



SAFER TOMORROW FOR THE CHILDREN OF EAST AFRICA

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

**WORLD VISION FINLAND'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR
THE MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FINLAND**

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Acronyms

AP	Area Programme
ANC	Antenatal Care
ARP	Alternative Rites of Passage
CBO	Community Based Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CEFM	Child, Early and Forced Marriage
CFS	Child Friendly Spaces
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CVA	Citizen Voice and Action
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
FBAK	Finnish Baby Aid Kit
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
FMNR	Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
MEAL	Monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
OPD	Organisation of People with Disabilities
PLWD	People Living with Disabilities
PSEAH	Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
S4T	Savings for Transformation
SST	Strategy Support Team
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WV	World Vision
WVFIN	World Vision Finland
WVI	World Vision International

1. SUMMARY

The year 2023 marked a significant milestone in World Vision Finland's (WVFIN) history as the organisation celebrated its 40th anniversary. The celebrations took place throughout the year, with a notable highlight in October when Andrew Morley, the President of World Vision International (WVI), visited Finland. Another key event was the partner seminar organised in May in Helsinki, which brought together all programme partners to strengthen cooperation and facilitate mutual learning.

These partners, from World Vision National Offices in Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, and Uganda, work closely with local partners at national, district, and community levels to implement the joint programme with WVFIN, Safer Tomorrow for the Children of East Africa. The programme aims to strengthen the realisation of children's rights and protect vulnerable children and youth across East Africa. It focuses on three main thematic areas: child protection, youth employment and empowerment, and resilience building, encompassing economic, social, and climate resilience. Additionally, the programme emphasises strengthening civil society and promoting the rights of people with disabilities and women, ensuring that no one is left behind. The programme receives funding from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) for the years 2022-2025.

The operational year in the programme areas was marked by extreme weather events due to climate change, as well as political and economic instability. Somalia and parts of Kenya experienced the fifth consecutive failed rainy season, leading people to migrate in search of better survival opportunities for their families and cattle. Conversely, some parts of Rwanda saw heavy rains and landslides. In Burundi, economic instability created very harsh living conditions, pushing children into malnutrition and vulnerability. Despite these challenges, significant progress was made through the Programme, thanks to strong and capacitated partners, stakeholders, and community members. The impact of these challenges on programme implementation was minimal, and World Vision was able to execute the programme as planned.

Overall, over three hundred thousand people were directly or indirectly reached through programme interventions, with approximately 3% of them being people living with disabilities (PLWD). The number of women and girls benefiting from the Programme was slightly higher than that of men and boys. More than 118,000 of the participants were children, as detailed in Table 1 below.

Category	Number	% of participants	Category	Number	% of participants
Programme Direct Participants 2023			Programme Indirect Population 2023		
Men	30 227	29 %	Men	65 394	33 %
Women	31 778	31 %	Women	57 556	29 %
Boys	20 348	20 %	Boys	34 615	17 %
Girls	21 514	21 %	Girls	42 160	21 %
Male PLWD	978	1 %	Male PLWD	1 182	1 %
Female PLWD	1 234	1 %	Female PLWD	1 381	1 %
Boys PLWD	563	1 %	Boys PLWD	1 484	1 %
Girls PLWD	852	1 %	Girls PLWD	1 492	1 %
PLWD total	3 627	3 %	PLWD total	5 539	3 %
Total	103 867		Total	199 725	

Table 1. Project Participants disaggregated by gender and ability.

Based on the results analysis for 2023, the Programme is making steady progress towards its goal of enhancing the safety and empowerment of children and youth, enabling them to become agents of change within their families and communities. Among the three result areas, the most consistent progress has been observed in child protection and participation. The efforts with youth are now beginning to show positive outcomes, and there has been advancement compared to last year. Additionally, the Programme has strengthened the resilience and capacity of families and communities to engage in social accountability. While progress has been made since 2022, it has not fully met expectations in terms of some few indicator values.

Disability inclusion has remained a strong focus across all projects. Reducing stigma and ensuring that people with disabilities are valued and accepted as they are continuing to be crucial. Instead of being isolated, people with disabilities have become active members and participants in their communities. They have received support in accessing services and have been given a voice. The role of women has seen significant growth in leadership positions, with young women now leading child protection committees and savings groups. This progress has been clearly visible during field visits throughout the year. The efforts toward disability and social inclusion have been transformative, yielding substantial impact.

Collaboration with the private sector continued through the joint Finnish Baby Aid Kit (FBAK) project in Somalia. This initiative, which included distributing kits, training midwives, and raising awareness about giving birth at clinics, has contributed to improved child and maternal health.

The total expenditure in 2023 was 3.97 million euros, in line with the original budget. Of this amount, 82% was funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA), and the remaining 18% was self-financed. Direct project costs made up 78% of the budget, with communication accounting for 6%, planning, evaluation, and resource development for 9%, and general administrative costs at a flat rate of 7%. The largest share of thematic spending, 37%, was allocated to child protection and participation.

Key figures and programme work for WVFIN in 2023 are summarised in Figure 1 below. More detailed results, achievements, successes, and lessons learned from 2023 are presented later in this report.

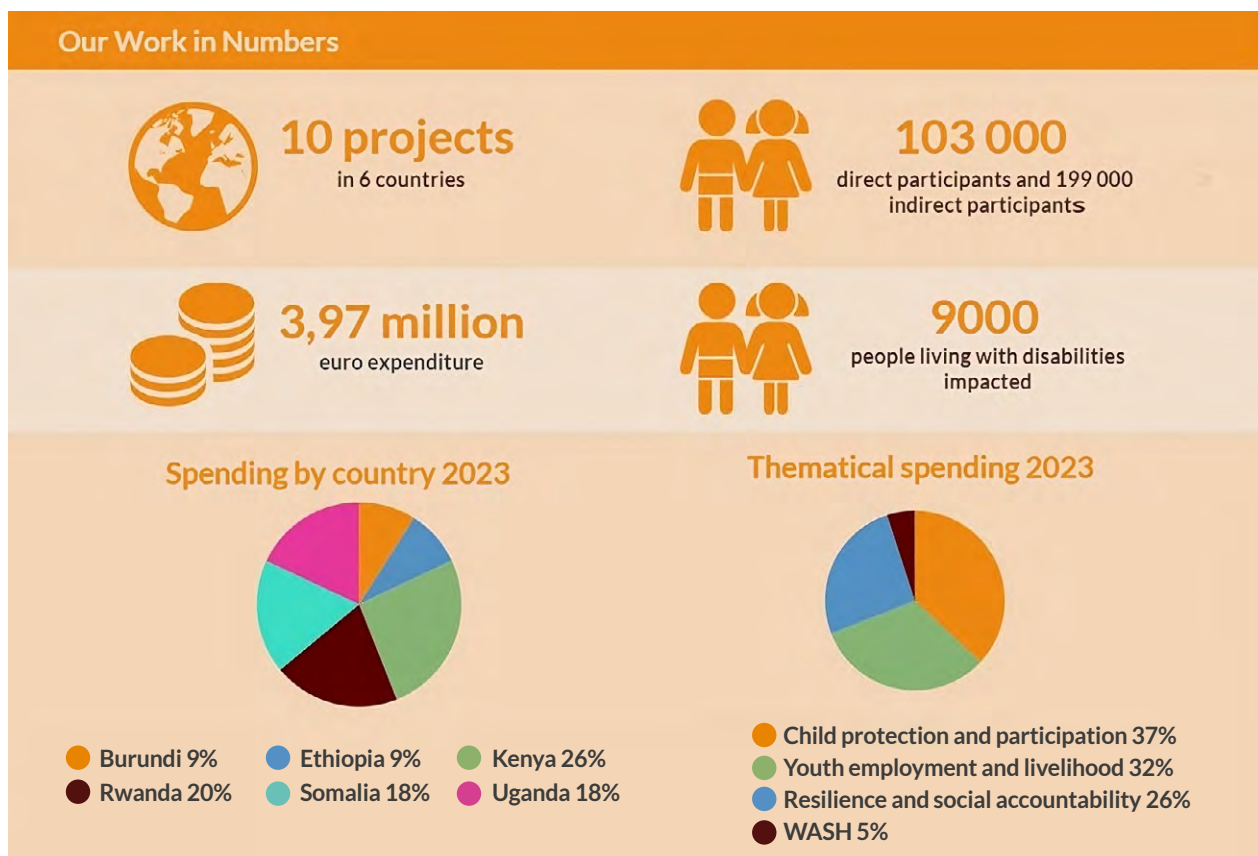


Figure 1. The programme work in numbers 2023

2. THE PROGRAMME

2.1. SAFER TOMORROW FOR THE CHILDREN OF EAST AFRICA

The main objective of the Safer Tomorrow for Children of East Africa Programme is to contribute to the realization of child rights and protection of the most vulnerable children and youth in East Africa. The Programme has three thematic result areas that are 1. child protection 2. youth employment and empowerment and 3. resilience building in terms of strengthening economic, social and climate resilience of families and communities. Furthermore, the Programme has strong focus on strengthening civil society and promoting the rights of people with disabilities and women. Close cooperation with formal and informal duty bearers such as traditional and religious leaders is considered critical element in the programme implementation and for the attainment of programme results. In addition, WVFIN applies the triple nexus approach (humanitarian – development – peace) and the conflict sensitivity/do no harm principles especially in the context of refugees and host communities.

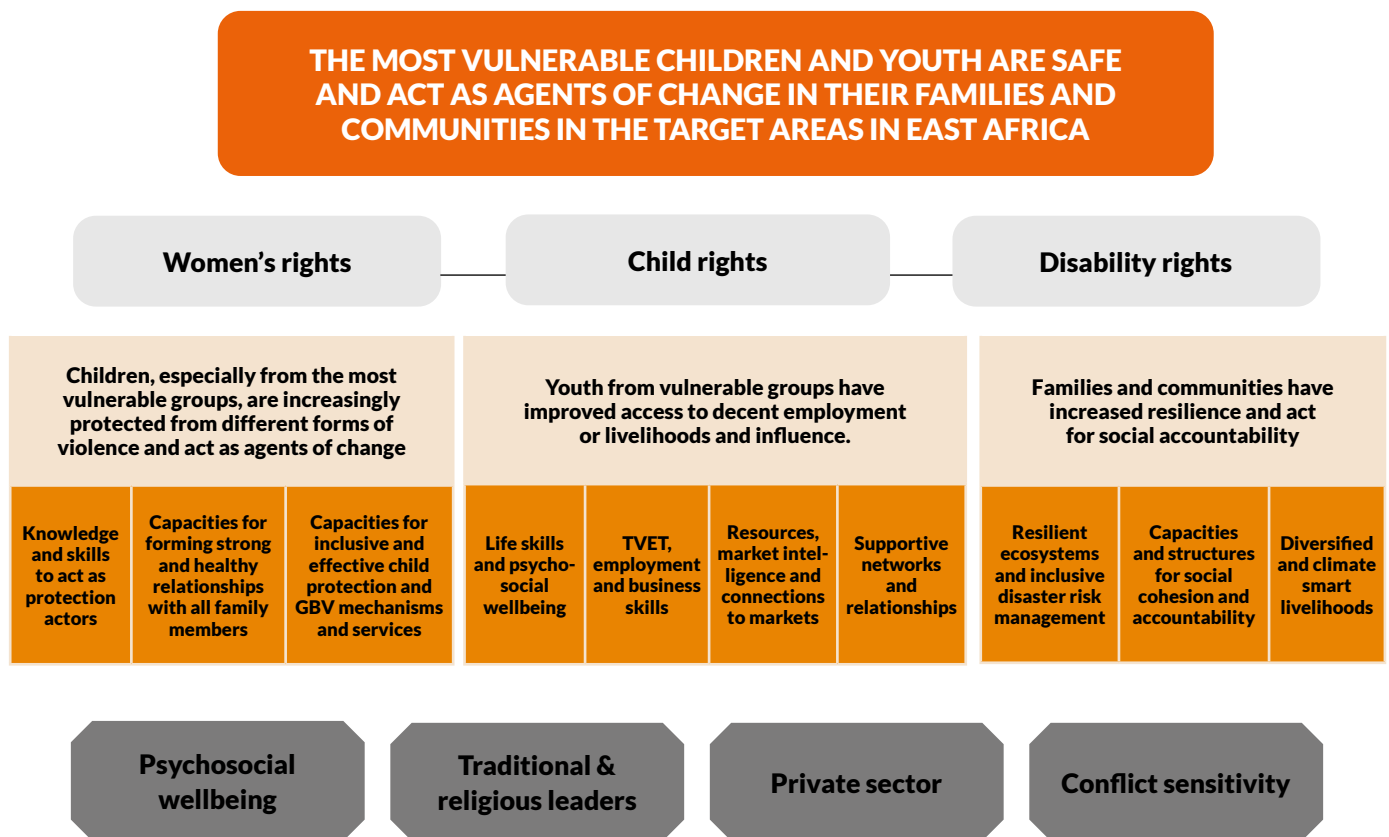


Figure 2. The Programme's simplified Theory of change

The Theory of change indicates the outcome contribution of the three results areas to the impact objective of this Programme. With implemented activities the Programme strives to strengthen safe environments for children to grow and youth to thrive. The Theory of change assumes that children empowered with awareness of their rights can protect themselves, and educate their peers, as well as contribute with the help of duty-bearers to safer communities. The assumptions include that the youth with financially and socially fulfilling lives give their input to common safety in communities, including the well-being of most vulnerable children. Lastly, resilient families and communities are better equipped to nurture, take care of, and protect most vulnerable children from many shocks and stresses in their living environments, caused by different man-made or natural disasters or indirect effects of harmful coping mechanisms.

While all three outcomes are necessary for achieving the impact, the outcomes and their respective assumptions are also interlinked. Child protection and youth employment are interlinked since the violence experienced by children is likely to have long-term negative impact on their wellbeing and behaviour including difficulties in learning, gaining employment, and interacting socially. Therefore, child protection is the foundation for ensuring youth employment and empowerment. On the other hand, youth with sufficient income can sustain themselves and provide for their family. Youth with good self-esteem and decent employment are more likely to have protective, positive, and caring relationship with their own children and with other children in their families and communities.

Communities and families with increased resilience to shocks and capacity for social accountability are in a better position to protect their children from all forms of violence. Furthermore, improved understanding of child protection improves the communities' advocacy, and strengthens family relationships and social protection structures which in return strengthens their resilience and social accountability.

The interlinkage between resilience and youth employment is obvious: resilient families and communities provide an enabling environment for youth to access decent employment and sustainable livelihood. In addition, communities with increased capacities for social accountability can promote and protect youth's human rights in society. Income-earning youth are, on their part, providing for the family and building resilience in the community. It can be argued that constructive youth empowerment and structures contribute to increased social accountability and peace.

WVFIN's programme approach is human rights-based, enhancing the capacities of rights holders and duty bearers. An active civil society is crucial for promoting development, ensuring sustainability and ownership of the results. World Vision's work has its foundation in Human Rights, especially the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and recognizes not only that all rights come with responsibilities but that the attainment of a right is always the duty of several actors or duty bearers. The implementation of the Programme is guided by the human rights principles: Indivisibility, equality and non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, accountability, and transparency.

