

A SYNTHESIS EVALUATION OF THE CHILD CENTRED
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

WHEN SOCIAL CAPITAL PAYS OFF



SUMMARY



INTRODUCTION

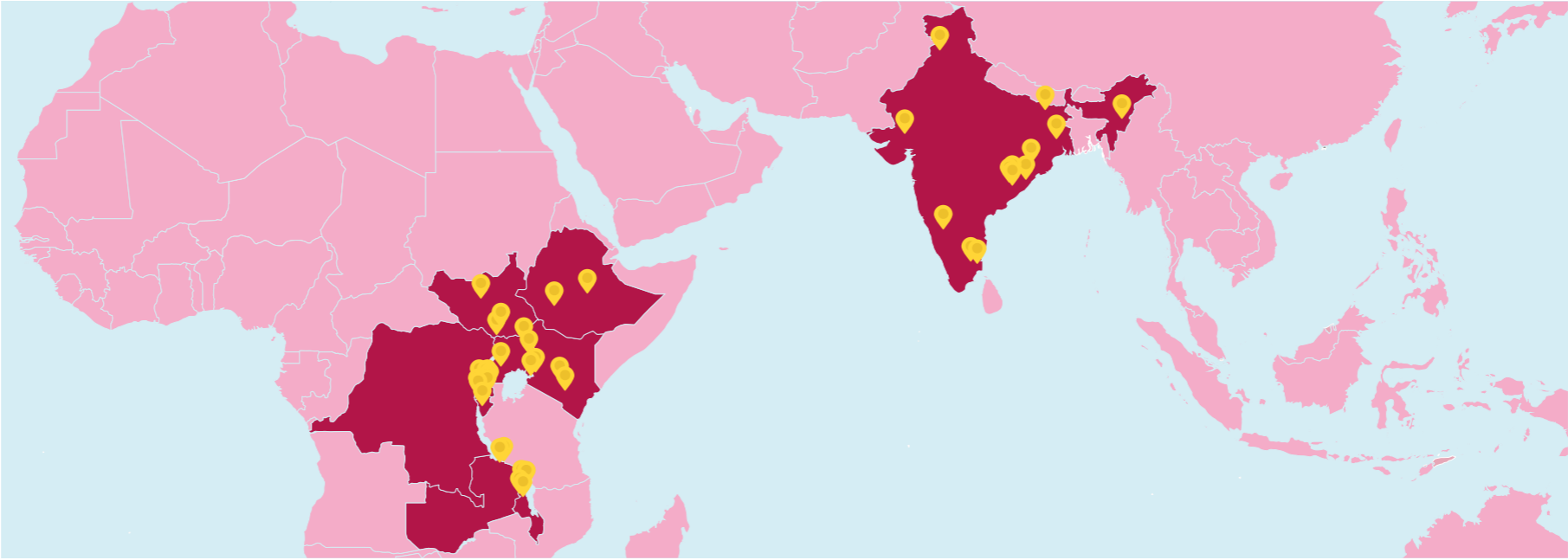
This visual report shows the main results of the evaluation of the child centred community development programme of Help a Child (Red een Kind). The approach on which the programme is based has been developed over the past ten years by Help a Child and local partners. It aims at improving the wellbeing of children in marginalised communities. The approach has at its core the realisation that children are part of families who are part of communities. The approach also realises that many changes that are necessary for child wellbeing can only be realised at the level of the community as a whole. Therefore, the approach works through setting up and supporting groups that bring together different people in the community: children, youth, farmers, parents and teachers to motivate them to improve the situation of their own community. Also, the approach aims at improving self-reliance and strives to reduce giving handouts.

This evaluation analyses the programme from a social and an economic point of view. Additionally, the effects on the child are examined through four aspects of child wellbeing: healthy and strong, educated for life, socially and emotionally developed, and with hope and dignity. Throughout these six lenses, two questions are being asked: ‘Did the programme make a positive impact?’ and ‘Is the community able to continue the positive changes?’

