET activities were also relevant to the most marginalised groups of children, such as children with disabilities and IDP children at the schools. They were invited to participate in the data collection and feedback discussions stages of ILET and saw their ideas incorporated into SIPs. As a result, respondents were aware of the difficulties children with disabilities face in the community, including bullying, low self-esteem, and difficulty accessing classrooms. They agreed that many activities had explicitly been

⁹ OECD-DAC Network on Development Evaluation, Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use, 10 Dec 2019, <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec2019.pdf>

¹⁰ Parent FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6. Male Student FGD, Baidoa, R1, R5. Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R6. Parent FGD, Beletweyne, R1. Teacher FGD, Kismayo, R5. Parent FGD, Kismayo, R2, R4. Headteacher KII, Baidoa, R1. Headteacher KII, Beletweyne, R1. Headteacher KII, Kismayo, R1.

¹¹ Programme Staff KII, Somalia, R4.

¹² Programme Staff KII, Somalia, R4, R5.

¹³ Programme Staff KII, Somalia, R2

¹⁴ Male Student FGD, Baidoa, R1, R5.

¹⁵ Male Student FGD, Baidoa, R3, R6, R7. Female Student FGD, Baidoa, R1, R4. Female Student FGD, Beletweyne, R1, R2, R3. Boy Student FGD, R1, R2, R6.

¹⁶ Programme Staff KII, Somalia, R4

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implemented to address these challenges, including training teachers and renovating classrooms to make them more accessible to children with disabilities¹⁷.

“Before leveling the rocky ground and backfilling vital areas in the school compound, it was very difficult to walk on the ground for disabled students. [These improvements] now cover most of our needs in this school, and ILET programme objectives were very successful.”

- Head Teacher, Kismayo¹⁸

The ECHO project, through which ILET was implemented in Somalia, mainly targeted schools in IDP host communities. Students were aware of the difficulties that IDP children face in accessing education. The root cause is often attributed to high levels of poverty that limit children’s access to school materials and lead to an increased workload within their households, taking time away from their education¹⁹. Respondents recognized that ILET had implemented activities responsive to the needs of these specific groups of children by providing school materials and uniforms and launching awareness-raising activities²⁰. One teacher said that they had become involved in the approach and collaborated in the data collection phase by collecting data within the IDP camps: “I went to the IDP camps to collect information on the immediate priority needs of the community regarding emergency education. I believe that the priorities I collected from this community were given consideration”²¹. According to this respondent, these priorities were meant to address, among other problems, the inability of vulnerable families to afford school materials and uniforms and the lack of free public schools in the area²². ILET relied on local community members to speak with vulnerable populations to align activities with their needs. By including vulnerable children in the data collection and feedback sessions, the community and programme staff could identify these children's needs and implement activities accordingly.

Teachers and head teacher. Head teachers and teachers who participated in ILET had mixed perceptions of the relevance of ILET-implemented activities. Most teachers and head teachers who have been involved throughout the ILET process claimed they had felt heard and agreed that the activities implemented as part of the SIP were relevant in their schools²³. Furthermore, head teachers also claimed that they mainly agreed with SC's findings cards, which facilitated discussion²⁴. However, one head teacher contended that there were disagreements on the schools' priorities at the beginning of the process. However, through conversations between the school community and SC, they agreed on the most pressing needs²⁵. This highlights the importance of the findings cards and feedback sessions in ensuring that SIPs are relevant to each school. These discussions enable school community members to understand the data collection findings and contribute to activities addressing issues. This consensus-seeking approach increases the relevance of activities to address the needs of individual schools and members of the school community.

Other school community stakeholders. The wider school community has also been primarily involved in the approach through the Community Education Committees (CEC). The CEC comprises school management,

¹⁷ Teacher FGD, Beletweyne, R1. Programme staff KII, Somalia, R2. Headteacher KII, Kismayo, R1. Parent FGD, Baidoa, R4, R1. Female Student FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6.

¹⁸ Headteacher KII, Kismayo, R1.

¹⁹ Male Student FGD, Baidoa, R1. Female Student FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2. Male Student FGD, Kismayo, R1, R4.

²⁰ Male Student FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3, R4, R5. Female Student FGD, Baidoa, R4. Teacher, FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6.

²¹ Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R2.

²² Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R2.

²³ Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R6. Teacher FGD, Kismayo, R5. Headteacher KII, Baidoa, R1. Headteacher KII, Beletweyne, R1. Headteacher KII, Kismayo, R1.

²⁴ Headteacher KII, Baidoa, R1. Headteacher KII, Beletweyne, R1.

²⁵ Headteacher KII, Kismayo, R1.

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teachers, parents, and other community members such as clan elders and religious leaders. CECs are responsible for resource mobilization, school supervision and management, conflict resolution, and promoting school enrolment through community awareness-raising activities. They were also critical contact points for SC during the implementation of ILET. CECs contributed at all stages, from data collection to SIP implementation. The data suggest that ILET is relevant to CEC members as parents of students and committee members. For example, CEC members highlighted that one of the challenges was reaching out-of-school children and family members to enroll them as a group of children in school²⁶. However, through ILET, CECs organized awareness-building sessions that facilitated reaching out to the families of out-of-school children²⁷.

Coherence

Coherence is defined as the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector, or institution²⁸. This includes internal coherence, which refers to the interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions implemented by the same organizations, and external coherence, which refers to the consistency of the intervention with different actors' interventions in the same context. This evaluation focuses on the compatibility of ILET with other interventions at the school or community level, including those interventions by SC and those implemented by the broader development community.

External coherence. In many cases, SC is not the only humanitarian actor implementing activities in these schools. Respondents said that several other actors are currently, or have in the past, implemented activities in their schools, including organizations such as ADRA, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), WARDA, Philips, and the World Food Programme (WFP)²⁹. These development organizations' activities differed from those implemented in ILET. For example, WFP is implementing food programmes in several schools that provide students with breakfast and lunch. These activities complement the work of the ILET in increasing community awareness by incentivizing marginalised children to attend school, which can increase enrolment and decrease dropout rates. However, there is some evidence of minor duplication of activities. For example, teachers at one school claimed that both SC and WARDA were providing teacher incentives but that the amounts they were given were equal not to create tension and conflict between teachers³⁰.

SC staff further explained the coordination between the different humanitarian actors. Most programme staff said that other international non-governmental organizations (INGO) operating in the regions where ILET was being implemented were well-informed about ILET and its activities through the state cluster meetings³¹. Clusters are groups of INGOs working on the same development area in each region. These cluster groups meet once a month and include MoE representatives. Development actors update each other in these meetings on projects, activities, and lessons learned from these programmes. Therefore, other development actors working in the schools and communities were familiar with ILET, its objectives, and the implemented activities. This is likely to have improved the external coherence of ILET with other development actors. SC has collaborated with ADRA throughout ILET implementation. ADRA was the implementing partner in the schools in Lower Juba. This means that staff from this implementing partner were trained on the ILET, including tools, data analysis, and SIP planning.

Furthermore, SC has also collaborated with the MoE throughout the implementation of the package. The objectives align with Somalia's Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2018-2020 and Somalia National

²⁶ Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R2, R3. Parent FGD, Beletweyne, R2.

²⁷ Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R2, R3. Parent FGD, Beletweyne, R2.

²⁸ OECD-DAC Network on Development Evaluation, Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use, 10 Dec 2019, <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec2019.pdf>

²⁹ Teacher FGD, Beledweyne, R1, R2. Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6. Headteacher KII, Baidoa, R1.

³⁰ Teacher FGD, Beledweyne, R1, R2.

³¹ Programme Staff KII, Somalia, R2, R3, R4, R5.

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Development Plan (SNDP) 2020 -2024, highlighting the need for initiatives to focus on the most vulnerable children, including girls, IDPs, and students with disabilities^{32,33}. The SNDP 2020-2024 highlights several activities by which it aims to improve education and training, including i) institutional oversight and strengthening, ii) focusing on education initiatives for the most vulnerable, and iii) a national framework of qualifications and training of teachers³⁴. ILET activities are coherent with the SNDP 2020-2024 goals, as these goals fit within the five QLF. Interviews with programme staff further highlight the synergies between ILET and MoE directives, with interviewees noting that MoE officials had been actively involved throughout the process³⁵. The involvement of MoE officials took the form of invitations to ILET training, feedback sessions with the school community, and information on the activities implemented at each school, among others.

Internal coherence. ILET was part of the ECHO programme, but not all schools included in ECHO used ILET. ILET was implemented in only five of the schools. This means that not all activities implemented at these schools were ILET activities, as the schools also received support directly through the ECHO programme. This posed a challenge during data collection as some respondents could not differentiate between ILET and non-ILET activities. However, the interviews and secondary data showed no evidence of internal duplication of activities during the approach. This is likely because ILET allows identifying the most pressing problems facing schools, which have not been previously addressed via other interventions under SC. Those areas of the school where SC had previously provided support would have been identified during the assessment process and not prioritized for ILET activities. However, it is essential to note that in Somalia, many activities implemented, including rehabilitating classrooms and constructing playgrounds and girl-friendly spaces, required considerable resources. The school communities did not have the resources available to implement SIP activities without direct input from SC. Therefore, many ILET activities relied heavily on the ECHO programme, especially regarding the resources needed to implement the SIP activities.

Effectiveness

The OECD-DAC effectiveness criterion is defined as the extent to which interventions achieved, or are expected to achieve, their objectives, including any differential results across groups³⁶. Therefore, this impact evaluation mainly focuses on how the ILET achievement across the five QLF foundations has varied and what factors led to different levels of achievement across the QLF foundations.

Emotional and psychosocial protection. This QLF foundation is defined as positive and respectful interactions between teachers, children, peers, and children engaging in social and emotional learning processes. The ECHO evaluation conducted by SC International and ADRA found that treatment schools had substantially improved in this QLF foundation³⁷. The findings of this report and the data from the DMP suggest that these schools made progress in i) school personnel having positive and respectful interactions with learners, ii) learners participating in recreation activities, and iii) learners in need of additional child protection support are referred to a specialist.

³²Ministry of Education Culture and Higher Education of Somalia. "Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018-2020". 29 October 2018

³³ The Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development of Somalia. "Somalia National Development Plan 2020 to 2024 (NDP-9)". January 2020

³⁴ The Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development of Somalia. "Somalia National Development Plan 2020 to 2024 (NDP-9)". January 2020.

³⁵ Programme Staff KII, Somalia, R1, R3, R5.

³⁶OECD-DAC Network on Development Evaluation, Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use, 10 Dec 2019, <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec2019.pdf>

³⁷ ADRA & SCI. "ILET Endline Evaluation Report- providing access to inclusive, quality and protective education to displaced girls and boys". 30 September 2021.

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Several teachers confirmed their participation in psychosocial training and training to teach children with disabilities³⁸. Teachers and students also agreed that the number and quality of recreational activities had improved³⁹. A parent (also a teacher) claimed they had become involved in ILET activities by “coordinating fun activities for students, like playing. These activities help to make the (school) environment fun and happy. The students enjoy these activities, and everyone in the school plays an effective role”⁴⁰. A head teacher confirmed this parent’s observation and agreed that recreational activities had increased, for example, through debates and other competitions, and that they could include gifts for competition winners⁴¹. The SIP developed for the Horyal school also highlighted that the school community attempted to improve this foundation through the construction/expansion of recreational sites, including a playground and a girl-friendly space. These activities are essential for the emotional wellbeing of students, as they serve as an instrument to reduce tension while enabling a positive learning environment. This is especially true in marginalised communities where these activities can help children cope with stress and trauma.

Other indicators within this foundation saw less improvement, according to the endline ECHO evaluation. According to the report, there was only a slight improvement in including vulnerable children in education and positive and respectful interactions between learners. Based on discussions with respondents, it is clear that the lack of progress in this indicator is especially true for children with disabilities. Although respondents agreed that physical accessibility had improved thanks to ILET and that teachers had made efforts to help children with disabilities at the school by letting partially deaf or blind students closer to the front of the class⁴², students with disabilities still faced many challenges, such as their treatment by other students. One common theme was that children with disabilities in and outside school were often teased, bullied, and discriminated against by other students⁴³. Furthermore, respondents in Baidoa claimed that poor behavior among other students was one of the reasons that students with disabilities were likely to drop out of school, as they were demotivated or scared due to ill-treatment by other students⁴⁴. Therefore, more must be done to raise awareness among students so that students with disabilities can benefit from schools to the same extent as other students and are included in the learning environment.

Physical protection. Physical protection is another component of the QLF foundations that saw improvements in the ECHO endline evaluation report and the DMP. This foundation is defined as i) safe and accessible learning spaces, ii) safe drinking water and adequate sanitation and hygiene facilities are accessible to all children, iii) all children receive services and education to support good health and nutrition, and iv) school safety management prevents and mitigates the impact of hazards and education. The DMP suggests specific improvements in the school safety management and safe and accessible learning spaces components of the foundation. Students noted these improvements, as almost all claimed to feel safe within their school and community. Several SC programme staff members also highlighted that this had been one of the foundations that had seen considerable improvement due to ILET⁴⁵. However, the activities implemented to address these foundations differed by the school, as they were based on the consultation process at the school. For example, one of the schools highlighted that the uneven and rocky surface of the school was a safety risk for children when playing and constituted a

³⁸ Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R2, R4. Teacher FGD, Beletweyne, R1, R3, R4. Teacher FGD, Kismayo, R1.

³⁹ Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6. Teacher FGD, Beletweyne, R2. Headteacher KII, Baidoa, R1. Male Student FGD, Baidoa, R5.

⁴⁰ Parent FGD, Beletweine, R2.

⁴¹ Headteacher KII, Baidoa, R1.

⁴² Parent FGD, Baidoa, R4. Male Students FGD, Baidoa, R1. Female Students FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6. Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6. Teacher FGD, Beletweyne, R1, R2. Parent FGD, Kismayo, R4, R5.

⁴³ Male student FGD, Beletweyne, R2, R4. Male Student FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9. Male Student FGD, Baidoa, R1.

⁴⁴ Parent FGD, Baidoa, R6. Headteacher KII, Baidoa, R1.

⁴⁵ Programme staff KII, Somalia, R2. Programme staff KII, Somalia, R4.

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challenge for children with disabilities. Therefore, with support from SC, the school community leveled grounds and backfill, allowing students to move around the school easily⁴⁶.

SIP data from ILET schools in Somalia corroborate the data collected for the present evaluation. They show that the school community emphasized improving the QLF foundation. The SIPs highlighted several activities implemented to enhance the school's physical protection. The activities in the SIPs included the rehabilitation of fifteen classrooms across the five ILET schools; the leveling of school grounds at two schools; the provision of fire extinguishers, first aid kits, and sanitary equipment at three schools; the rehabilitation of offices at one school; and the rehabilitation of school fences in another.

The DMP also highlighted specific improvements to the foundation's water, sanitation, and hygiene component. This was a common theme during data collection as students mentioned that the latrines and handwashing stations had been rehabilitated, and separate bathrooms for boys and girls had been constructed⁴⁷. Furthermore, students noted that a hygiene club had been created at one of the schools and that more sanitation activities were taking place there. Other initiatives pointed out by the respondents and included in the SIPs were the construction of new playgrounds, classrooms, and fences and the rehabilitation of administration offices and classrooms. Students in Baidoa referred to the school fencing as an essential addition to the school as it stopped other children from bothering them in school⁴⁸. The combination of these activities effectively improved facilities, increasing the physical protection of the school community. This is important in the Somali context, as insecurity has increased in the districts where the ILET is implemented.

Since September 2022, Somalia has experienced heightened violence and fighting between government and non-government groups. After an offensive by the Somali government in early September 2022, there has been an increase in activity by the Al-Shaabab militant group⁴⁹, including two consecutive bombings targeting the MoE in Mogadishu⁵⁰. The increased levels of violence led to some backtracking on the progress made at some of these schools. There have also been bombings in the regions and towns where these schools are based, specifically Kismayo and Beletweyne. The school in Beletweyne was particularly affected by these bombings, as security checkpoints near the school were targeted. This has led to the cracking of classroom walls and a general deterioration of school facilities. One of the respondents said that “the buildings were being maintained, but after the explosion, they have gone back to how they were initially. The organization did many good things, but these are now destroyed”⁵¹. Therefore, the general context of the area has had a direct effect on the progress of the approach and has decreased the effectiveness of some of the activities.

Furthermore, the ECHO endline evaluation suggested limited progress on increasing the safety of the school community on the school route and area. While most respondents claimed that the safety levels within their schools were high due to fences around the school and watchmen, most safety risks were outside the school. For example, some students noted that they were sometimes bothered by other children on the way to school, and sometimes stones were thrown at the girls⁵². However, the same students also admitted that such problems were rare. Furthermore, respondents also said that cars often sped in the area and that community insecurity sometimes prevented them from attending school due to the threat of bombs or conflict⁵³. However, due to the scale of the conflict in these areas, these issues are likely to be beyond the ability of ILET to overcome; an

⁴⁶ Male student FGD, Kismayo, R6. Teacher FGD, Kismayo, R5. Headteacher KII, Kismayo, R1.

⁴⁷ Male Student FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7. Female Student FGD, Baidoa, R1, R3, R4, R5. Beletweyne, R1, R2, R4, R6. Female Student FGD, Beletweyne, R1, R3. Male Student FGD, Kismayo, R1.

⁴⁸ Male Student FGD, Baidoa, R1.

