

Mid-Term Evaluation Report

DGD 2022-26 Programme

Plan International Belgium

March 2025



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
List of Tables and Figures	5
Acronyms	7
1. Executive Summary	10
1.1. Project Overview	10
1.2. Evaluation Purpose and Objectives	10
1.3. Evaluation Methodology	10
1.4. Key Findings and Conclusions	11
1.5. Selected Priority Recommendations	20
2. Introduction and Background	24
2.1. Project Overview and Background	24
2.2. Context Analysis	32
2.3. Evaluation Purpose and Objectives	35
2.4. Definitions of CAY Participation	36
3. Feminist and Participatory Approach	37
4. Evaluation Methodology	38
4.1. Evaluation Criteria	39
4.2. Sampling Strategy	44
4.3. Data Collection Methods	44
4.3.1. Achieved sample size	46
4.4. Data Analysis	46
4.5. Quality Assurance and Data Processing	46
4.6. Research Ethics	47
4.7. Safeguarding	47
4.8. Limitations	48
5. Findings and Conclusions	52
5.1. Global Analysis	52
5.2. Belgium Analysis	65

5.3.	Bolivia Analysis	81
5.4.	Ecuador Analysis	104
5.6.	Benin Analysis	123
5.7.	Niger Analysis	140
5.8.	Senegal Analysis	158
5.9.	Tanzania Analysis	173
5.10.	Vietnam Analysis	188
6.	Recommendations	204
6.1.	Global	204
6.2.	Belgium	206
6.3.	Bolivia	208
6.4.	Ecuador	210
6.5.	Benin	212
6.6.	Niger	213
6.7.	Senegal	215
6.8.	Tanzania	217
6.9.	Vietnam	219
7.	Annexes	221
7.1.	Evaluation Terms of Reference	221
7.2.	Country Theories of Change	221
7.3.	Evaluation Matrix	221
7.4.	Data Collection Tools	221
7.5.	Debrief Meeting Notes	221
7.6.	Consent Forms	221
7.7.	Cleaned Data	221
7.8.	Workshop Action Plans	221
7.9.	Documents Consulted	221
7.10.	Project Logframes	221
7.11.	Project Overview	221

List of Tables and Figures

Figure 1: DGD Programme Theory of Change	25
Table 1. Target groups and programme participants	25
Table 2. Project overview per country	28
Table 3. Dimensions of youth participation	36
Table 4: Global Level Evaluation Matrix and Research Questions	40
Table 5. Sample sizes	46
Table 6. Gaps and Limitations	50
Table 7: Achievement of logframe indicators by country	52
Table 8: Analysis of logframe indicators by country	53
Table 9: Indicator achievement by AoGD	56
Table 10: GTM scores by country/project at implementation stage	62
Table 11: Indicator achievement for Belgium Outcome	66
Table 12: Indicator achievement for Belgium Result 1	66
Table 13: Indicator achievement for Belgium Result 2	68
Table 14: Indicator achievement for Belgium Result 3	69
Table 15: Indicator achievement for Bolivia Outcome	82
Table 16: Indicator achievement for Bolivia Result 1	83
Table 17: Indicator achievement for Bolivia Result 2	85
Table 18: Indicator achievement for Bolivia Result 3	88
Table 19: Indicator achievement for Bolivia Result 4	90
Table 20: Indicator achievement for Ecuador Outcome	105
Table 21: Indicator achievement for Ecuador Result 1	106
Table 22: Indicator achievement for Ecuador Result 2	108
Table 23: Indicator achievement for Ecuador Result 3	110
Table 24: Indicator achievement for Ecuador Result 4	111
Table 25: Indicator achievement for Benin Outcome	123
Table 26: Indicator achievement for Benin Result 1	125
Table 27: Indicator achievement for Benin Result 2	126

Table 28: Indicator achievement for Benin Result 3	127
Table 29: Indicator achievement for Niger Outcome	140
Table 30: Indicator achievement for Niger Result 1	142
Table 31: Indicator achievement for Niger Result 2	144
Table 32: Indicator achievement for Niger Result 3	146
Table 33: Indicator achievement for Senegal Outcome	159
Table 34: Indicator achievement for Senegal Result 1	160
Table 35: Indicator achievement for Senegal Result 2	161
Table 36: Indicator achievement for Senegal Result 3	162
Table 37: Indicator achievement for Tanzania Outcome	173
Table 38: Indicator achievement for Tanzania Result 1	174
Figure 2: Suggestion box mounted in one of the schools visited during the survey	175
Table 39: Indicator achievement for Tanzania Result 2	176
Table 40: Indicator achievement for Tanzania Result 3	177
Table 41: Indicator achievement for Vietnam Outcome	188
Table 42: Indicator achievement for Vietnam Result 1	190
Table 43: Indicator achievement for Vietnam Result 2	191
Table 44: Indicator achievement for Vietnam Result 3	193

Acronyms

AEC	Alternative Espaces Citoyens
AEMO	Action Educative en Milieu Ouvert
AGYW	Adolescent Girls and Young Women
AJEC	Youth Savings and Credit Associations
ANTD	Association Nigérienne pour le Traitement de la Délinquance et la prévention du crime
AoGD	Area of Global Distinctiveness
APE	Aide à la Promotion de l'Emploi
APROFES	Association pour la Promotion de la Femme Sénégalaise
ASC	Sports and Cultural Association
ASO-EPT	Coalition des Associations et Syndicats en faveur de l'éducation pour tous
ATDA	Territorial Agencies for Agricultural Development
AVEC	Village Savings and Credit Associations
BNO	Belgium National Office
CAY	Children, Adolescents, and Youth
CBCPM	Community-Based Child Protection Mechanism
CCPE	Communal Child Protection Committee
CEC	Community Education Center
CEFM	Child, Early, and Forced Marriage and Union
CFP	Vocational Training Centre
CO	Country Office
COC	Champions of Change
CPS	Social Protection Centre
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRP	Community Resource Person
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CVPE	Comités Villageois de Protection de l'Enfant
DEI	Défense des Enfants International
DGD	Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid
DOET	Department of Education and Training

ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EdL	Escuela de Liderazgo
EPS	European Project Semester
ERT	Ethics Review Team
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GTM	Gender Transformative Marker
GUPS	Guichets Uniques de Protection Sociale
IGA	Income Generating Activities
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCPE	Community Child Protection Mechanism
MPSN	Movimiento Por ser Nina
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PDIA	Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation
PfV	Protection from Violence
PI	Plan International
PIB	Plan International Belgium
PIE	Plan International Ecuador
PIN	Plan International Niger
PIV	Plan International Vietnam
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEDIT	Social and Economic Development Initiatives of Tanzania
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SOYEE	Skills and Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
SRR	Sexual and reproductive rights
ToC	Theory of Change
VEMA	Vijana Elimu Malezi na Ajira
VEO	Village Executive Officers

WEO	Ward Education Officers
YAP	Youth Advisory Panel
YSLA	Youth Saving and Loan Association
ZLEA	Zona Libre de Embarazo Adolescente

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Project Overview

In 2022, Plan International (PI) Belgium, launched the 'DGD 22-26 Programme', which will run until 2026. The programme is delivered in eight countries: Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Ecuador, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania, and Vietnam, across four continents: Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America. It is delivered in Belgium by PI Belgium, by PI Country Offices (CO) in all other countries, as well as over 14 local partners and networks. Whilst the specific outcomes for each country differ, the overall strategy of the DGD programme is to **“contribute towards the economic and social empowerment of adolescents and young people, especially adolescent girls, and young women.”**¹ As such, whilst the programmatic focus is on adolescents and young people, it places specific emphasis on the social and economic empowerment of young women and girls.

1.2. Evaluation Purpose and Objectives

Bodhi Global Analysis was contracted by PIB to design and deliver a Mid-Term Evaluation for the DGD Programme across all eight countries - Belgium, Bolivia, Ecuador, Benin, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania, and Vietnam. The purpose of the evaluation was to have a participatory learning process for Plan staff and partners who are part of the DGD Programme. The mid-term evaluation results will be shared with PIB, PI COs, other stakeholders, and the partner organizations/networks of the programme. The recommendations of the evaluation are expected to serve as lessons that will be used for potential adaptations and new elements of the ongoing DGD programme for the remaining years of the ongoing framework and potentially the next frameworks.

1.3. Evaluation Methodology

During the Inception Phase, Bodhi, in collaboration with the BNO and country offices (COs), undertook a series of methodological framing sessions. These sessions were in the form of Inception Meetings and Stakeholder Consultations. Following these consultations, Bodhi employed a mixed-methods approach (using both qualitative and quantitative methods) to gather information from primary and secondary data sources to inform the evaluation of the DGD programme. Specifically, data was collected via (1) a review of programme documents and quantitative data from the Midline Survey; (2) focus group discussions (FGDs); (3) key informant interviews (KIIs); and (4) a Bridge Workshop in each country. Data collection took place in one location in all programme countries, with the exception of Belgium, where it took place across the country. All data collection was conducted with the aim of providing actionable recommendations and examples of best practice for the programme teams at both the global and country levels. Data collection was followed by a series of meetings: debrief meetings, validation meetings, and restitution meetings.

Each country customised the research questions and developed sub-questions which respond to and reflect the contextual, operational and programmatic environments specific to their interventions. A detailed version of the Evaluation Matrix at a global and country level, including data sources that fed into each evaluation, is available in [Annex 3](#).

¹ DGD Midline Study ToR

1.4. Key Findings and Conclusions

1.4.1. Global

Generally, the DGD programme is progressing well against its logframe targets across countries. The programme has 41 Outcome level indicators and 112 Result level indicators totalling to 153 averaging around 20 indicators per project (with the expectation of Belgium which has far fewer indicators). At outcome level the programme has achieved around 41 per cent of indicators. At result level the programme has achieved around 62 per cent of indicators. Notable achievements at outcome level include the projects implemented in Ecuador and Niger which have both achieved 100 per cent of their outcome level targets and should be commended for this achievement. Notable achievements at result level include the projects implemented in Ecuador (92 per cent achieved), Vietnam (73 per cent achieved) and Belgium (70 per cent achieved), again these projects should be commended on their achievements. Action plans for each country/project have been developed and can be found in [Annex 8](#). Overall, it is recommended to review the indicators and calculation guidelines to ensure that realistic targets and measurements are in place for the end of the programme.

Progress against two of the three suggested AoGDs were included in this evaluation: PfV and SOYEE. Most participants noted positive progress against the PfV AoGD. Participants noted that their understanding of SRHR and GBV had increased. Regarding SOYEE, very positive progress was reported by participants across all countries/projects (apart from Belgium where there is no SOYEE element). This included offering non-traditional skills and training options for young women and seed capital or start-up/installation kits for participants to reduce the financial barriers to starting their own businesses. Nonetheless, financial challenges across all countries/projects persist in that seed capital or start-up/installation kits are not provided for all participants and do not completely eliminate the financial cost of participating in training activities.

CAY Participation at the activity level is very high. According to Richard Hart's ladder of participation², CAY participation at the activity level is at its highest step: youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults. There exists a strong partnership between the project and the CAY participants. Activities which were reported to have the highest CAY participation included COC Clubs, SOYEE training and Education Volunteers. CAY motivation to engage in activities and maintain their engagement was also reported as high. Gaining new skills, taking part in activities which contributed to a cause they believe in and having ownership of activities were cited as motivating factors. Motivation decreased when participants did not take part in regular activities or receive regular updates. Furthermore, the evaluation found that project participants were happy to provide feedback on the project activities, but that there was no systematic way that feedback was being documented, tracked or actioned.

The evaluation found that there was a high chance of the DGD Programme achieving its gender transformative potential. All countries, apart from Benin, have carried out GTM assessments at both the design and implementation phases. Benin has carried out their design stage GTMs. All countries (apart from Bolivia for which the scoring sections were missing from the GTMs) scored 65 per cent which converts to high potential overall. Work on gender norms, agency, condition and position, and enabling environments is progressing well. Areas to focus on in the next half of the programme include work with boys and men and diversity. As noted in the analysis, across all countries, the programme is highly successful at engaging CAY and other participants with ethnic minority backgrounds and communities, which is a focus area for the project. More focus needs to be given to engaging CAY with disabilities and CAY from lower social-economic backgrounds in Belgium specifically. More work should

² Mullahey, Ramona & Susskind, Y. & Checkoway, B.. (1999). Youth participation in community planning. 1-70. Available at: [Link](#)

also be done to engage boys and men in the areas of positive masculinity and specifically adult men through intergenerational dialogues to create a safe space for male CAY to engage them.

1.4.2. Belgium

Overall, the project is well on track. A few key areas, however, will require particular attention for its second half, namely contributing to structural youth participation in decision making around international solidarity issues (Indicator 3 – 0 per cent achievement against target), increasing the number of schools starting the “gender” trajectory (Indicator 6 – 50 per cent achievement against target), and, to a lesser extent, creating wider youth support for campaigns co-created by Plan young activists (Indicator 2 - 64 per cent achievement against target).

PIB has done particularly well on advocacy and influencing of policy makers. They benefited from a favourable political environment, but they have also shown that they are able to build and maintain key linkages and a strong reputation as an expert organisation on both children’s rights and CAY participation. Their approaches to engage decision makers are successful, most particularly creating opportunities for policy makers to receive lived experiences and recommendations directly from CAY, both from Belgium and partner countries. Part of that success can be attributed to the solid preparation of youth who directly engage in advocacy. This includes training methodologies that prove effective to build not only young people’s knowledge on gender and international solidarity, but also their self-esteem and leadership skills. In addition, the trajectory to co-create recommendations has had a solid impact on young people from both Belgium and the partner country. While successful, it might however not be the most cost-efficient approach to influence decision makers. Policy makers do indeed indicate that their participation in other events organised by PIB in which they had the opportunity to meet CAY from Belgium and partner countries were equally impactful to attract their attention on key issues related to gender in international solidarity.

One of the key challenges of the project in Belgium, however, remains Plan’s ability to make youth participation systematic. One explanation is related to the fact that priority was given to influence political priorities in view of the national elections in 2024. PIB benefits from a key influencer position with Enabel, the development agency of the Belgian federal government, implementing Belgium’s international development policy. Enabel is on its own strategic pathway to enhancing youth engagement and participation in their decision making. PIB therefore has a key opportunity to influence structural youth participation from 2025 onwards.

The second key challenge for the project is PIB’s ability to mobilise young people, particularly young men and marginalised/vulnerable CAY. With the ‘Lead for Rights’ outcome, the project aimed to initiate two important shifts in the way PIB operates: i) increasing youths’ voices in PIB’s advocacy and campaigning work, ii) the introduction of a ‘new narrative’, in which PIB tries to mobilise Belgian young people to advocate for global issues and international solidarity. The latter especially has proven more challenging than expected. This is in part due to a national refocusing of societal debates in a context of political and social crises, as well as to a regression on values of tolerance and open-mindedness among youth. In this context, it is particularly challenging to mobilise young people on issues related to international solidarity as opposed to local priorities. This however indicates a strong need to continue to raise CAY awareness on gender and international solidarity issues, as well as a need to diversify mobilisation strategies - notably by increasing collaboration with structures actively engaged in (vulnerable) youth work.

1.4.3. Bolivia

The mid-term evaluation reflects positive progress towards the project’s outcome although several contextual challenges continue to cause challenges. The project had a good impact in creating

opportunities for technical and life-skills development through actual employment and business growth that is hindered by limited access to capital and restrictive job markets. While young girls and boys are knowledgeable of gender issues, a gap persists in their understanding of and trust in protection mechanisms. Despite the political volatility affecting progress towards Result 3, the project has made strides in fostering collaboration among stakeholders and influencing local policies. Field support should include more frequent visits, hands-on guidance, and responsive troubleshooting to address emerging issues.

The evaluation highlighted women in targeted communities continue to experience challenges in securing paid employment, often turning to self-employment due to societal expectations, particularly after motherhood. Even educated women struggle with hiring biases, leading them to entrepreneurship as a viable option. The EMPODERA-T project addresses these challenges by offering skill training and business growth opportunities, empowering them to break gender norms. Seed capital provides a significant motivator, although it is not always sufficient for long-term success. Despite this, participants still noted challenges in sustaining their businesses over time without additional financial or logistical support leading many to rely on support from family members. This highlights the need for follow-up support mechanisms.

The project motivates young people through skill-building and financial support, with many participants drawn by positive past experiences with PIB and encouragement from schools and youth networks. It boosts self-esteem by enhancing communication and leadership abilities, empowering participants to feel more confident. It primarily benefits youth networks, parents are supportive but seek more involvement. Feedback mechanisms are informal and not anonymous. However, efforts are underway to systematize and engage youth in the process. The project strengthens youth networks, ensuring their sustainability and supporting advocacy for local policies, while advancing gender transformative goals through ongoing integration of gender considerations.

The project has made progress in challenging gender norms, empowering young women, and improving their conditions, particularly through education and leadership initiatives. However, entrenched norms, especially in rural areas, and barriers in male-dominated fields persist. Efforts to engage boys and men in redefining masculinity have been positive, but more work is needed with adult men. In particular, respondents noted that even if their fathers have become more tolerant of their participation in the project's activities, they still feel emotionally distant and disconnected. Many expressed that while the project has encouraged personal growth and self-awareness among participants, it has also made them more conscious of the lack of open and affectionate communication within their families. Some respondents shared their desire for a more honest and open relationship with their parents, seeing the project as an opportunity to help their families, especially their fathers, become more receptive to emotional expression—just as it has helped them.

While strides have been made in promoting diversity, age-related discrimination and exclusion of out-of-school youth remain challenges.

1.4.4. Ecuador

The mid-term evaluation highlights the project's progress in achieving its objectives and outcomes. The findings demonstrate measurable improvements across all targeted outcomes, particularly in life skills development, informed decision-making regarding SRHR, and economic empowerment through entrepreneurship. However, challenges such as low self-esteem among participants, unclear mandates within protection mechanisms, limited local employment opportunities, and high turnover of institutional staff amplify the need for a more cohesive and sustainable approach.

The findings highlight that the project has made progress in raising awareness of GBV, SRHR, and protection services among CAY, while also driving cultural shifts within the targeted communities. The

program's SRHR activities have been instrumental in equipping CAY with practical knowledge, such as contraceptive use, and promoting informed decision-making around life goals, though early pregnancies and harmful norms remain prevalent challenges. Additionally, the project has positively influenced cultural norms, encouraging equitable household roles and more inclusive attitudes among families, though resistance tied to religious beliefs persists. Despite these successes, gaps in CAY's knowledge and confidence in protection services point to a need for clearer, contextually relevant education on accessing these systems and effort to strengthen them.