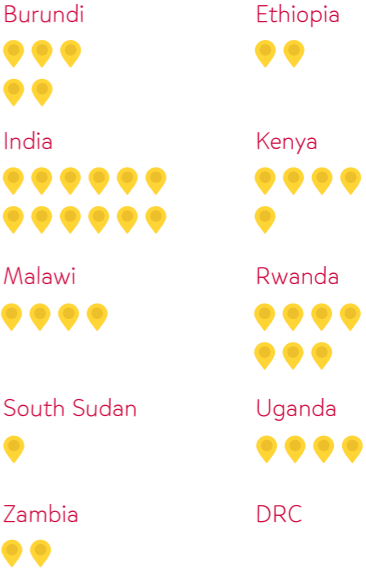
This page explains the size and the several elements of the programme. In the following pages the main findings for the impact of the programme in the community are presented. Also the issue of sustainability is addressed. The full evaluation report can be found at: www.helpachild.org/impact.

SCOPE

Total expenditure 2010-2018



LOCATIONS
COMMUNITY PROJECTS:



CORE ACTIVITIES IN PROJECTS OF HELP A CHILD

Social Resilience



Forming or strengthening community groups such as self-help groups.

Economic Resilience



Stimulating an attitude of saving and investing in a variety of groups, notably self-help groups.

Child wellbeing



Facilitating children groups on life skills, play, child rights and responsibilities, social issues, and more.



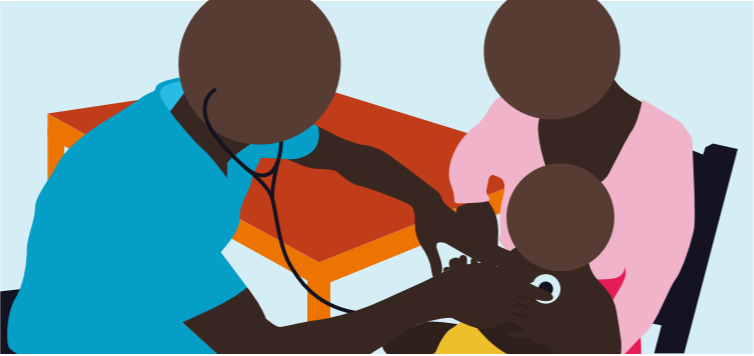
Stimulating linkages between groups in a village or at higher levels, to address community issues.



Training on Income Generating Activities. Agronomic & agribusiness training, coaching and demonstration.



Awareness and training on nutrition. Stimulating kitchen gardens and growth of diverse food crops.



Facilitating linkages, lobby and advocacy towards external actors, service providers and government.



Forming or strengthening farmer groups. Facilitating linkages towards other economic actors.



Supporting Early Childhood Development centres and primary schools through parents' involvement.



SOCIAL RESILIENCE OF THE COMMUNITY

The strength of the social structure in the community. This relates to aspects like empowerment, self-confidence, overcoming difficulties together, cooperation, solidarity, linking and networking, lobby and advocacy and conflict resolution.