The level of human rights consideration of the Programme continued to be assessed as human rights progressive. The projects in Somalia are considered human rights transformative and many of the projects have transformative elements like the ones in Ethiopia and Kenya (Alale). Thematically, child protection—the core component of World Vision's work—has the strongest human rights level of commitment. The activities address the root causes of violence and focus on capacity development at different levels, from children and families to schools and child protection offices. Efforts are made to build trust among communities towards government institutions and to strengthen the capacity of these institutions. These measures enhance accountability for respecting, protecting, and fulfilling human rights, and they contribute to making sustainable changes to laws and local policies related to child protection violations, such as harmful traditional practices like FGM.

2.2. PROGRAMME ALIGNMENTS

The Programme contributes significantly to Finland's development policy goals, particularly by enhancing the status and rights of women and girls, promoting the rights of persons with disabilities to live without discrimination, stigma, and violence, and improving access to decent work and opportunities for decent livelihoods and income for vulnerable populations, such as youth in various contexts. Specific targets related to climate change mitigation and adaptation and sustainable use of natural resources are addressed in Ethiopia, where the Programme focuses on strengthening the sustainable management, use, and protection of renewable natural resources and ecosystems, particularly forests. By promoting resilient communities by enhancing ecosystem restoration and improved disaster risk management (DRM), WVFIN's Programme also contributes to Finland's development objective of reducing the vulnerability of people and communities to extreme weather events and natural disasters. In line with Finland's priorities, the Programme is strengthening civil societies in target countries in various ways.

The Programme aligns with the overall principles of Agenda 2030. The principles of universality, equality, and leaving no one behind are well embedded, as the Programme targets the most vulnerable people in its operating countries. More than half of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their targets address the situation of children and young people, who are at the core focus of World Vision's work. Three result areas of the Programme align with specific SDGs as follows: Child protection (SDG 3, 4), Youth employment and empowerment (SDG 4, 8), and Resilience (SDG 13, 15, 16). Additionally, the overall Programme aligns well with SDGs 1, 5 and 10.

WVFIN's Programme is closely aligned with and contributes to the goals of Finland's Country Programmes for Kenya and Somalia 2021-2024 and complements the Country Programme in Ethiopia. In Kenya during the year, the Alale anti-FGM project promoted the rights of girls and women by focusing on protecting girls from FGM and targeting both rights holders and duty bearers, including building their capacities and supporting local-level coordination. Therefore, WVFIN's work aligns with and contributes to Finland's Country Programme Impact 1: "Women participate meaningfully in decision-making, and all women and girls are free from violence." WVFIN's efforts also contributed to all four pillars of Kenya's second 1325 (Women, Peace, and Security) National Action Plan, which Finland supports. WVFIN has also begun planning a joint evaluation with the Finnish NGO International Solidarity Foundation on anti-FGM work in Kenya.

The Youth Livelihood project in Nairobi contributes to Finland's Country Programme Impact 2: "Young women and men with improved technical and vocational skills gain decent employment". The project together with other youth empowerment projects and activities in the Programme contribute to Finland's National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security.

In Somalia, WVFIN's anti-FGM/C and child protection and environmental safety projects contribute to Finland's Country Programme Impact 2: "Enhancing the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls," specifically addressing Outcome 2.2 on inclusive violence prevention and protection, and Outcome 2.3 on ending harmful traditional practices that normalize GBV and FGM. In 2023, WVFIN supported Puntland's Ministry of Women, Development, and Family Affairs in conducting a FGM sensitization campaign that reached approximately 3,000 people. WVFIN also collaborated with the Ministry to organize awareness sessions on child protection and gender-based violence (GBV), reaching more than 5,000 individuals. Additionally, WVFIN's support enabled 1,000 individuals to receive violence prevention and response services.

In Ethiopia, WVFIN's Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) project complements Finland's Country Programme Impact 1: "Sustainable economic growth and improved livelihoods for people in rural areas" by promoting rural economic development through the development of agricultural value chains in forestry and farming. During the year, 800 people, of whom majority were women, were trained in diversified and climate-smart livelihoods, including different off-farm and on-farm value chain development, climate-smart agricultural or forestry practices. In addition, 1035 people (of whom 10% PLWDs) received agricultural or forestry inputs e.g. animals, seeds, seedlings, or cuttings. Last year 68% of households (compared to the baseline 22%) practiced improved and sustainable agriculture, agroforestry, or forestry techniques e.g. methods that increase farm productivity or safety nets in a sustainable manner.

2.3. OPERATIONAL CONTEXT: EAST AFRICA

The Programme is implemented in six East African countries: Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, and Uganda (see the map below). The region is often affected by domestic conflicts, political instability, and natural disasters leading to internal displacement or cross-border movements. While in 2023 all the programme countries suffered from high commodity prices coupled with shortages, including fuel, food, and agricultural inputs, the programme implementation was not severely affected by the situation.

The situations in the countries in East Africa are tightly interconnected; for instance, the conflict that erupted in Sudan in 2023 resulted in an influx of refugees into Ethiopia and Uganda. The project areas in Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi host refugees and returnees, while the project areas in Somalia host internally displaced people (IDPs). In this context, the nexus approach is being applied where relevant.



Figure 3. Area of operation.

In 2023, the security situations in Somalia and Ethiopia were the most fragile due to internal conflicts. These two countries, along with Kenya, also faced a fifth consecutive dry season. Thankfully it did not affect the project areas in Ethiopia. Erratic rainfall patterns and economic crises have intensified East Africa's status as the region with the highest risk for food crises globally. Despite a global decrease in food costs, East Africans spend disproportionately more money on food, as highlighted by World Vision International's "Price Shocks" report (April 2024). This report underscores the growing hunger and malnutrition crisis among the world's most vulnerable children. For example, in 2023, an average Ethiopian needed nearly 12 days of work to afford a basic food basket (compared to three days in 2021), while a Canadian could purchase the same ten food items with just two hours of work. In Burundi, it takes 36 days for an average person to earn enough to buy ten common food items. World Vision's research indicates that "the poorest countries were hardest hit, and the price of a food basket rose the most in countries experiencing currency fluctuations, sustained or worsening conflict and violence, and/or severe climate change effects devastating food producers." Furthermore, "children in the most fragile contexts suffer the most from these failures to address the underlying causes of hunger."

The most fragile contexts include refugee settlements like those in Adjumani district in Northern Uganda, which continued to receive new refugees while resources from humanitarian agencies were shrinking. Another report by WVI titled, "Ration Cuts: Taking from the Hungry to Feed the Starving" (May 2024), describes the impact of food and cash assistance shortfalls in Northern Uganda refugee settlements, where parents and caregivers reported that "food ration cuts and persistent hunger had caused sharp increases in malnutrition, violence, child marriage, child labour, and sexual exploitation." There are clear indications that the number of girls being forced into transactional relationships with older men has increased, and boys are at higher risk of trafficking or being sent away. This situation has also severely affected the people's mental health, with suicidal thoughts and intentions increasing in refugee settlements.

Civil society in East Africa faces severe challenges. Among the six WVFIN Programme countries, Kenya has the most vibrant civil society and relatively free media, although it is not without problems. Civicus ranks

the civic space in Kenya as “obstructed,” while the other five programme countries are ranked as “repressed.” In 2023, protest disruptions remained a significant concern in Kenya, with numerous incidents reported throughout the year. In Ethiopia, journalists faced restrictions due to war-related reporting, while in Somalia, the detention of journalists remained a serious problem. In Uganda, the enactment of a new anti-LGBTQI+ law led to the closure of the UN High Commission for Human Rights office after it had expressed concerns regarding the government’s commitment to human rights.

However, the human rights situation and state of civil society in partner countries did not directly alter World Vision’s work or project implementation in 2023. Like many international development organizations working also in the humanitarian space, World Vision generally refrains from taking a strong vocal stance on political or human rights issues. Nevertheless, World Vision actively promotes good governance and transparency in numerous project areas by supporting civil society and enhancing social accountability through initiatives such as the Citizen Voice and Action model.

At the local level, close cooperation with local and central authorities is crucial for effective project implementation. Through these partnerships, World Vision also strengthens and improves the capacity of duty-bearers. This functional partnership is particularly vital in crisis situations, such as in Somalia, where droughts during the first half of 2023 disrupted the livelihoods of communities dependent on livestock. World Vision worked with partners on the ground to implement a range of interventions, including water trucking and distribution of food and cash assistance, to support many vulnerable communities in the project’s target areas.

2.4. CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

The crosscutting themes of this Programme are gender equality, non-discrimination, disability inclusion, environment and climate, and conflict sensitivity. The cross-cutting themes contribute to the core WV global mission which is the eradication of all kinds of discrimination but also building up resilient and peaceful communities. These are well-aligned with Finland’s development policy. In 2023, mainstreaming cross-cutting themes further resulted in networking with relevant organisations and growing awareness of the themes among the World Vision colleagues in the National offices.

The Programme is based on inclusion and full and equitable participation of all, especially the most vulnerable including women and people living with disabilities in the communities. Non-discrimination is a non-negotiable approach and mode of operation for global WV, too. In general, within the global WV, WVFIND has been one of the pioneers to mainstream the rights of people with disabilities in all projects and programmes, even beyond the ones funded by the MFA of Finland. Besides people with disabilities, WV ensures that all genders, different age groups, people from various ethnic and religious backgrounds as well as social standings are represented and participate in projects. As in previous years, special attention was given to the most vulnerable populations in the project areas.

Central to addressing gender equality and rights within the Programme has been the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Assessments, aiming at uncovering root causes of gender inequality, including societal norms, cultural practices, and stereotypes that increase vulnerabilities among specific genders. Most projects conducted the GESI Assessment in 2022 as part of their baseline studies, with additional assessments carried out in 2023 in Ethiopia and Somalia. This has led to more focused efforts on promoting changes in gender roles, advancing gender equality, and enhancing women’s participation in decision-making and leadership. In Somalia, gender awareness sessions were conducted for staff and collaborators of both projects to enhance their understanding of gender dynamics. In Ngoswet and Alale, Kenya, the rollout of a Community Change Model has positively impacted families by addressing inequitable decision-making previously dominated by men, reducing family conflicts. Notably, in 2023, women have increasingly participated in savings groups, taken loans for small businesses, and supported household expenses like school fees.

In 2023, 53.3% of the Programme’s direct beneficiaries were women and girls, and 46.7% men and boys, which indicates that gender balance is mainstreamed in all the projects under this Programme. For instance,

Ejo Heza Burundi applied a 50% quota for male and female participants. Regarding women's participation in decision-making, the Somalia Child Protection and Environmental Safety project encouraged women to lead project committees, with women now chairing 9 out of 13 child protection committees. Similarly, women lead protection committees in Somalia anti-FGM/C project villages, serving as role models and providing valuable perspectives. In Alale, Kenya, GESI principles incorporated in project teachings and trainings improved women's roles in household financial management. The Ethiopia FMNR project focused on removing barriers to poor women's participation in the economy, education, and savings activities, promoting equal access to resources such as land, credit, and financial facilities. Moreover, a new rule was jointly decided that cooperatives must have at least 30% women in leadership positions.

All projects included in the Programme have paid attention to disability rights and inclusion. The total number of Programme participants with disabilities was 3,627 (F1 234; M978; girls 852; boys 563) which is 3% of the Programme's participants. The number has grown from 2022 when the total was 2,931 direct beneficiaries with disabilities but there has not been any change percentagewise. During 2023, a Disability Assessment was carried out in all the projects that had not yet done it. The objective was to better understand the situation of people with different kinds of disabilities in the implementation areas. Assessments differed ranging from more generic assessments like in Umurava Rwanda to more specific ones like in Ngoswet Kenya where the programme facilitated an assessment for children with ear, nose, and throat problems to prescribe appropriate hearing aids for them.

In all countries throughout the Programme the focus has been on the promotion of equality and participation and the empowerment of persons with disabilities rather than merely providing assistance for them. Predominantly, awareness-raising and attitude change campaigns have been carried out to build a ground for this change. For example, in Adjumani Uganda, 657 adults and children with disabilities took part in awareness raising sessions on the rights of children/persons living with disabilities. In Burundi the communities used to consider a person with a disability as a curse in the family or someone whose life will always depend on others. During the year, the project tried to remove all myths around disability to take this issue to a new height the movement from viewing persons with disabilities as objects of charity, medical treatment, and social protection to viewing persons with disabilities as subjects with rights, who are capable of claiming their rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent as well as being active members of society.

The participation of persons with disabilities has been promoted systematically in several ways. In Alale Kenya, persons with disabilities have been increasingly invited to community forums, not only those organized by World Vision. In the FMNR project in Ethiopia persons with disabilities are specifically targeted with training quotas and agricultural inputs, and the number of persons with disabilities in cooperatives has continued to steadily increase representing 7.5% in 2023.

The empowerment of persons with disabilities has taken place particularly by promoting their economic and livelihoods opportunities. For example, in Umurava Rwanda, 455 people with disability were empowered on social and behavioural change, financial inclusion, technical and business-related trainings as well as coaching and mentoring to ensure their involvement in self-supportive initiatives. The Adjumani project in Uganda supported 120 caregivers of children living with disability with incoming generating activities, which improved the livelihood of households taking care of children with disabilities.

This Programme adopts a twin-track approach to climate change, addressing it both through Outcome 3 on climate resilience and as a mainstreamed theme across all projects. In the coming year, a stronger focus on further integrating environmental and climate change considerations throughout the Programme shall be considered. Meanwhile, within the World Vision Partnership, several significant processes have taken place over the past year, including the development of tools for better environmental safeguarding, the creation of a road map for carbon programming to mitigate potential negative impacts, and the introduction of a new project model focused on greening communities.

The Programme proposes the protection of families by more resilient ecosystems and inclusive disaster risk management as well as the promotion of alternative and climate smart livelihoods. Children, persons

with disabilities, women and the elderly are seen as particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and other environmental threats. The Programme emphasises that children shall be at the heart of all climate action policies and practices. The most prevalent way of promoting children's and youth's participation and action has been the establishment and capacitation of school environmental clubs in several projects.

This Programme is partly implemented in geographical locations (Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi) where communities comprise of both local and refugee people and families. In those, a triple-nexus approach is included, particularly to avoid and mitigate tensions between host and migrant populations. Furthermore, in all programme implementation countries and locations political, ethnic, or social relations can yield unrest and clashes. Peaceful co-existence and interaction between populations determines whether development interventions succeed or not, thus conflict sensitivity is a crucial cross-cutting theme in ensuring sustainable results.

An integral step for addressing and promoting conflict sensitivity has been conducting project-specific conflict sensitivity analyses. During 2023 all the remaining projects except Ethiopia had conducted such an analysis. The year 2023 reporting suggests that the conflict sensitivity analysis of dividers and connectors has successfully led to both insightful reporting of conflict sensitivity, as well as to contextualizing and tailoring conflict sensitivity related action according to each project locations' local realities and practices. Examples of different approaches include the Alale Project in Kenya where peace meetings have been conducted along the borders of Pokot and Turkana community in Nawaypong where tension has been experienced for some time. With the regular peace meetings, conflict has reduced allowing the community to settle down and participate in project's activities. In the Ejo Heza Project in Burundi, project participants from refugee camps and host communities were sensitized on how they can live in harmony with their neighbourhood and supported them to implement joint activities that reinforce their mutuality and peaceful cohabitation.

3. PROGRAMME RESULTS

3.1. OVERALL PROGRESS

This chapter describes Programme's progress towards its overall impact i.e., that the most vulnerable children and youth are safe and act as agents of change in their families and communities in East Africa through the programme interventions. Based on the analyses of the outcome and output indicators and the qualitative data at the programme and project level it can be concluded that the Programme is making progress towards its objective. While there is some stagnation at the outcome level indicators, nothing is indicating that assumptions and approaches used in Programme are not valid, relevant, and adequate, but are contributing to the outcomes and progress towards achievement of impact.