CAY play an active role throughout all project stages, contributing meaningfully to design, planning, and implementation. Flexible, participant-centered approaches ensure activities align with CAY interests while meeting gender-transformative goals. Leadership opportunities, such as moderating activities and coordinating youth clubs, empower participants to take active roles. However, challenges like scheduling conflicts and limited infrastructure persist, highlighting the need for tailored solutions to enhance inclusivity and feasibility of activities. Project activities boost CAY's self-esteem, leadership, and community participation, with life-planning and entrepreneurship workshops helping participants build confidence and skills, particularly in public speaking and goal setting. Playful, interactive methods keep engagement high, with parents noting increased motivation. CAY are enabled to give feedback on the activities across different channels, including an anonymous suggestion box and frequent consultations with activity moderators. Youth report feeling heard, with examples like boys' feedback leading to more dynamic COC sessions. These mechanisms strengthen project adaptability while fostering ownership and trust among participants. Collaboration with CSOs like MPSN strengthens youth advocacy and leadership. MPSN empowers girls as community leaders and advocates for gender equality. Joint activities, such as Women's Day fairs, align with project goals. However, challenges like limited CSO mapping and staff turnover hinder sustained partnerships. Efforts are underway to address these gaps and expand collaboration with local actors to ensure long-term impact.

The evaluation of progress towards the project's gender transformative ambition was limited by the lack of the Plan Gender Transformative Marker analysis at implementation stage. The PIE team has confirmed that this will be a top priority following the evaluation.³ During the bridge workshop and data collection, progress was highlighted in key areas, with continued efforts needed to address existing challenges. In terms of gender norms, the project successfully shifted perceptions of women's roles and men's emotional expression, but challenges remain in participants' households, where harmful practices persist. The project demonstrated having impact empowered young women's agency, particularly by expanding their aspirations beyond traditional roles, with many pursuing higher education and entrepreneurial ventures. Regarding condition and position, the partnership with CODESPA helped young women gain financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills, but expanding these activities and offering digital marketing training could further support economic empowerment. In terms of diversity, the project raised awareness about marginalization but recognized more could be done to promote inclusivity. For work with boys and men, progress was noted in shifting masculinities, but further efforts are needed to engage fathers in positive parenting. Proposed actions include father-child bonding activities, active fatherhood workshops, and incentives for participation. Finally, while the project successfully partnered with local institutions and communities, there are challenges with continuity and community scepticism. To address these, the workshop recommended formalizing partnerships and organizing youth-led events to increase family involvement and awareness.

1.4.5. Benin

The mid-term evaluation reflects positive progress towards the project's outcome although several contextual challenges, and some gaps in the project's approaches, continue to affect outcomes. With regards to Priority Indicator 1 (Outcome indicator), two specific components (inclusion

³ Evaluation meeting, Ecuador

of members with disabilities in clubs and participation of young people in online social networks) drag down the overall value of the indicator. The project faced difficulties in engaging young people and integrating young people living with disabilities into existing youth groups (although some were successfully integrated in the CoC groups). This was partly attributable to problems of scale, as recruitment on a large scale was a challenge. Additionally, due to low penetration of digital communication tools, it was observed that an alternative method of evaluating exchanges between groups of young people should be included in the future. The project made significant progress with inclusivity in education, which did not reflect in the analysis of indicators (under Result 1), illustrating a failure at the methodological level. Regarding Priority Indicator 4 (SRHO1.1.1), the project demonstrated weak performance on accurate knowledge on sexual and reproductive health and rights for adolescents and young people aged 14 to 24, as parents and children faced difficulties of dialogue on these subjects, limiting access to clear and precise information. It was viewed as necessary to review awareness-raising approaches with greater emphasis on early pregnancy, reproductive health and contraceptive methods.

The project demonstrated difficulty in engaging men and boys in activities for gender equality and the promotion of positive social norms. It was also difficult for young people to report problems of violence encountered in the communities; while knowledge of the risks has improved, girls experience a lower rate of confidence to formally report abuse as compared to boys. Fear of community stigma and lack of follow-up on reported cases are among the reasons that victims feel discouraged from reporting. The community child and family protection mechanisms supported by the project also faced difficulties in carrying out their mission of identifying, referencing and monitoring the management of cases of violence encountered in the communities. Relevant action points were discussed during the Bridge Workshop to tackle these challenges.

The assessment of progress against the AoGD was positive. Based on an in-depth analysis of the results of the quantitative mid-term evaluation, it appears that the Impact-Elle project, its partners and the activities implemented contribute to creating an environment conducive to learning for adolescents and young people. Although it is still too early to draw conclusions on impact. Impact was reported at the individual level and the project has established a structured process for recruiting young people into vocational training in collaboration with community leaders. Challenges persist in the form of financial barriers to participation, transport to the training centers and subsistence during the training period. In addition, the course duration is also a challenge. The short nature means that the content is limited, and CAY require further follow-up support.

CAY meaningful participation at the project level is limited, however, CAY participation at the activities level is strong. CAY have been involved in the implementation of activities concerning them, mainly in the context of the choice of training and the AJEC and AVEC. This has led to increased capacity for decision making and leadership within the family and the community. Young people also report a significant improvement in their self-confidence thanks to the life skills training and awareness. Feedback is collected regularly by facilitators in the community and through Suggestion Boxes in schools. Several adaptations have been made which include improvements in access to starter kits, better planning of training, and greater consideration of youth financial constraints. While this feedback is used to adapt some activities, its overall integration could be strengthened, including by expanding the participation of the most marginalized youth and ensuring full traceability of feedback for ongoing evaluation of program impact.

The project has shown progress in changing gender perspectives and engaging young women in economic empowerment pathways traditionally reserved for men. Life skills, gender, and child protection training have had measurable positive effects, reducing early pregnancies, forced marriages,

and gender discrimination.⁴ Awareness-raising tailored to local needs has enabled better integration of communities into protection actions. The integration of the protection/gender approach/SRHR and economic empowerment components has also enabled a change of direction towards better acceptance by young people and communities of gender equality in the family and professional spheres. The participatory approach and strong community anchoring guarantees better acceptability of awareness-raising on the rights and gender approach and gender norms that are sometimes complex to deconstruct. In particular, the presence of facilitators in villages and GBV focal points ensured increased responsiveness, effective prevention of violence and better community acceptance of the project's actions.

1.4.6. Niger

The mid-term evaluation reflects positive progress towards the project's outcome although some challenges continue to affect results, including 100 per cent achievement of outcome level indicators. Although a lot of efforts were directed towards raising awareness among parents, students and teachers, and to train teachers on violence against children and young girls, there was a gap between the knowledge acquired and the application of that knowledge in action. There were mixed results on adolescents' experiences of violence, discrimination, or mistreatment at school, as the situation improved for boys but worsened for girls. Identifying the factors that have improved reporting among boys, young boys and young men could provide a basis for fostering positive change in the context of girls, young girls, and young women. The project exceeded its mid-term targets for the economic empowerment of adolescent girls and young women out of school which highlights the effectiveness of SOYEE activities implemented. However, it also fell short of meeting its target on minimum standards for community child and family protection mechanisms.

The assessment of progress against the AoGD was positive. The evaluation identified that the project fostered a supportive environment for adolescents and young people. Indeed, parents and families have demonstrated high levels of support for the participation of young girls in project activities, and husbands and in-laws have also encouraged and facilitated the participation of adolescent girls in vocational training. SOYEE activities also yielded significant social benefits for project participants. This includes the strengthening of social cohesion between members of AJEC/AVEC. Indeed, members support each other in the event of happy or unhappy events and even contribute financially to help each other.

According to Richard Hart's ladder of participation,⁵ youth participation at the activity level is at the highest level (Youth-initiated and shared decisions with adults). However, at the strategic project design level, youth participation is rated at the 'assigned but informed' scale. Project activities directly contributed to improving the decision-making capacity of young people and adolescents in the family and professional spheres. The evaluation identified an improvement in the consultation of young girls by their parents and older male brothers before making decisions at the household level. There is also an overall improvement in the level of confidence of the girls and boys supported by the project.

The project has initiated progress in addressing gender inequalities. Behavioural changes are also noticeable within the households of married adolescent girls in connection with gender equality, as their husbands increasingly participate in household chores. Although there is a positive trend towards normative change, in the context of Niger, this is a long-term process that will require continuous awareness-raising, training and coaching actions for key community actors and participants to lead to

⁴ FDG enseignants Ze; KII_IFMA_partenaire; KII_Plan_Gender_Inclusion_Specialist

⁵ Mullahey, Ramona & Susskind, Y. & Checkoway, B. (1999). Youth participation in community planning. 1-70. Available at: [Link](#)

an effective internalisation of the knowledge and skills acquired so far, alongside strategic advocacy actions with political authorities to prioritise gender equality on the national development agenda. Significant changes in community members, namely leaders, men and young boys' understanding on issues around protection and girls' rights have been identified. CVPEs have played a key role in triggering these changes through their actions at the community level, although given their non-compliance with the standards of the CVPE, further efforts are needed to improve their quality and effectiveness, to better use them as a lever for change within the community. Through the introduction of the approach of vocational training and the economic empowerment of young girls and adolescents, the project has strengthened the technical capacities of girls and adolescents on the trades and especially to conduct economic actions and generate income. Girls and adolescents have been able to improve their living conditions and to support their family members and are seen as role models by their peers in the community. Given the success of this approach, a strong demand has been created within the target communities, which highlights a strong potential for scale-up.

1.4.7. Senegal

The mid-term evaluation revealed notable progress but also persistent challenges in the project's implementation. The project demonstrated difficulty in engaging men and boys in activities for gender equality and the promotion of positive social norms. It was also difficult for young people to report problems of violence encountered in the communities; while knowledge of the risks has improved, girls experience a lower rate of confidence to formally report abuse as compared to boys. Fear of community stigma and lack of follow-up on reported cases are among the reasons that victims feel discouraged from reporting. The community child and family protection mechanisms supported by the project also faced difficulties in carrying out their mission of identifying, referencing and monitoring the management of cases of violence encountered in the communities. Relevant action points were discussed during the Bridge Workshop to tackle these challenges.

The assessment of progress against the AoGD was mixed as whilst the project has performed very well against all four SOYEE indicators in Result 2, qualitative data collected as part of this evaluation sheds some light on areas for improvement. The project has partially achieved an environment conducive to learning. The awareness raising activities may have led to an increase in course registrations, but this was limited to the testimony of one person. A review of the short-course impact would be beneficial to understand whether a longer-course for few people may be more impactful. Youth satisfaction with the support provided by the project is mixed, although many acknowledged the benefits of the training. Some youth expressed gratitude for the skills acquired, such as writing business plans and marketing techniques, which gave them more confidence. The overall satisfaction rating was, however, limited by unmet expectations, particularly on post-training follow-up. Training modules are complimentary which is helpful for CAY to build a complete picture about how to run a business, however, the impact is limited again by the short-term nature of the course. Whilst the budget was not sufficient to consider long-term training with a certificate recognised by the State, short-term courses limit the content that can be delivered.

The evaluation found good levels of participation and involvement of CAY in the project. According to Richard Hart's ladder of participation,⁶ youth participation in activities is at the highest level (Youth initiated and decisions shared with adults). Within their own communities, young people have strengthened their leadership roles thanks to the skills acquired during the training. Some led awareness-raising activities on social issues that led to policy action at a local level, including an initiative on access to sanitary towels in schools. The training also promoted their self-confidence and decision-making abilities within their families, including positive communication with parents. However, their involvement in decision-making and planning of project activities was marginal and sometimes

⁶ Mullahey, Ramona & Susskind, Y. & Checkoway, B.. (1999). Youth participation in community planning. 1-70. Available at: [Link](#)

solely focused on reporting or carrying out activities. Young people provided feedback on the training, but a lack of robust feedback mechanisms prevented the integration of their perspectives into the project's improvement.

The project had a notable impact on gender norms and attitudes, as well as a strong appreciation of gender equality and inclusion training by participants, including greater inclusion of girls in spaces traditionally dominated by boys. It has raised awareness among communities about GBV and the rights of children and young people. Training on positive masculinity and communication around sexual violence has transformed perceptions and behaviors in several communities, particularly in terms of gender stereotypes related to the employment of girls and women. However, the project's communication on positive masculinity and SGBV remains limited, and the need for diversifying communication platforms to reach wider audiences (at the target community level and beyond) was identified. Young people were also encouraged to integrate into existing youth structures, to continue to convey messages about positive masculinities and gender equality beyond the project.

1.4.8. Tanzania

Despite not meeting its midline evaluation targets for some of the indicators, the VEMA project is on course to achieve all indicators except for output indicator 1.4 (% of adolescents and young people with special needs who report that they receive the additional support they need to remain in school and achieve good learning outcomes (IQEO4.1.4)) which continues to be problematic to achieve. While the project continues to achieve milestones and demonstrate evidence of empowering CAY involved in the project, cultural and traditional practices along with gender norms continue to affect the overall outcome of project activities. Limited effort was made to understand the outcome of some of the output indicators like the effectiveness and user-friendliness of child protection structures and mechanisms at community level and referral pathways to address violence. Qualitative findings also indicated a gap in interventions targeting parents and caregivers, and integration of health workers that if addressed would significantly increase the effectiveness of interventions at school level, household level and within the communities they live in.

The VEMA project worked with multiple stakeholders and community leaders to implement interventions aimed at protecting CAY from violence. Among those in school and below the age of 18 years, awareness creation and sensitisation formed the basis of the intervention, along with creation of a referral pathway to report incidents. However, stigmatisation and victimisation of survivors who report incidents still exist due to inadequate power relationships between victims/survivors and perpetrators maintained by retrogressive cultural practices and unequal power dynamics that result from traditional gender norms. Among out of school youth, economic empowerment and life skills training proved to be effective in ensuring youth can make informed choices when faced with the risk of violence in their primary residences. At the community level, community leaders and youth peers also supported project participants in ensuring they were safe in the environments they lived in. However, active and consistent participation of female youth was affected by social activities such as marriage and early pregnancy, despite the project making effort to provide a youth and child-friendly learning environment for them.

Young people were actively involved in the implementation and management of project activities. While most activities had been pre-designed based on the needs assessment conducted, several opportunities were used to consult the young people on the proposed activities, implementation strategy to be used and what could be adapted to meet each group's needs. The CAY took part in the project in groups where they autonomously selected their group leaders and representatives who they felt would best represent their interests to the project implementation team. Diversity in age and gender amongst the selected leaders demonstrated the project's effectiveness in ensuring inclusivity and

participation of all participants, ensuring equal representation of all genders in leadership. However, inclusion of participants living with disability remains problematic, as mentioned earlier.

While the project demonstrated effectiveness in addressing retrogressive gender norms among its participants, the wider community members are influenced by cultural and traditional definitions of the roles of men and women in society. Participants who have gone through project activities demonstrated confidence and sufficient knowledge on their rights and can speak up and defend their perspectives when discussing issues that affect them. Men and boys taking part in the project have also been supportive of the girls and young women, encouraging them to take leadership roles. In addition, boys and men have also been sharing domestic roles equally with girls and women without discriminating roles along gender lines. Similarly, both young men and young women have selected vocational training courses that traditionally were not aligned to their genders as per societal norms. While the project aimed to ensure diversity by age, gender, education status and disability among its participants, incorporating persons with disability still proved to be a challenge. Among those that the project was able to reach, interventions were delivered in child-friendly and youth-friendly environments to ensure the participants were able to fully express themselves and participate in project activities without fear or feeling discriminated against.

1.4.9. Vietnam

Both the quantitative and qualitative evaluations find that the project is progressing well against its mid-term targets and is on course to achieve its Outcome and Results by 2026. The findings show that considerable progress has been made on Results 1 and 3. CAY are meaningfully participating in project activities such as the COC Clubs and children's committees. These activities have shown improvements in self-esteem and confidence for boys and more so for girls. There were notable delays on Result 2, however, mainly due to a lack of understanding of what type of training CAY wish to receive and the practicalities of finding a training partner who can deliver training near the CAY homes. Now this challenge has been overcome and one training course has already been delivered, PIV can expect to see progress in this area in the next half of the project. Furthermore, some indicators that have been exceeded should be reviewed to increase the difficulty or to develop a deeper reflection on the achievement.

The project models on child protection, SGBV and engagement of parents/caregivers have worked efficiently and effectively. PIV has trained and disseminated information to partners to support them to undertake activities to address various protection needs and risks. It communicates well and has a strong relationship with stakeholders across the project including DOET which helps to ensure the models are being implemented well and adaptations can be made when needed. The COC Club model is particularly efficient as it reaches many people through an amplification effect as CAY share their knowledge with their peers; and effective as CAY report increased levels of confidence gained by designing and delivering activities on topics of interest to them. Similarly, the model of engaging parents/caregivers in training and awareness raising activities has created a positive environment in the home and the community. Parents/caregivers also reported sharing their experiences and knowledge with their peers thus also having an amplified impact effect.

Regarding Outcomes 1 and 3, project staff, partners, teachers, CAY and parents/caregivers all agreed that CAY participation was meaningful, and CAY were motivated by being in control of the activities. They were given several opportunities to feed into the design of activities and design the activities themselves. Indeed, this is the main reason for their motivation to participate in the project. One suggestion for the next half of the project included adding or delivering existing activities in the Vân Kiều language so that CAY from the Vân Kiều community would feel more confident when delivering the activities. While there are several feedback mechanisms in place, more work could be done at the

school level, to define the feedback mechanisms and ensure the CAY understand what type of feedback would be helpful and provide training for teachers to receive feedback in a positive manner.

The project team has done well to stay on track to achieving the gender transformative ambition of the project given the significant delays to implementation. Areas where the project has performed well include influencing discriminatory gender norms and expectations through flagship activities such as the COC Club and various children's committees. The project has also performed well in creating an enabling environment through Parent Clubs, providing training for schoolteachers and engagement of other stakeholders including local authorities. These areas of high performance should be replicated when expanding into the new project location. There are, however, areas for further development including diversity of project participants and working with boys and men. Priority activities have been laid out in the action plan, developed as part of the Bridge Workshop.

1.5. Selected Priority Recommendations

1.5.1. Global Level

Create communities of practice and facilitate exchange visits between project staff: This would benefit all countries within the DGD programme and unite approaches across countries.

Introduce a systematic programme and project review and adaptation process: the evaluators did not find evidence of a systematic review and adaptation process which is linked to project planning.

Support projects to integrate better feedback collection, documentation and restitution mechanisms: by providing *How To* guidance, short training or briefing sessions on the importance of receiving, documenting, tracking and providing updates on how feedback has been acted upon.

Review the approach to seed capital and start-up kits as part of the SOYEE model: Two elements should be reviewed: 1. who receives seed capital and start-up kits and 2. how is the seed capital monitored?