⁴⁹ <https://www.voanews.com/a/somalia-military-makes-gains-in-large-scale-offensive-against-al-shabab-/6764305.html>

⁵⁰ <https://www.voanews.com/a/somalia-fights-back-against-al-shabab-attack-on-education-sector-/6837584.html>

⁵¹ Parent FGD, Beletweyne, R1.

⁵² Male student FGD, Kismayo, R2. Male Student FGD, Baidoa, R3.

⁵³ Parent FGD, Baidoa, R1. Male Student FGD, R1, R3, R4, R5, R6.

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increase' in the general safety and security of the Somali state will likely be needed for improvements in the physical protection foundation to be observed.

Teaching and learning. This foundation saw considerable improvement between the rounds of ILET data collection in intervention schools, according to the DMP. This foundation is comprised of five components: i) teacher development and well-being, ii) teaching and learning materials, iii) language for learning, iv) pedagogical practices, and v) planning, assessment, and reporting. The endline evaluation found improvements in teachers' planning lessons, motivation, and support in skills development. In addition, DMP data show advances in the foundation's learning, assessment, and reporting aspects. These findings correspond to the activities and improvements that teachers noted in discussions. For example, many teachers said they had participated in various ILET capacity-building activities and seminars⁵⁴. These capacity-building activities supported the development of teachers in many areas, including teaching students with disabilities and motivating and punishing students. Teachers highlighted that this was one of the activities they especially enjoyed participating in as it improved their teaching and classroom management skills⁵⁵. However, it is essential to note that although teachers at all three schools claimed to have participated in the training, teacher training was only part of the SIP at Bundoweyn and Hawo Tako primary schools. The training at both schools specifically focused on offering psychological support to their students. This may suggest that other training teachers participated in may have been part of the broader ECHO response rather than ILET activities.

A common theme across discussions with students was that they were proud of the school's teaching quality and that this had improved since the last school year⁵⁶. For example, students claimed they noticed that teachers used less physical punishment and could better explain lessons when students struggled. These improvements may also be linked to teachers being given regular teacher incentives by SC and other organizations (although not an ILET activity). Head teachers and teachers explained that receiving teacher incentives was one of the most significant factors that affected teacher motivation at the school⁵⁷.

“The quality of education in this school is very good. There are qualified teachers. I know this school is improving in terms of students and teachers.”

-Female Student, Beletweyne⁵⁸

Although the ECHO endline report and DMP found that there had been limited progress made on teachers' adherence to their teaching hours, this impact evaluation found evidence that more substantial progress has been made at the schools. For example, one student pointed out that one of the differences between this academic year and the preceding one was that lessons began on time and that classes were run according to a schedule⁵⁹. Furthermore, teachers said the teachers' CoC included adhering to a class schedule and arriving on time⁶⁰. One respondent said, “if teachers break any rules like being late, they will be warned verbally the first and second time. However, on the third time, they will be given a written warning. If their behavior does not change, the management will be informed, and management will take appropriate [disciplinary] action”⁶¹. This suggests that the approach has effectively improved teachers' commitment through accountability mechanisms.

⁵⁴ Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R2, R4. Teacher FGD, Kismayo, R1. Teacher FGD, Beletweyne, R1, R3, R4.

⁵⁵ Teacher FGD, Beletweyne, R1. Teacher FGD, Kismayo, R1.

⁵⁶ Male Student FGD, Baidoa, R3, R6. Female Student FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3. Male Student FGD, Beletweyne, R3, R6. Female Student FGD, R2, R3, R5, R6. Female Student FGD, Kismayo, R1. Male Student FGD, Kismayo, R5, R6.

⁵⁷ Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R2. Headteacher KII, Kismayo, R1.

⁵⁸ Female Student FGD, Beletweyne, R2.

⁵⁹ Male Student FGD, Beletweyne, R1.

⁶⁰ Teacher FGD, Beletweyne, R1, R2, R3, R4. Teachers FGD, Kismayo, R3. Headteacher KII, Baidoa, R1.

⁶¹ Teacher FGD, Beletweyne, R4.

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Parents and community. This foundation refers to i) the participation of children, parents, and communities in school planning and decision-making and ii) parents and community members supporting children's learning outside school. Although the DMP data found that there had been improvement at ILET schools for both components, the ECHO endline report and this report have seen improvements on only the first component of the foundation. Throughout the discussions with different respondents, a common theme was that ILET had increased the participation of children and parents in school planning. For example, students in Baidoa said they had become involved in activities to improve the school environment, including sanitation activities to clean the school classrooms and grounds, accountability seminars, and awareness sessions⁶².

Furthermore, programme staff noted that some of the activities implemented had been suggested by students during the feedback sessions. For example, one programme staff member indicated that children had discussed the need for first aid kits at the school and that this had been implemented through the SIP. The children were taught how to use these first-aid kits through the school health clubs⁶³. One head teacher explained, "I played a big role in the planning and implementation phase, including the establishment of committees such as parent committees. Furthermore, increasing the number of CECs to nine members." This suggests that as part of ILET activities, they had increased the number of CEC members, allowing more community members to become involved in school planning.

The ECHO endline report highlighted that there had been less improvement in the second component of this foundation. However, the DMP data and this report suggest that at least some progress had been made in this component and that parents and the community were becoming more involved in their children's education. For example, one of the parents highlighted that a student's father had told the head teacher that they could not afford to keep their child at school and would be dropping out. The head teacher brought this to the CEC, who then implemented a fundraiser and solved the matter with the community⁶⁴. This was also true at Bundowyene school. One parent mentioned that when children want to drop out of school, community elders talk to their parents to stop this from happening⁶⁵.

Although many children still noted that they do not receive homework help at home, some mentioned that they had begun to receive more support from family members since last year⁶⁶. However, the evidence also distinguishes between the support girls and boys receive at home. For example, while few male students said they missed school due to household chores, this was much more common among girls. Male students also said parents often encouraged them to go to school when they tried skipping⁶⁷. However, female students and their parents said that female students sometimes have to stay home when they have to help their mothers look after other children or complete household chores⁶⁸.

Furthermore, girls often completed homework either early in the morning or late at night. In contrast, boys stated that they completed assignments soon after school. This is another indication that girls face a more significant burden of household chores, which can impact the amount of time they can dedicate to their education. Although ILET has been effective in some aspects of this foundation, more needs to be done to raise awareness about girls' education in these communities so that activities implemented through the approach benefit both boys and girls equally.

⁶² Male Student FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2. Female Student FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2.

⁶³ Programme staff KII, Somalia, R2.

⁶⁴ Parent FGD, Kismayo, R2.

⁶⁵ Parent FGD, Beletweyne, R1.

⁶⁶ Male student FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3, R4, R7. Female Student, Baidoa, R5. Male Student FGD, Beletweyne, R4, R5. Female Student FGD, Beletweyne, R4. Female Student FGD, Kismayo, R4.

⁶⁷ Male Student FGD, Baidoa, R2, R4, R5, R6, R7. Male Student FGD, Beletweyne, R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6.

⁶⁸ Female Student FGD, Kismayo, R1, R4, R7. Parent FGD, Baidoa, R4, R5.

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School leadership and management. Three components comprise the school leadership and management foundation: i) inclusive and protective policies, ii) leading learning, and iii) school management. Although the ECHO endline report suggested improvements in some aspects of this foundation, interviews with implementation staff revealed that this was one of the foundations where they had seen less progress and that not many foundation-specific activities had been implemented through the SIP. Interestingly, one of the components in which the endline report and DMP had found no improvement was that the school CoC is in use and has resulted from a participatory process. Based on a discussion with teachers and headteachers, all the schools where data collection took place had a CoC, and the teachers and head teacher was well informed. The CoCs contained many common themes between schools: teachers should not curse, physically punish, or discriminate against students, teachers should act as role models to students, and teachers should plan their lessons ahead of time⁶⁹. However, based on the data, the CoCs were not part of a participatory process. They were mainly based on the school management team with some teacher input. However, there was no evidence that parents or students created and changed the CoCs⁷⁰. One head teacher mentioned that the school's CoC was built around the school, but these were in English, and students may not have understood them⁷¹. Therefore, these must be translated into Somali so students can fully understand and contribute to the teacher's CoC.

The extent to which teachers adhered to the requirements of the CoC was also unclear. Based on a discussion with parents, most respondents agreed that they had never heard of students being physically punished at school⁷². However, most children opined that, although they had noticed a change in the amount of physical punishment at the schools, physical punishment was still used when students were “defiant” or did not do their homework⁷³. One parent also explained, “most of the time, they skip school if they go late, and they are afraid of the teacher and their punishment.” This suggests that parents are aware of the punishment that students receive from teachers and that this hinders students’ willingness to attend school. However, progress has been made as several students mentioned that the punishment had decreased, and teachers often rewarded them⁷⁴. One student explained that “teachers rarely punish students lately but mostly warn or advise them. The teachers may have realized guiding students is better than punishing or cursing at them”⁷⁵.

All the schools the research team visited also confirmed that they had a complaint mechanism. The schools had implemented a suggestion box system where collection boxes were placed around the school, making it more accessible for students to complain. The complaints also seem to be taken seriously and addressed. Several respondents gave examples of when they filed complaints, and the head teacher and the CEC addressed these⁷⁶. For example, one head teacher said that one of the students at his school had complained about their teacher beating them. The headteacher had directly addressed this by speaking to the teacher and warning them⁷⁷. Some students also discussed using the suggestion boxes to express their issues or suggest parts of the school that should be improved. This indicates that the complaint mechanism is improving at schools and that the approach has improved the capacity of head teachers as they can deal with these complaints.

⁶⁹ Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3, R4. Teacher FGD, Beletweyne, R1, R2, R3, R4. Headteacher KII, Baidoa, R1. Headteacher KII, Beletweyne, R1.

⁷⁰ Headteacher KII, Baidoa, R1. Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3, R4.

⁷¹ Headteacher KII, Kismayo, R1.

⁷² Parent FGD, Baidoa, R1, R4. Parent FGD, Beletweyne, R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6. Parent FGD, Kismayo R1, R2, R3, R4, R5.

⁷³ Male student FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7. Female Student FGD, Baidoa, R4. Male Student FGD, Beletweyne, R4. Female Student FGD, Kismayo, R2.

⁷⁴ Female Student FGD, Baidoa, R3. Male Student FGD, Beletweyne, R1, R4, R5, R6. Male Student FGD, Kismayo, R4.

⁷⁵ Female Student FGD, Baidoa, R3.

⁷⁶ Headteacher KII, Kismayo, R1. Parent FGD, Baidoa, R1, R6. Parent FGD, Beletweyne, R1. Parent FGD, Kismayo, R2.

⁷⁷ Headteacher KII, Beletweyne, R1.

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Efficiency

This criterion is defined as the extent to which the intervention delivers or is likely to deliver results in an economical and timely way⁷⁸. This evaluation specifically focuses on the extent to which ILET interventions have been delivered in an economical, timely, and inclusive manner and if there was a variation in efficiency between different components of ILET, such as data collection, data analysis, data validation, and SIP planning and implementation. This section discusses the extent to which ILET can be considered efficient and the external factors affecting efficiency.

Challenges. As explained earlier in the report, ILET consists of different stages. Therefore, multiple package rounds have taken place at the schools in Somalia. During a discussion with programme staff, the consultant team asked if they had noticed any efficiency gains between all rounds of ILET implementation. Programme staff noted they had not used the ILET data collection platform (as different software is typically used for data collection in Somalia) and faced difficulties implementing the first round of ILET⁷⁹. This was also noted in the lessons learned report, which stated that there had been difficulties in i) submitting data through the mobile data tool due to a server error, ii) finalizing the findings card due to a dashboard error, and iii) translating the tool⁸⁰. Therefore, some programme staff members said that data collection and analysis were the more inefficient parts of the approach due to these technical issues⁸¹. However, it was also pointed out that once enumerators were more used to the tool and issues were addressed, there were fewer challenges during data collection, and programme staff saw the potential of this tool⁸².

“The data collection process was very easy because ILET has two platforms, the web app and mobile platform, both of them have an easy-to-use interface..... Because the information is obtained from the community and the findings card is quickly produced, there were no issues when presenting this to the community.”

-Programme Staff, Somalia⁸³

Interviews with programme staff and data from the lessons learned report also revealed additional barriers to efficiency during the implementation of SIPs. For example, several SIPs were implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, limiting face-to-face contact. One program staff member said capacity training took longer than expected because of the limits on how many people could be in a room⁸⁴. The lessons learned report also notes that some training had to be canceled due to the limitations placed during the pandemic. Furthermore, the time to implement activities was short, especially considering the scale of some infrastructure and rehabilitation activities. This condensed timeframe may explain why some of the respondents in Kismayo considered several implemented activities, such as backfilling, poor quality, and poorly implemented appropriately⁸⁵.

⁷⁸ OECD-DAC Network on Development Evaluation, Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use, 10 Dec 2019, <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec2019.pdf>

⁷⁹ Programme staff KII, Somalia, R3

⁸⁰ ILET Lessons Learned Report 2021. 21 June 2021.

⁸¹ Programme staff KII, Somalia, R4. Programme staff KII, Somalia, R5. Programme staff KII, Somalia, R1. Programme staff KII, Somalia, R3.

⁸² Programme staff KII, Somalia, R3. Programme staff KII, Somalia, R4.

⁸³ Programme staff KII, Somalia, R5.

⁸⁴ Programme staff KII, Somalia, R2.

⁸⁵ Headteacher KII, Kismayo, R1. Male Student FGD, Kismayo, R1, R2, R3, R4.

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Positives. Many issues that had caused efficiency loss during the first round of data collection were addressed in the second round⁸⁶. Programme staff also noted that all the schools had used the standard ILET package and that this had been appropriate in Somalia. ILET has four different versions. The difference between each is the stakeholders interviewed and the number of respondents included in the data collection process. Programme staff agreed that the recommended standard version had been successful in helping to identify the critical gaps in the school and that it was appropriate for the resources they had allocated to data collection⁸⁷.

Programme staff believed that the ILET components implemented well during both rounds of the ILET were the feedback sessions and data validation⁸⁸. Since the data were collected directly from the school community, they quickly understood and discussed the findings card. In addition, the school community was pleased to be directly involved in school improvement and openly shared ideas with the SC team. As a result, respondents felt heard and had a sense of ownership over the school as they could see their ideas implemented.

Furthermore, due to the feedback sessions' success, one staff member claimed that the length and size of feedback sessions were increased in the second round of the ILET so more individuals within the school community could participate⁸⁹. Programme staff agreed that the significant efficiency gains of using ILET came from using a systematic assessment and involving school community members to create a SIP designed for each school while considering the needs of various stakeholders⁹⁰. This means that funding could be allocated appropriately depending on the specific needs of each school, and those needing more resources and hardware components can be given the resources.

Sustainability

The OECD-DAC sustainability criterion refers to the extent to which ILET benefits are likely to continue at the intervention locations⁹¹ and if the positive components of the approach are likely to be adopted locally without support from SC.

Sustainability challenges. Discussions with respondents highlighted issues affecting the continued provision of some benefits and activities; however, they also noted many activities that are likely to continue beyond ILET. One of the most significant challenges schools face is the community's lack of funding and high poverty levels. Many schools where ILET was implemented are free schools (schools that require no school fees for students to enroll) in poor communities. Therefore, many ILET activities requiring a budget, such as providing school materials, teacher incentives, and building school infrastructure, would be impossible without SC or community mobilization support. The school community showed particular concern with the teacher's incentives ending as these would lead to a demotivation of teachers and a decrease in the quality of education⁹².

Capacity-building activities for teachers and other school community members must be continued to ensure the sustainability of the ILET approach. Although teachers at the intervention schools have been involved in several capacity-building activities and other stakeholders have been involved in ownership and accountability seminars, schools still do not have the technical ability to conduct these capacity training independently⁹³. Therefore,

⁸⁶ Programme staff KII, Somalia, R3. Programme staff KII, Somalia, R4.

⁸⁷ Programme staff KII, Somalia, R1. Programme staff KII, Somalia, R2. Programme staff KII, Somalia, R3. Programme staff KII, Somalia, R4. Programme staff KII, Somalia, R5.

⁸⁸ Programme staff KII, Somalia, R2. Programme staff KII, Somalia, R5.

⁸⁹ Programme staff KII, Somalia, R4.

⁹⁰ Programme staff KII, Somalia, R4. Programme staff KII, Somalia, R5.

⁹¹ OECD-DAC Network on Development Evaluation, Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use, 10 Dec 2019, <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec2019.pdf>

⁹² Teacher FGD, Beletweyne, R1, R2. Headteacher, Baidoa, R1. Teacher FGD, Kismayo, R3., Teacher FGD, Beletweyne, R3, R4.

⁹³ Programme Staff KII, Somalia, R2.

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increasing schools' ability to train relevant stakeholders must be undertaken before the benefits of the ILET approach can be sustainable.

One of the biggest challenges to sustaining ILET activities is the Somali government's priorities, capacity, and other external issues affecting the regions. Somalia has faced severe droughts, which have led to a food crisis⁹⁴. This may limit the communities' opportunities to mobilize resources. The increasing insecurity harms the sustainability of the approach due to the explosions damaging infrastructure at one of the schools. Finally, one of the most significant limiting factors is government capacity. The Somali government is focused on the ongoing conflict with Al-Shabaab. Therefore, the education sector has a limited budget⁹⁵. Although the MoE has been involved throughout ILET, more capacity building needs to occur to implement ILET without direct inputs from SC.