The results achieved in 2023 are analysed at outcome and output levels with the focus on progress and changes at the outcome level, while using outputs and examples of activities from the project level to support the analyses. The analysis is based on quantitative and qualitative results and analyses on outcome and output levels carried out in each of the Programme's 10 projects on an annual basis. The progress is analysed by measuring aggregated indicator data from projects against the baseline values and annual targets. All collected data is disaggregated by age, sex, and disability, with a special emphasis on persons with disabilities in monitoring, reporting and data analyses. Impact level monitoring will be conducted in the end of the programme period in 2025.

The Safer Tomorrow for the Children of East Africa Programme consists of 10 projects which are contributing to one or more of Programme's three result areas. In addition, the Programme includes collaboration with private sector supporting the Programme's impact and implementation.

Projects:

- **Burundi:** Ejo Heza Child Protection and Youth Empowerment Project, 2022-2025
- **Ethiopia:** Assisted Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) for Sustainable Land Management and Livelihood Project 2022-2025, second phase
- **Kenya:** Ngoswet Area Programme 2022-2025 (total duration 2014 -2030)
- **Kenya:** Roysambu Youth Livelihood Project 2022-2025, second phase
- **Kenya:** Alale Anti-FGM and reproductive health project 2022-2025
- **Rwanda:** Buliza Youth Empowerment Partnership Project 2022-2025, second phase
- **Rwanda:** Umurava Area Programme 2022-2025 (total duration: 2019- 2030)
- **Somalia:** Acceleration of FGM/C Abandonment Project 2022-2025, second phase
- **Somalia:** Child Protection and Environmental Safety Project, 2022-2025
- **Somalia:** Finnish Baby Aid Kit (FBAK) 2022-2023
- **Uganda:** Adjumani Child Protection, Livelihoods and Environment Project, 2022-2025

The Programme's progress is monitored using seven outcome indicators: four for Child protection, one for Youth employment, and two for Resilience. The progress is assessed using traffic lights for clearer interpretation: Green light indicates clear progress towards the intended results, where both progress from the baseline data is evident and the annual target is met; yellow light signifies progress from the baseline figures, but the annual targets are not met; and red light indicates neither progress from the baseline nor meeting the annual targets. In 2023, all outcome indicators except one showed satisfactory progress compared to either the baseline or the previous year. However, caution is advised in interpreting these results due to minor differences.

Based on the data collected, it appears that the most favourable progress within the Programme's three result areas is in child protection, with three out of four outcome indicators are showing positive progress. One indicator (positive parenting) declined compared to both the baseline and the 2022 result but needs further interpretation (see below).

In the Youth employment result area, although the annual target was not met, the result showed improvement compared to the previous year, indicating steady progress from the baseline values. Similarly, results from the Resilience result area indicate consistent progress from the baseline in terms of enhancing the resilience of families and communities, despite not meeting the annual targets.

There are acknowledged limitations in data collection and result interpretation. Firstly, the Ngoswet AP was unable to collect outcome data for results area 3 on resilience, despite including baseline data in the results matrix. Additionally, the number of projects contributing to specific outcomes varies widely (from 2 to 8), and not all projects can provide data for every indicator annually.

3.2. RESULT AREA 1: CHILD PROTECTION

3.2.1. Introduction

The objective of the child protection result area is firstly that children, especially from the most vulnerable groups, are protected from different forms of violence and secondly, that children act as change agents in their families and communities and among their peers. The Theory of change of the Programme assumes that violence and exploitation experienced by children can undermine other development outcomes as they can have long-term consequences on children's well-being and behaviour. For example, these negative experiences might result in difficulties in learning, social interaction and gaining employment.

The children themselves, families and caregivers, faith and traditional leaders and communities all have their role in child protection. While children's knowledge about their rights and protection mechanisms must be increased, it is equally important to transform existing norms and attitudes and behaviour of parents and

caregivers, for example through positive parenting approaches to create a safe environment for all children. This includes abandonment of harmful traditional practises like Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM). Furthermore, local-level collaboration between various duty bearers like local authorities, police, teachers and faith leaders and actors such as child protection advocacy groups and community-based organisations is crucial for strengthening the child protection systems.

The context of the child protection related activities varies in the eight projects in five Programme countries that contribute to the result area. In Umurava (Rwanda) and Ngoswet (Kenya) area programmes (APs), child protection is part and parcel of World Vision’s work, and local community-based partner organisations supported by WV are regularly monitoring wellbeing of thousands of children living in the AP areas, whilst parents and caregivers, and local and religious leaders are benefiting from various child protection trainings. In some other projects, child protection activities including case management is conducted ad hoc or as separate activities. In Adjumani (Uganda), Ejo Heza (Burundi) and Umurava (Rwanda) child protection is conducted both among the refugees and the host communities. It is well known that children living in refugee camps and settlements are more exposed to multiple child protection risks as separation from parents can, for example, lead to lack of care, child labour, sexual harassment, and abuse, early marriage and pregnancy, or substance abuse. Therefore, the projects working in refugee contexts have taken special measures to minimise these risks.

3.2.2. Progress in 2023

OUTCOME 1

Children especially from the most vulnerable groups are increasingly protected from different forms of violence and act as agents of change in their families and communities.

Outcome Indicator		Baseline	2025 Target	2022 Result	2023 Targets	2023 Results	Project Contribution
OCI 1.1.	% of children who know of the presence of child protection services and mechanisms.	39%	66%	64%	51%	56%	Kenya: Alale & Ngoswet; Somalia CP-ENV, & anti-FGM/C; Uganda: Adjumani; Burundi: Ejo Heza
OCI 1.2.	% of parents and other caregivers who demonstrate knowledge on positive parenting practices	59%	71%	61%	59%	50%	Kenya: Alale & Ngoswet; Somalia CP-ENV, & anti-FGM/C; Uganda: Adjumani; Burundi: Ejo Heza
OCI 1.3.	% of parents and caregivers who approve FGM	11%	5%	4%	9%	9%	Kenya: Alale; Somalia anti-FGM/C
OCI 1.4.	# initiatives by community groups	0	15	16	15	15	Kenya: Ngoswet & Roysambu; Uganda: Adjumani; Burundi: Ejo Heza

Table 2. Progress of the Outcome 1.

The progress towards the achievement of Outcome 1 is measured by four outcome indicators reflecting three core elements of World Vision’s approach to child protection, namely 1) children’s knowledge and children as actors, 2) the role of parents, caregivers, and families, and 3) community-based child protection. The indicator measuring parents’ and caregivers’ attitude towards FGM was developed specifically for two anti-FGM projects in the Programme. It is to be noted that Programme’s Outcome indicators do not capture all that is being done under Child protection by various projects. For example, the important work done with duty bearers, is not measured at the outcome level, but at output level.

In the second implementation year of the Programme, the overall progress was satisfactory, and only the target on positive parenting was not met. The outcome indicators values represent an average of data disaggregated by sex and disability (female, male, female with disability, male with disability, female with

disability) and sometimes indicator value for example for females with disability might be much better than the aggregation, or vice versa.

There are three outputs contributing to outcome 1, with eight output indicators in total. In 2023, most of the annual output targets were met or surpassed indicating good progress at the output level. Some of the key outputs contributing to the achievement of the targeted outcomes were, for example, the training of 11,752 children and youth in child rights and protection (more than double the number of those trained in 2022) and supporting 5,400 children and youth to participate in various types of groups promoting child rights. While 1,471 parents were trained on positive parenting in 2023, the outcome indicator target was not met. As regards the number of people who have received psychosocial or positive mental health support, the Programme is lagging behind the set targets for the second year in a row. At the same time, the Programme managed to provide different violence prevention and response services to about 1,000 more people (2,692) than planned. The two Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) that WV is supporting in Adjumani reached 4,634 children.

Children's awareness of child protection

Education of children of their rights and protection is a key objective in many projects in the Programme. The indicator measuring knowledge related to these shows a good progress (56%) as compared to the baseline (39%) and end of Programme target of 66%. On average, the share of girls with or without disabilities in this indicator is slightly higher than then boys with or without disabilities. In some context, girls might have better opportunities to participate training. For example, in Somalia, boys are more mobile than girls as they move with the cattle. But this might not explain results alone. In Somalia, the overall result dropped from 83% in 2022 to 65% in 2023 but the result for boys dropped significantly more (85% > 46%).

There was good progress for example in Adjumani, where the share of children who had information on child protection services and mechanisms continued to increase to 75% from the baseline (33%) and year 2022 result (70%). The good result might be explained by the fact that many organizations have been promoting child protection in the previous years in Adjumani refugee hosting district. Similarly, in Ngoswet AP, which is in its second phase, the indicator increased to 75% from 67% measured in 2022 reflecting the long-term work to inform children on their rights and protection through campaigns and school-based activities. However, in Ngoswet the child rights awareness of children with disabilities was significantly lower than that of children without disabilities.

There are great differences between projects as for example in the Ezo Heja project in Burundi the result was very low, only 19% (or 39% if children with disabilities are excluded). This might have been affected by the fact that the project did not train any new children in child protection in 2023, but instead decided to conduct refresher training for 16 club leaders in each of the four refugee camps and host communities to become child protection champions and lead the child protection sensitization process in the communities.

Schools are one of the most important partners in child protection. Trainings and awareness raising are usually conducted in schools where the teachers trained and capacitated by World Vision provide training to the members of child protection, life skills, peace clubs etc. Having gained skills on detecting, protecting, and reporting child protection issues, club members then train other children in schools or organize campaigns in communities.

The total number of children and youth trained in child protection increased significantly from 6,500 recorded in 2022 to 11,752. The increase was to large extent more children and youth trained Somalia in 2023 (7,056) than the previous year (1,496). Interestingly, there was no differences in number of boys and girls trained, but when participation of boys and girls in advocacy groups is analysed, girls make more than 2/3 of the participants. It could be that the pastoralist context of Somalia has an impact on this: training and awareness raising campaigns do reach boys, but they might not be able to participate in groups and advocacy efforts as they need to move with the cattle.

Children as agents of change

With knowledge, skills and platforms children and youth can play a critical role in advocating their rights and protection among other children, communities, and duty-bearers. In 2023, World Vision supported 5,418

children to participate in activities advocating child rights, almost a thousand children more than the original target. This surpass can largely be attributed to the large number of children and youth participating in various child-led advocacy groups in Adjumani encompassing Mobile Journalist club (Mojo club), two Peace Clubs, and sixteen Male Action Groups that open doors for a large and inclusive group of children and youth to engage actively in advocacy efforts to the advancement of child rights, child wellbeing and peace in host and refugee communities.

Children Assemblies and the Day of the African Child, and other events organized by World Vision provide children platforms to engage directly with community leaders and other duty bearers including local authorities. In 2023, for example in Ngoswet AP, 937 children (G560, B377) children were provided with these kinds of opportunities. The International Day of the African Child on 16th June, in particular, is an important advocacy event in most projects and programmes. For example, in Umurava AP in Rwanda, 3,248 children participated the celebration, and the competition organized for the child protection clubs around the theme “The Rights of the Child in the digital environment”. Further in Umurava, like in the previous year, the AP partnered with the Rwanda Extractive Workers Union (REWU) in capacitating 3,127 children and youth with 184 of them with disabilities who participated in rights advocacy groups to speak out about any child protection issues. The children were also facilitated to cascade the acquired skills to their peers, whereby an estimated 16,656 children were taught about rights and protection, for example, how to respond to sexual abuse.

Positive parenting

Parents and caregivers have a key role in creating a safe and supportive environment for children to grow and develop. In 2023, activities related to positive parenting and seeking to bring about changes in attitudes and behaviour were conducted in about a half of the projects. In 2022 there had been good progress as compared to the baseline and annual target; but in 2023 the situation was opposite: only half of the parents and other caregivers demonstrated knowledge on positive parenting practices as measured by the outcome indicator. In general, there are quite large differences between the projects, and the Programme level outcome (50%) is affected by the drop in Ngoswet (from 95% at baseline to 45%) and low results in Ejo Heza. All in all, because of some level of insecurity related to the data and since the approaches to promote positive parenting varied significantly between the projects, robust analysis of the actual progress is somewhat challenging.

In 2023, altogether 3,070 (1,746F, 1,324M) parents were trained in positive parenting, about a half of them in Adjumani, where a training of trainers’ approach was applied by training first 130 model parents who then trained 1,471 other parents. In some projects, World Vision’s Celebrating Families project model was used with aim of equipping parents with skills for them to prevent violence against children or gender-based violence and how to address disability issues in their respective families. Normally, couples who went through the training were acting as mentors for other couples in their community thereby helping to promote positive parenting practices in the communities and contributing to a safer environment for the children. In Alale, the 74 couples trained through the Celebrating Families model were religious leaders who afterwards used their moral power and platforms to reach out to 148 other couples with the same messages on importance of creating an environment where both boys and girls feel loved and cared for and how parents are responsible for their children’s welfare. The project’s progress monitoring reveals an increase in percentage of parents and caregivers who demonstrate knowledge on positive parenting practices from 26% in 2022 to 35% in 2023.

In Ngoswet, the Celebrating Family model was also implemented through the faith leaders (13 couples) who reached 878 parents (520F and 328M). The impact of the model is evidenced local administrators testifying of more peaceful families in their areas of their jurisdiction and reduced family conflicts, and by testimonies from children who feel that their parents give them more attention unlike previously before attending the training: “My name is Kibet from Simit village, am 12 years old. In our village, most parents especially fathers had no time for their children. They engaged in taking local brew and came home very late in the evening. This made children vulnerable. In the recent past my mother and father attended a training sponsored by World Vision on Celebrating Families. They shared with us stories on what they were taught. The training has greatly helped them together with other parents from our neighbourhood. I see most fathers now present at home and involved in the care of their children.”

Mental health and psychosocial support

The importance positive mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of parents, caregivers and children has increasingly been recognized as a crucial element for child protection and social and economic development. Challenges and problems faced by projects participants in their life can undermine efforts to improve their livelihoods, for example. Therefore, activities promoting mental wellbeing such as psychosocial support and trauma healing have been included in different projects.

In 2023, the Programme provided psychosocial and positive mental health support to 1,798 persons (958 adults, 172 youth, 625 children), most of them (1,336) in Adjumani. About half of those in Adjumani who were provide support were youth (751, incl. 440F, 311M) and reached through targeted actions such as workshops, counselling sessions, and mentorship programs which equipped them with the necessary skills and resilience to navigate the challenges of the modern work and enhanced their self-esteem, communication skills, and emotional intelligence (improving readiness to receive training and employment). Some 500 adults participated in Problem Management Plus (PM+) groups targeting people who are exposed to various forms of adversities (depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and chronic stress) and providing the emotional and psychological support to ensure that they acquire a good mental health state. In Adjumani, World Vision supports two Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) in refugee settlement. CFSs provided a safe and conducive environment (particularly important for refugee children) for a total of 4,634 (2,925F, 2,709M) children including 39 CWD who participated in different child friendly and age-appropriate activities. At the CFSs, children of different age categories accessed psychosocial support services rendered through World Vision's own Peace Road Curriculum.