Harmonise end-term evaluation tools: It was noted that before the mid-term studies took place in all countries, tools were prepared (in different languages) and shared so that all consultants would use the same approach.

1.5.2. Country Level

Belgium

Strategically define geographical focus of the project: While maintaining meaningful geographical coverage (across the country's linguistic regions, (semi-)rural and urban), consider a refocusing to enable mutually reinforcing activities.

Carry out a vulnerable CAY protection risk assessment: Assess how participating in PIB advocacy and campaigning activities can affect and put at risk vulnerable CAY, disaggregated by vulnerability criteria.

Enhance engagement on social media: Enhance PIB engagement on social media, especially on TikTok which is CAY's preferred channel.

Bolivia

Develop and implement an anonymous and systematized feedback mechanism: The project currently lacks a structured mechanism for participants to provide anonymous feedback.

Conduct community engagement sessions to raise awareness about the role and importance of community protection services: Data reveals that protection mechanisms are not always respected or recognized as authoritative figures, particularly in La Paz.

Strengthen and expand intergenerational activities: participants highlighted the positive impact of having intergenerational activities involving themselves and their parents.

Ecuador

Address scheduling conflicts to enhance CAY's participation and continuity in the project: To ensure meaningful participation and continuity among participants, activities should be scheduled during evenings or weekends.

Strengthen the capacity of community leaders and volunteers on protection mechanisms: To address gaps in knowledge of trust in protection mechanisms, PIE could conduct a training session specifically targeting community leaders and volunteers on the legal frameworks and protection mechanisms.

Train former EdL and COC participants to become facilitators: To ensure the project's impact is carried out to younger generations it would be good to incentivise former EdL and COC participants to become facilitators.

Benin

Tailor course classes to the needs of different CAY groups: This could work in two ways:

- Based on available financial resources, **expand catch-up classes to include a greater number of subjects** to better meet the educational needs of children.
- **Transition apprentices with a low literacy level onto an accelerated training** that could improve their effective participation in training so that the training can be tailored to their needs.

Manage the expectations of young people by sharing a distribution schedule for installation kits to enable young people to better anticipate their installation and begin their economic activities in better conditions as soon as they finish their training.

Address financial barriers which risk affecting retention on courses: An option to address a key barrier, money for meals, could be to set up a cooperative canteen system by integrating mothers who are members of AVECs or another system within the centers to compensate for the lack of meals during training.

Niger

Strengthen awareness-raising actions for students and their teachers on the school governance approach to improve the percentage of schools and learning spaces/centres that meet the national/global standards set for an accessible, safe and protected environment (IQEO4.2.3). Funds could be channelled to support schools to be compliant with environmental and technical standards so that access to school and learning facilities are more acceptable.

Continue community awareness-raising actions on children's rights and set up a mechanism of 'model parents' who champion the protection of children's rights and can inspire other community members to also take steps towards change. Indeed, although there is a good level of knowledge around children and adolescents' rights (including girls), concrete actions towards the operationalisation of this knowledge remain limited.

Involve CAY from the National Consultative Council for Children and Youth of Niger (CCNEJ) in discussions on the design for the project to improve meaningful participation of CAY in strategic decision-making regarding the project.

Maximise the effectiveness of the CVPE committees. To improve results related to behavioral changes, the project could increase incentives for CVPE committee members through the establishment of group economic activities.

Senegal

Continue efforts and review their effectiveness to engage more boys and young men in activities that would ensure positive behaviour change and gender norm change: It was highlighted as part of the quantitative mid-term study and the Bridge Workshop that the project is struggling to engage boys and young men. This would address the underachievement for boys and men regarding outcome indicators LDI 1 and 2.

Reactivate and strengthen the CCPEs: Provide resources and training for better management of cases of violence and focus on ensuring that reporting mechanisms are CAY friendly. This could involve greater engagement from the CCPE with CAY to build their confidence in reporting protection issues. This would contribute to bringing the project back on track to achieve results indicators PROO1.1.1 and PROO1.4.1.

Implement action points to improve adolescents and young people, especially adolescent girls and young women's, ability to identify and address school-related violence and GBV including on the different types of violence (including emotional, economic and neglect).

Tanzania

Address the logistical and financial constraints that matrons and teachers face when responding to and addressing cases of violence.

Review the behaviour change approach used for enhancing community awareness and sensitisation activities that promote gender equality and inclusion of boys and girls in social and economic activities. This will address the continued prominence of harmful gender norms.

Identify and include people with disabilities in the project. The project needs the services of a disability and inclusion expert to map the different disabilities that exist in the community and how these persons can be integrated into project activities.

Vietnam

Review the indicator targets to ensure they are realistically challenging for the second half of the project: especially those which have been exceeded, so ensure they are realistically stretching and provide meaningful data for future project adaptations.

Create a systematised feedback log and tracker: This log would systematically document all feedback received, why it has been received and from which project participant group.

Provide training for teachers, and a joint session for teachers and CAY in the feedback process:
The evaluation found that teachers would benefit from training on how to receive feedback from students.

2. Introduction and Background

Adolescent and youth economic and social empowerment is a core component at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They are seen as being both key actors in realising many of the targets identified in the SDGs by 2030 as well as being among the primary beneficiary groups. As noted in the United Nations' World Youth Report, young people are essential protagonists in the development of the SDGs and the 2030 agenda and "continue to be engaged in the frameworks and processes that support its implementation."⁷ To that end, supporting young people to be active economic and social agents in their communities is essential. In addition, the SDGs pay specific attention to gender equality and female social and economic empowerment. More details on the programme and the purpose of the programme can be found in the evaluation terms of reference, in [Annex 1](#).

In line with the above priorities, Plan International (PI) Belgium, launched the "Economic and social empowerment of adolescents and youth" (10-24) (Autonomisation économique et émancipation sociale des adolescentes et des jeunes), named after its principal donor the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD) in 2022 and will run until 2026.

2.1. Project Overview and Background

In 2022, Plan International (PI) Belgium, launched the 'DGD 22-26 Programme', which will run until 2026. The programme is delivered in eight countries: Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Ecuador, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania, and Vietnam, across four continents: Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America. It is delivered in Belgium by PI Belgium, by PI Country Offices (CO) in all other countries, as well as over 14 local partners and networks. Whilst the specific outcomes for each country differ, the overall strategy of the DGD programme is to **"contribute towards the economic and social empowerment of adolescents and young people, especially adolescent girls, and young women."**⁸ As such, whilst the programmatic focus is on adolescents and young people, it places specific emphasis on the social and economic empowerment of young women and girls. The programme is based on three key Plan Strategies:

1. A human rights-based approach with participation of target groups as the main actors of change
2. The principle of inclusion: the programme targets adolescent girls and young women aged 10 to 24, particularly those vulnerable to discrimination and violence
3. Implementation strategies for tackling the root causes of gender inequality and reshaping relationships of gender and power, aiming to realize girls' rights and gender equality

Three of Plan International's Areas of Global Distinctiveness (AoGD) that this programme was agreed to contribute to are protection from violence (PfV), skills and opportunities for youth employment and entrepreneurship (SOYEE), and inclusive quality education (IQE). The evaluation operates on the following pathways of change, which are linked to the AoGDs:

1. Girls, adolescent girls, and young women are protected from all forms of violence, including gender-based violence, in their communities.
2. Adolescent girls and young women have access to skills and opportunities for their economic empowerment.
3. Adolescent girls and young women have access to inclusive quality education and thrive in school environments that are exempt from violence.

⁷ United Nations. World Youth Report: Youth and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. 2018. Available at [Link](#).

⁸ DGD Midline Study ToR

The programme has an overarching Theory of Change (ToC) and country-specific ToCs. The overarching ToC can be found in Figure 1. The country ToCs are in [Annex 2](#). The programme level ToC clearly lays out the inputs and approach, stakeholders, sphere of control, sphere of influence, sphere of interest, and intended outcomes and impact. A project overview per country can be found in Table 1. This overview includes budgeted amounts, targeted groups, timeframe, and objectives and outcomes.

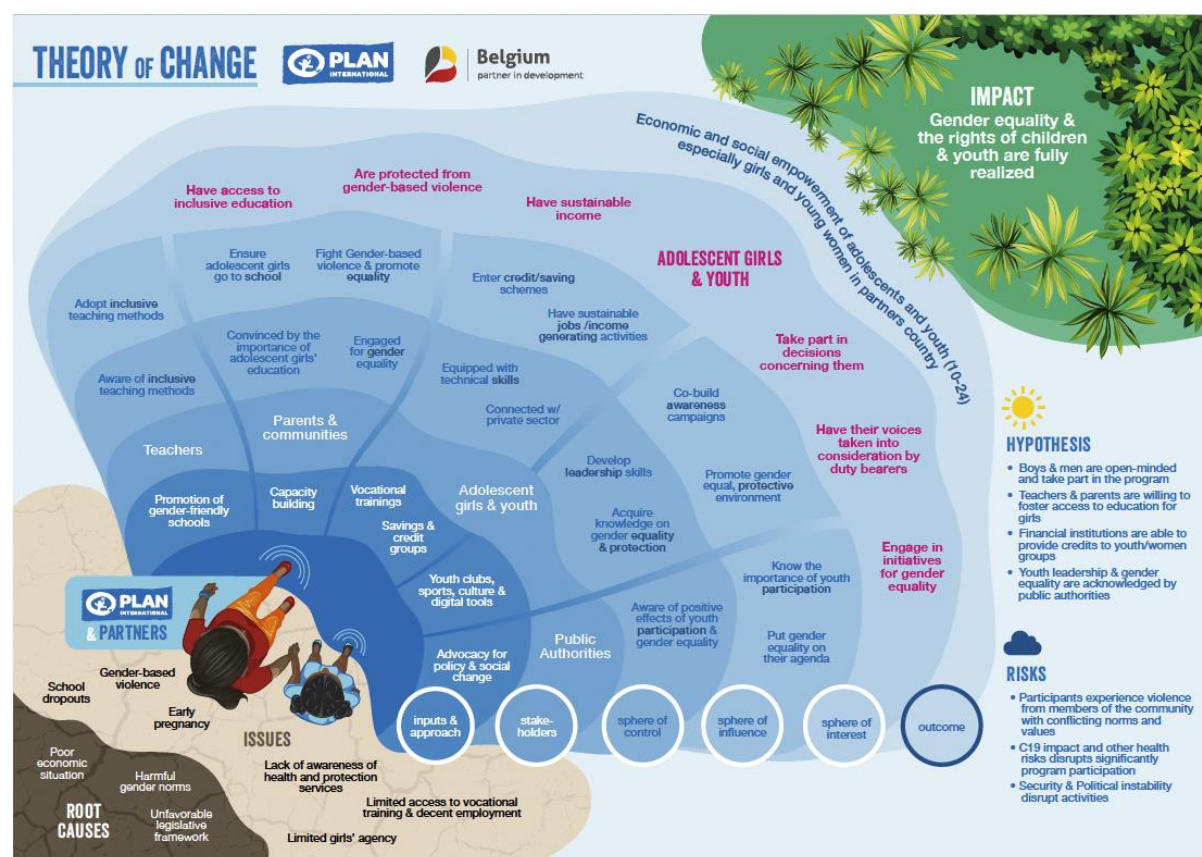


Figure 1: DGD Programme Theory of Change

Target groups per country and programme participants are listed in the table below.

Table 1. Target groups and programme participants

Country	Target Groups
Belgium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 300 young activists in Belgium (10 to 24 years old) 100 committed citizen volunteers 8 schools 100 political leaders 200 players from organised civil society and youth organisations General public (18,000 young people) The media
Bolivia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2,742 adolescent girls and young women (15-24 years old) 2,353 adolescent boys and young men (15-24 years old) 365 fathers, mothers, local authorities, teachers, and facilitators
Ecuador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3667 female adolescents and youth (10-24 years old) 3191 male adolescents and youth (10-24 years old) 2666 fathers, mothers, caregivers and community volunteers

Benin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,913 adolescent girls and young women (10-24 years old) • 4,188 adolescent boys and young men (10-24 years old) • 2,555 women and 3,679 men (parents, teachers, PTAs, traditional leaders, local/national authorities, community protection mechanisms, state services and training centres)
Niger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11,500 adolescent girls and young women • 9,000 adolescent boys and young men (10-24 years old) • 365 women and 675 men (parents, teachers, community and religious leaders, CBCPMs and local councillors)
Senegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10,350 teenage girls and young women • 7,500 teenage boys and young men • 20 local authority representatives • 150 female and 100 male apprenticeship staff • 150 parents • 45 members of local protection committees
Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4,930 (58 per cent girls) adolescents (10-18 years old) • 1,000 young people (60 per cent girls) (18-24 years old) • 4,038 (64 per cent women) teachers, parents/guardians, community leaders, master-craftsmen, members of development committees and child protection committees, police gender desks officers.
Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5,838 ethnic minority adolescents and youth (11-24 years old) • 300 teachers • 40 TVET Center trainers • 120 local employers • 60 commune health workers • 900 parents

In the first year of the programme, a contract amendment was agreed with the donor containing the following adaptations:

- The project in Rwanda was removed from the DGD Programme.
- Project budgets for Belgium, Bolivia, Ecuador, Tanzania, and Senegal were reduced.
- The duration of the programmes in Bolivia, Ecuador, Senegal, and Tanzania were reduced from five to four years with the following delayed start dates compared to the initial start date of January 2022:
 - Bolivia — July 2022
 - Ecuador — June 2022
 - Senegal — May 2022
 - Tanzania — August 2022

Because of budget reductions, several changes were made to the programme in different countries.

- The number of partners was reduced from three to two in Ecuador and from two to one in Tanzania.
- The number of beneficiaries for Bolivia were reduced by 30 per cent.
- In Belgium, there was a reduction in the number of volunteers by 20 per cent and in the number of young people made aware of PI's campaigns by 28 per cent. The number of themes was reduced from 5 to 4 and PI did not directly provide training for other NGOs (but for young people from other organisations).⁹

⁹ Provided Documentation. Note - Plan International Belgique - Principales modifications du programme 2022-2026.

Further details of the projects in each country are displayed in the table below, including implementation locations, budget, target groups and beneficiaries, timeframe, and intended outcomes and results.

Table 2. Project overview per country

Country	Budget	Target Groups/ Beneficiaries	Timeframe	Programme Outcomes and Results
Belgium (across the country)	1,990,221.26 EUR	Adolescents and young people aged 10-24	Jan 2022 - Dec 2026	<p>Outcome: Belgian society and political leaders support the recommendations co-constructed with young Plan activists in favour of the rights of children and girls and gender equality within the framework of international solidarity and sustainable development goals.</p> <p>Result 1: Young activists acquire fundamental skills and are supported by volunteers and schools to become actors of change for the respect of the rights of children, girls and gender equality within the framework of international solidarity and SDG.</p> <p>Result 2: Political leaders organised civil society, and the educational world contribute to an environment favourable to the mobilization of young people, rights of children, girls and gender equality within the framework of international solidarity and the objectives of sustainable development.</p> <p>Result 3: Young people collectively make recommendations for political and social change for the rights of children, girls and gender equality within the framework of international solidarity and the SDGs.</p> <p>Outcome: Adolescents and young people, especially adolescent and young women (15-24 years old), benefit from vocational training and life skills, improving their opportunities for economic and social empowerment, with resilience, gender equality, and inclusion in environments free from discrimination, exploitation, and violence.</p> <p>Result 1: Adolescents and young people, especially women, with technical/technological and organisational skills to manage their own economic ventures and/or secure decent employment.</p> <p>Result 2: Adolescents and young people, especially women, with developed life skills and organisational capacities, make informed decisions to prevent unwanted pregnancies and influence the exercise of their rights and a life free from violence.</p> <p>Result 3: Adolescents and young people have a favourable environment, at different levels of the state and civil society, that is sensitized and promotes and implements norms, public policies, practices, and attitudes in favour of the social and economic rights of adolescents and young people.</p> <p>Result 4: The capacities of implementing partners are strengthened, and joint actions with Belgian NGOs are developed to enhance the economic and social empowerment of adolescents and young people.</p>
Bolivia (3 communes in La Paz and 3 communes in Santa Cruz de la Sierra)	1,110,235.87 EUR	Adolescents and young people aged 15-24	Jul 2022 - Jun 2026	<p>Outcome: Adolescents and young people, particularly young girls, improve their opportunity for social, cultural and economic empowerment, within more resilient surroundings and free from violence.</p>
Ecuador (9 communes in Los Rios and 8 communes in Bolivar)	1,122,559.81 EUR	Adolescents and young people aged 10-24	Jun 2022 - May 2026	<p>Outcome: Adolescents and young people, particularly young girls, improve their opportunity for social, cultural and economic empowerment, within more resilient surroundings and free from violence.</p>

Result 1: Adolescent girls and young women (ages 15-24) enhance their core capacities needed to act as effective drivers of change in alignment with human rights, gender equality, and inclusion.

Result 2: Family and community environments take on their role in protecting girls, boys, adolescents, and youth (ages 10-24), particularly against gender-based violence, early pregnancy, and early and forced unions.

Result 3: Adolescents and youth, especially women (ages 15-24), develop skills to exercise their economic autonomy, whether through paid employment or self-employment.

Result 4: Capacity-building of partners and fostering synergies/complementarities.

Outcome: Adolescents and young people, especially adolescent girls and young women (10 to 24 years), benefit from quality inclusive education and vocational training and become economically independent, in a protective and gender-equal environment.

Result 1: Adolescents and young people aged 10 to 24, particularly vulnerable adolescent girls and young women, benefit from educational alternatives in an accessible, protective and safe learning environment by education sector rights holders and the community and improve their results in national primary and secondary school examinations.

Result 2: Adolescents and young people aged 14 to 24, particularly adolescent girls and young women, have the technical and managerial skills and adequate production materials to obtain productive employment or create and develop an economic unit in a protective environment.

Result 3: Adolescents and young people aged 10 to 24, particularly adolescent girls and young women, understand protection risks, including gender-based violence (GBV) and domestic violence, and are supported by their parents and guardians, local, national authorities and community actors to enjoy their rights.

Result 4: NGOs or partner structures of the programme including Belgian NGOs/ACNG which have the necessary technical skills, and which work effectively in one or all of the areas in synergy or in complementarity with one or more partners of the programme.

