

We contribute to:



FOOD, SECURITY AND LIVELIHOOD / YOUTH & WORK

While conflict and weather extremes can be identified as the major causes of food crises in 2021, the economic backlash of COVID-19 has worsened acute food insecurity in fragile areas.¹ In South Sudan, no less than 55 per cent of the population was exposed to food crisis, food emergency or even category 5: famine. Children are especially vulnerable to malnutrition. According to the World Food Programme, worldwide about 75 million children were stunted in 2020 and another 16 million children were malnourished or severely malnourished.

As part of its Food Security and Livelihoods theme, Help a Child combines various short-term, mid-term and long-term interventions, depending on the situation. After the large-scale flooding in South Sudan, for example, life-saving food aid was provided in the form of maize flour, oil, beans, seeds, tools, cash and more. In the DRC and other countries we have provided agricultural training and set up self-help groups to move families away from relying on food aid. In many of our community development programmes we have added advanced agricultural vocational education and training (AVET) and other components, such as the formation of farmer groups, life skills and community-based disaster risk reduction to reach for the ultimate aim: improve the food security of vulnerable households in the long term. Over the entire line, but especially in our community development projects, Help a Child's focus has been to involve young people in agricultural activities, thus boosting food security in their communities while at the same time creating income and livelihood opportunities for the next generation.

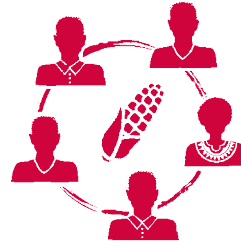
[1] World Food Programme, *Global Report on Food Crises – 2021*.



End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Key statistics:



805

Youth and farmer groups supported

14,926

youth (19-25) supported

53% male / 47% female



5,450

households received agricultural inputs

2,950

households received agricultural training

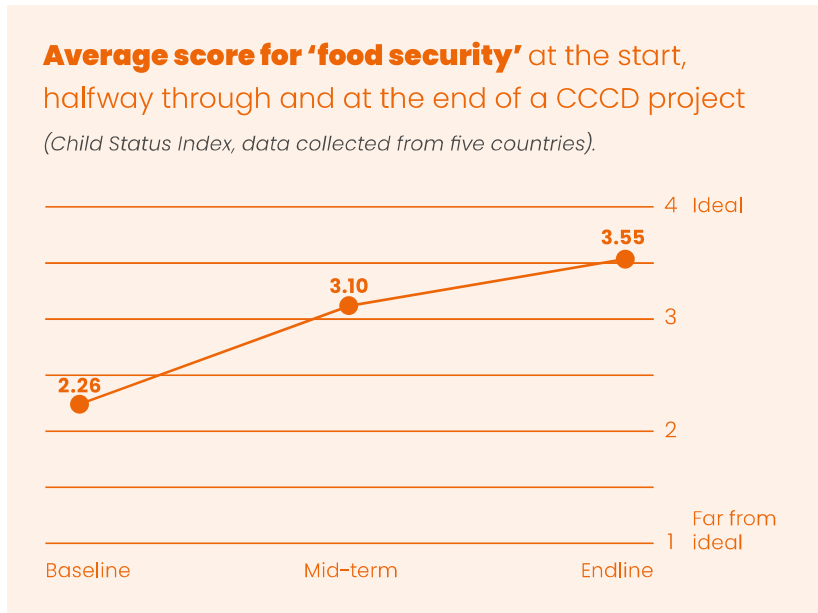


SEVERAL COUNTRIES

Improved food security at household level

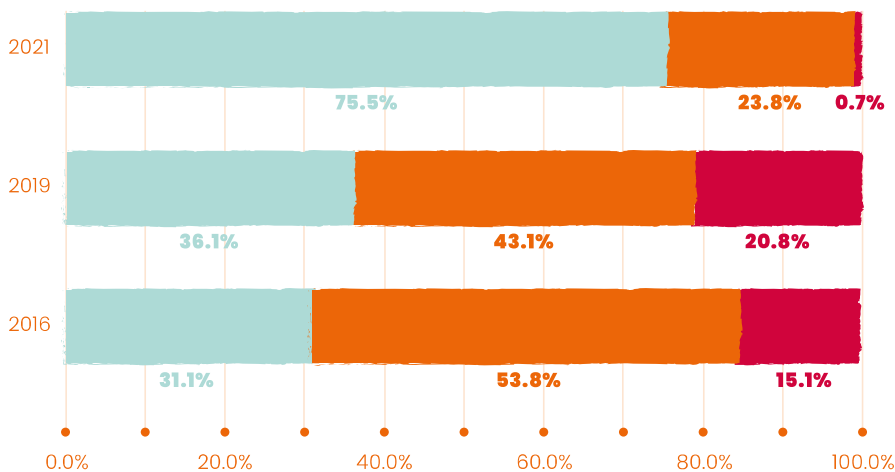
In general, 2021 was a good year for farmers in our projects. Abundance combined with higher prices boosted the incomes of farming households, especially those investing in wheat and oilseeds. These favourable circumstances were encouraging for youth and adults who participated in training and farmer groups within our programmes.