Opportunities for sustainability. Evidence shows that the school community could implement some ILET activities with continued community awareness raising and training. For example, staff explained that although it would not have been possible for the schools to construct new infrastructure without support from SC, the CEC had taken initiatives to maintain the new infrastructure⁹⁶. One programme staff member mentioned that many latrines and hand washing stations had broken down. The CEC could repair these without additional involvement from SC⁹⁷. In addition, the parent committee constructed two iron sheet/aluminum classrooms in one school to accommodate more students⁹⁸. This demonstrates that ILET has created a sense of ownership within the school community, allowing some of the infrastructure built because of the approach to be sustainable for some time. With continued awareness, capacity, and accountability training, school communities can continue to improve the school environment without support from SC.

Other activities and benefits can also be carried out without direct support from SC. Respondents noted that activities and benefits such as community awareness raising to increase school enrolment, sanitation activities to maintain the school, safety management plans, and teacher accountability could all continue and are essential to keep improving the school environment⁹⁹. These activities can play an important role in enhancing the learning environment *and* do not require as many material resources from the community. Therefore, as long as there is a sense of ownership and accountability within the school community, the school can continue to benefit from ILET. One of the respondents highlighted that as long as the CEC remains active, they could continue to improve their learning environment even without support from ILET, underscoring the importance that CECs play in the sustainability of the approach¹⁰⁰.

“School Committees will be sustainable as they mobilize to organize the community to facilitate school sanitation and teachers’ incentives.... In addition, we can engage the community and leaders to support the day-to-day activities of the school.”
-Headteacher, Baidoa¹⁰¹

Adoption of activities in the community. The consultant team asked respondents if they had seen any other schools in the district implement similar activities to improve their schools even if they did not receive support from SC. Many respondents reiterated that schools in the community had limited resources, so it would be

⁹⁴ UNICEF Somalia Country Office Annual Report 2021. <https://www.unicef.org/media/116396/file/Somalia-2021-COAR.pdf>

⁹⁵ Programme Staff KII, Somalia, R4

⁹⁶ Programme Staff KII, Somalia, R2. Programme Staff KII, Somalia, R4.

⁹⁷ Programme Staff KII, Somalia, R2.

⁹⁸ Headteacher KII, Baidoa, R1.

⁹⁹ Headteacher KII, Baidoa, R1. Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6.

¹⁰⁰ Headteacher KII, Baidoa, R1.

¹⁰¹ Headteacher KII, Baidoa, R1.

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challenging to replicate ILET components without support from humanitarian actors¹⁰². They also highlighted that their school's teaching quality and leadership would be hard to replicate without capacity-building activities provided by humanitarian actors¹⁰³.

Nevertheless, respondents knew of similar activities other schools had implemented. These included student clubs and activities such as debates, physical education, student parades, school committees to discuss school needs, and awareness-raising activities to encourage out-of-school children to enroll¹⁰⁴. Respondents also stated that other schools had also been able to copy interventions such as constructing a drainage system and installing billboards to raise community awareness¹⁰⁵. For ILET activities to spread to other parts of the community, collaboration mechanisms must be established between schools so school staff can advise and exchange ideas. This would allow ILET schools to explain the improvements they have seen and the activities that can be implemented without support from humanitarian actors, potentially spreading approach benefits to other schools in the community.

Impact

The impact criterion refers to the extent to which the interventions have generated or are expected to create significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects¹⁰⁶. This report focuses on the positive impacts of ILET (both intended and unintended) at the outcome level. ILET has four expected outcome level results: i) increased capacity at the school/learning space level to improve the education environment, ii) increased community engagement in improving the learning environment, iii) improved access to and experiences of quality learning opportunities for students, and iv) Increased capacity of agencies and partner to provide quality, timely support to Education in Emergencies (EiE).

Increased capacity at the school/learning space level to improve the quality education environment. This evaluation found that the approach had some impact in improving the capacity at the school level. Firstly, at the teaching level, there is evidence that the quality of teaching has improved and that teachers are better equipped to deal with students in emergencies. Many students stated that the quality of teaching was high at their school and that teachers had been more encouraging in the last year¹⁰⁷. This is likely the result of interventions implemented through ILET, including teacher training and seminars. Some teachers reported that they could teach and motivate children thanks to these activities and were now better equipped to deal with disadvantaged children¹⁰⁸. This plays a significant role in children's education quality and motivation to stay and finish school. The impact of the approach was further displayed by the increase in recreational activities such as sports competitions and debates and the reported increase in academic support teachers provide to students. Several students, teachers, and head teachers claimed that since the beginning of the approach, they could implement student competitions with prizes to motivate students and encourage them not to drop out¹⁰⁹. Furthermore, students reported receiving more support from their teachers when they could not understand their homework

¹⁰² Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R3, R6. Teacher FGD, Beletweyne, R1. Teacher FGD, Kismayo, R5. Headteacher KII, Baidoa, R1. Headteacher KII, Beletweyne, R1. Headteacher KII, Kismayo, R1.

¹⁰³ Headteacher KII, Beletweyne, R1. Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R3.

¹⁰⁴ Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6. Teacher FGD, Beletweyne, R1. Teacher FGD, Kismayo, R1. Headteacher KII, Baidoa,

¹⁰⁵ Headteacher FGD, Beletweyne, R1. Headteacher FGD, Kismayo, R1.

¹⁰⁶ OECD-DAC Network on Development Evaluation, Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use, 10 Dec 2019, <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec2019.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ Male student FGD, Baidoa, R2, R8, R6, R7. Female Student FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3. Male Student FGD, Beletweyne, R1. Female Student FGD, R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6. Female student FGD, Kismayo, R1. Male Student Kismayo FGD, R1, R5, R6.

¹⁰⁸ Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R2, R4. Teacher FGD, Beletweyne, R1.

¹⁰⁹ Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6. Teacher FGD, Beletweyne, R2. Headteacher KII, Baidoa, R1. Male Student FGD, Baidoa, R5.

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or classwork¹¹⁰. All this illustrates the impact that ILET has had in these schools, including an increase in the capacity of teachers to teach students and creating a motivating and positive environment for students to learn.

Increasing community engagement in improving the learning environment. Another emerging impact of ILET has been increased community engagement in school affairs. Respondent interviews indicate that there are examples of community involvement in improving the school environment, including clan elders speaking to families of children who want to drop out of school, the CEC creating a fundraiser for a family whose child was planning to drop out of school, increasing the number of CEC members, and a parent committee building two temporary classrooms¹¹¹. An increase in community involvement is also corroborated by the increased family support for students and the community's optimistic view on education, as observed by some teachers¹¹². This impact is likely due to the emphasis ILET places on community awareness, but more importantly, on school community involvement throughout the process, which has created a sense of ownership within the community and school. However, it is important not to overstate the impact of the approach in this aspect. Although communities have seen increased engagement, this is limited by the high poverty levels in these communities, which hampers community mobilization. Furthermore, programme staff noted that although those who had directly participated in ILET activities were aware of the approach, others in the community were unaware of it and may not understand it¹¹³. The data collected indicate that those participants who had not been directly involved were sometimes unaware of ILET, limiting their ability to engage more directly with the school community.

Improved access to and experiences of quality learning opportunities for students. As reported by respondents, one of the most significant impacts of ILET has been the enhanced access of children to education in those communities. A common theme expressed by respondents was that the increase in school enrollment was one of the most significant changes at the school since the previous year¹¹⁴. For example, one of the CEC members at Howlwadaag school stated that the enrolment had increased from 1100 last year to between 1500 to 2000 this year¹¹⁵. However, it is essential to note that respondents attributed increasing enrolment rates to multiple factors, including ILET activities, CEC activities, and activities by other humanitarian actors. According to some respondents, ILET contributed to this through community awareness and improvement of teaching quality¹¹⁶. For example, one respondent claimed, "once out of school, children see that the school is offering uniforms, books, and pens to the students, [which then incentivizes them] to return to the school." However, this was also attributed to the work of the WFP, who had begun a feeding programme at two of these schools. Importantly these activities also targeted vulnerable children in the community: girls were supported through the provision of pads, and IDP children were supported through the provision of uniforms and learning materials. In contrast, children with disabilities were supported through the launch of awareness-training initiatives. The supply of these materials is essential in these communities as respondents are often unable to afford them, which can cause learners to be unable to attend school. The combination of ILET activities with free implementation in schools and the introduction of feeding programmes have significantly impacted the school community and children's access to education within these marginalised communities.

¹¹⁰ Male Student FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3, R4, R7. Female Student FGD, Baidoa, R6. Male Student FGD, R1, R6. Male Student FGD, Kismayo, R3, R5, R6. Female Student FGD, Kismayo, R6, R4.

¹¹¹ Parent FGD, Beletweyne, R1. Parent FGD, Kismayo, R2. Headteacher FGD, Baidoa, R1.

¹¹² Male student FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3, R4, R7. Female Student, Baidoa, R5. Male Student FGD, Beletweyne, R4, R5. Female Student FGD, Beletweyne, R4. Female Student FGD, Kismayo, R4. Teacher FGD, Beletweyne, R1.

¹¹³ Programme Staff KII, Somalia, R2. Programme Staff KII, Somalia, R1.

¹¹⁴ Parent FGD, Baidoa, R1, R2, R3. Male Student FGD, Baidoa, R1, R6. Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R2, R4. Parent FGD, Beletweyne, R3. Male Student FGD, Beletweyne, R2, R3, R4, R6. Female Student FGD, Beletweyne, R2. Teacher FGD, Beletweyne, R1, R2.

¹¹⁵ Parent FGD, Baidoa, R1.

¹¹⁶ Parent FGD, Baidoa, R1, R3. Male Student FGD, Baidoa, R5, R2. Female Student FGD, Baidoa R2, R3, R4, R5. Teacher FGD, Baidoa, R2, R3, R4, R5. Parent FGD, Beletweyne, R2, R3, R5. Teacher FGD, Beletweyne, R1,

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Increased capacity of agencies and partners to provide quality and timely support. This outcome has seen the smallest impact attributable to ILET. Although ADRA has been directly involved as an implementing partner, and its capacity is likely to have increased, there is limited evidence of ILET's impact on other humanitarian agencies. Other agencies have been involved through the cluster meetings, learning about the approach and its activities, but this is unlikely to impact the actual capacity of these actors significantly. The efficiency section explains that ILET systematically evaluates the learning environment with several components, including the DMP. These components will be difficult to understand for agencies without directly being involved in the implementation phase of the approach. The MoE has been more involved than other actors, as they have been directly involved in the approach through training and implementation of activities. Programme staff highlighted the involvement of the MoE throughout the performance of ILET¹¹⁷, which may have led to an increased capacity of these actors. However, progress here is limited by the Somali government's priorities and limited funding and capacity building for the education sector. Nonetheless, programme staff highlighted that the MoE has also become involved through approach monitoring by sending monitoring personnel to implementation schools to complete a checklist on the school's status.

“We also developed mentors in the community to complete monitoring visits on a weekly basis. These mentors are chosen by the MoE and trained by Save the Children, who conduct monitoring visits every week. They go to the school and conduct checklists, complete classroom observations, and have discussions with children.”
-Programme Staff, Somalia¹¹⁸

South Sudan

Relevance

This section analyses the relevance of ILET in South Sudan. The findings suggest differences in respondents' involvement in ILET between schools/counties. Specifically, the evaluation found better communication lines between programme staff and school communities in Bor than in Rumbek. Therefore, there has also been a difference in the approach's relevance between counties. These findings highlight the importance of including the school community in feedback sessions and SIP planning to validate and discuss results.

Students. Unlike in Somalia, not many students claimed to have been involved in data collection (only one student). However, many said they had been engaged in SIP planning and implementation. For example, the one child that had participated in data collection noted that he could express the need for new latrines, as the ones that had been previously built had broken down after the floods¹¹⁹. In addition, students said that the head boys and girls were more involved after ILET was implemented, but these students had already graduated. Nonetheless, due to ILET, the students seemed to be well aware of ILET, SC, and the activities implemented in the school. In addition, students recognized that the most significant challenges faced in accessing education in these communities were the region's high poverty levels and insecurity¹²⁰. However, the insecurity situation has improved over the last few years as the 2018 Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) that was agreed upon was implemented in February 2020¹²¹.

¹¹⁷ Programme Staff KII, Somalia, R1, R4, R5.

¹¹⁸ Programme Staff KII, Somalia, R5.

¹¹⁹ Male Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R1.

¹²⁰ Male Student FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R2. Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R3.

¹²¹ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2022 Country Report — South Sudan. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2022. <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/SSD>

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Nevertheless, poverty levels remain high in these regions, limiting students' and families' ability to buy uniforms and materials or pay school fees. Respondents claimed that one of the main reasons students drop out is their inability to pay school fees¹²². Therefore, ILET implemented relevant activities by “giving school materials such as exercise books, school bags, pens, and pencils”¹²³ to students.

“We are given exercise books for free, and I am proud that since I joined this school, I have never bought an exercise book or pen with my own money.”

-Male Student, Bor Bright School¹²⁴

Respondents also highlighted that the most vulnerable populations in these regions are girls and children with disabilities. Girls face several challenges in accessing education and/or attending classes regularly, such as being married early for their families to obtain a dowry and being taken to cattle camps. In addition, schools not having appropriate hygiene and sanitation facilities for girls to use¹²⁵. Children with disabilities also face problems similar to those faced by children with disabilities in Somalia, including difficulties moving around the school compound, abuse and neglect, and trouble getting to school, especially when communities are flooded¹²⁶. ILET has conducted relevant activities, including awareness-raising and child clubs, which include these vulnerable students and motivate them to stay in school¹²⁷. Furthermore, SC tries to ensure that all facilities built as part of ILET are accessible to children with disabilities¹²⁸. In this way, ILET has been relevant to these marginalized groups through soft interventions to increase community awareness.

Teachers and head teachers. Most teachers at the intervention schools are volunteer teachers. This means that they are not fully qualified teachers and, in many cases, do not receive a salary, which leads to a lack of motivation and incentives. However, several teachers claimed involvement in the process, from data collection to SIP implementation. One of the teachers explained that she had even been trained as an enumerator by SC, so she was one of the enumerators who had collected data in that school¹²⁹. The teachers explained that their main challenges in school were the lack of teacher salaries and infrastructure, including classrooms and offices¹³⁰. One programme staff member highlighted that in the past several years, some parents had begun to pool money which was then given to teachers; however, this was not mentioned during parents or teacher FGDs¹³¹. Respondents highlighted that many new infrastructure facilities had been constructed due to ILET, which made teaching easier for them. These included storage facilities, TLSs, and offices¹³². Teachers also said that training had

¹²² Male Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R3. Female Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R8. Teacher FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R5. Parent FGD, Rumbek Complex School. Female Student FGD, Bor Bright School R6, R5. Parents FGD, Bor Bright School, R6, R8. Male Student FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R2. Female Student FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R4, R6.

¹²³ Male student FGD, Rumbek, R6.

¹²⁴ Male Student, Bor Bright School, R2

¹²⁵ Teacher FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R6. Female Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R6. Parent FGD, Bor Bright School, R1. Female Student FGD, R1. Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R3, R5. Parent FGD, Ritnom, R5

¹²⁶ Male Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School R1, R2, R3. Female Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R3. Female Student FGD, R3. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R1. Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R3, R5.

¹²⁷ Male Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R3. Female Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R6. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R1, R4, R6. Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R5.

¹²⁸ Programme Staff KII, South Sudan, R1.

¹²⁹ Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R4, R5. Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R2, R5.

¹³⁰ Teacher FGD, Rumbek Complex School. Parent FGD, Rumbek Complex School. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R1, R3. Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R2.

¹³¹ Programme Staff, South Sudan, R2.

¹³² Teacher FGD, Rumbek Complex. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R1. Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School R3. Head Teacher KII, Bor Bright School, R1. Teacher KII, Ritnom Primary School, R1.

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been highly relevant, as many were not qualified professional teachers. In addition, the training provided them with more information on South Sudan's new curriculum¹³³.

Head teachers had mixed feelings about their involvement in ILET. Head teachers in Bor were pleased with their participation throughout the process. They also agreed with the findings cards presented by SC and the priorities brought forward to improve the school, including the building of TLSs and school fences¹³⁴. However, the head teacher of Rumbek claimed not to be involved in data collection but confirmed he attended the training. He said that he had never seen the findings card or been presented with such by SC but that SC communicated directly with the State Ministry of Education in Lakes State instead. The lessons learned report also highlighted that there had been issues at Rumbek Complex School when presenting the findings to the school community, as both the Education Director and headteacher refuted the results¹³⁵. However, this was resolved by engaging with the individuals in a lengthy discussion and demonstrating the areas within the school that needed to be prioritized. This again highlights the importance of including stakeholders throughout the process and validating findings with them so that priorities are agreed on.

Parents. Similarly to other school community members, there were differences in how relevant they felt activities were between respondents in Bor and Rumbek. Parents in Bor were aware of the aim of the approach. They participated in data collection, feedback sessions, and SIP implementation. Furthermore, they highlighted that the SIP was clear for everyone at the school and that all PTA members had participated in ILET data collection¹³⁶. They were content that their ideas had been incorporated into the process and that specific activities had been implemented that were relevant to them as parents and PTA members, such as training on child rights and governance¹³⁷. However, parents in Rumbek claimed that they had only become aware of the SIP once engineers had come to the school and begun building the school fencing¹³⁸. They also said they had not been involved in any stage of ILET and, therefore, had little knowledge of the implemented activities¹³⁹. The differing levels of awareness indicate that there have been some differences in how ILET was executed between the two regions and that stakeholders have been much more involved in Bor. Therefore, ILET implementation is recommended to be replicated in all intervention areas to ensure the relevance of activities.