In Somalia, 209 people received psychosocial support or trauma healing, including 25 Community Education Committees' caregivers and parents who were trained by World Vision on helping and giving psychological support to survivors of any form of GBV and supporting the community on how to deal with trauma and cope with stress associated with GBV. The training also equipped the participants with relevant knowledge and techniques to apply during awareness-raising activities, especially when communicating with community members with low literacy skills, supporting people during and in the aftermath of disaster and traumatic events, and how to reduce risks associated with children's safety and emotional well-being.

Communities and child protection

The key objective of World Vision's approach to child protection approach is the strengthening of the capacities of various community stakeholders and local authorities to run inclusive and effective child protection mechanisms and services. Programme's objective is to ensure that projects' target areas are covered by functioning child protection units consisting of different types of duty-bearers that have skills and are committed, and who can be held accountable for their work and action or inaction by community members, community-based groups, and the civil society. In 2023, the Programme continued good performance and achieved the numeric outcome target of 15 initiatives by community groups such as Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) and Child Protection Advocacy (CPA) groups and child and youth advocacy groups.

During the 2022-2025 programme period, World Vision is aiming to facilitate establishment or reactivation, to provide financial or technical support to 124 CVA, CPA and other community groups. In 2023, 59 groups were supported as planned. There is some degree of variation with these groups and the support provided. In some cases, World Vision works with a group that has been in existence for longer time, sometimes groups are being set up. Similarly, some groups focus primarily on child protection, while other might work on various issues. For example, CVA groups typically select their advocacy issues based on situation and context. In the refugee context, empowering the community to stand up and demand accountability from service providers through the CVA model is still something new, while advocacy by children and youth through Peace Clubs, for example, has been used for longer time to strengthen child protection in communities.

World Vision's Community Change (C-Change) model was used in few projects to improve child protection. For example, in Ngoswet, 12 Trainers of Trainers enrolled 250 champions (122F, 118M) in a C-change class and empowering them become advocates for child protection. As a result of the training, a platform was

provided to explore in-depth “underlying beliefs, socio-cultural norms and traditional practices that either challenge or support communities progress towards child wellbeing improvement,” as stated in the project model. The model seems to be working as the outcome monitoring in Ngoswet revealed an increase in proportion of adults who would report a case of child abuse from 93% in 2022 to 100% in 2023. Further proportion of adolescents who know of the presence of services and mechanisms to receive and respond to violence against children rose from 64 % in 2022 to 78% in 2023. C-Change training and heightened awareness could have contributed to the rise in reported child protection cases within the Ngoswet community to eight incidents in 2023, compared to three incidents in 2022.

Child protection system preventing and responding to violence against children

In 2023, the Programme supported 80 child protection units. While the annual target of 106 units was not met, the annual target of 278 duty bearers (such as parasocial workers, faith and traditional leaders, local council leaders, teachers, police officers) trained in child protection was significantly exceeded as in total, 891 duty bearers were trained. The approaches selected by projects vary from targeted training to duty-bearers to the integration of child protection training in other trainings. The high number of duty bearers reached was due to the decision in Adjumani to incorporate training sessions on child protection and violence against children in all community engagements and integrate child protection themes into various project activities and engagements with duty bearers. Training to duty bearers on child protection usually also includes issues such as gender equality, diversity inclusion and the rights of children including children living with disabilities. Furthermore, trainings often seek to advance social accountability by promoting and explaining the Citizen Voice and Action approach.

A functioning child protection system requires collaboration and coordination between various duty bearers and actors, including community groups. Without this, no effective prevention and response to violence against children and gender-based violence is possible. In Alale, and the West Pokot County in Kenya in general, World Vision has been one of the driving forces in strengthening Government’s reporting and referral systems through regular trainings and meetings among child protection actors under Area Advisory Council at the government’s level as well as among NGOs, CBOs, Court User’s Committees and Faith Based Organizations. During the meetings for example child protection referral systems are tracked from the point of reporting to the point of case hearing and gaps are identified and responsible people are held accountable for any case that was not successfully handled. It can be assumed that regular collaboration and coordination among authorities and civil society has contributed to the large share (70%) of community members including children who according to WV’s monitoring data feel confident that the local child protection actors will effectively investigate reported cases of violence against children. In 2023, committal orders for 20 rescued girls at Alale Primary School were provided and their cases were with law courts. Another significant step in Alale was the construction of a safe house in conjunction with Alale Primary School that provides a conducive and safe environment for 100 girls fleeing from FGM and child marriages.

Those 20 rescued girls were among the 36 people in Alale that received violence prevention and response services in 2023. In total, 2,692 people received these services either through project activities or through referral, almost a thousand more than originally targeted. A significant part of this positive achievement can be attributed to Adjumani project’s strategic integration of GBV communication into all community engagements and into various project activities. In Puntland Somalia, where the protection and eradication of GBV including FGM, is the main objective of the two projects, World Vision supported the provision of violence prevention and response services to 1,008 people, meeting well the annual target.

Anti-FGM work

Reduction and eradication of female genital mutilation (FGM) is a special theme in the Programme and the main objective of two projects in the Programme (Alale/Kenya, Puntland/Somalia). FGM is closely linked to other harmful traditional practices such as child marriage which also concerns boys. In many cases, poverty is the root cause for continuation of FGM and hence addressing needs linked to livelihoods is an important strategy for ending FGM. The issue of FGM is very complex with many cultural and social factors contributing to its continuation. Therefore, it needs to be addressed using multiple strategies at various levels including by sensitizing children (girls and boys) and parents and caregivers, organizing Alternative

Rite of Passage (ARP) trainings and ceremonies, constructing safe houses (in schools), strengthening coordination networks, and providing incentives to practitioners/cutters who are ready to give up their work and thereby lose their source of income. Advocacy work on legislation and its implementation is also crucial. And finally, World Vision is providing legal and psychological support to survivors and educational and livelihoods options to those at risk.

The FGM-related outcome indicator seeks to measure the progress in the project areas by tracking the share of parents and caregivers who approve FGM. Due to the sensitive (and in Kenya illegal) nature of FGM neither the baseline nor monitoring data probably reflect the actual attitudes or thinking of respondents or the situation in communities as respondents were/are not comfortable sharing their opinions. In any case, the results data of 2023 is considered to reflect better the actual situation than the baseline or the 2022 results and provide a more reliable picture of how World Vision's interventions have affected opinions on FGM.

Furthermore, the aggregated programme level data do not capture the differences between Kenya and Somalia, where FGM is much more common. In 2023, the share of those parents and caregivers approving FGM was 9%, decreasing from 11% in 2022. In Alale, the percentage of parent approving FGM increased to 11% which in fact indicates that the World Vision's work has gained trust, people are talking about FGM and FGM cases. During the baseline period and the first year of the programme family members did not feel confident in talking about FGM cases. While some 10% of the parents and caregivers still approve the practicing of FGM there is need to continue working to change attitudes and mindsets in the communities in Alale and even more focus should go into educating parents on issues around FGM for them to accept its abandonment.

In Puntland the progress monitoring data shows no significant changes on average, but the share of female parents and caregivers who approve FGM has increased, while for male parent it has reduced. Interestingly, the share of parents with disabilities who approve FGM continues to be much lower than those with no disabilities which is opposite to projects' assumption. The drop in the share of men who approve FGM (17% > 5%) is a positive trend as also men and boys play a key role in eradicating the practise of FGM. In view of this, World Vision has taken many activities targeting boys/youth-to-men such as meetings to promote dialogue on abandoning FGM using role models and change agents who have publicly spoken out against FGM or who have taken a leadership role in ending the practice. This kind of engagement of adolescent boys and young men with role models and change agents can be critical in shifting attitudes and behaviours toward ending the practice.

Other key strategies used in Puntland have been proving boys and men with accurate information about the harmful effects such as the physical and psychological risks associated with FGM. Peer education has proved to be an effective way to spread awareness and promote positive change when it is done through open dialogue where boys and young men can discuss their thoughts and feelings about FGM without shaming or blaming. Finally, by promoting positive masculinity boys and young men can be encouraged to reject harmful stereotypes about masculinity and embrace positive behaviours that promote gender equality and human rights.

Alternative Rite of Passage (ARP) approach has been found to be one of the most effective ways to advocate for ending FGM practices and increasing children's knowledge and skills in Kenya. In 2023, in total 200 girls and 70 boys including 11 PWD in Alale participated ARP training consisting of units such as importance of education, children's act, referral systems and life skills. The project also reached a total of 300 girls and 200 boys through mentorship programmes in safe houses and communities utilizing role models such as women leaders and FGM survivors as facilitators using their stories to bring out the negative side of FGM and child marriage.

In Puntland, there was need to shift the focus of sensitization and training efforts on eradicating and eliminating harmful practices of FGM, early marriage and forced marriage and GBV more to Internally Displaced People's camps near project target villages as it was recognized that in the Somalia context during emergency situations IDP camps face unique protection risks and therefore require specific attention. The training sessions in 13 target villages and surrounding camps had 300 participants and facilitated establishment of care groups that serve as platforms for continued dialogue on harmful traditional practices and enhanced awareness-raising and behavioural change.

The collaboration with authorities such as the Ministry of Women, Development and Family Affairs, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Health has been crucial for the project implementation. The ministries are partners in awareness raising campaigns, while World Vision provides training to police and health workers. In 2023, for example, 18 police and community police officers (10M, 8F) were trained in responding to violence against women and children to enhance local capacity and address existing gaps in case management and reporting. 20 (16F, 4M) health care workers were trained on clinical management of FGM/C and appropriate and effective care to women and girls who have been subjected to FGM/C. The training was part of the strategy in which health workers are expected to double up their roles by taking part community awareness sessions within the health centres as well outside of the facilities and closely working with other existing structures such as the community protection committees and faith leaders. This may promote a shift in mindset and practices away from medicalization of FGM/C, which can further contribute to reducing the prevalence of this harmful practice.

3.2.3. Lessons learnt and adaptation

Child protection stands at the core of World Vision's Programme and is included in all projects sometimes as a main component, sometimes as a stand-alone activity. Either way, basic elements in promoting safety of children and youth are the same in different projects. Depending on the context and strategies and approaches chosen by projects, training of children on child protection can be more targeted and number of participants limited while the knowledge is cascaded to other children and community members by these "champions". Similarly, the training of duty bearers can be targeted, or it can be incorporated in all engagements whereby larger number of duty bearers can be reached. The moral power of religious leaders is a powerful tool in strengthening child protection as well. Activities to promote positive parenting were often implemented through training religious leader couples to function as model couples for others in the community.

Attitudinal changes are often the hardest to achieve and the process takes time. For example, one of the most crucial aspects of eliminating FGM is changing attitudes among parents, caregivers, community members, etc. In Alale, Kenya, monitoring and observations indicate that the project is on the right path as demonstrated also by the interest shown by parents in participating in activities such as the Community Change Class and the palpable engagement observed during the ARP graduation. Especially when working with sensitive issues like FGM, gaining the trust of parents and communities is everything. In Alale, trust has been gained, and it has become more acceptable to discuss girls' rights and the harms of FGM. There are clear signs that the community is receptive to change, as more and more parents and caregivers are now openly discussing FGM cases, whereas previously it was more hidden. This is also why measuring the indicator for parents accepting FGM practices is challenging.

Some projects' work to improve child protection was not measured by outcome indicators, but nevertheless deserve to be mentioned: in the Roysambu Youth Livelihood project implemented in informal settlements/slums in Roysambu and Mathare in Nairobi, child protection was incorporated in the project by providing child protection training, including referral pathways, to all participants. The training can help the youth to prevent such incidences from happening to them, their peers and the children living in their communities.

While there were some outputs in which the targets were clearly not met this is usually because of project-level decisions to change or adapt implementation strategies, and not underperformance. In those cases where projects' output targets were exceeded it seems that this has not compromised the quality of the work. There is no indication that the Programme's assumptions would not be valid and there is no need for major adaptations.

The closer analyses of the monitoring data disaggregated by sex, disability and age, at programme and project levels can sometimes reveal important deficits and trends. At the same time, some caution is needed when drawing conclusions based on monitoring data. For example, in Puntland there seems to be a steady and positive trend in female youth's (including those with disabilities) awareness of child rights, while male youth's knowledge dropped significantly. To understand the reasons behind these trends, and positive and negative trends in general, needs more in-depth analyses.

3.3. RESULT AREA 2: YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY

3.3.1. Introduction

The primary objective of the result area is the economic and social empowerment of youth defined as young people aged 15-24 years. The Programme’s theory of change assumes that when youth have sufficient income and can sustain themselves and provide for their families, they are more likely to develop protective, positive, and caring relationships with their own children and other children in their communities. With livelihood, economic and social assets, life skills and good mental health, youth are more resilient and can better cope with and recover from different types of stress and shocks.

A strong identity and good life skills reduce the risk of exploitation and encourage youth to become active members of their communities and societies, including participating in decision-making, holding duty bearers accountable, and upholding the rights of others. Therefore, supporting the livelihood development of youth and providing skills and platforms for engagement are crucial in building safe, just, resilient, cohesive communities and peaceful societies. This is especially important in refugee and urban contexts to prevent youth from being exploited to destabilise communities. For female youth, the access to skills training and employment can help to avoid child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM) or female genital mutilation or other forms of gender-based violence.

When youth have necessary life skills, increased psychosocial well-being, and supportive social relationships, they are assumed to be capable and committed to learning new technical and vocational skills that will help them find employment. Since activities target the most vulnerable youth, who often lack proper foundational education, it is essential to offer opportunities to develop basic practical skills (functional literacy, numeracy, financial literacy, digital literacy) followed by work readiness and life skills (entrepreneurship, teamwork, professionalism, problem-solving, communication skills, etc.).

Programme’s youth employment activities are implemented in six out of ten projects. Two of these projects focus solely on youth and increasing their employability and livelihoods. The projects are in informal settlements in urban areas (the Roysambu project in Nairobi, Kenya), ultra-poor rural areas (the Buliza project and Umurava area programme in Rwanda), and refugee settlements (the Ejo Heza project in Burundi and the Adjumani project in Uganda). Data for the Umurava AP was collected for the first time in 2023 for the outcome level indicator.

3.3.2. Progress in 2023

OUTCOME 2

Youth from vulnerable groups have improved access to decent employment or livelihood and influence development in their communities

Outcome Indicator	Baseline	2025 Target	2022 Result	2023 Target	2023 Results	Project Contribution
OCI 2.1. % of youth who are employed or self-employment	0%	75%	43%	68%	64%	Burundi, Ejo Heza; Kenya, Roysambu; Uganda, Adjumani; Rwanda, Buliza & Umurava AP Somalia, Somalia anti-FGM/C

Table 3. Progress of the Outcome 2.

The indicator to measure the progress of this result area is the percentage of youth engaged in the Programme's training and other employability-enhancing activities who become employed or self-employed. Therefore, the baseline value for this indicator is 0%, and it is expected that 75% of the youth involved will have their own business or be employed by the end of the programme period. The ideal situation would be that every young person is employed or self-employed.

The target value for the outcome-level indicator for 2023 was set at 68%, which was five percentage points' increase from 2022 (63%). The outcome monitoring revealed that 64% of the involved youth became employed or self-employed because of programme interventions, indicating that progress after two years of implementation is showing progress in a favourable direction. The target value for 2023 was almost met and progress compared to the results in 2022 took place.

In the Roysambu youth project, which operates in the Mathare slum in Nairobi, Kenya, half of the youth involved in project activities were employed or self-employed. In Rwanda's youth empowerment project, all 200 youth secured a job or started their own business. In Uganda's Adjumani project, 93% of the youth involved found employment, compared to 19% in 2022. In Burundi, even 4% of the youth managed to find employment within the refugee settlements or host communities even though youth activities were set to commence only in 2023.