Outcome: Adolescents and youth, especially adolescent girls and young women aged 10 to 24, are economically and socially empowered to thrive in a protective and gender-equal environment, and access sustainable economic opportunities

Result 1: Girls and young women (10-24 years) enjoy their rights and live in protective communities through capacity building for themselves and for community members and their parents

Benin (5 communes in Atlantique, 1 commune in Littoral, and 5 communes in Atacora)	2,000,165.45 EUR	Adolescents and young people aged 10-24	Jan 2022 - Dec 2026
Niger (50 villages in Dosso and Maradi)	1,702,733.99 EUR	Adolescents and young people aged 10-24	Jan 2022 - Dec 2026

Senegal (11 communes in Thiés and 16 communes in Kaolack)	1,427,577.09 EUR	Adolescents and young people aged 10-24	May 2022 - Apr 2026	Result 2: Adolescents, especially girls (12-18 years), have access to inclusive and quality education in an environment that empowers girls and engages boys to achieve gender equality.
				Result 3: Girls and young women (14-24) out of school are economically empowered and benefit from life skills that improve their social status.
				Result 4: The NGOs and partner structures of the program, including Belgian NGOs/ACNGs, have the necessary technical skills and work effectively in one or all of the areas in synergy or in complementarity with one or more program partners.
				Outcome: Adolescents and young people, especially adolescent girls and young women (10-24 years), thrive and are protected, including in school and professional environments, and access sustainable educational, professional and economic opportunities.
Tanzania (Ilemela, 2 districts in Nyamagana, and Mwanza)	1,124,200.63 EUR	Adolescents and young people aged 10-24	Aug 2022 - Jul 2026	Result 1: Adolescents and young people, especially adolescent girls and young women, benefit from a safe, inclusive and egalitarian school environment and are strengthened to identify and combat violence and GBV in schools.
				Result 2: Young people (15-24 years), especially young women, develop their skills and use them to engage in paid or self-employment.
				Result 3: Parents, young people and other community actors, authorities are committed to providing a protective environment for adolescent girls and young women and conducive to their emancipation and empowerment.
				Result 4: The capacities of implementing partners, and the synergies and complementarities are reinforced.
				Outcome: A society in which the rights of children, adolescents and young people are fully realized while respecting gender equality.
				Result 1: Marginalised adolescents and young people (10-18 years), particularly adolescent girls and young women, feel safe at school, learn in a conducive environment and receive additional support if needed.
				Result 2: Young people, especially young women with no or limited employability skills (15-24 years) build on and develop market driven skills to pursue decent work opportunities, wage employment or self-employment
				Result 3: Families and communities are engaged to end violence against adolescents and young people (10-24) and to ensure that survivors of violence receive quality age and gender responsive protection services.

<p>Outcome: Adolescents and young people, especially ethnic minority adolescent girls and young women (11-24), are economically and socially empowered to learn and thrive in a protective environment and live free from violence, including in school and professional environments.</p>			
<p>Vietnam (9 communes in Quảng Trị and 5 communes in Lai Chau)</p>	<p>1,620,744.90 EUR</p>	<p>Adolescents and young people aged 11-24</p>	<p>Jan 2022 - Dec 2026</p>
<p>Result 1: Ethnic minority adolescent girls and boys aged 11 to 18 benefit from an enabling educational environment and are empowered to make positive choices in a gender-equal and protective school environment.</p>			
<p>Result 2: Ethnic minority young people, especially young women aged 18-24, have agency to pursue decent work opportunities of their choosing, whether wage employment or self-employed.</p>			
<p>Result 3: Ethnic minority adolescent girls and young women aged 11 to 18 thrive in an enabling and protective environment and live free from violence, at home and in their communities.</p>			

2.2. Context Analysis

A context analysis is presented for each country within the DGD Programme to illustrate any contextual changes that occurred since the start of the programme that may have impacted the projects.

In **Belgium**, in 2022 at the onset of the project, COVID restrictions were lifted. These restrictions had, however, had a detrimental impact on youth and the relationship Plan International Belgium (PIB) had developed with them. The post-COVID context also impacted schools, with teachers' shortages, overload and constraints that reduced the space for long-term mobilisation of students in schools. At the political level, PIB maintained strong relations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – since 2020 held by socialist party Vooruit – and administration levels. Like those with youth, relations with Members of Parliament had, however, also been strained by COVID. The political scene, and subsequently PIB's collaboration with political decision-makers, was dominated by the upcoming 2024 legislative elections. The programme's ambition to implement a "new narrative", where Belgian youths' lived reality becomes an entry point for international solidarity advocacy work, was further impacted by a general context of political and social crises, leading to a national refocusing of societal debates and leaving less room for international solidarity. As a result, youth mobilisation, synergies between local programmes and the DGD programme, as well as collaboration with schools proved more complex than anticipated, leading to delays in the first year of the programme. On a programme implementation level, reallocation of staff responsibilities and staff turnover within Plan's PSC programme management destabilised the launch of the programme and further implementation, including relationship-building with youth and adult volunteers.¹⁰

Since 2022, **Bolivia** has faced numerous challenges, particularly due to economic stagnation and the severe impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. After Evo Morales' resignation in 2019, President Luis Arce's government focused on economic recovery, but the country continues to struggle with high inflation, fuel shortages, and unemployment rates. In addition, climate change has exacerbated existing problems, with the intensification of fires which have become a pressing concern. In October 2024, wildfires in Bolivia ravaged more than 10 million hectares of land, severely affecting agricultural communities that rely on farming for their livelihoods, however, the fires mainly occurred outside of project locations minimising the impact on the project. Droughts, also linked to climate change, have further strained these communities, with several participants considering shifting away from agriculture due to declining productivity. In addition, Bolivia is politically polarised, posing an important challenge for project's partners in the effort to establish a durable and neutral partnership with local authorities. In 2023 and 2024, notable protests and road blockages organised by supporters of Evo Morales disrupted various project activities aimed at community development. These blockades have significantly impacted project operations, as staff have been unable to reach targeted communities, particularly in Santa Cruz.

Since 2022, **Ecuador** has faced significant economic and security concerns, particularly in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic. In 2023, this led to early presidential elections, resulting in the victory of Daniel Noboa. During the initial months of the project, engagements were made with district coordinators from the Ministries of Public Health and Economic and Social Inclusion, presidents of Decentralized Autonomous Parochial Governments, and representatives of rights-guaranteeing institutions, such as the Council for the Protection of Rights (headed by the mayor) and Rights Protection Boards, which report to the Council representative. The change in government led to the appointment of new local authorities in the provinces of Los Rios and Bolivar. As a result, the project had to reestablish

¹⁰ Leçons apprises 'Lead for Rights' 2022, Plan International Belgium; Leçons apprises 'Lead for Rights' 2023, Plan International Belgium; Rapport narratif 2022, Programme DGD 2022-2026, Plan International Belgique

relationships with the new appointees. In January 2024, the activity of drug cartels intensified, leading to the breakout of an internal conflict between the government and active criminal groups. Since then, a state of exception has been declared across numerous high-risk areas of the country which justified the granting of exceptional powers to military and police forces. The state of exception has particularly impacted the province of Los Rios. The province has witnessed an increase in criminality coupled with the imposition of curfew and security measures that impacted the feasibility of the project activities leading to several rescheduling and cancellations. In addition, since September 2024, severe energy shortages, imposed by the government to face the escalation of an energy crisis, have caused widespread power outages across the country. During data collection in Los Ríos, power outages lasted eight to ten hours daily, coinciding with a 10:00 p.m. curfew. This drastically affects project participants and their communities' abilities to take part in the project as power cuts take place around working and studying hours.

Since 2022, several political, contextual, and security events have impacted the programme in **Benin**. On the political front, legislative elections in January 2023, which were conducted peacefully, resulted in the election of a record 28 women MPs, reflecting a positive shift in political gender representation. Important administrative shifts have also taken place, such as the restructuring of social protection centres (CPS) into Guichets Uniques de Protection Sociale (GUPS), and appointments of new departmental education directors, which required adjustments in stakeholder engagement. Contextually, project documents and partners have also highlighted economic challenges like rising food and fuel prices. These were partly driven by the COVID pandemic and global inflation, which strained household budgets, sometimes affecting community participation in project activities when participation was voluntary as well as increasing project budget costs. Additionally, flooding in areas like So-Ava disrupted school operations and access to project interventions. Security threats, including attacks by non-state armed groups in northern regions (e.g., Kerou and Tanguiéta), led to displaced populations and limited project outreach. The project was adapted to have a heightened focus on addressing vulnerabilities and maintaining community engagement under challenging circumstances.

Niger faces a situation of chronic vulnerability, particularly in its Dosso and Maradi regions. Around 4.3 million people require humanitarian assistance, with over 370,000 people internally displaced. Insecurity remains an issue, affecting children's education. As of June 2023, 958 primary schools remain closed, out of 17,977 countrywide, affecting the education of 81,510 children.¹¹ Insecurity is particularly a problem in the Maradi region, which records instances of violence, banditry, and kidnapping. However, this has not affected project operations as of 2023.¹² On July 26, 2023, a coup d'état took place in Niger, where the presidential guard removed and detained President Mohamed Bazoum.¹³ In response to the coup, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) announced sanctions against Niger. Eleven of the fifteen ECOWAS member states closed all borders with Niger and suspended financial transactions.¹⁴ The sanctions caused a considerable slowdown in banking operations and shortages of pharmaceutical products, imported food supplies, and electricity supplies. In February 2024, the ECOWAS lifted the sanctions on Niger, citing humanitarian reasons.¹⁵ The coup and resultant sanctions had a major impact on the activities of the project through the suspension of field trips and meetings/workshops, the closure of Plan International Niger (PIN) offices, and delays in the training of girls and young women in the sewing sector.¹⁶ In addition, the effects of climate change have strongly affected the livelihoods of rural communities, which is mainly dependent

¹¹ ECHO (2023). Niger - School closures, update (DG ECHO, Ministry of Education, Education cluster) (ECHO Daily Flash of 06 June 2023). Available at: [Link](#)

¹² Provided documentation. NER290_Rapport_Annuel_2023_PQ22-26_VF.

¹³ Mednick, S. (2023). Soldiers declare Niger general as head of state after he led a coup and detained the president. *AP*. Available at: [Link](#)

¹⁴ Provided documentation. NER290_Rapport_Annuel_2023_PQ22-26_VF.

¹⁵ Asadu, C. (2024). Soldiers declare Niger general as head of state after he led a coup and detained the president. *AP*. Available at: [Link](#)

¹⁶ Provided documentation. NER290_Rapport_Annuel_2023_PQ22-26_VF.

on agriculture and poorly diversified.¹⁷ Flooding and torrential rain in July 2023 destroyed over 12,000 homes across the country and crops and led to mass displacement.¹⁸ Maradi region was the most impacted by these events, with 48,027 people affected.¹⁹

Since 2022, **Senegal** underwent significant political developments, including presidential elections in March 2024 and legislative elections in November 2024 (during the mid-term evaluation), which consolidated Bassirou Diomaye Faye's power under a new administration. Despite some civil unrest during this time, Senegal remains a relatively stable country in a region increasingly marked by volatility and insecurity. Several changes in the institutional landscape have impacted project operations. The decentralisation of the Action Educative en Milieu Ouvert (AEMO) to departmental levels presented an opportunity for closer coordination in the child protection sector with other community-based child protection initiatives supported by Plan and the DGD programme. In addition, challenges arose from the non-functionality of some Communal Child Protection Committees (CCPEs), (and at the departmental level) which required revitalisation and capacity-building to enhance community-level child protection.

Although the economic outlook for **Tanzania** is generally positive, this has not translated into a reduction in poverty. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in increased numbers of people classified as "non-poor", living just above the poverty line, and has exacerbated issues of women's and girls' rights.²⁰ Furthermore, the El-Nino phenomenon caused heavy rains for two consecutive rainy seasons from October 2023 to March 2024. This resulted in a series of floods and landslides across the country.²¹ Social issues like child, early, and forced marriage and unions (CEFMU), early childbearing, and girls' limited access to education persist due to patriarchal social norms.²² GBV remains an issue in the country, especially in schools, with 46.2 per cent of women having experienced physical or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV).²³ The World Bank estimates that climate change risks could pose a threat to water access and economic development in Tanzania and potentially push 2.6 million people into poverty.²⁴ Despite development, youth in Tanzania lack knowledge of policies and laws and have limited access to formal employment opportunities.²⁵ Compared to other countries in the region, Tanzania enjoys relative political stability. In 2023, an outbreak of Marburg disease in the Kagera region slowed down project activities due to a ban on large gatherings.²⁶ The Kagera region is approximately 420 kilometres from Mwanza city. Otherwise, since 2022, no major political, economic, or social development has hindered or impacted programme operations.²⁷ There were also no changes at the partner level during the reporting period.

Vietnam has seen economic success following the 1986 Đổi Mới economic reforms, moving from one of the poorest countries in the world to a middle-income economy in a single generation.²⁸ Despite its growth and its efforts towards poverty reduction, poverty disproportionately affects ethnic minority households, with ethnic minorities making up 50 per cent of the country's poor and almost two-thirds of Vietnam's extreme poor population.²⁹ Traditional gender stereotypes pose a challenge to ethnic minority women and girls, who are expected to both participate in the labour force and in household work, and

¹⁷ World Bank Group (N.D.). Niger: Country Overview. Available at: [Link](#)

¹⁸ UN OCHA (2023). Niger: Flash update - Floods (as of September 11, 2023). Available at: [Link](#)

¹⁹ UN OCHA (2023). Niger: Flash update - Floods (as of September 11, 2023). Available at: [Link](#)

²⁰ Provided documentation. PLAN_ToC_TZN.

²¹ World Bank. (2024). Report on international economic relations and development cooperation. Available at: [Link](#).

²² Provided documentation.2. PLAN_ToC_TZN.

²³ UN Women (2016). Global Database on Violence Against Women. Available at: [Link](#)

²⁴ World Bank Group (2024). Tanzania Country Climate and Development Report. Available at: [Link](#)

²⁵ Provided documentation.2. PLAN_ToC_TZN.

²⁶ Provided documentation. TZA100284 - VEMA Annual Narrative report 2023_FINAL_07062024.

²⁷ Provided documentation. TZA100284_VEMA_Narrative report_Aug-Dec 2022_FINAL; Provided documentation. TZA100284 - VEMA Annual Narrative report 2023_FINAL_07062024.

²⁸ World Bank Group (N.D.). The World Bank in Viet Nam. Available at: [Link](#)

²⁹ Provided documentation. PLAN_ToC_VNM.

experience high rates of illiteracy.³⁰ Entrenched patriarchal norms contribute to CEFMU and teenage pregnancy.³¹ Around 30 per cent of young women from ethnic minority backgrounds between the ages of 15 and 19 are married in Vietnam.³² GBV is prevalent in private and public spaces, with 58 per cent women in Vietnam experience physical, emotional and sexual violence during their lifetime.³³ The new Decree 58/2022/ND-CP of the Vietnam government, implemented in 2022, pertained to registration and management of NGO activities in the country, and continued to affect the approval progress of the programme in Kontum. In response to this, Plan Vietnam, in discussion with the Belgium National Office (BNO) and in agreement with the donor (DGD), decided to change the project location from Kontum Province to Lai Chau Province, focusing on similar issues such as poverty, gender-based violence, child early forced marriage.³⁴ Partnerships with the Management and Sustainable Development Institute and the Kontum Women's Union were cancelled due to the prolonged approval process. Otherwise, no major political or policy developments were reported to have impacted the programme for the reporting period.

2.3. Evaluation Purpose and Objectives

Bodhi Global Analysis was contracted by PIB to design and deliver a Mid-Term Evaluation for the DGD Programme across all eight countries - Belgium, Bolivia, Ecuador, Benin, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania, and Vietnam. The purpose of the evaluation was to have a participatory learning process for Plan staff and partners who are part of the DGD Programme.

The evaluation began in May 2024 and ended in February 2025. It was divided into three phases: Inception (May-August 2024), Data Collection (October-December 2024), and Analysis and Reporting (December 2024-February 2025).

The mid-term evaluation results will be shared with PIB, PI COs, other stakeholders, and the partner organizations/networks of the programme. The recommendations of the evaluation are expected to serve as lessons that will be used for potential adaptations and new elements of the ongoing DGD programme for the remaining years of the ongoing framework and potentially the next frameworks. The key elements and recommendations of this mid-term evaluation will be shared with the main donor for the DGD Programme, the Belgian Development Cooperation.

The evaluation objectives were customised to each country to reflect the operational and contextual realities in each. At the global level, however, they included:

- Considering **the baseline, target and actual values of the programme's indicators halfway** through the programme, and explore why some of the targets have not been reached or have been exceeded through the triangulation of different data sources, analysis of changes in the context, and consultation with key stakeholders;
- Answering **one specific evaluation question related to one of the programme's AoGDs** and describe the progress status of the corresponding result;
- Assessing the **effectiveness of the methodologies and approaches** used to involve youth and enhance youth participation and leadership;
- Evaluating the **progress status of the gender transformative ambition** of the programme.

The evaluation team comprised:

³⁰ Thi H.D., Huong T.B.T., Tuyet M.N.T., Van H.M (2023). Socio-cultural Norms and Gender Equality of Ethnic Minorities in Vietnam. *J Racial Ethn Health Disparities*. Available at: [Link](#)

³¹ Thi H.D., Huong T.B.T., Tuyet M.N.T., Van H.M (2023). Socio-cultural Norms and Gender Equality of Ethnic Minorities in Vietnam. *J Racial Ethn Health Disparities*. Available at: [Link](#)

³² Provided documentation. PLAN_ToC_VNM.

³³ Provided documentation. PLAN_ToC_VNM.

³⁴ Provided documentation. VNM496_Narrative report_JanDec23_FINAL

- Charlotte Wiseman, Team Leader and Country Lead for Belgium and Vietnam. She was supported by national consultants in Belgium, Virginie Vuylsteke, and in Vietnam, Le Van Son who undertook data collection in French, Dutch and Vietnamese.
- Dr. Benedetta Zocchi, Country Lead for Bolivia and Ecuador. She was assisted in data collection by local research assistants, Zulma Carvaja Guzman in Bolivia and Nerea Rivera Aranaë in Ecuador.
- Mathilde Guntzberger, Country Lead for Benin, Niger and Senegal. She was supported by a team of national consultants who spoke the local languages, including Christelle Sgbedji and Raulinth Segbedji in Benin, Ibrahim Hamidou and Mounkaila Hadiza in Niger, and Dior Deng and Aminata Daff in Senegal. Laura Le Ray acted as Country Lead for Benin, Niger and Senegal for two weeks at the start of the evaluation and during the analysis and reporting phase when Mathilde Guntzberger left the evaluation team.
- Hillary Owinyo, Country Lead for Tanzania. He was assisted by Bodhi's research assistant, Narimaan Samir, in data collection.

2.4. Definitions of CAY Participation

The following table below lists dimensions of youth participation, as identified by Save the Children, in adherence to the CRC.