Apart from these favorable circumstances, various other indicators also show that the food security of farming households in the programmes operated by Help a Child improves over time. The scores for 'food security' given by participants in our CCCD programme show a steady improvement over the course of the project, usually with a duration of 8-9 years. Another tool used to measure food security is the Household Hunger Scale. We are grateful to see that households in Burundi have reported significant improvements since the start of the community development programme five years ago.



BURUNDI Improved resilience

Food security Burundi



- households with no or light hunger
- households with moderate hunger
- households with severe hunger



SOUTH SUDAN

Bridging the hunger gap, boosting resilience

In South Sudan, Help a Child has reached 26,100 people in need with food-security activities. The main interventions have taken place in the Pibor area, which has been affected by floods, conflict and droughts and is categorized by UNOCHA as the location with the highest needs in the country. Over 26,000 people have been assisted there.

To bridge the hunger gap from the spring, the communities were supported with one round of maize flour, beans and oil distribution. The focus of all food-related activities, however, has been agricultural training to increase the resilience of vulnerable households. In and around Wau, more than 3,000 people have been assisted in the same ways.

Unfortunately, Help a Child's partner in Pibor, Across, has been affected directly by the conflict in the area and lost a warehouse to looters and arson. Food and



Challenging conditions in Pibor: the lost warehouse as a result of arson.

agricultural supplies for 6,000 people in need were destroyed. We are grateful that no one was injured in this incident and even more determined to continue agricultural training and complementary food support in South Sudan.

RWANDA

Access to capital for poor farmers

In Rwamagana, Help a Child has piloted an initiative to give farmers access to capital. A revolving fund has been made available by a Dutch entrepreneur. Through implementing partner EPR, participating self-help groups have been trained in initiating income-generating activities, saving and loans. Despite relatively high bank charges and a short payback period, many groups have shown interest and even managed to start paying back their loans, which is promising.

According to the participating families, the project has already been beneficial. Cerena, a 55-year-old widow with three children, states, "The project staff

helped our self-help group to request a loan from SANGWA SACCO. We listed several ideas for income generation and decided to do pig farming. I received one pair, a boar and a sow. Four healthy piglets have been born. I don't have the means to feed all six, so I'm planning to sell three after two months. This will allow me to pay back the loan.

"I've benefited a lot from this project. In the past I struggled to get organic fertilizer, but now I use composted manure on my fields. I couldn't pay the school fees for my children, but soon I hope to have enough money. My children are happy and engaged in taking care of the animals. Together with my group and family members, we can achieve a lot!"



21 self-help groups of +/- **20 members** each have participated in training and received microfinance

DRC

Proud to sprout

Continued instability in the DRC in the past decade has caused large numbers of citizens to flee or migrate to other places in the country. Many vulnerable households, internally displaced families as well as returnees, have been deprived of their livelihoods. The local economies of host communities also come under pressure and acute shortages of food and supplies occur.

As part of the joint response in the DRC, funded by the Dutch Relief Alliance, Help a Child has been supporting vulnerable

households in Masisi and Fizi with agricultural tools, seeds and training in new farming techniques. Training topics have varied from the choice of land to the phytosanitary treatment of crops, and from harvesting techniques to the storage and preservation of agricultural produce.

In Masisi, the participants of the training have organized themselves into twelve self-help groups. Under the operating rules established by these groups, weekly contributions are collected. A total of CDF 1,140,300 (US\$570) has been mobilized so



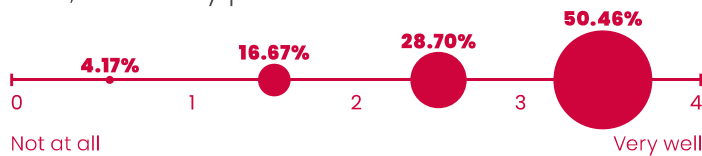
far by project participants. In Fizi, irrigation and drainage systems adapted to the climate change in the area have been set up in community gardens. The participants are happy and proud to harvest crops of good quality, intended partly for consumption and partly for sale.

Grow your talent, harvest a future

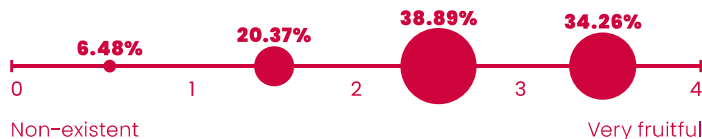
Help a Child has years of experience working with rural youth in changing contexts. The aim is to make them self-reliant and ready for work. Clearly, there is much more to this than finding the right niches and providing training. Even more important is the need to focus on the young people themselves and how they perceive their opportunities. Depending on a multitude of cultural, political, social, religious, family-related and personality factors, this window changes from person to person.

Help a Child increasingly includes these insights in its youth approaches and monitoring. These scores were given in 2021 by young people participating in our Youth & Work programmes in Rwanda.