Altogether, over 200 youths living with some form of disability were actively engaged in youth activities. When analysing the results, it is therefore important to remember that activities aimed at increasing access to decent employment or livelihood opportunities only started during this program period in the Ejo Heza project in Burundi and the Adjumani project in Uganda. Consequently, the work done within these projects is not fully reflected in the results. Also, the outcome monitoring in Burundi took place before the activities were fully completed. It is known that employment and self-employment activities need time and experience before yielding significant results. However, as seen last year, it is anticipated that the engagement will reflect even more strongly in the results of the coming years.

It was also reported from Burundi that strong inflation in the country particularly influenced youth programming. Economic resilience and confidence among the youth were reported as quite minimal, and the delivery of start-up kits was significantly delayed. These factors undoubtedly impacted the 2023 results. However, in the big picture, the result for outcome 2 is quite positive, showing good progress from 2022. Based on an analysis of the collected data and narrative reports, the work is moving towards a favourable direction and change is slowly taking place. The work has proceeded from 2022 results, although the targets for 2023 were not fully reached. It is anticipated that when the activities to increase youth employment are in full force, targets will be reached within the coming years. This indicates that youth from vulnerable backgrounds are gaining more access to employment and livelihood opportunities.

The gathered annual output level results support the development of the outcome result in a favourable direction. The collected data reveals that six out of seven output indicator targets were reached or almost reached, with only one indicator (percentage of youth who feel they have sufficient means to influence their life) showing a clear negative trend. At the output level within this result area, a total of 4,836 youths (3,179F; 42 FLWD; 2,250M; 35MLWD) benefitted from the programme activities, which included various life skills training, TVET engagements, mentoring sessions, and training on increased business skills and market connections.

Improved life skills and psychosocial wellbeing

A total of 1,926 youths (compared to 887 in 2022) (701F, 37FLWD, 946M, 153MLWD) were trained to improve their life skills and psychosocial well-being to prepare them for further training and eventual employment or self-employment. It is evident that working with the most vulnerable youths, including those from ultra-poor families, informal settlements, refugee camps, teen mothers, or school dropouts, requires providing basic skills and psychosocial support before they can attend training sessions. The focus on the youths' life skills and mental well-being has proven highly relevant in the youth projects. Life skills training, covering communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and time management, equips youth with essential tools to cope with challenges, build resilience, and navigate their environments more effectively.

Consequently, youth are empowered and better equipped to make informed decisions about their lives, including choices related to education, employment, health, and relationships.

The Roysambu project adopted an approach where youth participants were given the opportunity to discuss issues with their parents, involving 176 parents in life skills training alongside their children. Subsequently, parents supported their children's participation in the project activities by monitoring and providing social support, which motivated the youth and prepared them for training and employment.

Furthermore, in Roysambu, the life skills training, career plan development, and career counselling reached 249 youths (90M, 159F) with the aim of bringing about attitude and behaviour change. These trainings focused on enhancing mental capacities to handle complex life challenges such as drug and substance use, teenage pregnancies, or poverty, which hinder productivity in the job market. Additionally, the objective was to support youth in steering their positive personal development by identifying strengths and developing assets such as skills and personality. Psychosocial First Aid training was integrated with life skills training to help youth deal with stressful situations and mental health challenges arising from unemployment and lack of daily provisions.

In Rwanda, the Buliza Youth Empowerment Project, in collaboration with local leaders, provided training for 550 youths (368F, incl. 12FLWD; 182M, incl. 6MLWD). This training included both initial and refresher sessions on life skills and reproductive health. Particularly, the teen mothers in the project districts were targeted. The participants underwent comprehensive training on various life skills, reproductive health, and information about where these services are available. Additionally, advocacy efforts were conducted on behalf of the most disadvantaged youths and young mothers in the communities.

Improved business skills and access to education and employment

750 youths (259F, 37 FLWD, 449M, 51 MLWD) graduated from TVET, encompassing both formal and non-formal education, marking an increase of 362 compared to 2022. These youths were further supported on their chosen training or employment paths by receiving additional business skills training, gaining access to financial institutions or informal savings groups, and receiving start-up kits to either initiate or expand their businesses. Collaboration with reputable TVETs and other educational institutions played a crucial role in this process.

In Rwanda, local authorities collaborated closely in selecting youth and facilitating their participation in TVET training. District leaders, school headteachers, and other stakeholders were also involved. In Burundi, previously unemployed youths have shown significant behavioural changes after joining TVET programmes, transitioning from problematic behaviours to productive work, contributing to community development. The project has instilled hope, with many graduates now employed as tailors, hairdressers, welders, carpenters, masons, and motorcycle mechanics. In one Rwandan village, a new hair salon called New Vision and several sewing studios have been opened, providing employment for many.

Supporting new businesses or newly employed individuals is crucial for fostering long-term socio-economic change and brighter futures. In Rwanda, the mentoring programme, with former project participants acting as big sisters and big brothers, has proven to be a highly effective mentoring model for youth pursuing their chosen paths in life and employment.

In Somalia, the anti-FGM/C project supported a technical skill training project, specifically focusing on the tie-and-dye technique. Targeting 20 females, the project aimed at enhancing their capacity to acquire technical skills, creating employment opportunities for poor households and contributing to their livelihoods. Ultimately, the goal was to uplift highly vulnerable households, fostering sustainable livelihoods and economic stability. During the training, Maryan Mohamed Abshir, the Director General of the Ministry of Justice, officially inaugurated the project. In her remarks, she highlighted its value in empowering and supporting survivors of FGM on their journey towards healing and self-reliance. The tie-and-dye training not only imparted practical skills but also fostered creativity and self-expression, empowering participants to regain control over their lives. Through acquiring these skills, FGM survivors gained the opportunity for income generation and financial independence, paving the way for successful reintegration into society and breaking the cycle of marginalisation and dependency.

Access to resources, market intelligence and connections to markets

The 2023 results indicate that the programme succeeded very well in supporting youth to have access to markets and grow their businesses. In total 1,012 (513F, 12FLWD, 475M, 12MLWD) youth benefitted from these activities. For example, the project established digital hubs in Roysambu and Mathare, training 74 youth in digital skills to work online and earn income. It collaborated with the Nairobi County's Department of Digital Innovation and Moringa School to train 17 youth in basic computer programming. Additionally, eight youth groups in Mathare received training in agriculture, focusing on pig rearing, poultry farming, and waste management. Financial literacy sessions were conducted for 394 Mathare residents, and 14 individuals (13F, 1M) received business management training. The project also provided startup kits to youth completing technical training and offered mentorship sessions on business development. Furthermore, the project established 10 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) and three organisations of people with disabilities (OPD) in Mathare, targeting various community needs.

In Rwanda, 2,684 youth and community members with a vast majority of them females (1,690F and 994M) formed savings groups to promote a culture of saving and access to informal soft loans with a low interest rate of 10%, payable within three months. This initiative resulted in the formation of 103 savings groups in 2023, with a total portfolio of approximately 19,424 euros and outstanding loans to members amounting to 11,433 euros. Members invested these loans in priority rural businesses determined by the group, including animal rearing, vegetable growing, small petty trade, mobile market day saloons, cloth making and repair, and other artisan ventures such as crafts making and weaving sweaters. These productive small businesses have created and boosted youth self-employment and entrepreneurship, enabling members to earn incomes and meet personal needs such as health insurance, school fees, and buying food. Additionally, profits from these businesses are reinvested, further benefitting the community in the project district.

The impact of these activities is anticipated to be multifaceted. On one hand it is expected that by providing digital skills training, technical training, and entrepreneurship support, the project enables youth to generate income, start businesses, and become financially independent. This can lead to poverty alleviation and economic stability for individuals and their families. On the other hand, also the community benefits as the community establishing VSLAs and OPDs promotes financial inclusion and community cohesion. These groups enable members to access financial services, support each other, and collaborate on community projects, ultimately enhancing the overall well-being of the community and strengthening the civil society.

Access to networks and supportive relationships

1,076 youths (564F, 8FLWD, 497M, 7MLWD) were reported to be active members of youth livelihoods groups (e.g. cooperatives, savings groups) supported by the programme. However, the indicator measuring the percentage of youth that consider that they have sufficient means to influence their life and their communities, including the fulfilment of relevant human rights, did not achieve its target and was the only indicator of this youth result area indicating a strong negative trend. This could strongly be linked with, for example, external factors affecting the participants such as high inflation and financially uncertain times. All in all, it can be assumed that before mentioned examples and activities will significantly enhance the lives of vulnerable youth. These initiatives aim to improve their access to decent employment and livelihood opportunities by providing them with essential skills and support. Moreover, empowered youth can become catalysts for positive change in their communities, serving as influential role models for others to follow.

3.3.3. Lessons learnt and adaptation

The key assumptions presented in the Theory of change regarding these result areas remain valid. Effective partnerships between local government, educational institutions, the private sector, artisans, entrepreneurs, and training providers are crucial for supporting and guiding youth towards fulfilling their potential. The job market demand must align with the various trainings offered within the different projects. For example, in Rwanda, yearly assessments are conducted, and new contracts with TVETs are established. Internships, on-the-job opportunities, and strong supportive measures such as mentorship are essential for youth to

progress towards employment or self-employment. These various approaches are being implemented in youth employment promotion projects within the Programme.

Participation in youth employment projects and activities not only develops and strengthens positive identity but also encourages and enables youth to influence decision-making on issues affecting them and their communities. However, this is not always the case. External factors may affect how the youths feel about their ability to influence their future. Despite life skills training and well-being support, economic, political, or other external factors can impact their faith in a better future.

In Burundi, high inflation (27%) and the rising cost of living, coupled with increased food insecurity due to reduced World Food Programme support, have impacted the percentage of youths who feel they have sufficient means to influence their lives and communities, including the fulfilment of relevant human rights. Annual outcome monitoring shows this percentage dropped from 6% in 2022 to 5% in 2023. While the decrease is slight, it was noted that the youths involved in project activities had greater confidence in their ability to influence their lives and communities compared to those outside the programme. Additionally, Ejo Heza youth were less affected by the reduction in WFP food support, demonstrating greater resilience to external challenges. However, it is vital to consider such risk factors in future planning.

Another key insight from the reporting period is the importance of adopting an inclusive approach that also involves parents and caregivers. When parents and caregivers are actively engaged in project activities, the effectiveness of the programmes is significantly enhanced. Incorporating sessions on Psychosocial First Aid and mental health support into parent training has had a positive impact on youth development. Furthermore, empowering people living with disabilities is crucial, as engaging youth with disabilities often requires addressing specific needs, such as providing assistive devices, before they can fully participate and access public services.

For example, in Kenya, the Roysambu project collaborated with community resource persons from WV's Mathare AP to conduct door-to-door identification of youth with disabilities. Despite increased efforts, the project did not achieve its 10% participation target for PLWDs in 2023. These experiences highlight the importance of adaptability, inclusivity, and collaboration in achieving sustainable goals and positively impacting the youth and the communities. By continuously learning from and applying these insights, the project aims to bring about lasting change for all the targeted youth.

3.4. RESULT AREA 3: RESILIENCE, LIVELIHOODS AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

3.4.1. Introduction

The primary objective of the result area 3 is to enhance the resilience and capacity for social accountability of families and communities. Resilience in this context refers to the ability to endure, adapt, and recover from various stresses, including psychological, social, and ecological challenges. Social accountability involves promoting transparency, participation, and responsiveness in governance to protect vulnerable groups. All Programme efforts prioritise inclusivity, especially the rights of children, women, and people living with disabilities. Strengthening resilience and social accountability ensures better care and protection for vulnerable children, shielding them from disasters' direct and indirect effects including harmful coping mechanisms.

According to the Programme's Theory of change, to build resilient ecosystems and support inclusive disaster risk management, the Programme advocates for protecting and restoring forest and grassland ecosystems and environmental assets that help safeguard communities against disasters. This is done through regenerative agriculture and land restoration techniques, including Farmer managed natural regeneration (FMNR). The Programme also enhances social cohesion and accountability by employing community-based approaches. These approaches involve community-led risk assessments, strategy development, early warning systems, and empowering communities to hold responsible parties accountable. This helps prevent, respond, adapt to, and build resilience against various risks and includes peacebuilding and conflict

sensitivity components. The Programme promotes diversified and climate-smart livelihoods by supporting various off-farm and on-farm practices. Alternative livelihood opportunities compared to unsustainable means, such as charcoal making and free grazing of cattle by child labour, are also encouraged with climate change mitigation and food security synergies.

Out of ten projects, six were intended to contribute to this Outcome throughout the Programme cycle; however, in 2023, only four did. The Ngoswet and Alale projects are expected to contribute to the coming years. The level of effort of these resilience building activities varies significantly by location. In Ethiopia, the FMNR project focuses entirely on climate resilience-building, with climate change mitigation synergies through agroforestry and landscape restoration of 8 000 hectares of community-managed protection areas. The Child protection and environmental security project in Somalia primarily targets child protection but includes concrete disaster risk management efforts. In Adjumani, Uganda, the activities concentrate on all the Programme result areas among both host and refugee community members. In Umurava Area Programme, Rwanda, the project focuses on child protection, education, resilience, and livelihoods.

3.4.2. Progress in 2023

OUTCOME 3

Families and communities have increased resilience and act for social accountability in an enabling environment

Outcome Indicator	Baseline	2025 Target	2022 Result	2023 Target	2023 Results	Project Contribution
OCI 3.1. % of households that have not needed to use unsustainable coping mechanisms.	48%	67%	60%	57%	54%	Ethiopia FMNR; Somalia CP&Environment; Uganda: Adjumani;
OCI 3.2. % of household who apply improved and sustainable agriculture or forestry techniques	54%	80%	50%	63%	61%	Ethiopia FMNR; Rwanda: Umurava AP; Uganda: Adjumani; Somalia CP&Environment

Table 4. Progress of the Outcome 3.

Two outcome indicators measure progress in this result area. The first measures the use of unsustainable coping mechanisms, and the second measures the percentage of households that apply improved and sustainable agriculture or forestry techniques.

Annual monitoring reveals that the Outcome targets were partially achieved within the reporting period. The percentage of households that did not resort to unsustainable coping mechanisms improved by 6% from the baseline, reaching 54%. This signifies a slight increase in resilience, showing a positive trend towards the Programme target. The projects that reported this outcome indicator were Adjumani (Uganda), Ethiopia FMNR, and Somalia's Child protection and environmental safety project.

The percentage of households practising improved and sustainable agriculture or forestry techniques improved by 7% from the baseline, reaching 61% in 2023. This indicator's progress is almost on track to achieve its Programme target of 80%. Four projects contributed to this indicator: Umurava AP (Rwanda), Adjumani (Uganda), Ethiopia FMNR, and Somalia's Child protection and environmental safety project. Both indicators show improvement, suggesting that the Programme and interventions to increase resilience and social accountability have a positive impact. However, the results also highlight the need for continued efforts to reach the Programme targets.

Strengthening positive coping strategies

In the Programme area, communities often face severe economic and environmental stresses which can lead to adopting harmful coping mechanisms as immediate but unsustainable solutions to their problems. For example, in the absence of alternative livelihoods, families resort to charcoal production and collecting fuelwood as immediate sources of income. However, these practices may increase deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and land degradation, which exacerbate climate change impacts and reduce the resilience of ecosystems. Furthermore, families might harvest crops prematurely to meet immediate food needs when food is scarce, compromising future yields and long-term food security. While these practices provide short-term relief, they undermine long-term economic stability.