Coherence

The coherence of ILET in South Sudan seems to have been high, partly due to the increased involvement of government and local officials throughout the approach and the limited number of humanitarian actors implementing programmes at the ILET schools. Evidence suggests that there was no duplication of activities between humanitarian actors at the schools and that ILET could provide value to the larger NORAD project, which is a part of. The section again highlights that the systematic assessment used by ILET was effective in identifying relevant areas to prioritise in the schools so that ILET did not duplicate activities.

External coherence. Respondents noted that other actors, such as WFP, Red Cross, SAADO, ACDF, and JAM, had also implemented initiatives in the ILET schools¹⁴⁰. However, the types of activities these other organizations were implementing were not similar to those implemented by ILET, and there was no evidence of duplication of activities. For example, WFP is primarily involved in the schools by implementing food programmes. In contrast,

¹³³ Teacher FGD, Rumbek Complex School. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R5. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R2, R5. Head Teacher KII, Ritnom Primary School, R1.

¹³⁴ Head teacher KII, Bor Bright School, R1. Head teacher KII, Ritnom Primary School, R1.

¹³⁵ South Sudan Lessons Learned Report 2019.

¹³⁶ Parent FGD, Bor Bright School, R2, R6, R8. Parent FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R4, R5, R6.

¹³⁷ Parent FGD, Bor Bright School, R2, R7, R8. Parent FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R4, R5.

¹³⁸ Parent FGD, Rumbek Complex School.

¹³⁹ Parent FGD, Rumbek Complex School.

¹⁴⁰ Male Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School. Female Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R3. Head teacher KII, Bor Bright School, R1. Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R4. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R1, R5.

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the Red Cross installed hand sanitation stations at schools during the COVID pandemic¹⁴¹. In addition, the consultation measures through which ILET identifies school priorities should ensure that activities are not duplicated and that ILET activities specifically identify school areas that must be prioritized. For example, the head teacher at Rumbek Complex school explained that they had planned to build a new borehole with the support of ILET. However, UNICEF made the borehole instead, so the focus of ILET activities shifted towards building a fence around the school¹⁴². Furthermore, respondents in Bor explained that ILET was implemented through SAADO. This is important to mention as it suggests that SC was able to involve other humanitarian actors in ILET to increase the external coherence of the approach¹⁴³.

Another critical theme throughout discussions with respondents was the state education ministries' involvement and the approach's coherence with the ministry's goals and activities¹⁴⁴. The head teacher at Rumbek Complex school highlighted that activities were coordinated through the State Ministry of Education in Lakes State. Programme staff explained that local officials and ministry officials had been trained on ILET data collection by SC, and they collected that data. Therefore, the State Ministry of Education was well-informed throughout the process¹⁴⁵. Furthermore, ILET's objectives are coherent with South Sudan General Education Strategic Plan 2017-2022, specifically their goals i) to provide equitable access to learning opportunities for all citizens, ii) to contribute to all personal development of each learner, and the moral, social, cultural, political, and economic development of the nation, and iii) to enhance the quality of education and encourage a culture of innovation¹⁴⁶. The Strategic Plan also highlights critical policies that the government of South Sudan would focus on, such as maintaining gains in school enrolment and improving access to education through the provision of learning spaces¹⁴⁷. ILET has prioritized these activities in South Sudan through awareness raising in the communities and building TLSs. The activities above thus demonstrate the coherence between ILET activities and the government's goals and objectives.

Internal coherence. In South Sudan, ILET was implemented as part of the NORAD project. Programme staff noted that ILET had been coherent with the goals of NORAD and had added value to it¹⁴⁸. Programme staff highlighted that before the ILET programme was implemented, both MoE and school communities believed that humanitarian actors should provide for their school needs. However, the extensive feedback sessions and SIP planning made the school community understand that NGOs alone could not support all of the school community's needs and that the schools themselves would need to take the initiative and fill the gaps, which humanitarian actors and the MoE could not¹⁴⁹. Therefore, ILET was vital to creating a sense of accountability and ownership among community members over their respective communities' schooling quality¹⁵⁰.

Unlike in Somalia, many SIP activities were directly implemented by the community, and some schools did not receive any funding to implement SIP activities. This means that ILET activities were less reliant on support from

¹⁴¹ Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R4. Head teacher KII, Ritnom Primary School, R1. Head teacher KII, Bor Bright School, R1. Female Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R3.

¹⁴² Head teacher KII, Rumbek Complex School, R1.

¹⁴³ Head teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R1. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R5, R1. Head teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R1. Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R5.

¹⁴⁴ Head teacher FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R1. Programme Staff, South Sudan, R1. Programme Staff, South Sudan, R2. Teacher FGD, Rumbek Complex School. Parent FGD, Rumbek Complex School.

¹⁴⁵ Programme Staff, South Sudan, R1.

¹⁴⁶ Ministry of General Education and Instruction of South Sudan. The General Education Strategic Plan, 2017-2022. May 2017. https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/general_education_strategic_plan_south_sudan_2017-2022.pdf

¹⁴⁷ Ministry of General Education and Instruction of South Sudan. The General Education Strategic Plan, 2017-2022. May 2017. https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/general_education_strategic_plan_south_sudan_2017-2022.pdf

¹⁴⁸ Programme Staff, South Sudan, R1. Programme Staff, South Sudan, R2.

¹⁴⁹ Programme Staff KII, South Sudan, R1.

¹⁵⁰ Programme Staff KII, South Sudan, R1.

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the larger NORAD project. Nonetheless, some activities, such as constructing latrines, fences, and boreholes, were funded through Pooled Funds from the Safe Back to School Project and the Safe School Constructions budgets. This suggests that although an ILET stand-alone approach could be effective, the local contexts limited the scale of activities implemented due to resource limitations.

Effectiveness

This section will use a combination of data from KIIs and FGDs, and data from the ILET DMP to assess the effectiveness of ILET on the five QLF foundations. DMP data related to the efficacy of the ILET approach are broadly consistent with the primary data collected as part of the present evaluation. Among the various foundations under the QLF, the emotional and psychosocial protection, school management, and leadership foundations have progressed most between rounds. On the other hand, parents, community, and teaching and learning foundations have not seen much progress.

Emotional and psychosocial protection. During the first year of implementation of ILET in South Sudan, this QLF foundation was found to be at the lowest level out of the five QLF foundations, according to the DMP. However, as of 2022, the foundation has seen the most significant improvement. Both programme staff members noted a particular improvement in this foundation¹⁵¹. At the beginning of implementing ILET, it was found that schools were struggling with the foundation's social and emotional learning components. Discussion with respondents also suggests that several activities were explicitly implemented to address this gap.

Some respondents attributed the improvement of this component to the formation of child clubs at the schools. For example, one of the head teachers in Bor explained that they had formed educational clubs like debate, reading, and peace clubs¹⁵². The teacher also opined that peace clubs were particularly effective as they allowed children to mediate their problems without fighting¹⁵³. Teachers and parents also believed that the child rights clubs and girls' rights clubs had effectively taught girls and boys about the disadvantages of dropping out of school and their rights as children¹⁵⁴. In addition, students noted that they had enjoyed forming new debate clubs, allowing them to improve their public speaking¹⁵⁵. These clubs and recreational activities were essential as awareness-raising and social activities where children could develop positive relationships with their peers.

“We formed child rights clubs, and complaint/feedback mechanisms have been implemented in schools. This means all children at the school are more aware of their rights, and children with disability are also part of these clubs. These clubs’ role is to create awareness that schools are a learning environment, so there should be no fighting or bullying.”
-Programme Staff, South Sudan¹⁵⁶

There is evidence that ILET has been effective in improving the emotional and psychosocial protection foundation through the implementation of children’s clubs to inform children about the importance of education and their rights and the creation of more recreational activities, such as debate competitions, to improve the social and emotional learning of students. These soft interventions can be necessary to teach children about socialising while also helping them build essential life skills that may not be obtainable through regular classroom interactions.

¹⁵¹ Programme Staff KII, South Sudan, R1. Programme Staff, South Sudan, R2.

¹⁵² Head teacher KII, Bor Bright School, R1.

¹⁵³ Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R2. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R1.

¹⁵⁴ Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R4. Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R5. Parent FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R4.

¹⁵⁵ Male Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R5. Female Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R6.

¹⁵⁶ Programme Staff, South Sudan, R2.

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Physical protection. This component also saw an improvement, according to the ILET DMP. The improvement was recorded in i) School safety and management and ii) Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH). Respondents named several activities that they believed had effectively improved the schools' water, sanitation, and hygiene infrastructure. Firstly, some new latrines and boreholes were built to improve the WASH at the schools¹⁵⁷. However, there is evidence that there has been backtracking in this regard in recent times due to the flooding at the schools. Respondents in both Bor and Rumbek explained that the latrines that had been previously built with help from SC had flooded and were no longer accessible or functional. As one teacher said in Rumbek, “during the rainy season, the latrines got flooded from the ground, the water leaking from under the ground, and this got worse. It needs a sewage drainage system to get out when it is full.” Therefore, the effectiveness of these complex interventions has been limited by the context of the region and the heavy floods that have affected the areas in the last two years. However, soft interventions were also attributed to effectively improving the WASH component—specifically, implementing school children's hygiene clubs. Several respondents explained that these clubs had taught children about hygiene and ways to stop the spread of disease¹⁵⁸.

Although there was less evidence of successful activities that had improved school safety and management, this component's improvement may reflect the increased security in these communities. Students felt safer this year compared to previous years, as implementing the R-ARCSS brought security to these communities. Students from one school added that complex interventions, such as building a fence around their school, had made them feel safer because they stopped other community members from entering the school¹⁵⁹. Students in Bor also noted that the Brigadier General had cleared any gangs from the communities, making children feel safer¹⁶⁰. Although other respondents did not mention it, one programme staff explained that youth groups had been set up to prevent child kidnappings and gangs from bothering children on their way to school¹⁶¹. As a result, students said they felt safe in school and the community.

One interesting finding from the ILET DMP is that there had been a worsening of the safe and accessible learning spaces component at ILET schools. This is interesting because one of the commonly cited activities when discussing the improvements ILET had made in their schools was the installation of new infrastructure in 2019. Specifically, many respondents cited the success of SC and the school community in building new TLS in their schools. This allowed many of the children to stop having classes outdoors. Similarly to Somalia, the SIP of Ritnom school also highlighted that improving this QLF foundation was one of the school's main priorities. Activities in the SIP included the renovation of washrooms, kitchen, classroom doors, and school gates; constructing the classrooms, dormitory, and staffroom; and expanding the school kitchen and garden. Again, evidence from this SIP suggests that improving school facilities is one of the priorities of the school community.

There was a general theme amongst respondents: although the facilities had been built, some of them were beginning to break down¹⁶². For example, respondents reported that many doors and windows had broken down

¹⁵⁷ Male Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R2. Female Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R1, R6. Male Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R4, R6. Female Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R3, R4, R5, R6. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R2, R3. Parent FGD, Bor Bright School, R1. Male Student FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R6. Parent FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R4. Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R6.

¹⁵⁸ Male student FGD, Bor Bright School, R3. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R4, R5. Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R2, R4.

¹⁵⁹ Male Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R4. Female Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R4. Teacher FGD, Rumbek Complex School. Parent FGD, Rumbek Complex School.

¹⁶⁰ Male Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R4. Female Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R2.

¹⁶¹ Programme staff KII, South Sudan, R2.

¹⁶² Female Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R1, R2, R3, R5. Parent FGD, Bor Bright School, R8. Head teacher KII, Bor Bright School, R1. Head Teacher KII, Rumbek Complex School, R1. Male Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School.

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in some classrooms in their school¹⁶³. This may be because many of these infrastructure activities were primarily implemented by the communities with minimal support from SC; therefore, the infrastructure quality is not high. In addition, the worsening of school facilities may also be explained by the recent floods, which have damaged many of the facilities at these schools. Therefore, in future projects, SC may need to be more directly involved in implementing infrastructure activities to ensure that installed infrastructures are adequately durable.

“In the last year, some of our classrooms had walls made of mud, but the flood washed it down, and we had to remove mud and use iron sheets. So the borehole was drilled last year, and toilets and TLS rooms were also constructed.”

-Headteacher KII, Bor Bright School¹⁶⁴

Teaching and learning. According to the ILET DMP, this foundation has seen little improvement since 2019. However, when looking more closely at the components that make up this foundation, this is likely due to some components' progress and the backtracking of others. For example, the DMP suggests that there have been some improvements in the components related to teaching material and the use of planning, assessment, and reporting. However, other components, such as pedagogical practices, teacher well-being, and development, saw little improvement.

The improvement of teachers was noted throughout data collection. Students pointed out that their schools' teaching quality had improved as teachers were punctual and willing to spend extra time explaining lessons that students did not understand¹⁶⁵. In addition, teachers explained that they had received books and teacher guides¹⁶⁶. These materials are essential for teachers to keep children engaged during lessons. However, the use of pedagogical practices has remained low throughout the implementation of the approach despite training being conducted with teachers. These included training on management, teaching methods, and dealing with the community and students¹⁶⁷.

Similarly to Somalia, teachers mentioned training, but according to the Ritnom school SIP, teachers only received psychosocial support and first aid training. Again, this may suggest that teachers received training from other development programmes, not through ILET. Nevertheless, teachers noted that the training had been well run and was now guiding them in their daily work in the school¹⁶⁸. The backtracking in pedagogical practices may suggest that teachers are not using these teaching practices in the classroom or that more training is required to incorporate these teaching methods.

The component that has seen minor progress, noted by several respondents during discussions, was the teacher well-being and development component. Many teachers at implementation schools are volunteer teachers. Unfortunately, in many cases, teachers are not qualified or paid. This is a severe hindrance as teachers lack motivation or incentives to teach at these schools. For example, the school in Rumbek noted that 18 teachers are volunteer teachers, and only two are paid¹⁶⁹. The issue of teacher incentives was brought up at all three schools.

¹⁶³ Male Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School.

¹⁶⁴ Head teacher KII, Bor Bright School, R1.

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¹⁶⁶ Teacher FGD, Rumbek Complex School. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R3. Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R3.

¹⁶⁷ Teacher FGD, Rumbek Complex School. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R5. Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R2, R5. Head teacher KII, Rumbek Complex School, R1. Head teacher KII, Bor Bright School, R1. Head Teacher KII, Ritnom Primary School, R1.

¹⁶⁸ Teacher FGD, Rumbek Complex School. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R5. Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R2, R5.

¹⁶⁹ Head teacher KII, Rumbek Complex School, R1.

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According to teachers and parents, this is the biggest hindrance to the school's ability to provide quality teaching¹⁷⁰. ILET raised awareness of this, and some communities began pooling money to incentivize teachers¹⁷¹. Furthermore, a head teacher in Bor noted, "We had 15 teachers this year, but three more teachers volunteered, and we now have 18 teachers"¹⁷². This suggests that despite teachers' difficulties, the importance of education is understood in these communities. Hence, teachers are willing to keep providing education for children. Although providing teacher salaries is beyond the approach's scope and is potentially difficult for communities to implement due to poverty levels, other activities such as training may motivate teachers and contribute towards becoming qualified teachers.

Parent and community. This was the component with the best rating at the beginning of the approach's implementation, which may be why there has been no particular improvement on this foundation throughout the approach. Interestingly, the parent and community participation component worsened. In contrast, the learning at home and in the community component improved since the approach's beginning. Throughout the discussion with participants, community engagement seemed high. Many respondent types were actively involved in implementing school improvement activities. For example, many of the infrastructure activities were directly executed by the PTA, with monitoring support from SC¹⁷³. This included the PTA in Bor coming together to build classrooms, plant trees, and construct food storage facilities¹⁷⁴. This shows that PTA and parents have become actively involved in school planning and activities. Respondents also mentioned that the involvement of other community members had been essential to increasing awareness in the community for school activities. In Bor specifically, religious leaders and chiefs played a crucial role in raising money for the school, speaking with parents to let their children go to school, and making school announcements¹⁷⁵.

Similarly to Somalia, there seemed to be an improvement in parental support at home for girls and boys. However, household support remained lower for girls than boys. Both girls and boys reported that they had begun to receive more support when completing homework from teachers and family members¹⁷⁶. Girls noted that they were still more likely to miss school due to sanitary issues but that parents and brothers would be the ones to check that they were attending school and not skipping classes¹⁷⁷. One parent noted, "I used to allow them to help me care for my cows and farm, but after ILET training, I have now taken all the duties and allowed both girls and boys to focus on their studies." Therefore, soft interventions such as general community awareness sessions are essential and practical for parents to learn about the importance of education. The SIP of Ritnom school also highlighted that community awareness-raising sessions had been an ILET activity as the PTA and school management committee had been conducting awareness meetings with the community since 2021.

School leadership and management. This foundation has seen a substantial improvement, according to the ILET DMP. Both components within this foundation have seen a significant improvement. Firstly, the inclusive and protective policies component was noted to have improved considerably. Based on a discussion with respondents, this is likely due to the reduction and abolishment of physical punishment in schools and general

¹⁷⁰ Teacher FGD, Rumbek Complex School. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R1, R3. Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R2, R5, R6.

¹⁷¹ Programme staff KII, South Sudan, R2.

¹⁷² Head teacher KII, Ritnom Primary School, KII.

¹⁷³ Male Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R1. Female Student FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R5. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R5. Male Student FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R2. Ritnom Primary School, R4, R1. Parent FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R3, R4.

¹⁷⁴ Parent FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R3, R4, R6.