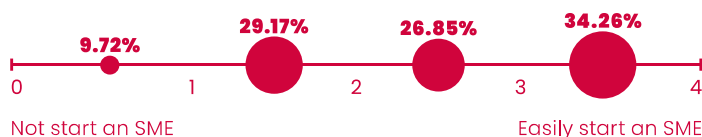
Now, I know my potential



My partnerships with key-stakeholders are



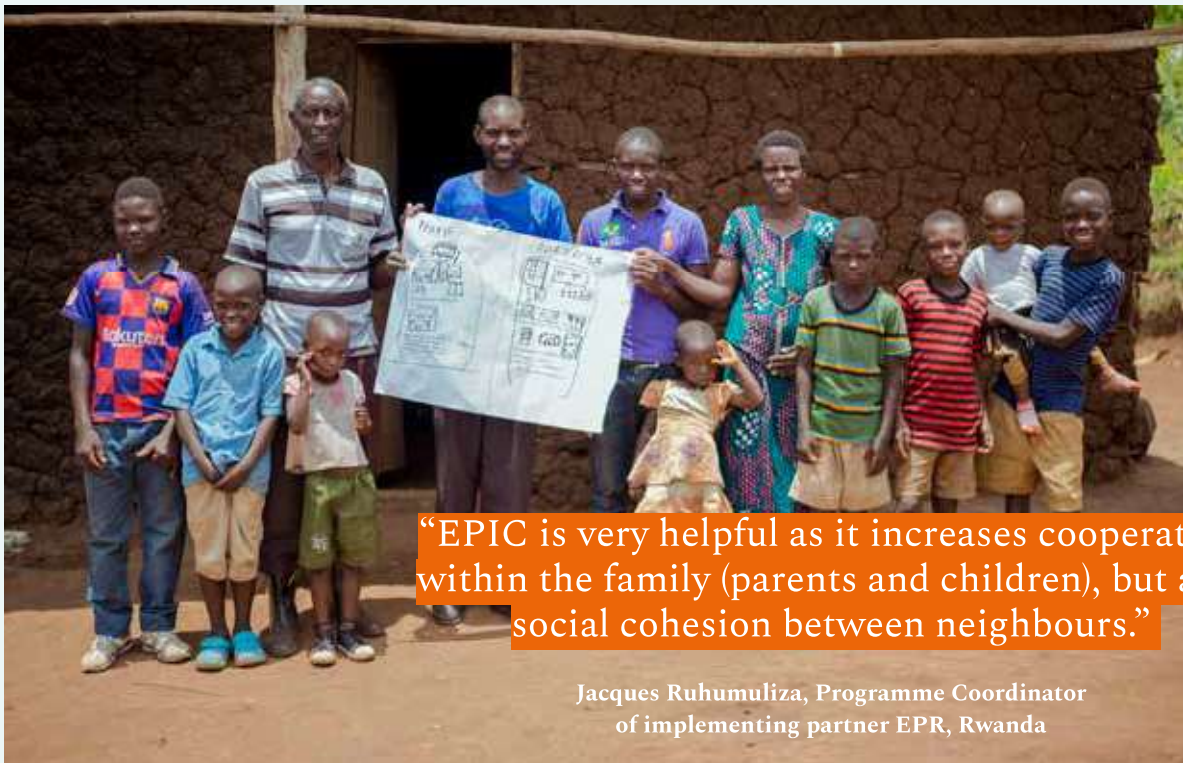
Business start-up





EPIC: grasping the synergy between economic development and child well-being

Economic resilience is an important precondition for child well-being. However, this does not mean that children automatically benefit from economic development. For this reason Help a Child has designed the Economic Programme with Impact on Children (EPIC): a programme for fragile rural communities that pays special attention to children's needs.



“EPIC is very helpful as it increases cooperation within the family (parents and children), but also social cohesion between neighbours.”

Jacques Ruhumuliza, Programme Coordinator of implementing partner EPR, Rwanda

A pilot has been set up in Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, running from 2020 to 2022. One of the burning research questions in this initial phase is, “Do our economic interventions indeed contribute towards better, sustainable well-being for children?” Final conclusions will be drawn in 2022, but our mid-term evaluation has already provided some interesting insights.

Findings of the mid-term evaluation (2021)

- Collaboration and joint decision-making between husbands, wives and their children have been improved.
- Yields and farm incomes are increasing. Parents testify that they now can feed their family

more meals a day, all year round, and can send their children to school.

- Farming families are becoming better stewards of their land and of the natural resources in the community.

Challenges we want to tackle

- Although income is improving, it does not yet cater fully for all family needs.
- Access to markets and to capital for investments is a barrier that we need to explore further.

How EPIC works

EPIC combines best practices and lessons learned in the areas of social resilience, economic development and child development.

One of its key elements is integrated farm planning, making use of the innovative PIP (“Plan Intégré du Paysan”) model developed by Wageningen University. At the household level, family members are invited to develop a shared vision in order to establish a sustainable agricultural livelihood. This results in sufficient, nutritious and responsibly produced food for all family members, including children. Moreover, after a while these households are ready to participate in sustainable value chains, thus enabling economic development that benefits children and youth and reduces inequalities.