Table 3. Dimensions of youth participation

Requirement	Definition
Transparent and informative	There is enough information for adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) and boys about the project process (purpose, time and effort required to engage, and potential outcomes), who will be involved, and in what ways to make an informed decision about whether and how they will participate. ³⁵
Voluntary	The participation of AGYW and boys, or those with other gender identities, is informed and voluntary, rather than out of obligation, and efforts are made to ensure that they do not feel pressure from adults. ³⁶
Respectful	AGYWs' and boys' gender commitments (to study, work, play, etc.) are respected and taken into consideration to inform design and timing of activities. ³⁷
Relevant	There is safe space, and opportunities are provided to highlight, analyse, and plan ways to address the issues they themselves identify as relevant and important. ³⁸
Child-friendly	AGYW and boys are encouraged to work together in peer groups to support one another and take forward their own ideas and initiatives and to explore issues using their own preferred forms of communication and child-friendly tools. ³⁹
Inclusive	AGYW, boys, and young men of different genders, ages, abilities, and backgrounds have opportunities to participate. ⁴⁰
Supported by training	AGYW have opportunities to prioritise and access their training needs and there are plans and budgets to support capacity-strengthening of AGYW, boys, and young men on child and women's rights, participation, gender equality, inclusion, and other topics identified by them. ⁴¹

³⁵ Save the Children (2021). *The Nine Basic Requirements For Meaningful and Ethical Children's Participation*, p.3. Available at: [Link](#)

³⁶ Ibid, p.4.

³⁷ Ibid, p.5

³⁸ Ibid, p.6

³⁹ Ibid, p.7

⁴⁰ Ibid, p.8

⁴¹ Save the Children (2021). *The Nine Basic Requirements For Meaningful and Ethical Children's Participation*, p.9-10. Available at: [Link](#)

Safe and sensitive to risk	Child safeguarding policies and codes of conduct applied, risks associated with AGYWs' and/or boys' participation have been identified, and efforts have been taken to minimize them in collaboration with adolescents and youth. ⁴²
Accountable	The project has an adolescent-friendly feedback mechanism and AGYW and boys know the purpose of, how to access, and how to use it. ⁴³

3. Feminist and Participatory Approach

This evaluation used a feminist and participatory approach to conduct an evaluation, but is not a fully feminist evaluation as, due to budget constraints, certain elements essential to a feminist evaluation, such as addressing unequal power imbalances and capacity strengthening to empower marginalized groups, could not be fully realized. Despite these limitations, the evaluation remained committed to participatory approaches and to the participation of children, youth, and adolescents (CAY).

Feminist approach

The evaluation conformed to the following feminist principles derived from the PI Feminist Leadership Principles:

1. **Self-awareness and courage:** the PI and Bodhi teams reflected on the various strengths and areas for development of each stakeholder and committed to learning from and delivering the evaluation in partnership with COs.
2. **Transparency and accountability:** Evaluation questions were co-created between Bodhi and PI COs. In addition, several stakeholders, including CAY, implementing partners and CO, have been invited to participate in technical and stakeholder consultations to review and input in the evaluation questions and data collection tools.
3. **Diversity:** Bodhi recognised the benefits of diversity by ensuring that the evaluation team worked closely with the COs and engaged consultants based in the implementing countries. This ensured that the evaluation process is reflective of diverse contextual realities and inclusive.
4. **Zero tolerance to discrimination and sexual harassment:** Both PI and Bodhi have a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination and sexual harassment. Several safeguards were put in place to ensure neither of these takes place during this evaluation.
5. **Addressing bias:** During this evaluation both PI and Bodhi have committed to recognising their unconscious bias and keeping it in check. Bodhi has included several layers of quality assurance and undertook data collection in pairs to ensure objectivity.
6. **Feedback:** PI and Bodhi have created several platforms for feedback during this evaluation. COs were encouraged to provide feedback on Bodhi's performance. Programme participants were encouraged to provide feedback on the programme, PI staff and partners.

Participation of CAY

PI CO staff, project partners and participants, including CAY, are the key stakeholders that took part in and indirectly benefited from this evaluation. It was important that these stakeholders actively participated to ensure that PI and Bodhi meet their commitments to using feminist and participatory principles in conducting this evaluation. Participatory evaluation approaches were embedded throughout the evaluation, thus contributing to enhancing CAY participation using the following strategies:

⁴² Ibid, p.10.

⁴³ Ibid, p.11.

- Ensuring the evaluation used CAY-friendly evaluation methods to make sure they were adapted to their age and diverse abilities (through interactive focus group discussions, games and vignettes)
- Adapting data collection tools to context and respondent profiles by validating tool content with frontline facilitators and partners
- Developing evaluation tools that aim at capturing some of the gender transformative change happening at the core of the program approach and strategies, by documenting, for instance, programme contribution to key practical and strategic needs for women, girls and other groups excluded from mainstream services, documenting programme potential to contribute to gender transformation through women socio-economic empowerment, participation and leadership and protection.
- Developing evaluation strategies that aim at creating safe and inclusive spaces for women and girls to raise their voice and contribute to programme re-alignment (through women and girls only spaces, question guides aiming at minimizing harm and re-traumatization)
- Inviting CAY to participate in the Bridge Workshop so they could share their experiences in a safe place and input directly into the planning and design process for the second half of the programme.

4. Evaluation Methodology

During the Inception Phase, Bodhi, in collaboration with the BNO and country offices (COs), undertook a series of methodological framing sessions. These sessions were in the form of Inception Meetings and Stakeholder Consultations. The Inception Meeting with the BNO and COs ensured the Bodhi and PI team's expectations aligned and started the collaboration in an agreed direction with established ways of working. Stakeholder Consultations then ensured that CO, project staff and selected stakeholders (partners and project participants) were introduced to the evaluation and participated in the selection of evaluation questions and the formation of sub-questions. These consultations also provided an opportunity to review and provide iterative feedback on the sample, evaluation participants, data collection methods and tools as well as safeguarding risk assessments and logistical practicalities of data collection in each country.

Following these consultations, Bodhi employed a mixed-methods approach (using both qualitative and quantitative methods) to gather information from primary and secondary data sources to inform the evaluation of the DGD programme. Specifically, data was collected via (1) a review of programme documents and quantitative data from the Midline Survey; (2) focus group discussions (FGDs); (3) key informant interviews (KIIs); and (4) a Bridge Workshop in each country. All data collection was conducted with the aim of providing actionable recommendations and examples of best practice for the programme teams at both the global and country levels.

Data collection was followed by a series of meetings:

- **Debrief meetings** with the project teams and Country Directors immediately after data collection to share reflections, progress, preliminary findings and next steps.
- **Validation meetings** with project teams and partners to discuss and triangulate the draft findings and recommendations from the draft evaluation report and provide feedback for the final evaluation report. This meeting will ensure that analytical outputs are aligned with stakeholders' experiences and perceptions.
- **Restitution meetings** with project teams and participants to share a final version of the findings and recommendations and give thanks for everyone's participation.

4.1. Evaluation Criteria

The following Evaluation Matrix and research questions formed the basis of our approach at the global level. Each country customised the research questions and developed sub-questions which respond to and reflect the contextual, operational and programmatic environments specific to their interventions. A detailed version of the Evaluation Matrix at a global and country level, including data sources that fed into each evaluation, is available in [Annex 3](#). The framework document has a tab for each country where sub-evaluation questions can be found which are customised to each country.

Table 4: Global Level Evaluation Matrix and Research Questions

Research Questions	Country							
	Belgium	Bolivia	Ecuador	Benin	Niger	Senegal	Tanzania	Vietnam
<i>Progress towards logframe indicators</i>								
To what extent have programme logframe targets been met, exceeded or not met and why?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
What are the possible reasons for variance in target achievement?								
<i>Examine how each country is operating with respect to the Plan International Areas of Global Distinctiveness (AoGD)</i>								
Protection from Violence: To what extent have the PI Child protection and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) programme models been integrated in the programme, at all levels?			X				X	X
SOYEE: To what extent have the SOYEE participants developed since the start of their training increased knowledge and skills (life, entrepreneurial/professional, vocational)? Are there any gender-gaps in these results? How are these gaps explained?		X		X	X	X		
<i>Assess the approaches and methodologies used to target youth and enhance youth participation and leadership</i>								
Participation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
What motivates CAY to take part in programme activities (with a differentiated analysis by gender and age)? How can the programme attract CAY to take part in our project activities more efficiently (with a differentiated analysis by gender and age)?								
In what ways are CAY invited to participate in the design, planning, implementation, and evaluation of the programme (with a differentiated analysis by gender and age)? To what extent is their participation meaningful (with a differentiated analysis by gender and age)?								
How do the programme teams collect information on how CAY participation (with a differentiated analysis by gender and age)?								
How can we be more inclusive in the recruitment of youngsters?								

Satisfaction	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
What is the CAY's satisfaction level (comparative cross-country, with a gender, age, and disability disaggregation)?								
What is the influence of the programme activities implemented, and resources mobilised on (i) youth self-esteem, (ii) youth's mobilisation and interest, (iii) youth's involvement (as leader or participant) in community-based activities? (comparative with a gender, age, and disability disaggregation)								
How and to what extent have the youth empowerment approaches or methodologies contributed to the advocacy power, autonomy and sustainability of youth led organisations in the region/country?								
Feedback	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Are the feedback mechanisms adapted to CAY in all their diversity? To what extent have they been used by CAY since the start of the programme? What is the nature of the feedback received from the CAY? To what extent is it recorded? What is done with the feedback?								
International Solidarity	X		X	X	X	X		
How can the programme foster exchange between CAY in Belgium and in other countries?								
Evaluate the progress status of the gender transformative ambition								
How are the six key elements of gender transformative programming and influencing being implemented in the programme? What are the main learnings so far?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
How efficient is the programme component of youth economic empowerment in systematically addressing the crosscutting perspectives of gender and inclusion? What can be strengthened moving forward?		X		X	X	X		
What has the role of male and female caregivers been regarding young women's participation in Youth Saving and Lending Associations (YSLAs) and youth economic empowerment activities? How has it evolved/remained the same?		X	X	X	X	X	X	

Do the various stakeholders describe training, capacity-strengthening sessions, concrete activities related to gender equality and inclusion as beneficial? In which ways and why?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
In what ways boys and men members of Community-Based Child Protection Mechanisms (CBCPMs) demonstrate positive influence on gender equality and protection within the communities? To what extent are they allied to young women and girls in the fight against violence?		X	X	X	X	X	X	X

4.2. Sampling Strategy

Key informants were purposefully sampled, based on their position and role vis-à-vis the projects and the participants. The FGD members were selected according to their profile, availability and willingness to participate, and randomly from lists of programme participants. Partner organizations and PI staff were informed in advance of the data collection and identified persons who were willing to participate and were available.

4.2.1. Data collection locations

Data collection took place in one location in all programme countries, except for Belgium, where it took place across the country. The following locations were chosen with justification added below.

- In Bolivia, the department of Santa Cruz de la Sierra was selected because Fundación Trabajo Impresa, the implementing partner, has been involved in delivering project activities there for an extended period.
- In Ecuador, it was Los Ríos province, because it was where both implementing partners, Fundación CODESPA and Fundación de Waal, were actively involved in delivering project activities.
- In Benin, the Atlantique Department was chosen taking into consideration accessibility and evaluation resources.
- In Niger, data collection took place in the Dosso Region due to its programme advancement in SOYEE, given that the evaluation focus is on the SOYEE AoGD.
- In Senegal, it took place in Thiés Region, as the SOYEE AoGD was the most advanced programme in that area.
- The Mwanza Region was selected in Tanzania as all project activities were located within the Mwanza.
- In Vietnam, the Huong Hoa District in Quang Tri Province was chosen for data collection as activities were only established in Quang Tri, despite there being two project locations

4.3. Data Collection Methods

Using a mixed-methods approach, information was gathered from primary and secondary data sources to inform the evaluation of the DGD programme. Primary data collection consisted of participatory FGDs and KIIs and a Bridge Workshop in each country with PI CO project staff, partners and CAY.⁴⁴ Secondary data, from a comprehensive programme and project document review was also used to complement the primary data. All data collection was conducted with the aim of providing actionable recommendations and examples of best practice for the programme teams at both the global and country levels.

Document Review

An initial document review was conducted during the inception phase to inform CO and Stakeholder Consultations and formulate appropriate research questions and sub-questions for data collection. Documents reviewed included the project proposal, country-specific ToCs, narrative reports and annual reports, and resources related to gender and inclusion, CAY participation, safeguarding, Plan International's PfV AoGD and M&E. The full list of documents available has been [annexed](#) to this report.

⁴⁴ Not all countries included partners and CAY. The exact breakdown of participants can be found in Annex 4.

Key Informant Interviews

KIIs were conducted using semi-structured, modular interview guides in which interviewers developed conversations with stakeholders, probing on areas of knowledge and allowing space for participant feedback and discussion. Domains of inquiry were similar to FGD guides, allowing for triangulation of findings. A total of 70 KIIs were conducted across the eight project countries, with project and partner staff; teachers; parents and caregivers; government partners, CAY leaders.

In some contexts, KIIs were conducted as group interviews. This was done to offer flexibility to organisations involved in the evaluation when choosing who the main participants in the evaluation should be. They also allowed the evaluation to address power dynamics and gaps in institutional knowledge. They helped to mitigate power dynamics by distributing influence among participants, fostering a more balanced representation of views. They enabled the pooling of complementary knowledge from various informants, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of evaluation questions. The group KIIs were also time-efficient, allowing simultaneous data collection and reducing redundancy. This was particularly important due to the limited sample size of this qualitative study.

Focus Group Discussions

FGDs were used to gain an in-depth understanding of a complex issue where several representatives of the same group may have different experiences and perspectives. A total of 58 FGDs were conducted, with CAY, parents and caregivers and other community stakeholders.

Where appropriate and necessary, FGDs were disaggregated by gender and by age group. This disaggregation allowed the team to gather quality data and ensure the process was respectful and empowering for the following reasons:

- patriarchal structures and strong gender norms prevalent, in many contexts, restrict women's and girls' ability to speak openly in front of men and boys, especially on sensitive topics like GBV and gender inequalities that were explored in this evaluation. Women and girls may feel intimidated or unable to contradict men in mixed-gender settings;
- different age groups, such as adolescent girls, may not feel comfortable speaking in front of older women;
- each subgroup would provide data that better reflects a diversity of opinions and experiences; and
- the questions and facilitation approaches needed to be tailored to the specific capacities of each age group.

FGDs were engaging and CAY-friendly to maximise the quality of the input provided in these sessions. In each country, Bodhi deployed qualitative research teams with the right facilitation and ethical knowledge and skills to conduct quality research involving CAY. This involved creating a safe space for them, including young women and girls so that they felt safe to participate and contribute in a meaningful way. FGDs were conducted in the primary language of participants, FGDs tools were translated and facilitators mobilised child- and youth-friendly engagement techniques (use of relevant language, games and vignettes) to ensure relevance to the needs and lived experiences of CAY. The FGD guides are annexed to this report.

Bridge Workshop

Bodhi facilitated a 1-day Bridge Exercise workshop in each country with the PI CO and a combination of project partners and CAY. The purpose of this workshop was for participants to collectively reflect on the progress made and achievements of their projects at the midline. It also enabled the identification of areas in which the projects could improve and allowed for the creation of a short-term action plan to bring them back on track.

The objectives of this workshop were twofold:

1. To assess progress made at the midline in terms of indicator achievement and priority learning areas for Plan and partners
2. To facilitate a discussion on suggested areas for improvement in the gender and inclusion approach deployed so far under the program.

To achieve these objectives, the workshop was divided into a morning 'Logframe Target Session' and an afternoon 'Gender and Inclusion Session'.

4.3.1. Achieved sample size

The following sample sizes were achieved during the data collection. A comprehensive list including disaggregation by age and gender is included as an [annex](#).

Table 5. Sample sizes

Method	Total Sample Size	Belgium	Bolivia	Ecuador	Benin	Niger	Senegal	Tanzania	Vietnam
KII	70	8	8	9	5	8	14	10	8
FGD	58	6	7	8	9	6	8	8	6
Workshop	8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

4.4. Data Analysis

The evaluation matrix has guided the data analysis. Analysis took place throughout the data collection process, with regular daily and weekly debriefs within the Bodhi team to identify emerging themes and trends. Following data transcription and cleaning, the evaluation team proceeded to analysis. Data was analysed through an intersectional lens, which accounts for relevant gender, demographic and socioeconomic factors. Data disaggregation was used in the analysis and displayed through-out the report to show differences of experience particular to beneficiary and stakeholder groups. Information from the different data sources was triangulated throughout the process to verify the consistency of findings (or when they differ and why) across different participant types and locations.

Analysis was completed at both the global and country levels. This allowed for a deep reflection and specific recommendations at the country level, while ensuring they are applicable for cross-country and cross-programme learning.

Utilising NVivo and manual coding, Bodhi coded qualitative interviews against a predefined schema which maps to the evaluation matrix. Emerging patterns, themes and relationships were identified and labelled, allowing repeated patterns to emerge from the texts. Data was triangulated and negative or deviate cases within a typical dataset were analysed to enhance reliability and validity. Any noted differences in response patterns by participants were analysed and prompted a discussion with COs and partners during validation to explore reasons behind these differences.

4.5. Quality Assurance and Data Processing

Bodhi implemented a multi-layered quality control system at the organisational and project level. This system was designed to ensure that participants' data was protected and secure throughout the research lifecycle. The system was also designed to ensure that data collection was done in a robust manner, yielding the highest possible quality of outputs.

Bodhi ensured strict adherence to project governance and management of the project. To ensure quality control, we:

- **Maintained Detailed Documentation:** Recorded the entire research process, including data collection methods, analysis procedures, and meeting minutes in apposite folders within our Google Drive to ensure transparency.
- **Documented Decisions:** Written notes of all decisions and follow up with a confirmation email to ensure accurate records of agreed steps were kept.
- **Conducted Internal Reviews:** Undertook a series of internal reviews of drafts to check for content flow, accuracy, and consistency.
- **Conducted External Proofreading:** Had the final draft proofread by an external researcher within Bodhi's team to ensure readability and coherence.

4.6. Research Ethics

The management and research approaches were grounded in Bodhi's core values of intellectual rigour, research objectivity and integrity as well as PI's Framework for Ethical MER. We adhered to neutrality, honesty in process, approach and conduct, multicultural values and professionalism.

Following both PI and national government requirements, approval for this research was sought both internally and externally to PI.