¹⁷⁵ Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R5. Parent FGD, Bor Bright School, R8. Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School. Parent FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R4. Head teacher KII, Bor Bright School, R1. Head teacher KII, Ritnom Primary School, R1.

¹⁷⁶ Male Student FGD, Rumbek School Complex, R5. Male Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R1. Female Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R1, R2, R6. Male Student FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R5. Female Student FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R3, R4.

¹⁷⁷ Female Student FGD, R1, R2, R3, R5, R6. Female Student FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R4.

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adherence to the teacher's CoC. According to the Ritnom school SIP, the school CoC was revised in 2021 through inputs from the PTA and school management committee.

Students noted that the amount of physical punishment had been reduced. Now, physical punishment is barely used in their schools¹⁷⁸. This was also indicated by parents who clarified that physical punishment had been abolished from their school¹⁷⁹. Students explained that when students misbehaved or fought, their parents would be called to the school, or the students would be sent home for the day¹⁸⁰. This shows that ILET has been effective in eliminating corporal punishment from schools. Therefore, children must see school as a friendly environment where they can come without fear. Students also noted that other aspects of teacher performance had improved as teachers had begun to follow the pre-determined teacher schedule and were more punctual¹⁸¹. One student explained that "teaching in our school is good. Teachers come on time and give lessons according to the school timetable"¹⁸².

"Before Save the Children came, the teachers punished students physically, which led to many students dropping out. Then, Save the Children came and told the teachers to cease using physical punishment against students, and indeed that has changed."

-Rumbek School Complex, Male Student¹⁸³

The second component which saw improvement in these schools was leading learning. This component refers to the involvement of school leaders in leading learning in their school and communicating a guiding vision for the school. For example, one of the head teachers in Bor explained that he had been trained in the design and implementation of SIPs. As a result of his training, he now displays SIPs on the board of his office as a reminder of essential action items and as a record of progress made towards SIP goals¹⁸⁴. This practice also seemed to have been effective in socializing the SIPs among school members, as respondents in this school were aware of the activities part of this SIP and the timeline of these activities. The Ritnom school SIP also highlighted that their school complaints mechanisms had been revised and strengthened in 2021. There was also evidence from other schools that school management had actively addressed student and teacher complaints in the suggestion boxes¹⁸⁵. One example was given by the Rumbek school head teacher, who explained that several students had complained about one of the teachers using physical punishment. After a discussion with the teacher, the head teacher dismissed him, for which the students were grateful¹⁸⁶.

The data suggest that ILET has helped school management teams implement suitable systems to communicate a vision for their schools and hold teachers and students accountable. This is particularly important for ILET, as school management is critical to the sustainability of the approach. In addition, school management teams and

¹⁷⁸ Male Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R2, R3. Female Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R4. Male Student FGD, Bor Bright Complex, R3. Female Student FGD, Bor Bright Complex, R3. Male Student FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R3. Female Student FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R3.

¹⁷⁹ Parents FGD, Bor Bright School, 8.

¹⁸⁰ Male Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R3. Female Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R4. Male Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R2, R3. Female Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R1, R2, R3, R6. Male Student FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R2, R5. Female Student FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R4.

¹⁸¹ Male Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R2. Female Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R1. Female Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R6.

¹⁸² Male Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R2.

¹⁸³ Male Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R2.

¹⁸⁴ Head teacher KII, Ritnom Primary School, R1.

¹⁸⁵ Head teacher KII, Ritnom Primary School, R1. Head teacher KII, Rumbek Complex School, R1. Head teacher KII, Bor Bright School, R1.

¹⁸⁶ Head teacher KII, Rumbek Complex School, R1.

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PTAs are essential in creating SIPs and improving the school environment. Therefore, when the capacity of school management teams increases, it is likely that they will be able to continue to apply many of the lessons from ILET to keep improving their school.

Efficiency

This section discusses the findings on the efficiency of ILET in South Sudan. Based on the KIIs and FGDs, the research team found that programme staff in South Sudan initially found data collection and analysis to be the least efficient part of the approach. Respondents also mentioned several issues during data collection, often due to connection errors when inputting data into the DMP. However, once programme staff had become more familiar with the system, it became an efficient data analysis tool, highlighting the areas needing prioritization at each school.

Challenges. The biggest challenge noted by programme staff was the implementation of SIP activities¹⁸⁷. As explained earlier, SC provided funding at only some of the ILET schools in South Sudan; therefore, the school implemented most of the activities with guidance from SC. However, programme staff said that although the school community was highly involved at the planning stage, it was much harder for the PTA to mobilize the community when implementing activities. In addition, although parents were willing to provide labor, obtaining the required resources to implement the activities was harder. Headteachers highlighted this and admitted they could not implement all SIP activities as planned¹⁸⁸. Therefore, it is vital that when planning the SIP, SC is directly involved and tries to make the available resources clear so that the school can focus on implementing activities. However, this had already been noted by the SC team, who said that in the second round of the ILET, SC had become more involved in SIP implementation to ensure the activities were of the required quality¹⁸⁹.

Those interviewed also said that data collection and analysis were less efficient than expected. One of the issues was that the tool was quite long, especially tools used for teacher FGDs and classroom observations¹⁹⁰. It was noted that teachers were often hesitant to be observed, as they claimed they were only volunteer teachers and had not been trained¹⁹¹. The bulky FGD tool can also be an issue as teachers were made to stay behind after their lessons and quickly lost interest in the discussion¹⁹². In this way, tool length impacted the quality of the data collected. The efficiency of data collection and analysis was also affected by the random sampling used in the data collection. The selected respondents, such as parents, were sometimes those who were generally not involved in their child's education and, therefore, could not fully participate in the discussion¹⁹³. Although a purely random sampling method helps avoid bias in the analysis, it would be helpful to mix random sampling with purposive sampling so that some key informants can be included, such as children with disabilities. More informed respondents can encourage those less informed to share their views.

Positives. Like what programme staff noted in Somalia, the most efficient part of the approach was the feedback and SIP planning sessions. This is because these sessions validated findings and allowed the school community to discuss the issues each faced, creating a shared understanding between community members¹⁹⁴. SIP planning was also vital to create ownership and accountability among respondents in the school community. Everyone was given clear roles and responsibilities they were expected to maintain, which are included in the SIP. These

¹⁸⁷ Programme Staff KII, South Sudan, R1. Programme Staff KII, South Sudan, R2.

¹⁸⁸ Head teacher KII, Ritnom Primary School, R1. Head teacher KII, Rumbek Complex School, R1. Head teacher KII, Bor Bright School, R1.

¹⁸⁹ Programme Staff KII, South Sudan, R1.

¹⁹⁰ Programme Staff KII, South Sudan, R1.

¹⁹¹ Programme Staff KII, South Sudan, R1.

¹⁹² Programme Staff KII, South Sudan, R1.

¹⁹³ ILET Lesson Learned Document South Sudan 2019

¹⁹⁴ Programme Staff KII, South Sudan, R1. Programme Staff KII, South Sudan, R2.

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meetings are also when SC can make the school community aware that it is not only the humanitarian actors' responsibility to improve the school but that they all must work together to improve the learning environment.

Views on the DMP were mainly positive. However, it remains essential to hold more regular training due to staff turnover and the difficulties of learning the platform. As explained by programme staff, the DMP is challenging to be acquainted with when first using it without direct guidance¹⁹⁵. However, once understood, it is a valuable tool that gives a clear and systematic analysis of schools' progression and the areas that must be prioritized¹⁹⁶. The staff only faced prioritization issues at one of the schools, so the outputs of the DMP were accurate and vital for the efficient implementation of the approach. It is recommended that MEAL teams (and other relevant staff) involved in ILET are trained at least once a year so they not only rely on the guides but have more hands-on experience with the tools.

Sustainability

This section discusses the sustainability of the approach's benefits. Overall, the sustainability challenges remain similar to those in Somalia. While the school community can continue implementing smaller-scale activities requiring fewer resources, such as children's clubs, teacher monitoring, and infrastructure maintenance, larger-scale interventions are more difficult to implement due to a lack of resources. One key difference between the implementation of the approach in Somalia and South Sudan is that schools in South Sudan received limited funding, which forced the school community to implement most activities by sourcing local materials and involving local community members in manual labor. This led to increased ownership of activities, increasing the sustainability of the approach. However, at the same time, it has also led to some infrastructure being built to be of low quality, reducing the sustainability of the physical infrastructure created under the ILET approach.

Progress and challenges. The ILET schools received much less financial support as part of ILET when compared to schools in Somalia. Only Bor Bright school received any financial support from our sample of schools. This would suggest that activities implemented as part of ILET should be somewhat sustainable. The significant challenge to the sustainability of benefits in some schools in Somalia was the lack of resources in the communities. However, in South Sudan, activities were implemented using local resources. When speaking to the school community, they believed that several of the benefits of the approach would be sustainable, such as the maintenance of infrastructure, the knowledge obtained during the teacher training, and the new CoCs implemented as part of the approach¹⁹⁷. As one head teacher explained, "most ILET activities demand much more capital than small activities that the PTA can handle, and without SC, activities like writing materials and borehole would be challenging." This suggests that many of the significant benefits of the approach, such as the reduction of physical punishment at the school and the improved quality of teaching, are likely to continue, as these were soft interventions and would require that teachers are held accountable by school management and the PTA.

However, teachers and parents were worried that many children would drop out once the approach ended and volunteer teachers left. In addition, respondents explained that if learners do not receive school materials, it will be difficult for parents to provide this¹⁹⁸. This can affect children's ability to do well in school and may lead to students' demotivation. Similarly, in the case of teachers, without the coordination help of ILET to organize parents to pool together money for teachers, teacher performance and quality improvements may not be sustainable.

¹⁹⁵ Programme Staff KII, South Sudan, R1.

¹⁹⁶ Programme Staff KII, South Sudan, R1.

¹⁹⁷ Head teacher KII, Rumbek Complex School, R1. Head teacher KII, Bor Bright School, R1, Head teacher KII, Ritnom Primary School, R1. Teacher FGD, Rumbek Complex School. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R3, R5. Teacher FGD, R5.

¹⁹⁸ Male Student FGD, Rumbek School Complex, R4. Female Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R3. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R3.

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When comparing the results in Somalia and South Sudan, on noteworthy difference is the funding schools received through ILET. On the one hand, schools in Somalia received more funding and, therefore, could implement several quality infrastructure activities. However, it was also noted that the greater reliance on external funding meant less direct involvement in activity implementation from the school communities in Somalia. On the other hand, the school communities in South Sudan were much more involved in activity implementation, including building classrooms, setting up school gardens, and participating in hygiene activities¹⁹⁹. This is positive for the sustainability of the approach, as communities took the initiative and conducted their activities through the PTA, which is essential to build a sense of accountability and ownership in the school community²⁰⁰.

However, there is also evidence that the quality of the infrastructure built in South Sudan is not the same as that in Somalia. Respondents in South Sudan explained that the floods had heavily affected many infrastructures they had created²⁰¹. For example, the Rumbek Complex school head teacher explained that although several facilities had been built in the last three years, “the girls’ toilets, store, and kitchen are about to collapse and need to be urgently improved. In addition, the gate of the school compound and doors for the classrooms from the main building have broken and need to be fixed”²⁰². This suggests a relationship exists between SC’s support and the quality of implemented activities. Furthermore, programme staff highlighted that communities struggled to implement many of the activities that had been planned due to a lack of resources and capacity. Therefore, it is critical that when implementing the approach, a balance is found between the support of SC to ensure the quality of activities and the independence that communities are given to implement their activities.

Activities adopted in the community. Several schools within these communities are also part of ILET; therefore, similar activities have been implemented at these schools. Unlike in Somalia, there seemed to be a cooperation structure between schools as a couple of respondents mentioned that other schools had visited their schools and had been impressed with the cleanliness of the schools²⁰³. Teachers noted that some activities had already been copied by other schools, including building school gardens at their school, introducing more children’s clubs, and building dykes to prevent flooding from damaging the school²⁰⁴. Programme staff also noted that the building of TLSs had begun to spread to many other schools and is sometimes implemented by different partners as a cheap solution for schools to teach students in classrooms²⁰⁵. However, implementing more resource-intensive interventions, such as the construction of boreholes or the provision of school materials, would be more complex for schools to implement without external support²⁰⁶. The spread of soft interventions, which do not require many resources, would be increased if school communities had more evident communications lines so that innovative activities, which are implemented by one school, can spread to other schools and improve the quality of schools in these communities

Impact

Due to implementation contexts within these countries and ILET being part of the NORAD programme, it is hard to pinpoint the exact impact of ILET activities. This is because external factors such as the implementation of the R-ARCSS and the impact of NORAD activities also played a role in these communities and impacted the school

¹⁹⁹ Male Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R1. Female Student FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R5. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R5. Male Student FGD, Rintom Primary School, R2. Ritnom Primary School, R4, R1. Parent FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R3, R4.

²⁰⁰ Programme Staff KII, South Sudan, R1

²⁰¹ Female Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R1, R2, R3. Male Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R1, R3, R4, R5. Female Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R8. Parent FGD, Bor Bright School, R1, R8. Parent FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R3.

²⁰² Head teacher FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R1.

²⁰³ Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R3. Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R6.

²⁰⁴ Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R6. Teacher FGD, Rumbek Complex. Head teacher KII, Bor Bright School, R1.

²⁰⁵ Programme Staff KII, South Sudan, R1.

²⁰⁶ Teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R6. Head teacher KII, Bor Bright School, R1.

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communities. However, evidence suggests that ILET (in combination with other factors) has positively impacted these schools, especially in increasing access to education and community engagement. Furthermore, no negative impacts were noted by any respondents.

Increased capacity at the school/learning space level to improve the quality education environment. There is evidence that ILET positively impacted this outcome-level objective. First, respondents, particularly students, reported an increase in the teacher's ability to teach using quality learning techniques²⁰⁷. One of the most significant impacts of the approach was the reported reduction of physical punishment given to students. This is key for children to focus on their education and not fear attending school. One of the schools in Bor evidenced this. Respondents said they had ranked second in South Sudan on average national examination scores²⁰⁸. As described in the effectiveness section, there is also evidence that the capacity of head teachers at the schools has increased; ILET activities equipped them with skills needed to improve the quality of education in their schools, such as by directly addressing students' concerns, identifying their own school's issues, and forming a plan to address issues through SIP.

Community engagement in improving the learning environment. Although community engagement seemed to already be high at the beginning of the approach, this has continued throughout the implementation of ILET. Specifically, programme staff reported increased engagement at the planning level, as the school community was happy to see that their ideas were considered and that, with guidance from SC, they could come up with solutions using locally sourced materials²⁰⁹. This was vital to building a sense of ownership and accountability in the school community. However, community engagement was more limited at the implementation level. Parents, teachers, and students were willing to give their time and offer their labor to improve the school environment by building TLSs and gardens. However, this was limited by the poverty levels in the communities²¹⁰. This shows that although the community is doing its best to engage with the school to improve the learning environment, this is still limited by the poverty levels in the communities, which limit the mobilization of resources and the implementation of the SIPs. It was also noted that the involvement of community leaders, particularly chiefs and church leaders, had improved through their participation in awareness-raising activities to increase school access and, to a smaller extent, through mobilization by church leaders to raise money for schools.

Improved access to and experiences of quality learning opportunities for students. Similarly, in Somalia, one of the most significant impacts of ILET was the improved access to education by children in ILET communities. For example, several respondents explained that the number of students had substantially increased last year²¹¹. However, this was attributed to several factors and not only ILET activities. For example, one parent said, "one of the changes in the school attendance level. In previous years, attendance was low. However, for the last three years, attendance has improved. Many children are coming to school because there is feeding and no more insecurity²¹²".

²⁰⁷ Male Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R2. Female Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R1, R2, R3. Female Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R1, R6. Parent FGD, Bor Bright School, R1, R2, R4. Male Student FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R3, R5. Parent FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R2.

²⁰⁸ Parent FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R5, R6. Head teacher FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R1.

²⁰⁹ Programme Staff KII, South Sudan, R1.

²¹⁰ Parent FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R3, R4, R6. Male Students FGD, Bor Bright School, R1. Parent FGD, Bor Bright School, R8. Female Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R2, R5.

²¹¹ Male teacher FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R4. Female Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R6. Parent FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R6. Head teacher KII, Ritnom Primary School, R1.

²¹² Parent FGD, Rumbek Complex School.

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On the other hand, other respondents attributed the increased enrolment to other factors, including awareness-raising activities by PTA and community leaders and improving school facilities²¹³. Therefore, it is likely that the increase in enrolment can be attributed to a combination of all these factors. However, according to respondents, one of the biggest influences was introducing a school feeding programme. Without this, school enrolment would likely decrease²¹⁴.

However, marginalised groups, such as children with disabilities and girls, still face more challenges than other students in school. Students with disabilities are particularly affected as they suffer from discrimination from students and face difficulty getting to school and participating in school activities²¹⁵. Although some activities have been implemented to increase awareness for these children and to increase mobility within the school, more activities targeting these specific children are necessary to see a real impact on these students. Similarly, for girls, there is evidence that awareness-raising activities have been able to inform the community about the importance of girls' education, but some cultural barriers remain²¹⁶.

Increased capacity of agencies and partners to provide quality and timely support. ILET has tried to increase the capacity of local partners and government officials by training them in data collection and monitoring. This is important for ILET to be continued by SC partners and for local communities to understand the whole process that ILET entails. However, the capacity building of MoE is likely to be a long process due to the limited resources and capacity in the MoE. For example, programme staff explained that schools had contacted MoE to request support to implement some SIP activities. However, the MoE shifted the burden back to humanitarian actors²¹⁷. The school management similarly opined that the government had limited resources and offered little support to the schools. Therefore, they could not implement many of the activities without support from SC²¹⁸.