Economic pressures often force families to send their children to work rather than school and children contribute to household income through labour, sometimes in hazardous conditions. However, child labour limits future earning potential and violates their rights to protection. Eliminating child labour and supporting families can ensure children's rights are upheld and their futures are protected. In times of economic hardship, girls are often seen as a financial burden. Early marriage is perceived to reduce household expenses and gain dowry benefits while removing girls from school reduces immediate educational costs. These practices deny girls educational opportunities and perpetuate cycles of poverty and gender inequality. By addressing the root causes of these harmful coping mechanisms and promoting sustainable livelihood alternatives, the Programme can improve the resilience and well-being of communities in the target areas.

Progress in the Adjumani (Uganda) and Ethiopia FMNR projects has been satisfactory during the reporting year. In Adjumani, Uganda, the percentage of households not resorting to harmful coping mechanisms increased from 60% at baseline to 86% in 2023. This success is due to the project's comprehensive approach to strengthening resilience, which includes providing diversified and climate-smart livelihood opportunities both on and off the farm. Similarly, in Ethiopia, the percentage of households avoiding harmful coping mechanisms rose from 64% at baseline to 73%. The project has focused on creating alternative income sources, strengthening forest cooperatives, forming cooperative unions, and promoting sustainable farming practices while protecting and restoring forests. However, in Somalia, the percentage of households refraining from harmful coping mechanisms increased slightly from 23% at baseline to 26% in 2023, falling short of the 35% annual target. This somewhat disappointing result is due to the complex challenges and difficult circumstances these households face, which affect the programming. Consequently, the project functions more like a temporary relief effort, providing scattered aid without yet being able to build resilience.

Promoting sustainable coping mechanism through livelihood diversification and saving groups

Promoting diversified and climate-smart livelihoods and supporting formation of saving groups are essential to diminishing the need to use unsustainable coping mechanisms. This involves, for example, training project participants in climate-smart agriculture, including different agroforestry systems, woodlot establishment, alternative forage, and livelihood methods. During the reporting year, 3,068 individuals (1,173F and 998M, including 164 FLWD and 133 MLWD) were trained in these practices.

In Ethiopia FMNR project, people have been very eager to be trained, and the focus has been on the community's most climate vulnerable members, resulting in a higher number of women (with or without disabilities) being trained than men. Cooperative members have received trainings, for example, on Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) practices, alternative forage development and homestead agroforestry practices. Trained cooperative members have received inputs such as different agroforestry tree seedlings produced by the four cooperative-run nurseries to develop their home gardens to produce much-needed fuelwood, additional income streams, and support food security. Forage seeds and alternative forage trainings have also been integral in reducing the pressure on letting the cattle trespass in cooperative-managed protected areas. Over the past years, awareness-raising and capacity-building trainings have significantly changed people's behaviour and attitudes. Trainings on savings culture, entrepreneurship and business development have shifted community focus from unsustainable livelihoods such as charcoal making and fuelwood collection that had seriously degraded the landscape to petty trades and other local-level businesses, subsidising their livelihoods.

Programme beneficiaries were also capacitated on saving and financial linkages through household coaching, mentoring, and empowerment. This enabled saving group members to obtain low-interest loans, allowing them to start their businesses. Over the reporting year, 14,516 people (6,580F, 6,933M, incl. 480FLWD and 523MLWD) participated in savings groups. In Rwanda, the Umurava AP collaborated with various partners to increase financial income through WV's Savings for Transformation (S4T) project model. This framework empowered 7,134 people (4,231F, 2,903M, incl. 103FLWD and 137MLWD) to save money and utilize loans effectively. Loans from S4T were used for new investments, benefiting 14,091 children from group members.

Resilience building through sustainable agriculture and forestry techniques

The Programme aims to protect families and communities through resilient ecosystems and inclusive disaster risk management by promoting new agroforestry practices, including Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) and sustainable land management.

Two of the four projects that provided outcome-level information for the reporting year showed a positive trend. In Ethiopia, households using sustainable agriculture or forestry techniques increased from 25% at baseline to 68% in 2023. Capacity-building training sessions included, for example, FMNR, biodiversity restoration, and soil and water conservation. These efforts empowered communities to safeguard and restore degraded forest areas. Significant increases in vegetation cover led to the resurgence of wild animals and medicinal plants. Communities now have better access to fuelwood, fodder, and local water sources, reducing the need for long-distance travel and fostering a heightened enthusiasm for forest protection and sustainable management.

Similarly, in Adjumani, Uganda, the adoption of sustainable techniques rose from 60% at baseline to 86% in 2023, surpassing both the annual target and the previous year's result (63%). This progress was due to project's strong emphasis on sustainable agricultural practices and water management. However, the progress was less successful in Rwanda (Umurava AP) and Somalia. In Umurava, the percentage of households applying improved and sustainable agriculture or forestry techniques decreased from 88% at baseline to 80%. Similarly, in Somalia, the rate of households implementing improved and sustainable agriculture or forestry techniques dropped from 36% at baseline to 10%. This downward trend highlights a concerning decrease in adopting climate-smart and environmentally sound practices, underscoring the need for increased efforts and new ways of programming in a highly challenging context.

Training and support to enhance sustainable agriculture and forestry

To enhance resilient ecosystems, the Programme trained 4,360 individuals (361F; 2,402M, incl. 160 women and 155 men with disabilities) in environmental conservation or restoration in 2023. For example, in Adjumani, Uganda, 2,447 people were trained. This high interest was attributed to strong community engagement, effective outreach strategies, and advocacy by district partnerships for environmental conservation. The project's inclusive approach attracted significant participation from marginalised groups. Furthermore, the Programme provided support to 34 natural resource user committees and producer groups during the reporting year.

In the Ethiopia FMNR project, forest cooperative-run nurseries produced 867,000 indigenous or naturalised tree seedlings that were planted in protected areas. Additionally, 100,000 agroforestry tree seedlings were distributed to 7,000 families to improve food security, develop additional income streams and produce wood for energy and construction. These efforts improved the regeneration of over 8,000 hectares while mitigating flooding and biodiversity degradation.

The Programme also promoted energy-saving or clean energy technologies, with 661 households adopting these technologies in the reporting year. In Adjumani, the project promoted the production of improved energy-saving cook stoves, including constructing 400 stoves and training community members in their construction and usage. This initiative targeted people with special needs, such as older people, persons with disabilities, and child-headed households.

The Programme facilitated the development of disability-inclusive local-level disaster management plans and trained 1,453 individuals in disaster risk management. For example, in Uganda, Adjumani, 1,199 people, including refugees (379F, 187M) were capacitated on disaster risk reduction strategies such as early warning systems, and disseminating disaster-related advisories from the Uganda National Meteorological Authority. Specifically, the sessions focused on educating the communities about the impacts of bush burning, deforestation, stray animals and floods as identified as the top five disaster risks in the project area.

Community cohesion and social accountability

Community cohesion and social accountability are pivotal strategies employed by the Programme to bolster resilience within communities. Despite not measuring these efforts at outcome level, the Programme made significant strides in 2023. A total of 38 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and 9,731 CSO members, including also forest cooperative members in Ethiopia, were empowered to enhance accountability among duty-bearers and foster social cohesion.

For example, in Ngoswet, Kenya, Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) reported improved accountability, cohesion, and synergy among leaders following training for 90 officials (46F and 44M) from 30 groups. This training focused on visioning, identity, resource mobilisation, networking, partnership, and effective monitoring and reporting. The enhanced leadership skills benefited 1,050 group members (602F, 448M), enabling them to secure funds for small businesses, agriculture, and other initiatives, enhancing livelihoods and promoting local sustainability. Similarly, in Adjumani, Uganda, targeted efforts led to improved capacities for social cohesion and accountability within communities. Regular dialogues between CSOs and service providers, including the government, facilitated open communication channels and mutual understanding. Implementing Integrated Peacebuilding and Conflict Sensitivity (IPACS) frameworks, stakeholder quarterly review meetings, and conflict scans enhanced conflict resolution and community cohesion. These initiatives strengthened social accountability and engaged 1,065 participants (542F, 523M). Throughout the reporting year, duty-bearers were also trained in disability inclusion to implement laws, policies, and practices aligned with Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Specifically, 88 duty-bearers received training to ensure compliance with CRPD standards, while 1,431 others underwent resilience-building and accountability trainings. Conflict sensitivity was enhanced through conflict analysis and adherence to the Do No Harm Principle, particularly crucial in projects involving host communities and refugee populations in Adjumani (Uganda), Umurava AP (Rwanda), and Ejo Heza (Burundi). For example, in Ejo Heza, Burundi, the Programme fostered peaceful relations and cohesion among community members and refugees. Trained groups from both communities collaborated promoting social cohesion by conducting shared events. Proactive risk management, stakeholder engagement, and adaptability were integral to the Programme's progress, promoting trust, transparency, and equitable participation to mitigate conflict drivers effectively.

3.4.3. Lessons learnt and adaptation

The Programme's Theory of change posits that different aspects of resilience, combined with social accountability, are deeply interconnected. Together, these elements strengthen community members' ability to cope with and recover from various types of stress, both personally and collectively. The analysis of the annual report outcomes shows that, while both outcome targets were partially achieved during the reporting period, the Programme's Theory of change remains valid despite the challenges encountered. However, the results also highlight the need for continued efforts to fully meet the Programme's targets. Although mindset and behavioural change initiatives aimed to increase economic resilience were successful in some projects, others faced significant resistance to behaviour change, emphasizing the need for targeted strategies that address cultural norms and perceptions. Improved participant identification, awareness-raising, and community engagement are crucial for the successful adoption of new ways to manage and use natural resources including adoption of new technologies.

Similarly, challenges in adopting more sustainable coping mechanisms were evident in some projects due to the complex difficulties these communities face. Flexibility in reprogramming activities has been recognized as essential to responding effectively to evolving needs and conditions. Additionally, mobility challenges

during climate shocks underscore the importance of flexible interventions and outreach strategies to reach vulnerable communities and better address their realities. These findings highlight the need for increased efforts and innovative approaches to programming in highly challenging contexts. Delays in convening training sessions in some projects further underscore the importance of proactive scheduling and stakeholder engagement to address challenges related to duty-bearers' unavailability and conflicting commitments.

Local ownership is crucial for the sustainability of any project. In Ethiopia, efforts to build capacity within cooperatives and foster partnerships with local governments and stakeholders have strengthened the cooperatives' management, ensuring continuous government support and enhancing the long-term sustainability of the project outcomes. The annual report also emphasizes that fostering social cohesion and mutual understanding requires regular dialogues between Programme participants and various partners, which is particularly important in projects involving both host communities and refugee populations.

Regarding gender inclusion, it was noted that exceeding the minimum gender inclusion targets set by national standards has a positive impact on gender equality and empowerment. Proactive measures, such as including women in cooperative leadership and ensuring their participation in training sessions through minimum quotas, have increased female involvement and amplified their voice within cooperatives. Finally, prioritizing social inclusion through tailored actions, such as training and fostering positive community attitudes, has improved the acceptance of persons with disabilities and increased their engagement in various activities also outside the scope of the projects.

3.5. PRIVATE SECTOR COLLABORATION

In 2023, WVFİN continued its collaboration with the private sector and other organizations in using and exploring sustainable and innovative approaches for achieving the development impact of the Programme. A significant milestone was the completion of the Finnish Baby Aid Kit project in Somalia, which commenced in November 2022 and was concluded in December 2023. This joint initiative with the Finnish company Logonet Ltd aimed to enhance access to maternal and newborn services, resulting in improved healthcare outcomes across the region.

The distribution of 1000 Finnish Baby Aid Kits notably enhanced health facility performance and increased the utilization of maternal health services among women in Burtinle and nearby villages. It successfully encouraged a shift from home deliveries to seeking delivery and Antenatal Care (ANC) services at health facilities. During the reporting period, 7,400 out of 7,468 women received ANC services provided by qualified midwives at health centres and Primary Health Units (PHUs), highlighting the project's success in promoting institutional deliveries. The Baby Aid Kits, distributed on condition of attending a minimum of four ANC visits, motivated mothers and contributed to reducing maternal complications and deaths associated with home deliveries. Additional support in the form of fabric clothes for mothers during childbirth and the Baby Kits ensured hygienic delivery practices. Moreover, 6,841 mothers received Postnatal Care (PNC) within 48 hours of delivery, facilitating early detection and management of postpartum complications, and promoting Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices, childcare, immunization, and healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies. Awareness sessions on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) reached 11,729 beneficiaries, educating them about its adverse health effects. The project prioritized social inclusion by extending services to People Living with Disabilities (PLWD), reaching 592 individuals through healthcare services at health facilities and community levels. These efforts underscore WVFİN's commitment to enhancing healthcare accessibility and maternal health outcomes in Somalia. The joint efforts have continued in South Sudan, with initial plans underway for Rwanda.

Collaboration also continued with a Finnish company Tespack that has developed a solar-powered audio-visual system contained in a backpack, the Smart Solar Media System (SSMS). The partnership started in Kenya in 2021 with funding from Fingo's Powerbank initiative and continued in 2022 in Uganda by Finnpartnership (actual implementation in 2023). Also in Rwanda, WV has started a collaboration with Tespack. Tespack's SSM that combines hardware (solar panel, projector, loudspeakers) and software allows World Vision's staff and partners in off-grid locations to utilise audiovisuals, i.e., videos and other visual

content in trainings and awareness raising. This makes engagement with beneficiaries and stakeholders more efficient and effective, thereby contributing to better achievement of programme and project goals and, eventually, more significant development impacts.

In 2023, WVFİN continue participating in the events and forums organized by different actors such as Fingo and Finnpartnership, including the informal private sector collaboration network of Fingo members and the Uganda forum. WV Kenya was facilitated to participate Fingo Powerbank’s activities in Kenya. Finnpartnership conducted a post monitoring visit to WVFİN’s project in Kenya that received business partnership support in 2018-2019.

4. COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY

Introduction

The focus of World Vision Finland’s communications is on children and child rights. WVFİN emphasizes children’s own voices and aims to communicate 1) how children are affected by global issues and 2) what kind of results and impact can be achieved through development cooperation. The aim is also to communicate the challenges, especially when working in fragile contexts including with refugees or with complex issues such as FGM.

The goal of Communications and Advocacy in the Programme is to 1) increase awareness and understanding of current issues in global development focusing on child rights, 2) increase awareness and understanding of World Vision Finland’s priority themes and 3) make the results of WVFİN’s development cooperation visible to the general public, and increase understanding of WVFİN’s role in solving global development challenges focusing on child rights. To achieve these goals, WVFİN has set the outcome “Understanding of current issues in global development and positive attitude towards development cooperation has increased.”

Progress in 2023

COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY

Outcome Indicator		Baseline	2025 Target	2022 Result	2023 Target	2023 Result	
OCI 4.1.	% of Finns who think that development cooperation and development policy is important	68% (2021 survey)	68%	66%	68%	63%	WVFİN
OCI 4.2.	% of WVFİN supporters who report that their understanding of challenges children face in the global south has increased	90%	98%	91%	94%	93%	WVFİN

Table 5. Progress of communication indicators.

WVFİN continued collaboration with WVI and WV national offices’ communications teams as well as with other NGOs and partners to reach new and wider audiences. WVFİN provided a steady flow of information and news related to global development and humanitarian crises and remained in contact with various journalists to pitch ideas related to global issues and children.