- Internally, Bodhi applied for ethics approval through the **Ethics Review Team (ERT)** as it met the criteria set out in the How To Apply For Ethics Approval From PI's Ethics Review Team (ERT) guidance. This involved working with the Country and National Offices to jointly compile all documentation needed for the application, including Ethics Application Form, evaluation terms of reference, the Inception Report, and Safeguarding Risk Assessments, Information Sheets and Consent Forms, and data collection tools for each country.
- Externally, Bodhi applied to the Ministry of Public Health, Population and Social Affairs and the National Ethics Committee for Health Research in Niger and the National Bureau of Statistics in Tanzania for the relevant research approvals. It was agreed that current PI approvals in other countries would include any data collection done as part of this evaluation.

Informed consent was obtained from adult participants and from parents/caregivers of participants under the age of 18 either in written or verbal form. Either written or verbal assent was obtained from participants under the age of 18. Participants were adequately informed about the benefits and risks of participating in the research process.

4.7. Safeguarding

Bodhi ensured that all information provided was confidential. No sensitive personal data was collected, and the names of participants do not appear in this report.

- All Plan and Bodhi staff have undergone PSEA and safeguarding training, briefing, and have signed up to the Safeguarding Policy.
- Consent and information sheets were shared with young people and their parents and caregivers to prevent misunderstandings around any perceived benefits of participation.
- Participants will be given a list of referral services and reporting mechanisms from which they may seek support for any distressing issues that might be raised as part of the discussions.
- All notes and feedback received will be kept anonymous to protect the identity of the participant.

- Recordings will not be taken to protect the identity of the participant and allow for free and open discussions.
- Data collection times and locations will be pre-agreed with the participants to minimise negative impacts such as missing work or school.
- All questions have been designed by trained and experienced researchers (with experience of working with CAY), they will go through a rigorous ethics procedure. They have been designed in accordance with best practice for research with CAY and Plan International policies.

There were multiple safeguards in place for this evaluation to ensure that PI and Bodhi uphold their duty to protect everyone involved from harm as a result of the evaluation. These included strict Safeguarding Policies, Guidelines, Checklists and Codes of Conduct; Safeguarding Risk Assessments; training for the whole team; and strict protections for data collection including the recruitment of data collectors.

This work was undertaken strictly in line with Bodhi Safeguarding principles which are drawn from the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) Principles and the [UKRIO Code of Practice for Research](#), as well as the PI **Safeguarding in MER guidelines** and the **Plan International Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People**.

Additional safeguards were put in place regarding the evaluation of the sensitive SGBV/child protection topic areas. We understand that any research in this area can cause harm to the physical, psychological and social wellbeing of everyone involved. This may include re-traumatization of programme users and secondary trauma for staff and partners. We therefore designed the study to be implemented according to the [WHO Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Researching, Documenting and Monitoring Sexual Violence in Emergencies](#) and embedded these principles into our own evaluation praxis.

The safety and security of all those involved in data collection were of utmost importance. As part of the ethical review process, **Safeguarding Risk Assessments** were conducted in each country and updated at the end of data collection to understand the risks of conducting this evaluation on respondents and evaluators. The risks identified were mitigated and in extreme cases avoided. Each PI CO has fed into the assessments and provided support on an ongoing basis from their Safeguarding Focal Point. The assessments are annexed to this report.

All staff and consultants will receive **PI Safeguarding Training online and a briefing in-person from the PI CO Safeguarding Focal Point**. This will ensure that safeguarding incidents are prevented in the first instance and that the team knows how to act if they witness a safeguarding incident, or one is disclosed to them.

The entire Bodhi team underwent **background and police checks** where possible as part of its vetting process. They have experience working with children and on sensitive topics such as SGBV/child protection and they will be provided with the necessary information to ensure that respondents receive **referrals to available support services as needed**. Bodhi has also ensured that there is a **gender balanced team**, with at least one member of the same gender as participants to account for any unintentional power dynamics and ensure that participants feel safe and comfortable to share their experiences.

4.8. Limitations

All limitations have been documented together with their mitigation measures in Table 6. Most limitations were managed with mitigation measures agreed between the Bodhi Team, PI BNO and PI COs. Where limitations were not able to be overcome, they have been noted through-out the report.

The most significant limitation was the small sample size which meant that only one project location could be sampled for the primary data which limits the generalisability of the results to other project locations.

Table 6. Gaps and Limitations

Gaps/Limitations	Description	Mitigating Measures
Security	At the time of data collection in Ecuador , the province of Los Ríos was under a 10:00 PM curfew due to the high prevalence of criminal activity. Additionally, daily power outages made nighttime activities unsafe.	Travel arrangements were coordinated using Plan-approved providers, ensuring secure and efficient transit for both the evaluation team and participants. To minimize travel, data collection sessions with participants were strategically scheduled over two days in the same location. The team operated exclusively during daylight hours, concluding work each day by 5:00 PM and returning to the hotel to ensure safety.
	In all countries, only one area of implementation was chosen due to the limited budget available for the evaluation. This limited the sample size and the validity of the results across the different project locations. In Belgium , the project did not have the contact details of many of the participants, this reduced the number of participants that could be reached for FGDs. This combined with low response rates for specific FGDs from participants the evaluation team did have access to, meant that some FGDs had limited numbers of participants. Further, the activity participants were also relatively few, which limited the size of the sample. In Ecuador , four out of 20 adult participants appeared on both FGDs with parents and FGDs with volunteers as they could speak about the programme in both capacities. In Bolivia , numerous scheduling issues and no-show resulted in low participation of boys and parents. The final FGD sample includes seven boys and three parents (all women).	When possible, the bridge workshops involved partners and participants from all locations, either in person (Bolivia, Ecuador) or using online communication (Senegal) for the final workshop, allowing participation from programme implementers from all project areas. In Belgium , additional project documentation was consulted to gain a more accurate picture of project implementation. In Ecuador , the evaluation team conducted a 1-day visit to Simiatug to meet the Runakunapa organisation. Questions in the two FGDs were adapted to reflect the different capacities of participants. In Bolivia , an additional FGD was undertaken with three project participants from the location of La Paz who came to Santa Cruz for the Bridge Workshop. One additional KII with a young male participant was conducted to increase the boy's sample.
GTM data and documentation	In some countries (Benin, Senegal), the bridge workshop didn't cover the Gender Transformative Marker (GTM) session as in some contexts, an updated GTM had been done recently (Benin). In Ecuador, the GTM-Marker has only been completed at design stage, but not at implementation stage, limiting data-informed comparative analysis between	Where data was not available, priority was given to team brainstorming around strategies needed to bring the programme on track to achieving key outcome indicators (Senegal, Ecuador). Priority was given to safeguarding measures. In Ecuador, the GTM session was accelerated so that CAY could leave at 5.30. In Bolivia, the GTM session was anticipated to the morning so that CAY had time to go back home in the daylight

Gaps/Limitations	Description	Mitigating Measures
	<p>design and midline. Each of the six GTM areas has been discussed in detail in the Bridge Workshop.</p> <p>In Ecuador, the gender and inclusion advisor joined virtually but was only partially available due to connectivity issues caused by power outages.</p> <p>Some countries did involve youth participation (Senegal, Ecuador, Bolivia) and some others not (Benin, Niger, Belgium) due to ethical considerations related to the time and resources needed to involve young people in a safe and meaningful way.</p> <p>In Francophone countries, the analysis of M&E indicators was based on the mid-term quantitative report that was shared with each team lead before data collection and before the final workshop. However, these did not include all indicators; for francophone countries for instance where SOYEE had been chosen as a key theme for the qualitative evaluation, SOYEE indicators had not been collected which did not allow us to triangulate qualitative and quantitative data. Instead, data was triangulated by type of participant (e.g. youth, parents, tutors and teachers).</p> <p>In Bolivia and Senegal, the reliability of the quantitative study was questioned due to data collection challenges, including widespread road blockades. The sample was not representative, as it included both CAY participating in the project and others attending partner or PIB-based activities.</p>	
Lack of data		Qualitative data was collected for the purpose of this report, however, due to the low sample size the generalisability of the data cannot be verified.
Delays to receiving the Quantitative Mid-term Reports	To make the best use of the intended sequencing of the quantitative and qualitative midline evaluations, the Quantitative Midline studies should have been completed before the qualitative studies. This would have allowed the qualitative research team to design the data collection tools to integrate specific questions to probe any under or over achievements against the indicators.	To account for the delays in quantitative reports, the Bodhi team integrated general questions about indicator achievements into the KIIs and held a specific session within the Bridge Workshop on indicator achievements to explore the context in which progress had been made in discussion with the project team and partners (in some cases).
Lack of documentation	In Belgium, there was a lack of available data at the start of the evaluation. The 2022 Narrative Report was in draft form and no 2023 Narrative Report was available.	The evaluation team Belgium Country Lead had several discussions with the PIB team to understand the progress of the project and included specific questions on progress within the KIIs.

5. Findings and Conclusions

This section is presented at the global and country levels. Each sub-section is presented according to the evaluation objectives: assessment of progress against the logframe, of progress on and alignment of the AoGDs, of the effectiveness of youth participation and leadership methods, and of the gender transformative ambition of the programme. Conclusions are similarly presented at the global and country levels.

5.1. Global Analysis

5.1.1. Progress Against Logframe Targets

Rem. by PI Belgium: The evaluators and authors of this report have calculated the # & % Achieved Outcome and # & % Achieved Result including in the denominator indicators that were not measured at midterm. More information in the table below.

This section includes a programme level analysis of progress against logframe targets. It highlights notable trends, achievements and challenges experienced by multiple countries. Both outcome and result level indicators were analysed as part of this evaluation. Indicators under Result Area 4 were not included within this evaluation.

Generally, the DGD programme is progressing well against its logframe targets across countries as detailed in the table below. The programme has 41 Outcome level indicators and 112 Result level indicators totalling to 153 averaging around 20 indicators per project (with the expectation of Belgium which has far fewer indicators). At outcome level the programme has achieved around 41 per cent of indicators. At result level the programme has achieved around 62 per cent of indicators.

Table 7: Achievement of logframe indicators by country

Country/ Project	# Outcome Indicators	# & % Achieved Outcome	# Result Indicators	# & % Achieved Result	Total % Achieved
Belgium	3	1/3 - 33%	10	7/10 - 70%	61.54%
Bolivia	5	2/5 - 40%	16	9/16 - 56%	52.38%
<i>Bolivia, without the indicators not measured⁴⁵</i>	5	2/5 – 40%	14	8/14 - 57.14%	10/19 - 52.6%
Ecuador	5	5/5 - 100%	12	11/12 - 92%	94.12%
<i>Ecuador, without the indicators not measured</i>	3	3/3 – 100%	8	7/8 – 87.5%	10/11 – 90.9%

⁴⁵ Addition by PI Belgium in June 2025 – without the indicators not measured at the time of the evaluation (R4 Indicators were measured 6 months later).

Benin	7	1/7 - 7%	14	5/14 - 36%	28.57%
<i>Benin, without the indicators not measured</i>	2	1/2 - 50%	8	6/8 – 75%	7/10 – 70%
Niger	6	6/6 - 100%	14	8/14 - 57%	70%
<i>Niger, without the indicators not measured</i>	6	4/6 – 66.67%	11	7/11 – 63.64%	11/17 – 64.7%
Senegal	5	2/5 - 40%	16	9/16 - 56%	52.38%
<i>Senegal, without the indicators not measured</i>	5	2/5 – 40%	13	8/13 – 61.5%	10/18 – 55.6%
Tanzania	5	0/5 - 0%	15	8/15 - 53%	40%
<i>Tanzania, without the indicators not measured</i>	2	0/2 – 0%	11	8/11 – 72.7%	8/13 – 61.5%
Vietnam	5	1/5 - 20%	15	11/15 - 73%	60%
<i>Vietnam, without the indicators not measured</i>	4	1/4 – 25%	12	10/12 – 83.3%	11/16 - 68.75%

Notable achievements at outcome level include the projects implemented in Ecuador and Niger which have both achieved 100 per cent of their outcome level targets and should be commended for this achievement. The projects in Bolivia and Senegal have achieved 40 per cent of their outcome level indicators and the project in Belgium has achieved 33. Projects in Vietnam, Benin and Tanzania have achieved 20, 7 and 0 per cent respectively. It should be noted, however, that some indicators at this level were not measured at this stage and may distort achievement levels.

Notable achievements at result level include the projects implemented in Ecuador (92 per cent achieved), Vietnam (73 per cent achieved) and Belgium (70 per cent achieved). Again, these projects should be commended on their achievements. Projects implemented in Niger achieved 57 per cent, Bolivia and Senegal both achieved 56 per cent and Tanzania achieved 53 per cent of result indicator targets at mid-term. Benin is recorded as achieving 36 per cent of indicator targets. This is due to large numbers of indicators not being measured at mid-term. Details on specific indicators achieved per country are listed in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Analysis of logframe indicators by country

Country	Indicator Achievements	Analysis
Belgium	1/3 Outcome indicators were met. The following indicators were not met:	While only one outcome indicator was achieved, there was solid progress against the two unmet indicators.

Country	Indicator Achievements	Analysis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indicator 2 - Indicator 3 <p>7/10 Result indicators were met at mid-term. The following indicators were not met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indicator 5 - Indicator 6 - Indicator 10 	<p>Indicator 3 was delayed due to political elections and therefore should show greater progress in the second half of the project and is therefore not a cause for concern.</p> <p>The result indicator achievement matches well with activity progress across the project. The country level analysis showed that more attention needs to be directed to the Gender School approach of recruiting the schools and the approach of mandatory inclusion of students in sessions. Further attention is also required on the Educational Volunteers activity, specifically on what happens to them after they are trained.</p>
Bolivia	<p>2/5 Outcome indicators were met. The following indicators were not met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SOYI1.1.2 - LDI 1 - LDI 2 <p>9/16 Result Indicators were met. The following indicators were not met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SOYO1.1.2 - SOYO1.1.3 - SOYO1.1.1 - LDI 3.2 (# economic opportunities generated by youth, especially women) - LDI 3.3. (strengthened community protection mechanisms) 	<p>During the Bridge Workshop, the reliability of the quantitative study was questioned due to data collection challenges, including widespread road blockades. The sample was not representative, as it included both CAY participating in the project and others attending partner or PIB-based activities.</p> <p>SOYEE indicators measuring employability were miscalculated, as data collection occurred when employability training processes were just beginning. It was noted that this likely caused confusion among participants when filling out the tool. This explains the unmet indicators at both outcome and result level.</p> <p>Additionally, the seed capital support scheme mentioned was noted to stem from other PIB-implemented projects, rather than public policy.</p>
Ecuador	<p>5/5 Outcome indicators were met.</p> <p>11/12 Outcome indicators met at mid-term. One indicator was miscalculated and therefore counted as not met at this stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LEAO1.3.2 <p>Disaggregated by location, all indicators were met in Los Rios. Three indicators were not met in Bolivar.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LEAO1.1.1 - PROO1.4.1 - PROO3.3.1 	<p>The reasons for underachievement in Bolivar were a combination of operational, given the difficult mountainous region and cultural environment. The team underestimated the difficulty of operating in such an environment and therefore the mid-term targets may have been too ambitious.</p>
Benin	<p>1/7 Outcome indicator was met. LDI 1 was not met. The remaining five indicators were not measured at mid-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LDI 3 - LDI 4 - LDI 5 - SOYI1.1.1 - SOYI1.1.2 <p>5/14 Result indicators were met at mid-term. One indicator was not met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LDI 8 <p>Seven indicators were not measured</p>	<p>Of the indicators that were measured, good progress was reported with no serious cause for concern.</p> <p>The outcome and result indicators were not measured due to the CEC cycle being in its first year and therefore insufficient data was available to report on these indicators at the mid-line. Furthermore, LDI 9 was not measured as installation kits had not yet been distributed, and SRHO1.1.1 was not measured as CAY had not been through 1 entire cycle of the intervention.</p>

Country	Indicator Achievements	Analysis
	<p>at mid-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LDI 6 - LDI 9 - SOYO1.1.2 - SOYO1.1.3 - SRHO1.1.1 - LDI 10 - LDI 11 - LDI 12 	
Niger	<p>6/6 Outcome indicators were met.</p> <p>8/14 Result indicators were met at mid-term. One indicator included here did not have a target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IQEO1.2.2 <p>Two indicators were not met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IQEO4.2.3 - PROO3.3.1 <p>Four indicators were not measured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IQEO1.3.2 - LDI 5 - LDI 6 - LDI 7 	<p>The project is progressing very well against its outcome level targets at mid-term, achieving all six indicators.</p> <p>Four indicators were not measured due to delays in project activities.</p>
Senegal	<p>2/5 Outcome indicators were met. Three indicators were not met were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LDI 1 - LDI 2 - LDI 3 <p>4/16 Result indicators were met. Five indicators were not met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PROO1.1.1 - PROO1.4.1 - IQEO5.1.1 - IQEO4.1.6 - PROO3.5.1 <p>Two indicators were not measured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LDI 4 - LDI 5 	<p>Senegal had significant delays to the start of activities, and complications in sampling for the quantitative data collection. Some indicators have unusually high reference values (due to biased participant selection), leading to a potential overestimation of the mid-term targets.</p> <p>Despite these challenges the project performed well against SOYEE indicators but faced greater challenges achieving against PfV and IQE indicators which were reflected in both result and outcome indicator achievements.</p>
Tanzania	<p>0/5 Outcome indicators were met. Only one indicator was measured and not met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LDI 2 <p>8/15 Result indicators were met. Three indicators were not met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IQEO4.1.4 - SOYO1.1.2 - PROO2.1.1 <p>Four indicators were not measured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SOYO 1.3.1 - SOYO 1.3.2 - LDI 3 - LDI 4 	<p>The project shows a broader trend of needing to focus more on inclusion of CAY with special needs. This was reflected in not meeting IQEO4.1.4.</p> <p>The two SOYEE indicators (SOYO1.3.1 and SOYO1.3.2) were not measured because implementation of the vocational training intervention started late in the project.</p> <p>The PfV indicator PROO2.1.1 was very narrowly missed and therefore not a cause for concern.</p>
Vietnam	<p>1/5 Outcome Indicators were met. Three indicators were not met:</p>	<p>Most indicators at result level were achieved by the project by the mid-term. Some indicators vastly</p>

Country	Indicator Achievements	Analysis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SOYI1.1.1 - LDI 1 - LDI 2 <p>One indicator was not measured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PROI1.1.3 <p>11/15 Result Indicators were met. One indicator was not met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PROO1.1.1 <p>Two indicators were not measured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LDI 3 - LDI 4 	exceeded their targets, and it is recommended for endline targets and indicators to be revised including: SOYO1.1.1; PROO3.3.1; IQEO6.5.1; SOYO1.1.2; SOYO6.1.1; SOYO6.2.1 and SOYO2.1.1. Where appropriate targets should be increased.