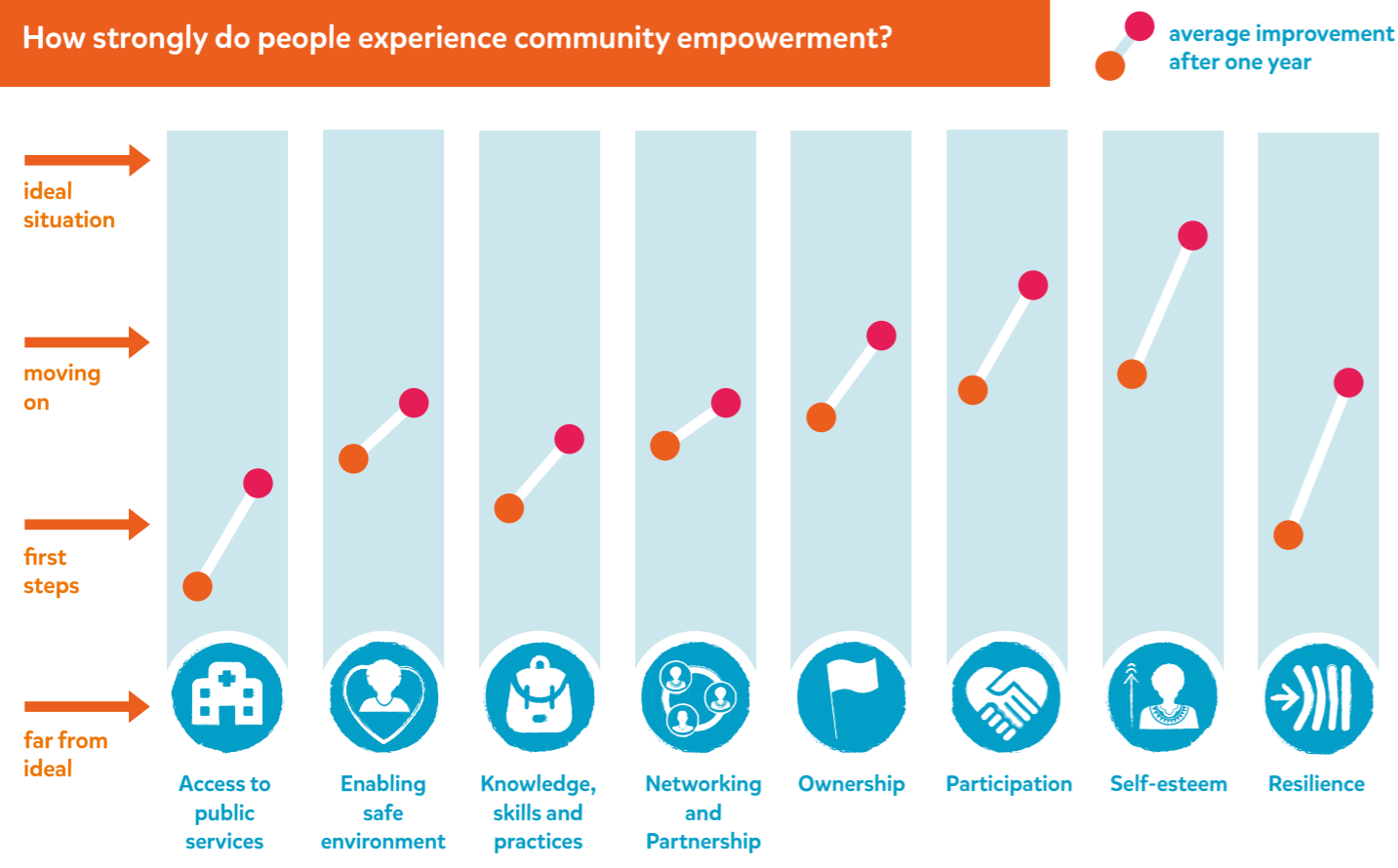
REACH

Self-help Groups	2,168
Members Self-help Groups	38,239
Cluster Level Associations	124
Number of Adults Reached	77,125

70%

Seventy percent of the projects perform well and have clear positive effects related to development of social resilience, social capital and empowerment of groups of people.

How strongly do people experience community empowerment?



FARMER GROUP

'I have harvested twice as many vegetables this year. However armyworms have destroyed 40% of my maize yields, any tips?'

CHILDREN'S CLUB

'Our friend didn't come to school last week. Her parents want her to fetch water and work on the land. Let's go and talk to the village elders!'

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

'Last month one of the teachers often did not show up, but after a good conversation he is now motivated to be on time every day!'

CLUSTER LEVEL ASSOCIATION

'Many people cannot afford medicines. Let's talk to the district leader to see if we can arrange a health insurance through the self-help groups.'

SUSTAINABLE GROUP STRUCTURE

When community groups are coached by other groups (mostly a Cluster Level Association), they are more sustainable. When each group, club and committee is on its own, it is more difficult to sustain them.