Niger Relevance

This section will analyze the relevance of ILET in Niger. ILET was implemented under the BRiCE (Building Resilience: education opportunities in fragile and crisis-affected environments) programme and the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) programme. The findings suggest that within schools that involved the entire community throughout the process, the SIPs instituted under ILET proved successful and relevant to each community's needs. Schools reporting sporadic interactions with the activities still reported improvements in quality education. However, these appear to be less tied to a specific SIP and more closely to *ad-hoc* capacity-building training and assistance with infrastructure, which were often tangential to ILET activities. Nevertheless, the impact evaluation found that most activities undertaken under ILET were relevant responses to the school community's needs and suggestions.

Students. Students seemed to be generally familiar with ILET, although the extent they were involved seems to have varied. Students in Chétimari Traditionnelle were happy with the activities, reporting that they were

²¹³ Male teacher FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R4. Female Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R6. Parent FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R6. Head teacher KII, Ritnom Primary School, R1. Female Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R7, R8. Teacher FGD, Rumbek Complex School. Parent FGD, Rumbek Complex School.

²¹⁴ Male Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R1, R3, R5. Female Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R7, R8. Teacher FGD, Rumbek Complex School. Parent FGD, Rumbek Complex School.

²¹⁵ Male Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R2, R3. Female Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R5. Female Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R4. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R1, R2. Parent FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R3.

²¹⁶ Male Student FGD, Rumbek Complex School, R3. Female Student FGD, Bor Bright School, R6. Parent FGD, Bor Bright School, R1. Female Student FGD, Ritnom Primary School, R1. Teacher FGD, Bor Bright School, R3.

²¹⁷ Programme Staff KII, South Sudan, R1, R2.

²¹⁸ Head teacher KII, Rumbek School Complex, R1. Head teacher KII, Bor Bright School, R1. Head teacher KII, Ritnom Primary School, R1.

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involved in training and listened to as part of the development of the SIP²¹⁹. Female students at Malentendant noted that “the changes observed in our school in recent years are numerous. For example, learning and attendance. Things are getting better and better.”

On the other hand, students from Fanna Grima, Dan Barto Mixte, and Kantché, while familiar with SC, reported little knowledge of or inclusion within ILET-specific activities.²²⁰ The BRiCE endline evaluation echoes this gap, noting that in some regions, students’ voices are still not included in the ILET process due to fixed community ideas about the role of children.²²¹ However, students at these schools could point to outcomes of the approach, such as access to materials, improved relationships with teachers, and a heightened sense of security.²²² This may indicate they are more familiar with SC than ILET specifically. If so, however, there was still no indication that the respondent children had been included in SIP development in these schools.

Poverty remains a crucial factor in keeping children from school, as this was a challenge cited by nearly every respondent. As a result, support from SC to offset the costs of attending school (including school supplies and other financial aid) was heavily emphasized by students and parents.²²³ Students at Malentendant noted the importance of the school feeding programme: “It is customary to say that an empty stomach has no ears.”²²⁴

As with Somalia and South Sudan, girls and children with disabilities face challenges in receiving their education. Respondents, particularly in rural areas, reported that girls could be held back from school to assist their families in commerce, to help with animals, or because of “traditional” family expectations²²⁵. In addition, children with disabilities can face physical access issues to classrooms or latrines, difficulties in transport to and from school, and discrimination or bullying at school from their peers²²⁶. However, students in all schools could cite changes made to the school through ILET that address these concerns. This was particularly true in the case of children with disabilities, including the addition of ramps and accessible toilets and in establishing codes of conduct that emphasize equal treatment for all students regardless of gender or ability.²²⁷

Teachers and head teachers. Teacher involvement with the approach was also mixed. For example, the teachers at Chétimari traditionnelle and Malentendant reported being well-integrated into developing their SIPs.²²⁸ “As teachers, we collaborate a lot with ILET in the context of capacity building, especially pedagogy in the context of disability,” noted a teacher from Malentendant.²²⁹ Teachers at Dan Barto Mixte, on the other hand, were familiar with SC as an organization and reported receiving some ILET training, but note that they were not clear on the purpose of the approach or activities: “We were informed of this project by the Director who gave us the information. So there is a gap. There must be capacity building to know this project better. Because you need more information and know what it means, its purpose and its role and activities, and if possible, train people on it to know it better.”²³⁰ Similarly, in Kantché, teachers reported that they were not involved in ILET activities, though they were familiar with SC.²³¹ While it is possible that some respondents used SC and ILET

²¹⁹ Student FGD, Chétimari traditionnelle, R3.

²²⁰ Student FGD, Fanna Grima, R1, R2, Student FGD Dan Barto Mixte R3.

²²¹ BRiCE Endline Evaluation.

²²² Student FGD, Fanna Grima, R3.

²²³ Student FGD Dan Barto Mixte, R4, Parent FGD Dan Barto Mixte, R2, Head Teacher KII Fanna Grima, Student FGD Chétimari traditionnelle R3.

²²⁴ Male Student FGD, Malentendant, R2.

²²⁵ Parent FGD, Chétimari traditionnelle, R1, Head Teacher KII Kantché, Head Teacher KII Malentendant.

²²⁶ Head Teacher KII Kantché, Head Teacher KII Chétimari traditionnelle, Teacher FGD Malentendant R3

²²⁷ Head Teacher KII Malentendant, Teacher FGD Chétimari traditionnelle R2

²²⁸ Teacher FGD, Chétimari traditionnelle, R3.

²²⁹ Teacher FGD, Malentendant, R2.

²³⁰ Teacher FGD, Dan Barto Mixte, R3, R4.

²³¹ Teacher FGD, Kantché, R2.

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interchangeably, the gap in teacher involvement in these schools' SIP development is a missed opportunity for their input and buy-in.

“Save The Children, through its ILET approach, has carried out several activities within our school to improve education. It has trained us on several themes such as GBV, protection, the school improvement plan, and teaching pedagogy.”

-Teacher, Chétimari traditionnelle School²³²

Head teachers were familiar with ILET and happy to be involved. They pointed to improvements in the quality of teaching due to training, revisions to the codes of conduct, and the security measures offered by SC as relevant benefits of the approach.²³³ However, at times there appeared to be a feedback gap from SC back to the schools; the head teacher of Chétimari traditionnelle reported that, while SC would approach to discuss relevancy before any action was taken, he had not received any results and assumed those results would be going to his superiors.²³⁴

The theme of the physical environment was very present in the teachers' and head teachers' commentary, praising what had been done and noting that support was still needed. The construction of toilets and classrooms and the provision of tables and other school furniture were commonly referenced as relevant benefits of ILET.²³⁵ Programme staff also note this focus, which will be further discussed later.²³⁶

Parents. Parents represented an unusual mix of respondents. All three groups interviewed were knowledgeable and in favor of the activities. Parents at Chétimari traditionnelle reported being included in the development of the SIP as well as training, and parents at Malentendant note the role of the Children's Club, “an activity that makes it possible to discuss the daily life of children at school but also family level” and that in their view SC helped to keep their children safe.²³⁷ There appears to have been a sustained level of parental involvement in these areas before the beginning of the approach; teachers and head teachers refer to community and parental assistance in building classrooms and cleaning the school.²³⁸

On the other hand, when asked about what might cause a child to drop out of school, nearly all respondents cited a lack of follow-up from the parents and the need to sensitize other parents about the importance of their child remaining in school.²³⁹ One parent summarised ILET's impact on the community's parents: “There is also poverty. As parents, we tend to occupy our children with small businesses rather than letting them go to school. The return is believed to be faster than letting your child spend many years on the bench. But ILET has sensitized us, and more and more, we leave our children in school with the return of calm.”²⁴⁰ This suggests that even for parents not directly engaged with the school, ILET has relevant potential benefits for them and their children.

²³² Teacher FGD, Chétimari traditionnelle, R2.

²³³ Head Teacher KII Fanna Grima, Head Teacher KII Chétimari traditionnelle, Head Teacher KII Kantché, Head Teacher KII Malentendant.

²³⁴ Head Teacher KII Chétimari traditionnelle.

²³⁵ Teacher FGD Fanna Grima, R3, R4, Head Teacher Fanna Grima, Teacher FGD Dan Barto Mixte R1, Student FGD Chétimari traditionnelle R3, Teacher FGD Chétimari traditionnelle R2

²³⁶ Program Staff Niger KII, R2, R3

²³⁷ Parent FGD, Chétimari traditionnelle, R2, Parent FGD, Malentendant, R1

²³⁸ Teacher FGD Kantché, R1, Head Teacher KII Malentendant

²³⁹ Teacher FGD, Fanna Grima, R2. Student FGD Fanna Grima, R3. Head Teacher KII Fanna Grima. Teacher FGD Dan Barto Mixte R3. Head Teacher KII Dan Barto Mixte. Student FGD Chétimari traditionnelle R3. Teacher FGD Chétimari traditionnelle R1, R2. Parent FGD Chétimari traditionnelle R3. Head Teacher KII Chétimari traditionnelle. Teacher FGD Kantché R2.

²⁴⁰ Parent FGD, Chétimari traditionnelle, R3.

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Coherence

ILET's activities in Niger seem coherent with internal and external priorities. In cases where other humanitarian actors also took action at an ILET school, interventions were harmonious rather than duplicative. These targeted, communally agreed upon ILET interventions were closely aligned with the schools' goals for improvement, and the shared goals and specific approach brought value to the larger NORAD-BRICE project.²⁴¹

External coherence. Though three target schools did not report overlapping activities with other actors, respondents mentioned that other actors such as PAM, RESCUE, ACTED, COOPI, CONCERN, and UNICEF had also implemented initiatives at two of the schools²⁴². It does not appear that activities were duplicated, as should be ensured by the initial ILET evaluation of a school's needs. In fact, due to the Educational Cluster at the national level, it appears that interventions were complementary. UNICEF, for example, assisted with sanitation interventions at Chétimari traditionnelle and Kantché.²⁴³ SC's local partners include FASSALI, Mungane, Onee Katutu, Coalition ASO EPT, and the National Federation for People with Disabilities. Partnering with these community-based organizations improves the likelihood of the activities' sustainability. In addition, it ensures that SC's actions are coherent with the goals of the larger civil society in Niger.

A particularity of Niger's educational structure, and subsequently of ILET's value within this context, is the decentralized nature of educational systems. The Regional Directorate of National Education, decentralized in 2018, aims to encourage closer involvement of regional populations in the planning and to allocate of resources. This vision aligns with ILET's prioritization of stakeholder involvement in SIPs.

ILET corresponds with goals outlined by national entities, including the Ministry of Education's Education and Training Sector Plan (originally 2014-2024, revised 2018), including increasing girls' representation in schools, preventing students from dropping out, and quality education through teacher development.²⁴⁴ These shared goals at the national, regional, and local levels indicate that ILET's activities are coherent with external actors.

Internal coherence. In Niger, ILET was implemented as part of the NORAD-BRICE project. ILET's interventions bring specific value to some of this project's objectives, including increased access to safe learning environments, improved teacher development, and literacy activities.²⁴⁵ Programme staff described the approach's value as deeply contextual and its ethos as "reinforce instead of create" – supporting and strengthening school community resilience and capabilities rather than providing materials.²⁴⁶ This community-driven approach, deeply rooted in the expressed needs of the school environment, brought targeted value to the larger NORAD and BRiCE missions.

Effectiveness

The evaluation of ILET in Niger about the five QLF foundations suggests that the progress described for ILET schools by data in the DMP and the endline BRiCE evaluation are primarily consistent with respondents' views and opinions in this evaluation. Respondents particularly noted what they saw as improvements in physical protection, positive and respectful interactions, and school management.

²⁴¹ Programme Officer KII, Niger, R2.

²⁴² Student FGD, Chétimari traditionnelle, R5, Teacher FGD Chétimari traditionnelle, R1

²⁴³ Head Teacher KII, Chétimari traditionnelle. Student FGD, Kantché, R3.

²⁴⁴ Ministry of Education Niger. Programme Sectoriel de l'Éducation et de la Formation (2014-2024) - Document de stratégie. June 2013. https://assets.globalpartnership.org/s3fs-public/2013-06-Niger-Education-Plan-2014-2024.pdf?VersionId=iMpq_LdDmw_SzxXgELK3f7FsfGcD0LTT

²⁴⁵ Marchais, Gauthier, et al. BRICE Project DRC and Niger: Endline Report Teacher Wellbeing and Teaching Quality in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts. November 2022.

https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/17743/BRICE_Endline_Report.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

²⁴⁶ Programme Staff KII, Niger, R2.

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Emotional and psychosocial protection. Some schools struggled with the initial implementation of the emotional and psychosocial protection framework, which includes i) positive and respectful interactions and ii) social and emotional learning. Respondents and programme staff say this component has improved, particularly support for positive and respectful interactions.

The elimination of corporal punishment in favor of positive discipline strategies plays a role in strengthening student/teacher relationships. Programme staff noted this improved dynamic: “When we are talking about the protection side of it, the reinforcement component, both at the emotional and physical level, really improved. With the reinforcement and support teachers received, they were equipped with an alternative to humiliating and physical punishment forms.”²⁴⁷

In contrast to interventions in Somalia and South Sudan, only one respondent discussed a Children’s club in the community from the Malentendant school.²⁴⁸ This is a positive example, given that Malentendant is a school for children with disabilities, and indicates that these children are being integrated into the larger community. In addition, this respondent referred to the club as not only a way to “discuss the daily life of children at school and also at the family level” but also as a way to keep children out of trouble.²⁴⁹

There is evidence that ILET has effectively improved the first component of emotional and psychosocial well-being through the training for and encouraging respectful relationships between students, teachers, and the community. However, there was less evidence to suggest a meaningful change in social and emotional learning. The BRiCE endline evaluation found no statistical improvement of this component during the approach, and respondents did not bring it up during this evaluation.

“The change is noticeable for those who know our school before the ILET approach. [Among the improvements made] New classrooms have been built, a vegetable garden for the canteen's fruit and vegetable needs, drinking water supply, well-maintained boys' and girls' toilets, guaranteed hygiene with the establishment of a dump, trees planted all around the classrooms and even the school, to fight against the advancement of the desert, the devices for washing hands against COVID-19.”
– Female Student, Malentendant, R1²⁵⁰

Physical protection. Respondents frequently brought up the improvement of school facilities as a tangible and appreciated benefit of ILET, and programme staff identified this QLF as the most important the approach has worked on.²⁵¹ The construction and repair of classrooms were noted in nearly every interview. The head teacher of Fanna Grima reported that before SC’s involvement, “The school was falling on the students.”²⁵² The construction of ramps and accessible latrines for students with disabilities was also frequently mentioned as a practical improvement.²⁵³ However, respondents and programme staff reported that much of the school infrastructure in Niger is still made of “matériaux indéfinitifs,” or unsustainable materials like straw or mud, which are susceptible to environmental effects such as the significant flooding in the last year.²⁵⁴ In schools where SC funding was used to improve these structures, they have effectively supported the creation of safe and accessible

²⁴⁷ Programme Staff KII, Niger, R2.

²⁴⁸ Parent FGD, Malentendant, R1.

²⁴⁹ Parent FGD, Malentendant, R1.

²⁵⁰ Female Student FGD, Malentendant, R1.

²⁵¹ Programme Staff KII, Niger, R1.

²⁵² Head Teacher KII, Fanna Grima.

²⁵³ Teacher FGD, Kantché. Head Teacher KII, Chétimari traditionnelle.

²⁵⁴ Programme Staff KII, R3. Head Teacher KII, Dan Barto Mixte. Teacher FGD, Kantché, R2.

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learning spaces. However, even some of the ILET schools still require assistance. For example, data from the DMP describes schools still struggling with classroom space and room for all children.

The construction of external security measures, like fences and the engagement of a school caretaker, also appeared to be effective in reassuring students and families that their school was a safe environment. For example, the head teacher of Dan Barto Mixte noted that the construction of an external wall and security guard had significantly increased the school's security, including from moto-taxis that had previously sped through the middle of the school.²⁵⁵ Other respondents noted that these security measures kept thieves from entering the property or outside people from distracting students during class.²⁵⁶ These successful activities support the efficacy of ILET's support of school safety and management.

The improvement of hygiene through the construction of additional latrines, sanitation stations, and training on WASH was also noted by respondents. However, with the extra help from other partners like UNICEF, it is challenging to pinpoint ILET's specific contribution.²⁵⁷ Respondents in Dan Barto Mixte note the construction of and financial support for a tap—many referenced training on improved hygiene as a part of ILET's contribution.²⁵⁸

“Hygienic services, classrooms have been much improved over the past few years, especially at the level of hygienic services where there is a ramp construction that allows disabled children to move easily and there has been at the level of the latrine support breaks allowing visually impaired and sighted children to sit well on the hole to relieve themselves.”

-Headteacher KII, Chétimari traditionnelle School²⁵⁹

It should be noted that some of these interventions cited by respondents are likely part of the broader umbrella of SC initiatives and not specific to the ILET approach. However, as physical safety is a critical component of ILET, these improvements indicate that ILET's approach has effectively prioritized physically protective spaces for children.