The below table shows an analysis of indicator achievements by AoGD. The most common indicators included within projects were locally defined indicators (LDI) showing that the DGD programme has been adapted well to the local operating and contextual environment. Following this 40 SOYEE indicators and 30 PfV indicators have been included within the projects. The table below shows that the highest achievement rates were found for LEAD and PfV indicators and the lowest rates for LDI and SRHR. When removing indicators not measured at mid-term, broadly, the same pattern remains with LEAD and SRHR scoring 100 per cent achievement, SOYEE 81.25 per cent and PfV 75.86 per cent achievement. The lowest scoring AoGDs were LDI (57.69 per cent) and IQE (69.23 per cent).

Table 9: Indicator achievement by AoGD

AoGD	Number of indicators included within the project ⁴⁶	Indicators met at mid-term	Indicators not met at mid-term	Not measured
IQE	15	9 - 60%	4 - 26.67%	2 - 13.33%
LEAD	5	4 - 80%		1 - 20%
PfV	30	22 - 73.33%	7 - 23.33%	1 - 3.33%
SOYEE	40	26 - 65%	6 - 15%	8 - 20%
SRHR	3	2 - 66.67%		1 - 33.33%
LDI	47	11 - 31.91%	15 - 23.4%	21 - 44.68%
Total	140	77	29	34

The programme has recently benefited from having a programme level logical framework to bring all country/project level logframes together. This acts to collate all information centrally for easy access and viewing across countries to identify trends, patterns and areas that need attention and closer management by the programme level M&E Specialist.

5.1.2. Assessment of progress on and alignment of the AoGDs

This section provides a high-level overview of AoGD coverage and alignment, and a cross country⁴⁷ analysis per AoGD. It highlights notable areas of achievement (what works well) and challenges that

⁴⁶ This table does not include indicators used in Belgium

⁴⁷ Belgium was not included in this analysis

were experienced by multiple countries. These trends and patterns highlight where stories of success exist within the project and adaptation could be made to the standard activity design.

Protection from Violence

This AoGD is concerned with and related to girls, adolescent girls, and young women are protected from all forms of violence, including GBV, in their communities' pathway of change. The following countries choose to focus on this AoGD for the evaluation: Ecuador, Tanzania and Vietnam. Notable cross-country/project achievements in this area include:

Most project participants', especially CAY, reported improvements in their understanding of SRHR and GBV. Participants from all countries noted that their understanding of these issues was greatly improved. Across all countries CAY and parents and caregivers reported their knowledge and attitudes had greatly improved and that the programme models such as the **COC Clubs** and **Intergenerational Dialogues** were the driving force behind these achievements. Specifically in Ecuador, the **ZLEA programmatic model** was mentioned by CAY as helping them to think through the consequences and risks associated with practising unprotected sex, particularly early pregnancies. Specifically, one 17-year-old girl participant explained, "I learned that early pregnancies affect your life and what you can do afterwards. For example, I would need to provide for my child, so I might not be able to study. That's why it's better first to have a job and then have a baby."⁴⁸

It was, however, unclear whether the models used actually caused a change in GBV related practices within the beneficiaries, for two reasons: 1) because this data was not collected as part of the quantitative mid-term evaluation; and 2) because when data was collected as part of the qualitative evaluation, for example, in Vietnam, it was unclear whether the lack of reports of GBV were due to no incidents of GBV or whether the reporting mechanisms were not functioning or that the public was reluctant to use them.

Challenges mentioned across countries/projects included:

- **Strengthening community-based child protection mechanisms (CBCPMs):** while progress has been made across countries to establish, revitalise and train members of CBCPMs, challenges were reported in Vietnam that knowledge levels remained low and in Ecuador that CAY lacked the capacity and confidence to approach CBCPMs.
- In Tanzania more **operational and contextual challenges** were noted, for example timing of parent and caregiver awareness activities and the nature of participants being from low socioeconomic backgrounds leading to high rates of CEFMU.
- **It is too early to assess whether the models used are successful in causing a change in GBV practices.** A more accurate measure at this stage of the programme could be to measure whether attitudes towards GBV have changed. For example, whether GBV is positive, negative, perceptions of risk, whether it is ever justified and associated stigma. The measurement of and any changes in practices of GBV would need to be measured towards the end of the programme.

Skills and Opportunities for Youth Economic Empowerment

This AoGD is concerned with and related to adolescent girls and young women having access to skills and opportunities for their economic empowerment pathway of change. The following countries choose to focus on this AoGD for the evaluation: Bolivia, Benin, Niger and Senegal. In each country SOYEE models are adapted to the country context and therefore implemented slightly differently. For example,

⁴⁸ FGD 1, Girls aged 15-17, Ecuador

the duration and reach of the training are different. The Senegal project offers a short training course which aims to reach many people, while Benin offers both short and long-term training courses.

Across all countries young people taking the course were generally satisfied with the course content, the creation of safe spaces to learn and a good combination of technical and soft skills being offered. Course duration was the aspect that came up the most in the data. Longer courses are much preferred to short courses as they allow the students time to develop a deeper understanding and confidence before attempting to enter IGAs.

In Bolivia, participants noted increased levels of self-esteem. One young woman from the region of La Paz reported: “I used to look at myself in the mirror and ask, 'What are you going to achieve in life?' When I started attending the training sessions, they taught me to accept myself as a person. I didn't express myself much, I didn't speak, and when I did, I spoke very quietly. I'm grateful to the Project for who I am now. They have so much patience in helping us build the confidence to speak.”⁴⁹

The creation of a safe and non-judgemental environment was seen as essential creating and maintaining motivation to learn and address gendered norms through taking up non-traditional professions. For example, a young boy in Benin reported: “I learned to do men's hair, but today, since men and women can do the same things, I am learning to do women's hairdressing. Before, I could not have the courage to enrol in this training, since it is not a job for men.”⁵⁰

There was a general appreciation that the development of soft skills and a positive mind-set is essential for engaging in IGAs after completion of the course. This was noted in Bolivia and Senegal.

Regarding the duration of the course, short courses in general were not seen as effective as longer-term courses. This finding was observed in Benin and Senegal, although it should be noted that short courses were used to identify promising candidates for entry into longer-term courses and course duration is limited by financial resources available. Those who were not selected to transfer to the long course were left feeling like they lacked the confidence and skills to fully implement what they had learnt. This was reported in Senegal by a Director of the training center: “It is good to train them, but they must be supported” afterwards, reflecting a lack of post-training support to translate the knowledge acquired into concrete results.⁵¹

Further notable cross-country/project achievements in this area include:

- **In contrast to the other countries, Bolivia offered a range of non-traditional skills and training options for young women to engage with which was generally seen as providing gender equality in choice of training topics.** However, they seem to have overlooked providing training or skills development opportunities for young men in areas that are traditionally seen as female; for example, two boys in El Torno shared their passion for cooking and expressed a strong desire to participate in training that could help them start their own cooking businesses. It should be noted that many boys in La Paz participated in cooking training (data was not collected in this location as part of this qualitative evaluation).
- **A good practice across all countries was the provision of seed capital or start-up/installation kits for participants to reduce the financial barriers to starting their own businesses.** It is a very good practice as it reduces some of the burden felt by parents or partners who were supporting their children or partners to set up small businesses. It also helped young people who could not be supported by their parents or partners in this way due to financial pressures. This group is arguably the most in need of support and would feel the greatest impact. However, as noted in Bolivia, there needs to be a monitoring process in place

⁴⁹ FGD 6, Mixed participants from La Paz district

⁵⁰ FDG JH FP Ouidah

⁵¹ KII Director CFP Khombole

to ensure seed capital is used for the intended purpose. Seeking and acting upon participant feedback on these areas would be beneficial to the projects as it would enable the participants to access the support they need to make their IGA successful.

- **An area of promising practice is the combination of technical skills and life or professional skills.** This combination is particularly important for maintaining employment and business ownership as life/soft and professional skills are needed to meaningfully engage in IGAs, as mentioned above.
- **Community anchoring was also found to be a good practice in Benin.** This was due to facilitators from the communities being present. It is assumed, but not mentioned in the data, that this also acts to create an enabling environment for learning.

Challenges mentioned across countries/projects included the following:

A challenge mentioned across multiple countries in the SOYEE area, which engages adolescent girls and young women, was the existence of financial barriers and the continuing existence of social barriers to participation. Across all countries it was noted by participants that they still required financial support from their families to take part in the activities, whether this financial support was to cover the cost of transport to training location or to provide meals for themselves while at the training centers. Despite the work done across projects to create a favourable environment and address harmful social norms that would prevent young people from engaging in SOYEE training, changes take a long time to establish in this area.

It was noted in Bolivia that it is still hard for women to engage in IGAs, especially employment due to social barriers. In Bolivia, it was noted that “When women have a child, as we are still old-fashioned, they have to stay home, so they choose entrepreneurship to be able to stay with their children.”⁵² A multi-faceted approach to this barrier may prove fruitful. For example, increasing focus on addressing these harmful gender norms and increased support for entrepreneurial activities in combination with innovative childcare support. In Niger, it was also highlighted that young women and girls are still very much expected to carry out several household chores, and whilst it did not prevent them to participate in project’s activities, it could present challenges to engaging freely in IGA (including around time management).

Across Benin, Niger and Senegal, it was noted that including a wide range of students with different literacy levels was not the most effective way to train. It was found that two streams of training may be more effective and ensure that students feel comfortable learning at a pace which suits them. For example, those with low levels of literacy would benefit from further classes to establish a base level of knowledge before diving into the main training content.

Inclusive Quality Education

None of the countries choose to focus on this AoGD, therefore the evaluation does not comment on it.

5.1.3. Assessment of the effectiveness of youth participation and leadership methods used

This section sets out an overview and analysis of the effectiveness of CAY participation, motivation, feedback and exchange mechanisms that exist across countries/projects within the DGD Programme. Best practices and areas for improvement are also highlighted. These can be used to learn lessons and correct courses for the second half of the programme.

⁵² FGD 4, Girls, Buena Vista, Bolivia

What is the level of meaningful participation in the DGD Programme?

The evaluators found limited evidence of meaningful CAY participation in the design of the programme or the country level projects. This includes how the packages of activities are designed and linked together, which countries should be included in the programme, which locations each country project should focus on and how the programme and project level ToCs are designed. Furthermore, there seems to be a lack of CAY input when it comes to agreeing who should take part in activities and why. Choice of locations and participants seem to be based on project analysis, and PI and donor requirements. This is a solid base to design a programme, however, to enhance it and encourage greater CAY ownership, input at the design phase could be a way to increase CAY participation and leadership at the programme and project level.

A best practice example was found in Vietnam and Bolivia (although not systemically), where the project team held an annual dialogue with CAY to seek feedback from participants to guide and adapt future planning.⁵³ Furthermore, the approach of creating a Youth Consultative Committee to be involved in decision-making in Senegal is an example of best practice. These practices could be integrated into other DGD projects to increase the ownership, leadership and influence with the programme.

There was a good level of evidence across the board of meaningful CAY participation in the design and delivery of specific activities. Best practice examples include:

- The **Champions of Change (COC) Clubs** where CAY are responsible for agreeing to the subjects or topics of their activities and delivering some of the activities themselves. Adult participation is limited to training CAY, facilitating and guiding CAY when they request support. This model is well established in every country and is an example of best practice which should be highlighted. This was observed in Tanzania, Belgium and Vietnam.
- In Bolivia, **SOYEE training** engaged CAY in a brainstorming session to identify and agree on market opportunities to shape the focus of the training. This activity was facilitated by an adult, but the discussion and final agreements were owned by the CAY. Examples of this approach were also reported in Niger and Vietnam.
- The **Educational Volunteers** in Belgium have the potential to be an example of best practice. This is a good example of participants delivering activities for CAY. Currently, the activity is delivered by adults, however, this activity could be delivered by young people. The way in which the activity is currently being delivered, however, requires greater attention to keep the Educational Volunteers engaged and motivated as they are currently lacking a good level of on-the-job training and follow-up support from the PIB team.

According to Richard Hart's ladder of participation,⁵⁴ CAY participation at the activity level is at its highest step: **youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults**. There exists a strong partnership between the project and the CAY participants. At the programme and project design level generally CAY participation is at the lowest level of participation: **assigned but informed**. However, best practice examples were found in Vietnam, Bolivia and Senegal at the project level which would suggest they have achieved **consulted and informed**.

What motivates CAY to take part in the DGD Programme?

Two notable types of motivation were found by the evaluators: 1. Motivation to start engaging with the project; and 2. Motivation to maintain engagement with the project.

The overarching motivation to start engaging with the project was reported as:

⁵³ KII 5, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

⁵⁴ Mullahey, Ramona & Susskind, Y. & Checkoway, B. (1999). Youth participation in community planning. 1-70. Available at: [Link](#)

- **Self-interest: across all countries, CAY were extremely motivated by gaining knowledge that they found important and had a direct impact on them.** For example, training to be able to engage in IGAs or reduce GBV that happens in their immediate locality. CAY were less motivated by impacts that they perceived as indirect to them. For example, the international solidarity mandate.
- **Taking part in activities that contribute to a cause they believe in** was, to a lesser extent, a motivating factor. CAY across multiple countries cited this as a motivating factor. This means that activities may maintain CAY motivation if they are the target groups who have a pre-existing interest in the topic areas.

Motivation to maintain engagement with the project was found to be linked to thirst for knowledge, ownership of activities, and limiting financial barriers to engagement and maintenance of regular communication with and support from the project and regular involvement in activities.

- **Thirst for knowledge:** in Tanzania, it was noted that CAY were motivated by a thirst for knowledge on topics that were seen to affect them. The discussions with their peers were also reported as a key motivator because they get to interact and speak freely among people of their own age.
- **Ownership of activities:** in Vietnam, motivation was primarily linked to ownership and the ability to lead and deliver activities. Similarly, CAY in both Ecuador and Vietnam reported motivation was maintained through the integration of CAY-friendly activities, for example, games, quizzes and drawing competitions. These playful activities kept the attention and interest of the CAY.
- **Financial barriers were reported by CAY, parents and staff from training centers in countries which chose to focus on the SOYEE AoGD for this evaluation:** Bolivia, Benin and Senegal. Regardless of the provision of seed capital and start-up kits, these are not available to all young people and therefore there is still a burden on the individual to cover the costs of starting up their own business and providing transportation and meal costs while at the training centers. In addition, in Senegal, a key issue is also the cost of training courses certified and recognised by the State, which are expensive. In comparison, in Tanzania CAY were motivated by the prospect of financial independence.
- **Lack of regular communication and support was reported by Educational Volunteers** in Belgium. They reported that they were ready and willing to work to carry out activities for the project, yet they were not contacted by the project to undertake activities.⁵⁵

What feedback mechanisms are used in the DGD Programme?

While all projects under the DGD programme are activity seeking feedback through various methods there was no evidence of systematic documentation, tracking, and actioning of feedback across the board. Four countries have feedback mechanisms at the project level: annual CAY dialogues in Vietnam which are well established, Youth Consultative Committee in Senegal, reflection meetings with project staff and participants in Tanzania and an online quarterly survey in Bolivia starting from September 2024. All other feedback mechanisms are present at the activity level only and include a few examples of best practice:

- **Suggestion Boxes** in schools were present across multiple projects, yet there seemed to be limited evidence of how well they were being used. Evidence of suggestion boxes being present was found in Ecuador, Benin, Tanzania and Vietnam.
- **Post-training questionnaires** are sought from CAY in Senegal, but CAY reported that these are not used in a systematic way. Nonetheless, this was mitigated through the collection of verbal feedback, recorded in an online database to ensure timely response.

⁵⁵ KII 8, Project Volunteer, Belgium; FGD 4, Project Volunteers, Belgium

- **Verbal feedback** to project team members of teachers is also a common method reported during the evaluation. This method seems acceptable to gain feedback from confident participants.

5.1.4. Progress of the gender transformative ambition of the programme

Overall, the DGD Programme has a high potential to achieve its gender transformative ambition. According to the PI Gender Transformative Marker, there are six elements of gender transformation and four levels of potential: No potential, low potential, medium potential and high potential. Each element is listed below together with the description for high potential.

- **Gender norms:** Tailored community dialogue and media and/or policy engagement on key gender norms
- **Agency:** Works with girls to act and influence change on thematic issues and gender equality
- **Working with boys and men:** Mobilises boys/young/adult men to act for gender equality, positive masculinities and inclusion
- **Condition and position:** addresses gender barriers to improve the condition and position of girls and young women
- **Diversity:** Works with vulnerable/excluded groups tailored to gender, age and multiple exclusion factors
- **Enabling environment:** the project is strengthening societal structures, systems and civil society to enable gender equality and inclusion

Table 10: GTM scores by country/project at implementation stage

Country	Gender norms	Agency	Working with men and boys	Condition and position	Diversity	Enabling environment	Score	Overall potential
Belgium	High	High	High	High	Medium	Medium	65%	High
Bolivia	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium		
Ecuador ⁵⁶	High	High	Medium	Medium	High	High	65%	High
Benin ⁵⁷	High	High	High	Medium	High	High	65%	High
Niger ⁵⁸	Medium	Medium	High	High	High	Medium	65%	Medium
Senegal	High	Medium	High	Medium	High	Medium	65%	High
Tanzania	Medium	High	High	High	High	Medium	65%	High
Vietnam	High	High	Medium	High	Medium	High	65%	High

Areas that all projects could focus on in the next half of the programme include, diversity and working with boys and men.

How is diversity ensured when planning for activities?

The programme is highly successful at engaging CAY and other participants with ethnic minority backgrounds and communities, which is a focus area for the project. The project teams have taken

⁵⁶ Scores are for design stage. A GTM has now been conducted for the implementation phase however, it was too late to include within this evaluation.

⁵⁷ Scores are for design stage

⁵⁸ Scores are for design stage

great care to identify barriers and challenges that may prevent CAY engagement and meaningful participation in activities. There are minor challenges in this area, which project teams have identified and are working on as part of their on-going project delivery for example working in different languages and cultural norms across different communities.

The same focus should be applied when attempting to engage a more diverse CAY participant base. For example, there are limited people with disabilities engaged by the projects and limited people from the LGBTQ+ communities. This gap was noted in Belgium, Ecuador and Vietnam.

In addition, in Belgium, it was reported that CAY from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are not specifically engaged by the project. While the project does try to include CAY from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, rates of inclusion were found to be low. Suggested ways to improve this include to meet CAY where they are, in their own communities and/or on social media platforms like TikTok.