Stories and news were delivered through press releases as well as social media channels, electronic newsletter (7 issues) and the World Vision magazine (two issues). A total of 47 online news articles and eight press releases were published. Three content gathering and/or media trips were organized, including a visit to Meibeki area programme in Kenya that was finished in 2017, and where an ex-post evaluation was conducted in 2023. Stories of long-term impact were published in World Vision magazine, the website and

social media channels and the trip also generated media hits in Radio Helsinki and Trendi magazine. The media trips are a useful tool to get more in-depth coverage on global issues and to expand the network of journalists interested in these themes.

WVFIN's media work resulted in coverage e.g. in hunger crisis, youth employment, baby aid kits, child protection, FGM, Turkey-Syria earthquake as well as the war in Ukraine. In total, the media hits in 2023 had a potential reach of 128,5 million. Our experts or spokespersons were featured e.g., in Huomenta Suomi (MTV3 channel's morning programme), MTV3 News, in website and TV and radio channels of the Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE, Finnish News Agency (STT), in Helsingin Sanomat (the largest Finnish daily), Uutissuomalainen (news cooperation of 21 regional and local newspapers), Eeva and Trendi (magazines). Also, a large photo feature focusing on hunger in Kenya was published in Sunnuntaisuomalainen (Sunday supplement of 14 regional and local newspapers) in the beginning of the year. The potential reach of the weekend supplement is around 2 million readers.

Opinion pieces by WVFIN specialists were published among others in Helsingin Sanomat and Turun Sanomat (newspapers) on topics ranging from FGM to humanitarian law and the rights of people with disabilities. WVFIN also organized a successful Instagram Live talk on the international day of the girls with one of our spokespeople.

World Vision Finland celebrated its 40th anniversary during the year 2023. WVI's President Andrew Morley attended the anniversary gala held in October and also met the Minister for Foreign Affairs Elina Valtonen. The communications theme of the anniversary year was Kohtaamisia (Encounters). To commemorate the birthday, a virtual photography exhibition was created and photographers who had worked with WVFIN invited to share photos of encounters from content gathering and media trips throughout the years. Encounters from various partners were also shared in WVFIN's communications channels. The idea was to show the results and steps of development cooperation through individual human interest stories.

WVFIN also produced a photography exhibition Huomisen muoti (Tomorrow's fashion) focusing on youth employment and girls' rights exhibited for the month of March in Muji Concept Store in Kamppi and later in August in Pikku-Finlandia gallery space. The Muji Store has around 200,000 visitors per month so the visibility for the exhibition was most likely very good.

A steady flow of content was produced for WVFIN's own social media channels, mainly Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn. The focus was on the main themes of the programme. WVFIN conducted advocacy communications around the parliamentary elections and the budget negotiations led by the Fingo, the network and cooperation platform for the Finnish development NGOs. The number of followers in WVFIN's social media channels grew by 2,2% which is better than the previous year (0,4% in 2022). The targeted annual growth was 5%. This target was reached in Instagram (5,85%) and clearly surpassed in LinkedIn (48,4%) which are the two channels WVFIN is focusing on. In Facebook it is harder to find new followers and the popularity of the channel is not growing among the younger audience. With X (formerly Twitter) WVF has made the decision to be reactive only. In terms of social media coverage, the target-setting for several years is challenging since the algorithms and popularity of different channels can change rapidly. However, they are a tool to reach new audiences and provide information on the reach of WVFIN's communications. The number of unique user sessions on the website rose from 91,780 per year (2022) to 119 464. The annual growth was 23%, clearly surpassing the targeted annual growth of 7%. Investment in good quality content as well as in the ways of sharing and inviting readers to the site has contributed to the good progress. It is worth noting that the result was measured with a newer version of the web analytics service, so the two figures are not entirely comparable. The number of newsletter subscribers grew by 2% slightly missing the annual growth target of 3% (36,322 subscribers at the end of the year). Thus, the focus must be put on creating more engaging content next year.

WVFIN's supporter survey showed that the percentage of supporters who report that their understanding of the challenges children faces in developing countries has increased to 92,9% (91,4% in 2022, 1,6% annual growth). This almost reaches the target annual growth of 2% which is great result since the baseline was already high.

The number of supporters who are informed of the results of WVFIN's development cooperation surpassed the baseline figure being now at 85,2% (baseline 84,6%). Around 63 % of Finnish people (MFA survey) think

that development cooperation and development policy is important. The public support is in small decline compared to the 66% baseline in 2022).

There has been positive progress and no major decline in the indicators. It is important to keep finding innovative partnerships, channels, and ways of communicating about development cooperation. The emphasis is on its impact and how it can contribute to investing in children and solving global challenges that threaten their wellbeing.

Within global WV work the year 2023 witnessed various crises that affected the well-being of children, such as the global hunger crisis, the earthquake and on-going conflict in Syria as well as the continuing war in Ukraine. These topics were featured in the organization's communications and global hunger was also the theme of World Vision's new global campaign ENOUGH which was launched in September 2023 during UN General Assembly Week in New York. In addition, communications activities focused on child protection, girls' rights, youth employment and disability inclusion and rights and WVFİN's work on those themes in East Africa.

5. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

5.1. MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING

Building on the groundwork laid in the previous year to establish the Programme's monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) systems, the focus in 2023 shifted from setting up and rolling out systematic monitoring systems to ensure their proper and effective functioning and improving the quality of the Programme. The results frameworks for the ten individual projects allow for consistent and comparable disaggregated data that easily feeds into the Programme's overall results framework. These practices lay a solid foundation for results-based management and support reporting for the four-year programme period. Outcome and output level results and progress data are collected annually and compared with 2022 and baseline data to analyse progress. This analysis is supported by traffic lights indicating decline, stagnation, or favourable progress of results.

The Programme's results framework has proven to be comprehensive, enabling proper analysis at all result levels. As noted above, outcome and output level data are collected and reported annually, while impact level results will be reported at the end of the Programme in 2025. All collected and presented data are disaggregated by age, sex, and disability. The chosen methods emphasize the importance of leaving no one behind, with particular emphasis on persons with disabilities in monitoring and results analysis.

As a global organization, World Vision has its own standardized MEAL processes and tools that cannot be entirely adopted for this programme. However, some of the indicators used are WV standardized ones, and thus WVFİN's programming also contributes to WV country, regional, and international impact processes and results. The projects of this programme are aligned with and contribute to WV's country strategies, allowing for a larger and more coherent impact.

The WV national offices and regional offices in the programming countries have their own MEAL specialists and processes, ensuring the quality of the work. All ten projects independently collected data on outcome and output levels. Most of the projects used the Lot Quality Assurance Sampling (LQAS) method when gathering data, while others used standard sampling strategies with a 95% confidence interval. The LQAS method is widely used within World Vision as it enhances local decision-making, provides real-time indication of progress, and links the intended output. However, due to the small sample size, this method limits the comparability of baseline data with outcome level data. The collected data enable the indication of possible progress towards the expected results. It is also important to remember that this report is the second one and attempts to capture trends after still a rather limited time of implementation. Overall, outcome monitoring, data collection, and disaggregation of the collected data succeeded well, and the MEAL objectives for 2023 were achieved. The templates and tools worked as planned, supporting the work

effectively. The only limitation faced was missing outcome level data for Ngoswet in terms of result area 3, but the challenges in data collection were addressed, and data will be collected for 2024.

The MEAL activities for 2023 were numerous. A joint gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) assessment was conducted for the two Somalian projects and in Rwanda and Ethiopia. Additionally, a post-evaluation was carried out in Meibeki, and a seminar week for all partners was organized in Helsinki in May 2023. Moreover, a joint monitoring mission with the Finnish Refugee Council and the MFA to Uganda was successfully conducted in November. The joint evaluation with the International Solidarity Foundation on the Alternative Rite of Passage approach as part of the FGM work was also initiated in 2023. These activities were significant not only for WVFIN but also for the partners and stakeholders, providing them and the Programme with valuable insights and an additional dimension to the work.

The week-long Impact Seminar for all WVFIN Programme partners was a success. The theme for the seminar was Resilience, and partners shared their views on best practices of resilience building within their own contexts. There was a lot of discussion and learning, as resilience in all its forms is crucial in this volatile world. The partners also visited Finnish stakeholders such as the MFA, the Deaconess Foundation, and the Live Vocational College (Special Education and Development Centre) to increase their knowledge of diverse approaches to employment and different employment paths, including aspects of resilience. Additionally, a half-day training on Human rights-based approach was conducted by an external consultant to strengthen understanding of the approach in practical work and reporting. A meeting on FGM was also organized, where the idea of collaboration between ISF, WVFIN, and Kenya began. Additionally, a wide scope of communication and media activities took place during the week to effectively communicate the work to a larger audience. Sponsors of the Umurava and Ngoswet Area Programmes had a chance to meet the AP Managers and hear direct impact stories from the field.

In December, a webinar for Programme partners was organized, focusing on Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH). MFA's PSEAH guidelines and information on reporting mechanisms including possible misuse of development cooperation funds set up by MFA, were shared with partners.

The results of the GESI assessment in Somalia, Ethiopia and Rwanda laid the groundwork for action points to be incorporated into the 2023-2025 activities to ensure gender equality and disability inclusion. Additionally, a disability training was organized for the Cluster office and the Umurava AP stakeholder organizations in November.

During the reporting period, systematized monitoring trips by the WVFIN staff were made to all countries. During the trips, stakeholders and project participants were met, and new collaborations and networks were established. An explicit financial monitoring trip by the WVFIN Financial Manager took place in Burundi in February 2023. WVFIN actively participated Strategy Support Team (SST) meetings that are organized regularly between national offices and support offices like WVFIN to monitor and support the implementation of county strategies.

Ex-post evaluation of the Meibeki Area Programme (2004-2017)

As part of World Vision's learning agenda, an external ex-post evaluation was commissioned for the Meibeki Area Program (AP) implemented from 2004 to 2017 in Western Kenya. The AP aimed to improve children's well-being by supporting families and communities through various means, including increasing awareness of children's rights, enhancing livelihoods, improving water and sanitation conditions, ensuring access to healthcare services, and promoting education. Approximately 36,000 people benefitted directly or indirectly from the programme. Nearly 20 years have passed since the programme began and five since it ended, and the world and Kenya have undergone significant changes. However, World Vision's programme has made a notable impact that cannot be solely attributed to general development trends in the country.

Poverty reduction and economic improvement: Poverty in the Meibeki AP area has decreased, with rising income levels. For instance, 73% of households reported better economic conditions compared to 2017, and the proportion of communities classified as poor has decreased from 58% to 24%. A key indicator of

sustainable impact is that most of the numerous self-help groups supported by World Vision are still active, with some forming a large cooperative eligible for state loans.

Agricultural development: More than 80% of households earn their living from agriculture. Support for agricultural development has proven sustainable, with the area well-integrated into the agricultural value chain. Direct support in the form of livestock has provided long-term income. However, despite increased income, 20% of respondents had gone a day without food in the last three months, likely due to drought and poor harvests in 2022. Nearly all households rely on their own crops for food.

Education: Educational infrastructure such as classrooms, toilets, and dormitories built or renovated with World Vision's support remains in use. School attendance has remained high with no significant gender disparities. Most parents can afford the necessary school supplies for their children.

Water, sanitation and health: The water infrastructure built with World Vision's support is still operational, though results are mixed. The percentage of people accessing safe water within 30 minutes has decreased from 82% to 50%. Water availability is a complex issue due to lower river levels from increased irrigation and population growth. Illegal water pipes and irrigation reduce household water availability, leading to reliance on non-compliant water sources. However, the proportion of children under five with diarrhoea has significantly decreased from 83% to 12%. Improved healthcare facilities supported by World Vision remain operational. Nearly all births now occur with professional assistance, up from just over 80% in 2017. There has been a continued decrease in underweight and stunted children, although vaccination rates have decreased from nearly 100% in 2017 to 85%, likely due to disruptions caused by Covid-19.

Child Safety and Participation: The programme focused on children's safety, well-being, and participation, aiming for lasting community change. Children who benefited from World Vision's work are now youth and adults. Over 90% of guardians in Meibeki participate in community efforts to improve children's well-being, and about 80% consider children's wishes in decision-making. Awareness of local child protection mechanisms remains high at 70%, with 68% knowing how to act if they experience sexual harassment, an increase from 62% in 2017, indicating the impact of World Vision's work. Additionally, in 75% of households, women actively participate in household decision-making.

In 2023, WVFİN also commissioned (with own funding) a final evaluation of the Kirewa-Nabuyoga AP in Uganda that was supported by the MFA during the two previous programme phases. The evaluation showed significant improvement of livelihoods, child protection and health situation in the AP area between 2015-2023. For example, the proportion of households with alternative income sources (with farming as primary income source) increased from 33% in 2015 to 60% in 2023, the year-round access to sufficient food grew from 24% to 45%, and the proportion of children receiving the minimum meal frequency increased from 52% to 99%. At the same time, the awareness of child rights among parents/caregivers as well as their readiness to report child abuse cases to the appropriate institutions increased from about 80% to 95%, while their perception that harmful practices are reducing increased from 63% to 76%. Antenatal care attendance increased from 82% to 99%, while births in health facilities with skilled birth attendance rose from about 60% to 78%. Appropriate malaria treatment for children rose from 68% to 91%.

5.2. RISK MANAGEMENT

WVFİN's risk management practices are grounded in ethical standards, child protection policies, and adherence to anti-corruption guidelines. Key policies for risk management include the Code of Conduct Policy, the Adult and Child Safeguarding Policy, and the Anti-corruption Policy. WV staff globally undergo annual training and refresher courses on ethical rules and safeguarding practices. Additionally, WV maintains a robust whistle-blower policy encouraging reporting of misconduct such as corruption and harmful behaviours like sexual abuse or harassment.

Risks are assessed and monitored also at the country level, facilitated by SSTs comprising representatives from WV support offices and the national office's senior management. Also, as part of WV international practices, WVFİN executes organisational risk assessments with updates to the WVFİN Executive Board and WVI biannually.

Each project within the programme conducts risk assessments annually and develops mitigation strategies, contributing to the overall programme-level risk assessment. While the programme's overall risk level is moderate, critical risks have been identified. However, the pathway from identifying project-level risks to addressing programme-level risks could benefit from strengthening, alongside enhancing staff capacity to identify and prioritize urgent risks affecting operational activities more effectively in the future. Some risks are at the country level rather than specific to projects, which occasionally complicates assessing their impact on beneficiaries or implementation outcomes. Therefore, WVFIN remains committed to supporting monitoring practices and facilitating communication across all partners to promptly identify, prevent, or mitigate realized risks. This approach aims to ensure operational resilience and efficacy in tackling potential challenges.

A recent update to the risk matrix in December 2023 included newly identified risks highlighted in red in Annex 3. Here are presented in Annex 3 but here are some few realised risks which luckily had minor effect on the actual implementation thanks to mitigation plans and strong support from National Office and the partnership.

Environment and climate change

The impacts of climate change and other environmental threats have affected the programme implementation a little. Drought was a challenge, for example, in Alale, Kenya, leading to significant movements of humans and livestock to Uganda in search of water and pasture. This resulted in conflicts between the Karamoja and Pokot communities, further displacing families and making girls vulnerable and causing children to miss school. To mitigate this risk, the project increased awareness of education and cooperated actively with the authorities both in Kenya and Uganda and the Alale primary school's board of management to increase the number of girls at the safe house. Similarly, in the project areas in Somalia, recurring droughts had a devastating effect on communities whose primary reliance is on livestock, forcing people to move. WVI Somalia worked with partners on the ground to implement a range of interventions, including water trucking to reach and sustain many communities in vulnerable situations in the project's target areas.