Teaching and learning. Respondents noted the improvement in perceived teaching skills since the start of ILET. Students and parents claimed that teachers took time to explain lessons, answer questions, review the material, and even help them after school.²⁶⁰ In addition, teachers reported feeling empowered by the training they were offered, explicitly citing those on positive discipline, risk management, child literacy, and including children with disabilities²⁶¹. Manuals and guides for teachers were also appreciated, along with the supply of classroom materials²⁶². These are essential support systems to keep teachers trained and motivated, promoting teacher development and well-being. Respondents also noted classroom decorations of words or alphabets that they say encourage student literacy.²⁶³ DMP data echoes satisfaction with teaching and learning.

The BRiCE endline evaluation found statistically significant improvements in three key indices corresponding to similar components under the ILET QLF for teaching and learning: interaction with teachers, lesson delivery, and literacy activities.²⁶⁴ Again, as BRiCE implemented ILET and TPD simultaneously, it is challenging to isolate which

²⁵⁵ Head Teacher KII, Dan Barto Mixte.

²⁵⁶ Head Teacher KII, Chétimari traditionnelle. Teacher FGD, Fanna Grima, R3.

²⁵⁷ Head Teacher KII, Chétimari traditionnelle. Student FGD, Kantché, R2.

²⁵⁸ Head Teacher KII, Dan Barto Mixte.

²⁵⁹ Head teacher KII, Chétimari traditionnelle.

²⁶⁰ Parents FGD, Dan Barto Mixte, R4. Female Student FGD, Dan Barto Mixte, R1. Student FGD, Kantche.

²⁶¹ Teacher FGD, Fanna Grima, R2. Teacher FGD, Dan Barto Mixte, R1, R3. Teacher FGD, Malentendant, R1.

²⁶² Head Teacher KII, Dan Barto Mixte.

²⁶³ Teacher FGD, Kantché, R4

²⁶⁴ BRiCE Endline Evaluation.

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specific training caused this effect. Regardless, the improvement under these components includes the work undertaken as part of ILET. Interestingly, this effect seemed to be pronounced among female teachers, who had statistically significant improvements. This is reiterated by a respondent who specifically expressed appreciation for capacity-building for female teachers.²⁶⁵

“Corporal punishment is banned here. Teachers often involve parents if the many warnings [to learners] become unsuccessful. Often, parental authority is more feared by the child than the threat of the school principal or teacher in question.”
-Female Student, Kantché²⁶⁶

Parents and community. In most sample schools, parental and community engagement was already high before the ILET intervention; therefore, this marker has not changed dramatically. DMP and respondents data indicate that several schools have active COGES (School Management Groups), parental groups, and community mobilizing teams, including IDP representation. These groups engage in various school support activities, including cleaning and maintenance and attending educational sessions. As one parent put it: “There is training and all the other activities such as giving donations, sanitation, planting trees, and many other activities of community interest. Even before the arrival of this approach, parents are asked to give their point of view.”²⁶⁷ Parents report being included in developing SIPs and monitoring and planning activities.²⁶⁸ Parental support for their children’s education at home also seemed relatively strong. However, it is unclear whether this is a change. Both boys and girls reported receiving homework assistance from their parents and teachers. They felt “helped on what we have not understood.”²⁶⁹ Other community actors, such as local merchants providing rice and local religious leaders, were also mentioned, but these were less commonly noted.²⁷⁰

Regional insecurity has challenged ILET’s community-wide effectiveness in some locations through forced evacuations, attacks, and threats that diverted attention from education²⁷¹. There also remain children who are not in school. It is unclear whether this situation could change through soft interventions, including educating parents about the importance of keeping their children in school, or whether complex interventions like cash assistance would be helpful. Respondents noted that out-of-school children who helped their parents with animals or commerce would unlikely return to school without cash assistance.²⁷²

This suggests that community outreach and parental training provided through ILET affected parents who were already somehow affiliated or connected with the school community. Therefore, reaching disparate parents and community members to share their knowledge and awareness of the importance of education should be the next step for these school communities.

School leadership and management. Improvements in school leadership and management appear to be one of the most effective results of the QLF. The establishment and/or modification of codes of conduct seem to have been effective frameworks for both students and teachers. Some schools noted that the codes of conduct needed to be signed and honored by teachers and students, making expectations clear and establishing mutual respect²⁷³. Teachers at Kantché reported that their CoC was intended to increase children’s sense of safety and confidence.

²⁶⁵ Teacher FGD, Fanna Grima, R2.

²⁶⁶ Female Student FGD, Kantché, R5.

²⁶⁷ Parent FGD, Malentendant, R1.

²⁶⁸ Parent FGD, Chétimari traditionnelle, R2, R3.

²⁶⁹ Female Student FGD, Kantché, R2. Male Student FGD, Kantché, R3.

²⁷⁰ Parent FGD, Malentendant, R5.

²⁷¹ Parent FGD, Chétimari traditionnelle, R4.

²⁷² Male Student FGD, Dan Barto Mixte, R2. Female Student FGD, Dan Barto Mixte, R1, R2. Student FGD, Fanna Grima.

²⁷³ Head Teacher KII, Malentendant. Head Teacher KII, Kantché.

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²⁷⁴ Similarly, improved complaint mechanisms included solving issues for parents, teachers, and students.²⁷⁵ Other data from the DMP and this evaluation also found concerted efforts on behalf of school administrations to implement inclusive and protective policies for children with disabilities and integrate IDP children in Diffa.

Again, the elimination of corporal punishment is now a national policy. However, teachers reported that they felt equipped to implement other effective strategies thanks to positive discipline training from SC. Rather than physical punishments, students and teachers explained that conflict was resolved by calling parents into schools to discuss.²⁷⁶ Data from the DMP indicates that school leadership was engaged, motivated by reasons other than salary, and responsive toward complaints or concerns. In one school, students recounted a story of a teacher who used corporal punishment against a student who the teacher felt had disrespected him. The director subsequently fired the teacher²⁷⁷. This is an encouraging sign that school management is taking child protection and respect seriously, supporting the “leading learning” component of QLF 5.

*“Each child, without distinction, must be cared for and taught.”
-Head Teacher, Fanna Grima School²⁷⁸*

The data suggest that the ILET has effectively supported school management.

Efficiency

As in Somalia and South Sudan, programme staff reported difficulty with the data management tool. The efficiency of the feedback loop was also unclear, notably on whether schools received evaluation feedback. A preoccupation with the physical environment also colored some respondent replies.

Challenges. Programme staff identified several sticking points that appear to have affected the efficiency of ILET. A significant issue that repeatedly arose was the ability to include construction projects in SIPs. A staff member said: “The communities really strongly embrace the activities proposed in their Improvement Plans, and above all, the others they insert in their plan’s classroom construction. But very often, they face the problem of funds. We have a big problem raising the necessary funds to allow them to build the classrooms they dream of.”²⁷⁹ This is echoed in the school interviews, where head teachers, teachers, and students all name construction of classrooms or fences as a top priority. This school community's focus on the physical environment may not align with the funding opportunities available through ILET. As in South Sudan, this can impact the efficiency of school SIPs.

Success in working with the data management programme appears to have been mixed. A programme staffer reported: “we had many problems and a lot of data loss. Sometimes we find data for only certain schools, and others are not there. Sometimes the data [not cleaned]. I do not know where the problem is.”²⁸⁰ This may result from a lack of training, as another programme staffer reported that the data collection systems were efficient. However, it underscores the importance of training and support for these data collection tools.²⁸¹ Problems with this tool, echoed by staff in Somalia and South Sudan, can impact staff's efficiency in recording and understanding school data accurately. As noted by another programme staffer, rapid staff turnover can also impact team efforts:

²⁷⁴ Teacher FGD, Kantché, R2.

²⁷⁵ Student FGD, Chétimari traditionnelle, R3. Head Teacher KII, Kantché.

²⁷⁶ Student FDG, Fanna Grima, R1. Head Teacher KII, Dan Barto. Parent FGD, Chétimari traditionnelle, R2. Head Teacher KII, Chétimari traditionnelle. Head Teacher KII, Kantché.

²⁷⁷ Female Student FGD, Dan Barto Mixte, R1.

²⁷⁸ Head Teacher KII, Fanna Grima.

²⁷⁹ Programme Staff KII, Niger, R2.

²⁸⁰ Programme Staff KII, Niger, R3.

²⁸¹ Programme Staff, Niger, R1.

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"Whom you start with is not whom you end the project with, which makes it complicated to keep it all together."²⁸²

Lastly, it was not clear whether the feedback loop always returned to the school. For example, the head teacher of Chétimari traditionnelle noted that he had not always received the findings card. In addition, a programme staffer reported that "it is rare that we return to the partners for feedback."^{283,284} Providing schools with feedback on their interventions is an essential transfer of ownership and should be completed whenever possible.

Sustainability

As in Somalia and South Sudan, the sustainability of ILET interventions may depend on the resources required to manage them. The school community can continue to train new teachers in pedagogical methods, adhere to the CoC and complaint mechanisms, and work alongside the community to ensure equitable access to education for all students. These steps represent significant portions of the QLF and should not be discounted. However, respondents express the desire for additional physical environmental assistance that will require additional funding, including fences, barbed wire, and classroom repair. In some cases, members of the community and parents have contributed both manual labor and finances, which, like South Sudan, is likely to increase sustainability through a sense of ownership. Re-evaluating SIPs in light of available funding and resources is likely the best step forward for these activities to continue sustainably.

Interestingly, the BRiCE endline evaluation notes that 40 percent of Cohort 2 schools did not receive SIP funds from SC in 2020 because of delays but that the schools mobilized funds as part of the Community Action Cohort (CAC) component of BRiCE.²⁸⁵ Unfortunately, this is not mentioned by any programme staff or respondents from sample schools in this evaluation. However, it does indicate that community mobilization strategies were successful in ILET schools in both Zinder and Diffa.

Progress and challenges. The "soft" interventions provided through ILET appear sustainable. Training in community sensitization and positive discipline are replicable without much expense. Some head teachers have already begun training new teachers in the pedagogical methods taught by ILET, for example.²⁸⁶ Further interactions between pupils and teachers, such as positive discipline, improved complaint mechanisms, and revised codes of conduct, will likely continue, barring significant staff turnover. The formalized relationships between the schools and the communities are probably sustainable, given that, in some cases, they predate SC's arrival. The BRiCE Endline Evaluation notes that the perception of the school had changed in several towns, from considering the school "in" the community to considering it "of" the community, including town political leaders and religious leaders.²⁸⁷ This sense of ownership and relationships developed to support the approach are critical to the next phase of these school communities' growth. By taking ownership of SIP development and implementation and the school's success, the community can make permanent changes to the quality of their education.

ILET schools received financial support from SC to implement their SIPs, including purchasing scholarly materials like books, pencils, and furniture or building or repairing part of the school. Respondents may have chosen to use this financial support from SC for oversized items that could not be sourced locally through a parents' group or

²⁸² Programme Staff KII, Niger, R1.

²⁸³ Head Teacher KII, Chétimari traditionnelle

²⁸⁴ Programme Staff KII, Niger, R1.

²⁸⁵ BRiCE Endline Evaluation.

²⁸⁶ Head Teacher KII, Kantché.

²⁸⁷ Marchais, Gauthier, et al. BRiCE Project DRC and Niger: Endline Report Teacher Wellbeing and Teaching Quality in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts. November 2022.

https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/17743/BRICE_Endline_Report.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

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community mobilization strategy. This may pose a problem for sustainability; respondents reported that these materials and, in the case of Malentendant, food provision were a draw for students who might not otherwise be able to afford them.²⁸⁸ As a result, there is a possibility that there may be a drop-off of students if they can no longer receive these incentives.

Compared to the interventions in South Sudan, it appears that communities in Niger relied less on local resources to fulfill their improvement plans. For example, while some parents assisted in constructing classrooms (including manual labor and provision of cement) before SC's involvement, it is not clear that this infrastructure was sustainable.²⁸⁹ Additionally, while the BRICE endline evaluation mentions community financial support structures, these were not evident from the interviews conducted during this evaluation.

It seems likely that those interventions that rely on interpersonal education and can be completed with fewer resources are more sustainable than adapting to the physical environment without funding from elsewhere. For example, Dan Barto Mixte's head teacher reported, "If Save leaves, we will not have the chance to have financial support, but the strategies we have acquired will remain."²⁹⁰

Activities adopted in the community. There appears to be an interest in Niger in replicating ILET's context-specific strategy in other locations. One program staff member noted that ECHO is financing another educational programme in the Tillabery region modeled after ILET and that other regional heads are looking to mimic the methodology.²⁹¹ Another pointed out that the state is developing action plans similar to SIPs.²⁹² Programme staff appeared interested in continuing to expand ILET.

Some schools have established clear community ties that have led to sensitization and mobilization activities within their area.²⁹³ This strong school community-based sense of ownership over education will likely pay sustainable dividends, including spreading to other schools in the area, if communities can balance their visions with their available resources.

Impact

ILET was implemented under the auspices of the NORAD-BRICE project and in tandem with the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) project, so it is not easy to single out the effects of ILET on its own. However, it is clear that this approach, as part of the larger context, has positively impacted school communities. Respondents note elevated teaching skills, codes of conduct emphasizing equal treatment, improved physical structures, and an engaged community as positive results from SC's intervention.

Increased capacity at the school/learning space level to improve the quality education environment. There is evidence that ILET has positively impacted this outcome-level objective. Respondents reported increased teacher motivation and pedagogical abilities in daily instruction, security planning, and engaging with students with disabilities.²⁹⁴ Teachers, parents, and students all noted that they feel the level of teaching has improved, including helping students after school, in part likely due to the training provided by ILET.²⁹⁵ This has translated to improved academic performance in some schools; Fanna Grima, for example, "has become a benchmark in terms

²⁸⁸ Student FGD, Fanna Grima, R2, R3. Parent FGD, Malentendant, R2.

²⁸⁹ Head Teacher KII, Kantché.

²⁹⁰ Head Teacher KII, Dan Barto Mixte.

²⁹¹ Programme Staff KII, Niger, R1.

²⁹² Programme Staff, KII, Niger, R2.

²⁹³ Teacher FGD, Fanna Grima, R4.

²⁹⁴ Teacher FGD Fanna Grima, R2, R3. Student FGD Fanna Grima, R1. Head Teacher KII, Fanna Grima. Student FGD, Chétimari traditionnelle, R2. Head Teacher KII, Chétimari traditionnelle. Head Teacher KII, Kantché. Teacher FGD, Malentendant, R2, R1.

²⁹⁵ Teacher FGD, Malentendant, R2.

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of academic results.”²⁹⁶ Programme staff noted that some teachers in ILET schools had explicitly commended the national school training director and his various teams in Niger for their hard work and improvement.²⁹⁷

Respondents repeatedly remarked on the improved view of their school as a safe environment. This can be broken down into several components. Firstly, the construction of safe learning environments (including functional classrooms, footbridges to cross flooded roads, canteens, and exterior fences) was mentioned several times as an incentive for children to attend school.²⁹⁸ Secondly, SC’s interventions create a safe space for children to attend school in regions affected by outside threats. Parents at Malentendant noted that “the biggest challenge comes down to keeping children in school for a long time despite the unfavorable security emergency. In this respect, the contribution of ILET has been substantial. We are reassured as parents concerning the conservative measures taken to ensure safety within the school,” citing the recruitment of a caretaker.²⁹⁹ The Head Teacher at Chétimari traditionnelle also noted that staying in school dissuades some young people from potentially joining Boko Haram.³⁰⁰ Finally, eliminating corporal punishment within schools reassures students that they are safe from harm. This is likely due to a national ban on corporal punishment. However, teachers report that the positive discipline training they received from SC helped them improve and gave them other options.³⁰¹ Safety is crucial to students’ well-being and educational ability, particularly in regions where outside-school threats persist.

Increased community engagement in improving the learning environment. Community engagement with parental assistance in schools was already present in most of these regions before the ILET intervention. However, formalizing parent groups and community-sensitizing outreach appears to have strengthened some community commitment to education. In areas where all stakeholders were engaged, students reported feeling supported. “The relationship between us students, parents, and teachers is important; a reciprocal relationship and each respects the other.”³⁰²

ILET’s participatory approach appears to have led to increased engagement, as stakeholders could see the results of their participation.³⁰³ For example, parental involvement in developing SIPs led to greater inclusion of students in schools, as they recognized the long-term value of education.³⁰⁴ In addition, community mobilization groups and training were mentioned by teachers in Fanna Grima and Malentendant, including a Children’s Club.³⁰⁵ Finally, local actors, such as local and state leaders, have become increasingly involved in community activities.³⁰⁶

However, there remains room for continued community engagement. For example, nearly all respondents noted that there remain parents who do not send their children to school and appear not to have been reached by existing community mobilization projects. Additionally, while some schools noted that parents and other

²⁹⁶ Student FGD, Fanna Grima, R4.

²⁹⁷ Programme Staff KII, Niger, R2.

²⁹⁸ Head Teacher KII, Fanna Grima. Head Teacher KII, Kantché. Student FGD, Malentendant, R2.

²⁹⁹ Parent FGD, Malentendant, R1

³⁰⁰ Head Teacher KII, Chétimari traditionnelle.

³⁰¹ Head Teacher KII, Fanna Grima.

³⁰² Student FGD, Fanna Grima, R2.

³⁰³ Teacher FGD Chétimari traditionnelle, R4. Student FGD Chétimari traditionnelle, R2, R3. Parent FGD, Malentendant, R2.

³⁰⁴ Parent FGD, Chétimari traditionnelle, R1.

³⁰⁵ Parent FGD, Malentendant, R3.