ROLES

Self-help groups sometimes take up many roles in society: advocating for more and better public services, mediating conflicts, joining broader platforms in the area, reaching out to the poorest children of the community and undertaking joint activities.

SELF-HELP GROUP

'My neighbours have marriage problems. How can we help them?'

BREAKING THE LINK

The programme breaks the link between economic development and increasing individualism. On the contrary, it combines (some) economic growth with an increase in solidarity and togetherness.

see
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ECONOMIC RESILIENCE OF THE COMMUNITY

The strength of communities to increase their income and assets so that they can overcome difficulties such as poor harvest, death of livestock, loss of job, or family difficulties and will not fall back into poverty.

REACH

Self-help Groups — 2,168
Members Self-help Groups — 38,239
Farmer Groups — 149
Youth with Vocational Training — 1,621

1/3

One-third of the projects show strong positive economic effects. For the other projects the economic effects are small.

increase in number of assets

+31%

SUSTAINABLE IMPROVEMENTS

The economic improvements are only sustainable when linked to attitudes of self-reliance and a business mindset, since investments made by the programme are only temporary.

BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN

The programme has managed to link economic development and child wellbeing by continually raising awareness about the benefits for children.

AGRIBUSINESS TRAINING

'I think in our village there is a demand for maize flour, so can't we process our maize to get a higher price?'

FRESH VEGGIES for sale

average increase in yields per crop

+20%

increased amount of livestock

+11%

results

VOCATIONAL TRAINING (TVET)

The results of TVET are reasonably sustainable, but the system for providing TVET much less.

after a training, youth earn 5.6 times as much

+560%

SAVINGS

The programme's contribution to an attitude of savings and investment forms a strong basis for further economic development. This attitude is sustainable and continues to expand to others. Economic development itself is not very significant yet.

SELF-HELP GROUP

'We have enough capital to provide a loan to three members with an interest of 10%. Who is interested?'

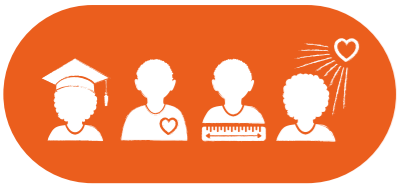
activities



Programme activity: Training on Income Generating Activities. Agronomic & agribusiness training, coaching and demonstration.



Programme activity: Stimulating an attitude of saving and investing in a variety of groups, notably self-help groups.



CHILD WELLBEING

When children can develop to their full potential: cognitively, socio-emotionally, physically and spiritually.

REACH

Young Children (0-6)	28,861
Children (7-14)	151,921
Adolescents (15-18)	11,091
Youth (19-25)	13,764

Children Groups	1,648
Youth Groups	307
ECD Centres	307
Primary Schools	362



While a broad view on child wellbeing is used, the 'educated for life' aspects receives most attention and shows most positive effects, followed by the 'healthy and strong' aspect'.

EDUCATED FOR LIFE

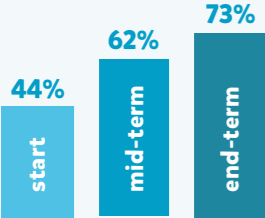


EDUCATION

Over half of the projects perform well in the domain of education, while some projects excel.

Participation of parents

The level of participation of parents and community in education, at every phase of the project.

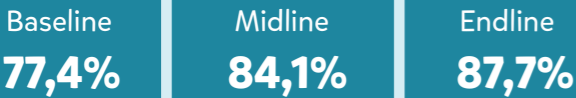


QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The main result of support to primary schools is that governing bodies (parent-teacher associations, school management committees) are better equipped to play their roles. This in turn improves the quality of education.



Percentage of children in the village who score sufficient or good on this aspect of child wellbeing



SOCIALLY & EMOTIONALLY DEVELOPED



CHILDREN'S GROUPS

Children's groups have the potential to develop agency, skills, character and encourage children to take responsibility. Some projects leveraged this potential, but others reinforced passive attitudes of children in these groups.



SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

One third of the projects show clear positive effects related to social and emotional development of children.



HEALTHY & STRONG



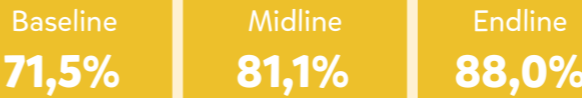
KITCHEN GARDENS

Kitchen gardens turn out to be a quick win for many families. Many families continue their use and expand the practice to other people.



HEALTH & NUTRITION

About half of the projects have clearly contributed to better health and nutrition, mainly by increasing parents' attention to and knowledge about it, but also in combination with agricultural improvements.



WITH HOPE & DIGNITY



HOPE & DIGNITY

The Christian meanings of 'hope' and 'dignity' operate at the level of identity, motivation and inspiration of Help a Child and partners, but hardly in the projects, strategy and activities of the programme.



INCLUSION

The identity of Help a Child and partners leads to inclusion of the most marginalized, and never leads to exclusion of persons on undue grounds.



OPPORTUNITIES

Some projects miss the opportunity to cooperate with churches as an important stakeholder working with children. Particularly in Christian contexts this is relevant.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

SUSTAINABILITY

The projects that have been completed are encouraging. Two years after completion most groups are still active. They save, they invest, they undertake joint activities such as supporting schools or providing support for others in the community that were not part of the project. New groups continue to be formed and more people are being trained to save, invest and lobby for a better community. This is a remarkable achievement. At the same time, for half of the projects sustainability cannot be guaranteed. This is due to the fact that sustainability is not sufficiently emphasized as a principle right from the beginning of a project.

Percentage of projects with positive results:



KEY ISSUES

The positive impact and encouraging sustainability of the projects are partly explained by four key issues. These key issues are implicitly or explicitly part of the child centred community development programme. The absence or presence of these key issues explains why some projects have less or more impact or are less or more sustainable than others.

1) Projects realise sustainable impact when they are truly based in local ownership, local savings and active participation of the community. This is often a ‘slow’ process that takes time, but it is a better approach than the ‘fast way’ of using external investments or donating services and goods to the community.

2) Projects realise sustainable impact through strong and lasting linkages. This requires linkages to the world beyond the community including government and service providers, built by networking and lobbying, but also strong interlinks between different groups within the community, which creates true social capital.

3) Projects realise sustainable impact through a good phasing of the project. The entry phase should be used to develop a strong foundation in the community and develop ownership. There should be an intentional phase out trajectory that focuses on facilitating sustainability.

4) Projects realise sustainable impact by integrating principles like child wellbeing and child rights and responsibilities strongly in all activities. This is needed along with an approach where different activities of different groups are not separated, but linked. This combined effort makes the project more than the sum of its parts.

The child centred community programme has in itself the potential to generate great impact in ways that the community can maintain. And although all contexts differ, this report shows that many projects have strengthened the ambitions of communities to help their children grow up to be responsible individuals who can make their community a better place.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW-UP

Based on the analyses and conclusions, a list of 6 recommendations is offered that can further improve the quality and impact of the child centred community development programme.

- 1 Provide further guidance on the principles behind using the fast and the slow way.
- 2 Focus on developing linkages between groups and towards the outside world.
- 3 Guide partners to understand what each project phase is for.
- 4 Develop integrative principles that help decide what activities to use for whom and why.
- 5 Elaborate what “Living with Hope and Dignity” implies in different contexts.
- 6 Make sustainability a leading concept from the start.



Help a Child takes these recommendations seriously and is committed to thoroughly reflect on the synthesis evaluation with all relevant stakeholders and respond with a clear follow-up plan. By doing this Help a Child strives to further improve the impact and sustainability of the child centred community programme in order to help more children to grow out of poverty.

The detailed response of Help a Child towards this evaluation can be found at www.helpachild.org/impact.





Evaluation

Wouter Rijnveld, Resultante

Infographics

Robin Jaspers / GC

www.helpachild.org/impact