Conversely, in Buliza, Rwanda, inhabitants were affected by intense rainfall towards the end of the year that caused many landslides and house destructions. In the Umurava AP area, the landslides did not cause any deaths, but the activities were postponed for a while, and shelter was offered. The lessons learned from these experiences have now resulted in e.g. effective disaster management plans at the national office level.

In Adjumani, Uganda, the project area experienced unreliable and unpredictable rainfall patterns, initially marked by prolonged dry spells and later excessive rain during planting seasons, affecting harvests. Erosion and deforestation have been major challenges, for example, in Burundi, where the degradation of arable soils has led to low productivity, food insecurity, and malnutrition. Again, the projects are working to mitigate these risks to ensure that the harms remain at a modest level and the participants are not too adversely affected by these challenges.

Staff turnover

During the reporting period, a significant number of staff in various projects chose to leave World Vision or were reassigned to other projects, especially in the Ngoswet, Adjumani, and Ejo Heza projects. This trend is identified worldwide, as skilled individuals are highly sought after in the current job market. World Vision has responded to this challenge by reviewing payment levels, for example, in Burundi and Uganda. However, it is clear that a short pause in implementation will occur as new staff are onboarded.

Economic factors

Economic factors affected the implementation in different ways. In Burundi, for example, the official currency exchange rate was too weak, making the unofficial rate more attractive to inhabitants. This resulted in difficulties obtaining appropriate rates. Additionally, there were reported shortages of materials for start-up kits, as well as fuel shortages. The purchase of start-up kits for youth had to be postponed to 2024 and WV Burundi is now investigating the possibility of acquiring its own fuel tanks to secure transportation within the country.

5.3. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

In January 2023 the programme team grew by one person as a Programme Advisor was recruited to the team. The full capacity of the team responsible for the Programmes was 8 people: 4 Programme Advisors, a Grants Advisor, a Financial Coordinator, the Head of Humanitarian Aid and Grants, and the International Programmes Director. WVFIN had a total staff of 33 employees in man-years in 2023.

The programme team actively built capacity with several trainings and workshops, which included MEAL, HEAT (Hostile Environment Awareness Training) and first aid trainings. World Vision International provided global competence building via mandatory compliance trainings. One of these was Compliance Harassment Prevention: Dignity and Respect at Work Training in July 2023, and WVFIN personnel completed those courses as well. WV Compliance team organized e-learning training on World Vision's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in May, and an Anti-Corruption awareness campaign to staff throughout November in conjunction with International Fraud Awareness Week. Furthermore, child and adult safeguarding trainings are mandatory for all new WV employees. All Programme team members completed it and promoted it to the implementing partners worldwide. Furthermore, WVFIN team managers were trained on the model of early caring and coaching leadership skills. Environment and climate change working group formed from volunteered employees continued its work.

Staff wellbeing was monitored systematically by various staff surveys. It was further supported by recreational staff events and several focus discussions in the weekly staff meetings, for instance, about coping mechanisms in quickly changing working environments. In 2023 WVFIN continued its operational mode of hybrid working, which was found feasible and functional. This arrangement done in early 2022 meant working two days a week at the office and three days in a location of choice. It also contributed to maintain employees' work-life balance and strengthened the collective spirit of the work community.

5.4. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The second year of the programme implementation was characterised by progress and stabilisation of the project management. The changes and delays in project implementation in the initiation year 2022 had led to budget adjustments and transfer of 130,000 euros from the 2022 programme budget to 2023. The transferred funds were used in 2023 for the programme projects as previously planned. In addition, 40,000 euros of the 50,000 euros of the non-earmarked innovation funds and the 30,000 euros saved from the project planning, monitoring, evaluation and capacity building budget were transferred for the usage of the projects. The rest of the innovation funds, 10 000 euros, were used in the Finnish Baby Aid Kit (FBAK) project. All the changes and transfers were approved by the MFA. Besides of the transferred funds from 2022, there was no need for substantial changes in the programme budget in 2023, and it was implemented as planned.

The total spending of the Programme in 2023 was 3,978,190 euros of which 3,275,047 euros (82% of total funding) was funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and 703,143 euros (18% of total funding) was self-financing collected from private donors.

The MFA development cooperation funding share of WVFIN's total income was approximately 23% in 2023. In 2022, the corresponding figure was 28%, in 2021, 25%, and in 2020, 26%. WVFIN applies for funding from other sources for the project areas implemented with MFA development cooperation support and seeks synergies with other programs, stakeholders and actors. As an example of this, the FBAK project in Somalia, was implemented in partnership with the Finnish company Logonet Oy in 2022-2023.

All in all, besides the MFA development cooperation funding, the total funding of WVFIN in 2023 consisted of projects financed with the MFA Humanitarian Unit (KEO-70), ECHO, different UN agencies (FAO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNOCHA), and private funding.

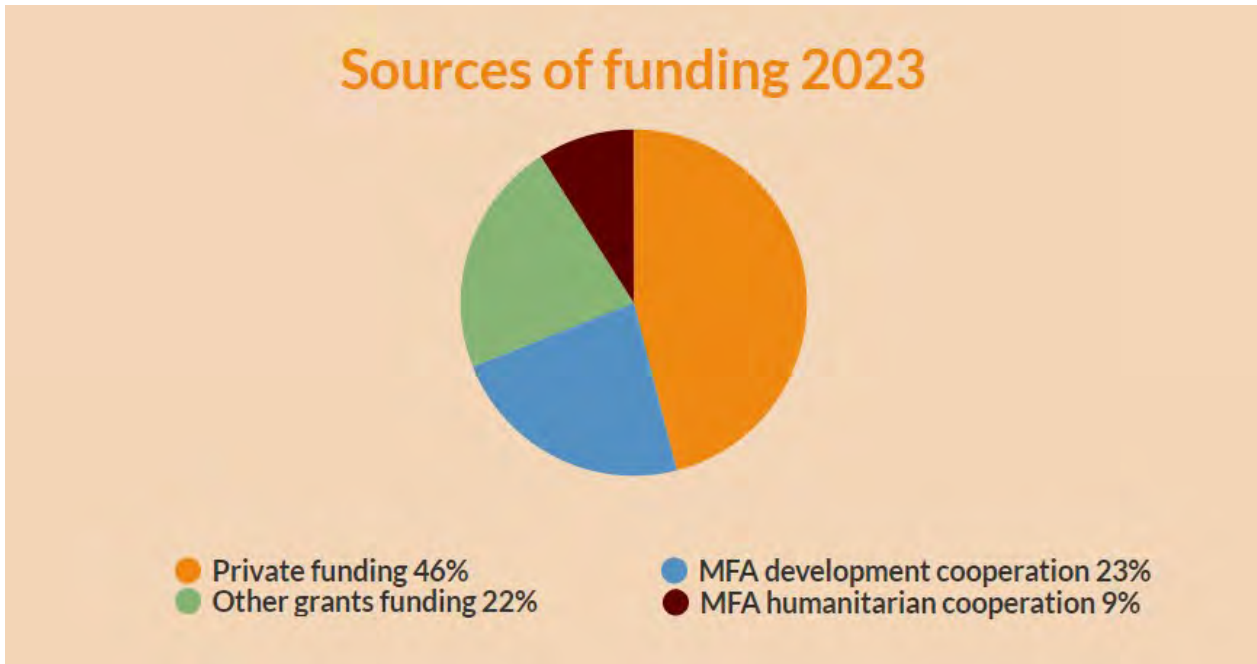


Figure 4. Sources of WVFIN total funding 2023.

The direct project costs were 78% of the total Programme costs in 2023. The remaining budget was allocated to communication expenses (6%), project planning, monitoring, evaluation and capacity building (9%), of which the organization of the Impact Seminar formed a substantial part, and to general administrative costs (7% flat rate).

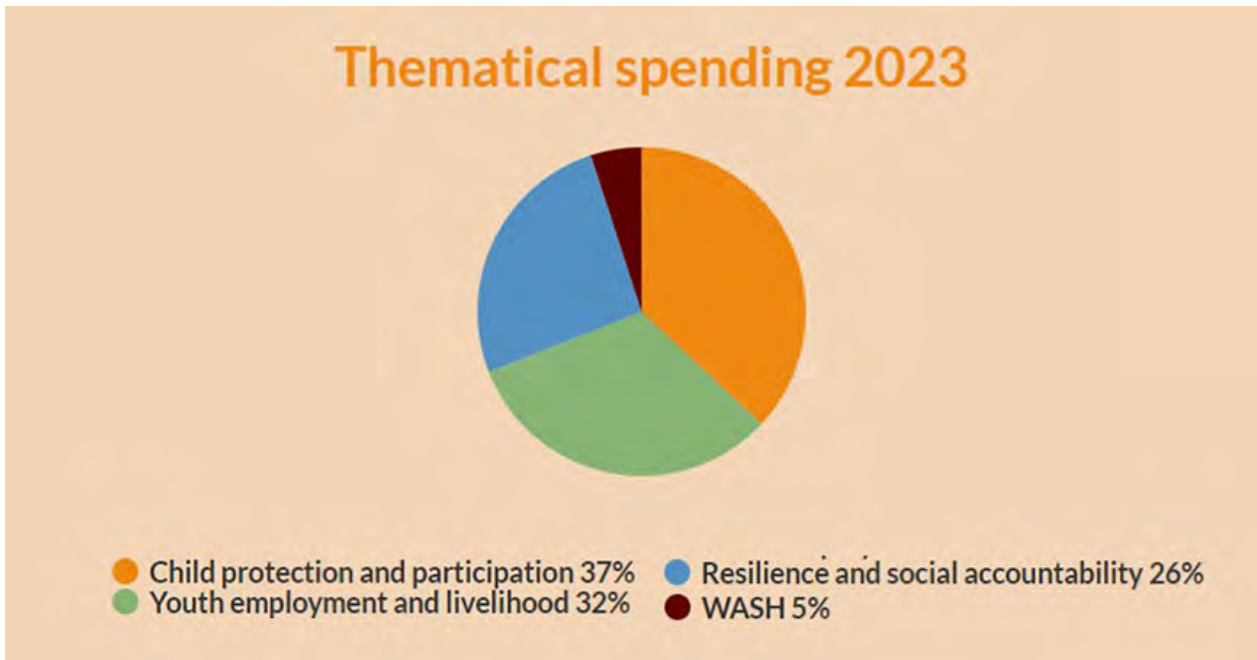


Figure 5. Programme thematical spending 2023.

As the Figure 5 shows, in 2023 the share of the programme costs divided by Outcomes 1-3 and WASH of total spending was as follows: Child protection and participation 37%, Youth employment and livelihood 32%, Resilience and social accountability 26%, and WASH 5%. WVFIN mainstreamed disability inclusion into all sectors. This was a chosen strategy to enhance the effectiveness in promotion of the rights of persons living with disabilities. Livelihoods also compasses climate-smart actions.

The programme expenditures were divided between six countries through two APs and eight thematical projects. Most of the programme expenditures occurred in Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, and Uganda as shown in Figure 6. Five out of six implementation countries are considered belonging to the Least Developed Countries namely Burundi, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, and Uganda. In 2023, 74% of the total Programme budget was used in these countries, while in Kenya, categorised as lower-middle income, WVFİN’s projects took place in the poorest areas of the country.

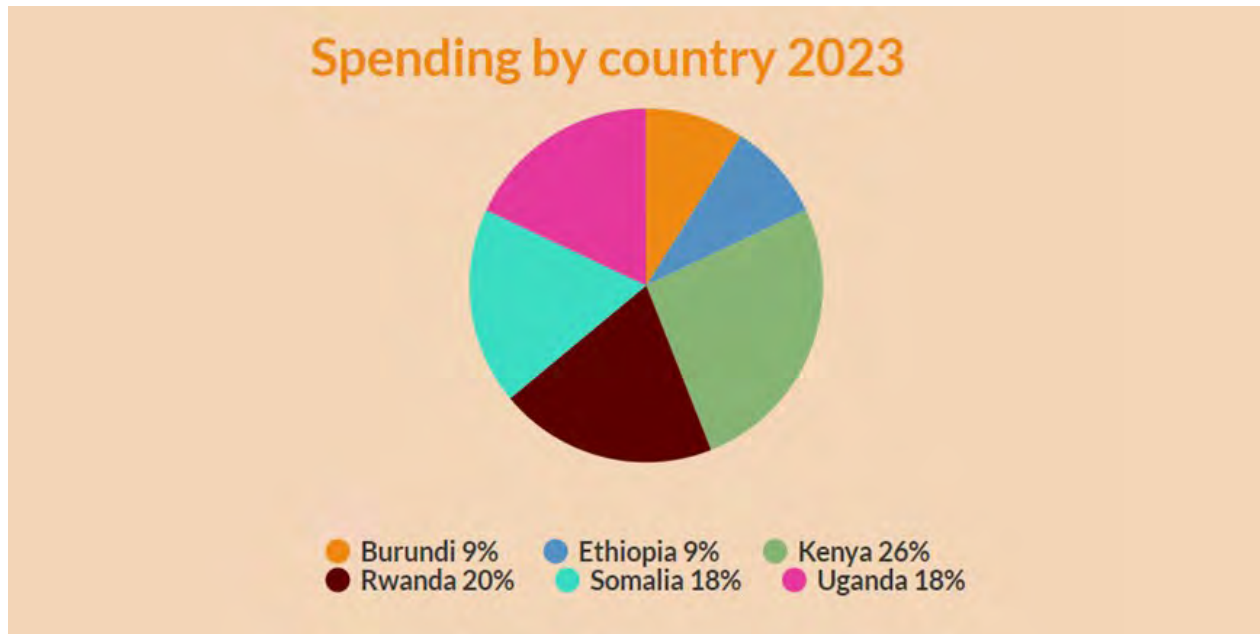


Figure 6. Spending by country 2023.

The carry forward from 2023 to 2024 was 154,953 euros, which has been approved by the MFA. The primary reasons for the underspending were savings in the personnel costs in various projects and the late realization of some of the procurements. A plan for the use of the carry forwards has been put in place by the projects.

The management and administration of the WV partnership is professional and reliable. The development of the organisation’s internal management system has continued to better meet the challenges of a changing operating environment, and for example a financial coordinator has been working since 2022 to make the use and monitoring of funds even more efficient. The executive management of WVFİN meets once a week and the Board of Directors 4-5 times a year. The board committees, Fundraising & Marketing, Governance and Audit & Risk Management, meet at least before each board meeting or more frequently, should the circumstances require. The administration is regularly monitored and audited annually, both internally (by the WV International Audit Group) and by external auditors. The Programme is annually audited by external auditors in Finland, and the individual projects are annually audited by local external auditors.

WV uses the PBAS system and the finance processes on the international level are functioning effectively. Project expenses and budget progress are monitored biannually by WVFİN and monthly by the national WV offices. Virtual meetings are held on a regular basis with the project teams to make sure that the reporting is sufficient, and the schedules will hold. During the monitoring visits, financial aspects are also monitored.

WVFİN finance and administration team members are part of the WV Partnership Finance Team. The team meets in person annually to share best practices and work for future targets. The person responsible for WVFİN’s Programme finance attends the Global Field Finance Team meetings arranged by WVI regularly.

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