³⁰⁶ Marchais, Gauthier, et al. BRICE Project DRC and Niger: Endline Report Teacher Wellbeing and Teaching Quality in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts. November 2022.

https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/17743/BRICE_Endline_Report.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

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community members have been able to assist with construction projects or cleaning duties, poverty in these communities likely prevents large-scale assistance and resource mobilization.

Improved access to and experiences of quality learning opportunities for students. As with Somalia and South Sudan, Niger has seen an increase in student enrolment over the last few years following a massive school closure during COVID-19. Many factors, including a national push for higher enrolment, likely affected rising enrolment rates. However, there is evidence that activities undertaken during ILET have somewhat improved access. For example, the president of the COGES School Management Committee at Malentendant reported a significant decrease in the school dropout rate: “Since the advent of the ILET approach, we can only observe the raising of the level of the children. The dropout rate is practically revised downwards. From now on, young girls' failure revolves around ten percent whereas more than half of the girls enrolled drop out before the CM2 class.”³⁰⁷ The head teacher of Dan Barto Mixte reports that his school grew from 162 students in 2013 to 782 students today, including 413 girls.³⁰⁸

Girls, children with disabilities, and IDP still face significant barriers to school access. The head teacher at Malentendant reported that the drop-out rate of girls remains an issue.³⁰⁹ Respondents in other schools noted that a student with disabilities would encounter mobility and inclusion problems in their schools.³¹⁰ but there is evidence that ILET has contributed to an increased sensitization within school communities about the importance of their inclusion. For example, students at Fanna Grima reported that “both boys and girls feel comfortable; none of their families stop them from going to school.”³¹¹ Improved school structures, including ramps and accessible, gender-separated toilets, provide accessibility and privacy.³¹² Training for teachers on inclusive pedagogy was beneficial at the school for the blind and deaf, Malentendant. However, it was also implemented at Dan Barto Mixte to include all students. Introducing a canteen to Malentendant was also well taken, and a pull factor for students.³¹³

It is important to note that there remains evidence that these groups have less access to education. While most respondents seemed to agree that girls and boys have relatively equal access, national data points to gaps due to security concerns and child marriage³¹⁴. There was minimal discussion about the integration of IDP children into schools. While programme staff contended that all children presented at school have a right to attend, this requires initiative and drive on behalf of the parent.³¹⁵ All respondents agreed that refugee children could not attend school without financial support. While there is room to increase community sensitization about equal access to education, poverty and lack of resources may continue to prevent marginalized children from accessing quality learning opportunities, which is beyond ILET’s capabilities to address.

Increased capacity of agencies and partners to provide quality and timely support. For ILET’s sustainability, agencies and partners must pick up where ILET leaves off. There is evidence that some partners at the school level are already moving forward with this approach, including training new teachers in the pedagogical methods from ILET.³¹⁶ Additionally, programme staff reported that more and more initiatives are proposed and implemented by school community stakeholders and that there is a rise in funding interest from the private sector.³¹⁷ This funding,

³⁰⁷ Parent FGD, Malentendant, R1.

³⁰⁸ Head Teacher KII, Dan Barto Mixte.

³⁰⁹ Head Teacher KII, Malentendant.

³¹⁰ Student FGD, Dan Barto Mixte, R1, R2.

³¹¹ Student FGD, Fanna Grima, R4.

³¹² Head Teacher KII, Chétimari traditionnelle.

³¹³ Student FGD, Malentendant, R2, R5. Head Teacher KII, Malentendant.

³¹⁴ UNICEF Niger. Education. <https://www.unicef.org/niger/education>

³¹⁵ Programme Staff KII, Niger, R2.

³¹⁶ Head Teacher KII, Kantché.

³¹⁷ Programme Staff KII, Niger, R2.

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combined with potential support from the Government's Education Sector Basket Fund, may be adequate to bridge the resource gap that might prevent agencies and partners from continuing to implement ILET activities without the assistance of SC.³¹⁸

CONCLUSIONS

ILET aims to improve learning environments in humanitarian contexts through school community participation, according to the QLF. Since its inception in 2016, this tool has been used in different contexts and countries, including Somalia, South Sudan, and Niger. ILET uses systematic assessments to collect data which is analyzed using the DMP. The findings are then presented to the school community, where the community can further express their views and concerns on the state of their school before a SIP is planned and implemented by the school community with support from the implementing partner. Although ILET was implemented within different development programmes, contexts, and countries, some common conclusions about the ILET approach can be made.

This evaluation found ILET to be a relevant, innovative, and responsive tool that can be implemented as a standalone programme or incorporated into an extensive development programme. The school community-led approach and common DMP made it a unique tool in the development climate. The tool can be adapted to different contexts, emergencies, or funding models. One of the notable strengths was its relevance and responsiveness to the needs of school communities across the three countries.

This evaluation focused on the approach's impact and sustainability. In terms of impact, one of the noticeable impacts, across all the countries, has been the improved access to and experiences of quality learning opportunities for students. Although other factors have also contributed to this impact, it was still notable that many ILET schools where data was collected had increased their enrolment in the last year. These achievements are all the more noteworthy when considering the challenging contexts in which ILET schools operated, including regions in Somalia and Niger that have experienced heightened insecurity in the past year and areas of South Sudan affected by significant flooding. Although the increased school enrolment was attributed to many different factors, at least part of the improvement was attributed to ILET activities such as community awareness raising, improved teaching quality, and the construction of school infrastructure.

The second impact noted in this evaluation was the increased community engagement in improving the learning environment. This was pointed out at the household and school levels, as it was a common theme across respondents that parents were now more supportive of children's education. This included parents helping their children with academic work and reducing household chores. Furthermore, there was a clear theme of the school community implementing their school-led activities as part of the SIP with limited support from SC. This is a crucial factor contributing to the sustainability of the approach's benefits.

The qualitative data showed that many of the approach's benefits would be sustainable, mainly through the school community's involvement. The highly participatory approach has built a sense of ownership and accountability in these school communities. In the highly marginalized communities where the approach is being implemented, humanitarian actors are often expected to provide the resources to improve the school environment. However, evidence shows that the consultative process characterizing ILET was critical for stakeholders to understand their role within the approach and the activities they should try to implement with SC's guidance. This sense of ownership is vital for schools to improve activities beyond the lifespan of the approach. It was noted that schools that received more support also had less community involvement. In contrast, schools with no funding had more extensive community involvement. Although community involvement

³¹⁸ Alliance Sahel. In Niger, Education as a Unifying Priority. 25 July 2022. <https://www.alliance-sahel.org/en/actualites/in-niger-education-as-a-unifying-priority/>

increases the sustainability of the benefits created through the approach, it was also noted that some of the activities implemented were of lower quality, which might undo the sustainability gains of increased community ownership over ILET activities.

The surrounding context in the relevant countries has also affected the effectiveness and sustainability of the approach. Specifically, the increase in insecurity in Somalia has led to bombings directly damaging one of the implementation schools and poses a new challenge for students' attendance at school. Similarly, South Sudan has seen intense flooding in the intervention communities in the last two years, negatively affecting the school buildings and limiting students' access to facilities. Finally, external threats in Niger, particularly in the Diffa region, from groups like Boko Haram continue to affect children's ability to access schools. The sense of ownership created in the schools will be critical for the school communities to bounce back from these challenges and for school improvements to continue beyond the lifespan of the ILET approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This section will present strategic yet actionable recommendations to guide the formulation and continuation of possible follow-up projects. The recommendations are based on discussion with the school community and programme staff and a desk review of relevant documents. They aim to improve ILET and its implementation following the OECD-DAC criteria.

Government support. Strengthening the capacities of local and government institutions is critical for the long-term sustainability of ILET and its adoption by partners and the government as a viable tool. Although ILET successfully brought in government officials throughout the approach, from the initial training to activity implementation, government officials' level of inclusion may remain insufficient for the continued self-sustainability of the approach's benefits. Therefore, continued support, training, and involvement of regional and national authorities will be needed to increase the sustainability of the approach.

Children with disabilities. Children with disabilities at school should be explicitly included at all levels of the implementation. ILET uses random sampling at the data collection stage, which may exclude the participation of children with disabilities to participate in FGDs if the population is small compared to children without disabilities. Absent the intentional inclusion of children with disabilities in the data collection stage, their perspectives may not be effectively integrated into programme implementation. Moreover, even if they were included in feedback sessions, they may be too afraid to speak about their problems in front of their peers. If no other person in the school community advocates for them, their needs will not be discussed or included in SIP activities. Therefore, their inclusion throughout the process is critical to target their needs within the school community. Based on this reality, the evaluation team recommends that children with disabilities are always included in data collection, even if this requires non-random, purposive sampling techniques.

SIP implementation. SC should closely review SIPs to ensure they are realistic and actionable in the timeline provided and with the available resources. This ensures that resources are distributed appropriately and that the most critical activities can be implemented without spreading school community resources too thinly. The district MoE should also institutionalize district education plans that build on the SIPs designed at the school level.

Gender-related gaps. ILET documents highlight that including girls in the ILET process was a critical component of quality education. However, cultural contexts can lead to resistance to the participation of girls and women in the implementation process. For example, many teachers and CEC members are men in Somalia and South Sudan. As a result, girls may either be hesitant to speak up in front of them or discouraged from speaking during feedback sessions, thus excluding their views from SIPs. This resistance can be lessened by understanding and respecting cultural dialogue processes in each implementation country. Each project must understand these cultural

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contexts and adjust implementation accordingly so that the views of women and girls can be included in the process and girls' specific activities are included in the SIPs.

The balance between support and stakeholder involvement. As explained earlier, schools that received more resource support as part of ILET were also found to have less community involvement. In contrast, schools with no funding had more considerable community involvement. Although more community involvement increases the school's sustainability, it was also noted that some of the activities implemented were lower quality and, therefore, unlikely to be sustainable. Thus, SC must continue to monitor and advise schools on activity implementation, even when SC does provide direct funding.

Programme staff training. As noted earlier, ILET comprises five components, three of which (data collection, feedback sessions, and SIP planning) are repeated during each round of implementation. Therefore, training sessions should be repeated at the beginning of each round to familiarise program staff with ILET, its mechanisms, and the DMP. This is because ILET rounds can be more than a year apart, and the team implementing one round may not be the same as implementing subsequent rounds. In addition, although the DMP can be a valuable tool for analyzing and comparing data quickly, there may be a steep learning curve when first learning to use the device. Finally, staff turnover may lead to inefficiencies in tool implementation if new staff are not adequately trained at each round.

School networks. Establishing school networks between ILET and non-ILET schools within the community can be an essential mechanism for activities implemented in ILET schools to spread to other parts of the community. For example, many activities implemented as part of ILET are school-led, soft interventions that do not require significant resource investments. Through the network of schools, these types of interventions can spread to other schools in the area, even without additional humanitarian support.

Avenues for further research. This evaluation faced several limitations, which can be addressed in future assessments. Most notably, future evaluations should increase the sample size of schools so that different factors, such as school funding and type of schools, can be considered when conducting the assessment. In addition, the ILET tool can be implemented within several different contexts in different emergencies to understand the contexts in which the ILET tool can be most impactful.

LESSONS LEARNED

Finally, this section highlights the best practices and lessons learned that have led to the approach's success within their specific contexts. These lessons learned should guide future ILET package implementation to ensure that activities remain efficient, relevant, sustainable, and effective.

Coherence. The cluster meetings in Somalia and Niger were essential for other humanitarian actors working in the same area as SC to keep each other informed on activities being implemented and challenges they faced. This coordination between relevant agencies increased the external coherence of activities and ILET capacity development for partners.

Child participation. While the child participation approach can bring challenges to implementing ILET by increasing the time needed for data collection, including children in the entire process was an essential factor in the relevance of ILET activities. Furthermore, including children served as a capacity-building activity for children to become aware of their rights within their school and community.

School management capacity building. Although not many activities specifically targeted head teachers, evidence suggests that their intense involvement in ILET enhanced the capacity of school management. The systematic tool, which allowed them to prioritise certain areas of the school and participation in SIP planning with support

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from SC, gave them the tools to create a guiding vision for their schools. This allows them to work on their planning skills and to be directly involved in activity implementation, increasing the sustainability of the approach's benefits.

Feedback sessions and data validation. This was highlighted as one of the essential parts of ILET for many reasons. Firstly, feedback sessions and validation served as a capacity-building opportunity for the school community to learn to advocate for their ideas and rights. Secondly, they allowed different actors within the school community to share common problems, building a sense of community around the school. Finally, this package component is vital for the school community members to understand that humanitarian actors can help but that they can also work on improving the school even if there are limited resources in the community. Understanding is vital to creating a sense of ownership and accountability in the school community.

Setting up school mechanisms. ILET activities that proved to be the most effective and efficient were soft interventions within schools and the community. Children's clubs, PTAs, and complaints mechanisms were vital for the success of the ILET for several reasons. Some of the critical achievements of the approach, such as abolishing physical punishment in many schools and increasing enrollment, have come, at least partly, as a result of strengthening these school mechanisms. Establishing and continuing these soft interventions will be necessary for ILET benefits' sustainability and the school community's accountability.

Local capacity building. A critical aspect of the approach, which was used in Somalia and South Sudan and is one of the best practices noted by the consultant team, was using community members and government officials as data collectors. This capacity building is essential for local community members to understand the ILET process and to continue the approach by implementing partners without support for SC. In addition, training local community members and government officials will allow ILET to be implemented by other actors, such as the government or local partners.

Adaptability. ILET can be helpful as a standalone project or an incorporated approach to more considerable EIE programming. It effectively addressed issues within different contexts and for schools facing other challenges. The data collection process and analysis ensured that each school implemented individualized activities relevant to its contexts, thus increasing the relevance of activities in each school.

The role of MoEs. MoEs are critical stakeholders in the ILET process and are essential for the success and sustainability of the approach. Although lacking capacity and resources may limit their ability to improve the learning environment, their involvement in the approach is essential for promoting an understanding of the ILET programme to other agencies. Furthermore, individual SIPs can be valuable data for MoEs at district and national levels for identifying common areas needing improvement in schools, which can inform future MoE policies. Therefore, MoEs must be included throughout the implementation of the approach to increase the capacity of MoE to respond to school needs.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: Documentation Consulted and Reviewed

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Annex 2. Evaluation Matrix

Table 4. Evaluation Matrix

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND GUIDING QUESTIONS	QUALITATIVE DATA SOURCE	PROJECT DOCUMENTS
Relevance		
To what extent do ILET objectives and design respond to the intended beneficiaries (Children, teachers, parents, and communities)?	Key Informants: head teacher, ILET programme staff FGDs: Students, teachers, parents	ILET package documents ILET reports from Target countries (e.g., ILET South Sudan Case Study, ECHO ILET Report Somalia, BRICE Annual Report-Niger) ILET Review SIP documents from target schools (if possible)
Coherence		
Is ILET compatible with other interventions at the school or community level (Regarding other Save the Children Initiatives and the broader development community)?	Key Informants: head teacher, ILET Programme Staff FGDs: Teachers, parents	ILET Review
Effectiveness		
Has the ILET achieved its objectives? How has achievement varied in its achievement across the 5 foundations of the QLF?	Key Informants: head teacher, ILET programme staff FGDs: Students, teachers, parents	ILET reports from Target countries (e.g., ILET South Sudan Case Study, ECHO ILET Report Somalia, BRICE Annual Report-Niger) Review of data on the ILET data management system between ILET cycles SIP documents from target schools (if possible)
What factors generate the variation in achievement across the different QLF foundations?	Key Informants: Headteacher, ILET programme staff FGD: teachers, parents	ILET reports from Target countries (e.g., ILET South Sudan Case Study, ECHO ILET Report Somalia, BRICE Annual Report-Niger)
Impact		
What have been the positive impacts of ILET (intended and unintended)?	Key Informants: head teacher, ILET program staff FGDs: Students, teachers, parents	ILET reports from Target countries (e.g., ILET South Sudan Case Study, ECHO ILET Report Somalia, BRICE Annual Report-Niger) SIP documents from target schools (if possible)
What have been the negative impacts (if any)?	Key Informants: head teacher, ILET programme staff FGDs: Students, teachers, parents	ILET reports from Target countries (e.g., ILET South Sudan Case Study, ECHO ILET Report Somalia, BRICE Annual Report-Niger)

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		SIP documents from target schools (if possible)
Efficiency		
Have the ILET approach interventions been delivered economically, timely, and inclusively?	Key Informants: ILET programme staff	ILET reports from Target countries (e.g., ILET South Sudan Case Study, ECHO ILET Report Somalia, BRICE Annual Report-Niger)
Is there variation inefficiency among different components of the ILET approach (for example, is it more efficient at collecting data than validating it with the community)?	Key Informants: ILET programme staff	ILET reports from Target countries (e.g., ILET South Sudan Case Study, ECHO ILET Report Somalia, BRICE Annual Report-Niger)
Sustainability		
How likely are the ILET approach's benefits to continue?	Key Informants: head teacher, ILET programme staff FGDs: teachers, parents	ILET reports from Target countries (e.g., ILET South Sudan Case Study, ECHO ILET Report Somalia, BRICE Annual Report-Niger)
Are any positive components of the approach likely to be adopted locally (i.e., even without the continued support of Save the Children)?	Key Informants: head teacher, ILET programme staff FGDs: Students, teachers, parents	ILET reports from Target countries (e.g., ILET South Sudan Case Study, ECHO ILET Report Somalia, BRICE Annual Report-Niger)

Annex 3. Qualitative Tools

Tools have been attached as a separate document