The involvement and influence of boys and men

Mobilising and maintaining the interests of boys and men is a constant issue, as reported in Belgium, Ecuador, Benin and Tanzania. This could in part be because boys and men see the project as girl/young women focused. The project teams are aware of this issue and are already making efforts to address it with more effective engagement strategies.

Areas of promising practice included an example from Bolivia where the project team engages with a youth network who has helped boys challenge stereotypes and express emotions, as reflected in FGDs. For example, participants highlighted redefining masculinity as crying without judgment or helping in the kitchen. In addition, the models of Future Husbands Clubs and Husbands Schools developed in Niger also constitute key good practices, as boys and young men engaged in these groups have become positive agents of change in the target communities.

Another activity which seems to have a reported impact on increasing positive masculinities is intergenerational dialogues, where CAY and their parents are invited to discuss gender norms and masculinity issues. Participants reported the dialogues as being a safe space for the discussion which is extremely important for any type of discussion and behaviour change. Countries/projects that are having challenges or resistance in engaging adult men are Ecuador and Benin which could benefit from implementing intergenerational dialogues.

5.1.5. Conclusions

Generally, the DGD programme is progressing well against its logframe targets across countries. The programme has 41 Outcome level indicators and 112 Result level indicators totalling to 153 averaging around 20 indicators per project (with the expectation of Belgium which has far fewer indicators). At outcome level the programme has achieved around 38 per cent of indicators. At result level the programme has achieved around 62 per cent of indicators. Notable achievements at outcome level include the projects implemented in Ecuador and Niger which have both achieved 100 per cent of their outcome level targets and should be commended for this achievement. Notable achievements at result level include the projects implemented in Ecuador (92 per cent achieved), Vietnam (73 per cent achieved) and Belgium (70 per cent achieved), again these projects should be commended on their achievements. Action plans for each country/project have been developed and can be found in [Annex 8](#). Overall, it is recommended to review the indicators and calculation guidelines to ensure that realistic targets and measurements are in place for the end of the programme.

Progress against two of the three suggested AoGDs were included in this evaluation: PfV and SOYEE. Most participants noted positive progress against the PfV AoGD. Participants noted that their understanding of SRHR and GBV had increased. Regarding SOYEE, very positive progress was reported by participants across all countries/projects (apart from Belgium where there is no SOYEE

element). This included offering non-traditional skills and training options for young women and seed capital or start-up/installation kits for participants to reduce the financial barriers to starting their own businesses. Nonetheless, financial challenges across all countries/projects persist in that seed capital or start-up/installation kits are not provided for all participants and do not eliminate the financial cost of participating in training activities.

CAY Participation at the activity level is very high. According to Richard Hart's ladder of participation⁵⁹, CAY participation at the activity level is at its highest step: youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults. There exists a strong partnership between the project and the CAY participants. Activities which were reported to have the highest CAY participation included COC Clubs, SOYEE training and Education Volunteers. CAY motivation to engage in activities and maintain their engagement was also reported as high. Gaining new skills, taking part in activities which contributed to a cause they believe in and having ownership of activities were cited as motivating factors. Motivation decreased when participants did not take part in regular activities or receive regular updates. Furthermore, the evaluation found that project participants were happy to provide feedback on the project activities, but that there was no systematic way that feedback was being documented, tracked or actioned.

The evaluation found that there was a high chance of the DGD Programme achieving its gender transformative potential. All countries, apart from Benin, have carried out GTM assessments at both the design and implementation phases. Benin has carried out their design stage GTMs. All countries (apart from Bolivia for which the scoring sections were missing from the GTMs) scored 65 per cent which converts to high potential overall. Work on gender norms, agency, condition and position, and enabling environments is progressing well. Areas to focus on in the next half of the programme include work with boys and men and diversity. As noted in the analysis, across all countries, the programme is highly successful at engaging CAY and other participants with ethnic minority backgrounds and communities, which is a focus area for the project. More focus needs to be given to engaging CAY with disabilities and CAY from lower social-economic backgrounds in Belgium specifically. More work should also be done to engage boys and men in the areas of positive masculinity and specifically adult men through intergenerational dialogues to create a safe space for male CAY to engage them.

⁵⁹ Mullahey, Ramona & Susskind, Y. & Checkoway, B. (1999). Youth participation in community planning. 1-70. Available at: [Link](#)

5.2. Belgium Analysis

In Belgium, Plan International's DGD Programme has been implemented under the title 'Lead for Rights' Project. It focuses on girls, boys and young people as active drivers of change. The launch of the project consolidated two important shifts in the way Plan operates in Belgium: i) increasing young people's voices in Plan's advocacy and campaigning work, ii) the introduction of a 'new narrative', in which Plan tries to mobilise Belgian young people to advocate for global issues and international solidarity, using the daily experiences of Belgian young people as a starting point to bridge the North-South divide (I-You-We approach). Whilst PIB has solid experience in both mobilising young people on international issues and on local issues directly impacting their daily lives and access to rights, this combination of these two approaches is new.

The project is implemented across Belgium, including activities in schools, a Youth Advisory Panel (YAP), campaigns, COC Clubs, with limited to no links between activities. It is implemented by PIB directly, with no implementing partners. The project however partners with international and local civil society and youth participation structures like Forum des Jeunes/Vlaamse Jeugdraad, Défense des Enfants International (DEI), UNICEF to construct and organise campaigns and events.

5.2.1. Progress against logframe targets

This section integrates qualitative and quantitative data collected during the mid-term evaluation to describe the project's central progress and challenges against the mid-term logframe targets. It draws on data from the quantitative midterm evaluation. The project logframe is also annexed to this report.

Overall, the project is on track, and in general overperforms. A few key areas, however, will require particular attention for its second half, namely contributing to structural youth participation in decision making around international solidarity issues (Indicator 3 – 0 per cent achievement against target), **youth training and capacity building** (Indicator 5 – 84,5 per cent achievement against target), to a lesser extent **wider youth support for campaigns co-created by Plan young activists** (Indicator 2 - 64 per cent achievement against target), increasing the number of schools starting the "gender" trajectory (Indicator 6 – 50 per cent achievement against target), and increasing the number of political leaders or ANCG who participate in the annual conference (Indicator 10 – 94 per cent achievement against target). Qualitative data collection confirms that the project has been very successful in areas in which PIB excels locally (advocacy and youth lead campaigning) but has struggled to meet its ambitions in innovative areas (mobilising youth on international solidarity related advocacy).⁶⁰

Outcome: Belgian society and political leaders support the recommendations co-constructed with Plan's young activists in favour of children's rights, girls' rights and gender equality in the context of international solidarity and the sustainable development goals

The project has three impact level indicators. Indicator 1 and 2 showed a good level of progress and overachieved compared to its target. Indicator 3 was not met. The following analysis explores the possible reasons for this level of achievement.

⁶⁰ KII 1, Project staff, Belgium; KII 3, Project staff, Belgium; Bridge Workshop

Table 11: Indicator achievement for Belgium Outcome

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
Indicator 1: Number of political commitments in the priority areas of the program made on the basis of recommendations co-constructed with Plan's young activists from 2022	0	2	8	3
Indicator 2: Number of young people responding positively to campaigns co-created by Plan International youth activists (mobilization) from 2022	0	12,000	7,651	18,000
Indicator 3: Number of initiatives that make the participation of young people on issues of international solidarity structural	0	1	0	2

The project saw **mixed progress against Outcome indicators**. There was a 400 per cent achievement of targets on political engagement in reaction to recommendations co-constructed with young activists (Indicator 1). The project struggled to fully rally a wider public of young people (64 per cent achievement against its target) around campaigns of international solidarity (Indicator 2) and struggled even more (0 per cent achievement against its target) to make youth participation on international solidarity issues structural. Qualitative data collection confirmed that the project is progressing well in the areas in which PIB feels comfortable – namely advocacy and campaigning.⁶¹ It had however underestimated the challenges related to rallying many young people around international solidarity issues.⁶² This directly impacted progress and achievement on Result 1. It should be noted that this target was achieved by the end of Year 3.

With regard **Indicator 3** and the project's aim for a **structured approach to youth participation in decision making around international solidarity issues**, identified challenges include internal strategic prioritisation (e.g. towards 2024 national elections), Enabel's internal team structure challenges, and changes within political leadership (Minister of International Cooperation). Data collection however showed that there is a solid **support for youth participation at the policy making level**.⁶³ Whilst this might change at the political level following the 2024 elections, Enabel's commitment to enhance youth participation will continue well into 2025 and could be a strong opportunity; as is PIB's positioning as an expert organisation in this area.⁶⁴

Result 1: Young activists acquire fundamental skills and are supported by volunteers and schools to become actors of change for the respect of children's rights, girls' rights and gender equality within the framework of international solidarity and the sustainable development goals.

The project has achieved one out of the three mid-term indicator targets under this result area. An analysis of the achievements can be found below.

Table 12: Indicator achievement for Belgium Result 1

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
Indicator 4: % of young Plan activists who have increased their fundamental capacities to become actors and actresses of change for the respect of children's rights and gender equality in the framework of international solidarity and the SDGs	N/A	60%	73%	75%

⁶¹ KII 3, Project staff, Belgium

⁶² KII 1, Project staff, Belgium; KII 3, Project staff, Belgium

⁶³ KII 5, Local authority, Belgium; KII 6, Local authority, Belgium

⁶⁴ KII 5, Local authority, Belgium

Indicator 5: Number of young people and volunteers trained or supported by Plan to become change activists from 2022	0	200	169	400
Indicator 6: Number of schools having formally started a “gender” trajectory with Plan (start of the journey = coaching 1) from 2022	0	2	1	4

It is noteworthy that **73 per cent of participants in the quantitative data collection reported they had strengthened capacities to become actors of change** in areas like children’s rights and gender equality in international solidarity and SDGs (Indicator 4). This means that the project succeeds to equip CAY to become actors of change on these issues. This finding is supported by qualitative data. Young people interviewed reported having gained a solid understanding on gender related issues, of the challenges faced by young people in third countries, leadership skills and willingness (or action) to engage in other similar activities.⁶⁵

The ‘Lead for Change’ outcome faced the **biggest challenge on Result 1**, and most particularly on **Indicator 5 and 6, which had a 84,5 per cent and 50 per cent achievement rates respectively**. The qualitative data collection confirms that the biggest challenge persists in this area. As mentioned above, whilst PIB has expertise in mobilising and training youth towards campaigns related to challenges they face in their local daily lives, it took an innovative approach in the framework of the DGD Programme by aiming to connect it with the mobilisation of young people to advocate for international solidarity. Ambitious targets had been set based on successes of previous projects mobilising young people on local issues of direct concern to them but had not taken into account the **complexity of mobilising youth around international solidarity issues starting from their local challenges towards international issues**.⁶⁶ This was even harder for the large number of youths targeted. This was further complicated by the general **social, economic and political context**⁶⁷ – including a persistent low level of awareness among CAY on issues like gender⁶⁸ and even a perceived regression on values of tolerance among youth by one adult participant⁶⁹. Project staff raised challenges related to i) the complexity and sensitivity of the thematics covered (gender dynamics, masculinities, decolonisation) on the one hand, and ii) donors’ efficiency requirements that force them to address these complex issues with very **limited resources, both in terms of human resources and time**, whilst bringing lasting impact on these issues is intensively consuming in both.⁷⁰ CAY participants also noted that PIB and the issues it works on are perceived as **‘girls-centric’ might be a factor influencing the low engagement of male youth and volunteers**.⁷¹ This is supported by the gender disaggregation of quantitative data, which indicates a 45,6 per cent female CAY, 19,5 per cent male CAY, 23,7 per cent female adult volunteers and 11,2 per cent male adult volunteers gender distribution under **Indicator 5**.

Result 2: Political leaders, organized civil society and the school world contribute to an environment favorable to the mobilization of young people, the rights of the child, girls and gender equality in the framework of international solidarity and development objectives.

The project has achieved three out of the four mid-term indicator targets (and one end-term target) under this result area. An analysis of the achievements can be found below.

⁶⁵ FGD 1, CAY, Benin; FGD 2, CAY, Belgium; FG 3; CAY, Belgium; KII 7, CAY, Belgium

⁶⁶ KII 1, Project staff, Belgium; KII 3, Project staff, Belgium

⁶⁷ Leçons apprises ‘Lead for Rights’ 2022, Plan International Belgium

⁶⁸ KII 8, Project Volunteer, Belgium; FGD 4, Project Volunteers, Belgium

⁶⁹ FGD 5, Teachers, Belgium

⁷⁰ KII 1, Project staff, Belgium

⁷¹ FGD 2, CAY, Belgium

Table 13: Indicator achievement for Belgium Result 2

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
Indicator 7: Number of schools that have formally completed a “Children’s Rights School” (primary) or “Schools for Rights” (secondary) pathway with Plan International in the partnership	18	2	5	22
Indicator 8: Number of members of ACNG or youth organizations who participate in seminars or training organized by Plan from 2022	0	120	140	200
Indicator 9: Number of political leaders who explicitly take a position in favour of consulting young people on issues of Belgium’s external relations	0	12	25	25
Indicator 10: Number of political leaders or ANCG who participate in the annual conferences of Plan International Belgium and UNICEF Belgium and are strengthened in their capacities to assume their responsibilities towards children	0	90	85	150

The project was particularly successful in Result 2. As mentioned prior, this is an area in which PIB feels particularly comfortable.⁷² In addition, as one staff participant reported, PIB has built and enjoys a ‘unique selling position’,⁷³ and partner organisations and **political stakeholders hold PIB in high regard for its expertise on youth participation and children’s rights issues in international cooperation.**⁷⁴ PIB could benefit from a supportive decision-making environment, with Ministers from socialist party Vooruit for the entire first half of project,⁷⁵ and the Belgian development cooperation agency Enabel being on its own pathway for increased youth participation.⁷⁶ Whilst the Enabel interest in enhancing youth participation in their decision making will continue well into 2025, the **politically favourable environment** will possibly change in the second half of the project following national elections in 2024. Yet the Bridge Workshop showed clear indications that PIB has been planning and mitigating for this already. In addition, PIB continued to be successful in mobilising civil society actors to participate in its events. When looking at data disaggregation for Indicator 8, it is noteworthy that a significantly lower number of youth organisations participated. Finally, it is worth noting that 93 per cent of political leaders explicitly taking a position in favour of youth consultation on Belgium’s external relations are female (Indicator 9).

53 NGOs and 32 political leaders were engaged by the project in the first half of implementation. **While this means that Indicator 10 was not met, it was only narrowly missed with an achievement rate of 94 per cent.** This could be attributed to the fact that elections took place in the first six months of 2024, in which time no political engagements took place. Furthermore, due to the report period, the Annual Conference for 2024 was not counted in these results as it happened after the reporting period.

Result 3: Young people collectively carry recommendations for political and social change for the rights of children, girls and gender equality within the framework of international solidarity and the sustainable development goals.

The project has achieved all the mid-term targets (and one end-term target) under this result area. An analysis of the achievements can be found below.

⁷² KII 1, Project staff, Belgium; KII 3, Project staff, Belgium

⁷³ KII 1, Project staff, Belgium

⁷⁴ KII 5, Local authority, Belgium; KII 6, Local authority, Belgium

⁷⁵ KII 6, Local authority, Belgium

⁷⁶ KII 5, Local authority, Belgium

Table 14: Indicator achievement for Belgium Result 3

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
Indicator 11: Number of advocacy or mobilization tools co-constructed with young activists from Belgium and/or partner countries from 2022	0	2	3	3
Indicator 12: Number of meetings between young people and relevant political leaders and administrations from 2022	0	10	14	15
Indicator 13: Number of campaigns co-constructed with young activists from Belgium and/or partner countries from 2022	0	3	3	5

The project has exceeded its mid-term targets and has almost achieved its targets for 2026 for Indicator 11. As PIB staff participants noted, this is one of PIB's key areas of expertise.

While it is clear how each activity contributes to each its Result Area, it is not clear how they mutually reinforce each other's impact to achieve the overall Outcome. The project would benefit from the creation of linkages between its activities, by capitalising on awareness raising and training in schools to mobilise youths for advocacy and/or campaign work for example. Outcomes of the Logframe Session of the Bridge Workshop have been included in the recommendations.

5.2.2. Assessment of the effectiveness of youth participation and leadership methods used

What motivates CAY to participate in project activities?

Motivation to participate in PIB activities varies to some extent depending on age and type of engagement.

COC Club participants noted that within the group, each had different types of motivation and expectations for the project. One of the participants reported to have specifically chosen to work on gender when applying for the European Project Semester (EPS), noting that "as a girl I feel like it's a topic that is very important to me and that I would love to learn more about and that I love to work on,"⁷⁷ whereas the second did not. Exchange with peers from a variety of backgrounds was also a strong motivator.⁷⁸ Participants in the **Memorandum activity from Belgium** reported the following motivational factors: pre-existing interest in the subject, the international character of PI activities, the opportunity to strengthen their knowledge on the topic of international solidarity and the functioning of INGOs as pull factors. There seems to be a consensus that the key motivating element of the project was international travel, with youth clearly stating that activities in Belgium were much less motivating.⁷⁹ A **YAP member** who is active in the awareness raising working group reported quadruple motivation: being in close contact with other young people, learning about something they did not know much about (i.e. women and girls rights in Belgium and in the Global South), mobilising others, and engaging in stimulating activities. They discovered PI, its work and gender and international solidarity issues through another young person who was already involved in PIB activities.⁸⁰ It is worth noting that COC and YAP members who were interviewed share similar backgrounds (university level students mostly in social oriented studies (law, political sciences, psychology, communications), and for some were previously

⁷⁷ FGD 3, CAY, Belgium

⁷⁸ FGD 3, CAY, Belgium

⁷⁹ FGD 2, CAY, Belgium

⁸⁰ KII 7, CAY, Belgium

engaged in Plan activities and/or youth advocacy through the YAP, Jeugdraad or Forum des Jeunes activities).

Motivational factors for European participants who participated in activities in Belgium are relatively similar: prior interest in international solidarity and/or gender issues, social studies background, interest in international exposure, fun and dynamic activities (travel, TikTok campaign, etc. as opposed to Memorandum or questionnaire drafting), and finally personal gain (learning, professional experience, skills, interaction with like-minded youth). **For participants from Benin, who were all active in youth activist groups before applying to participate in the Memorandum project, political participation was a very strong motivational factor** for all, but particularly for male participants, incl. strengthening leadership skills, meeting and practising defending their rights with decision-makers, and learning from an organisation with expertise in youth participation and from European experience to duplicate in Benin in view of the 2026 elections. One participant was motivated by the opportunity to share the realities of their country to Belgian youth.⁸¹ This confirms one PIB project staff observation that PIB has a 'unique selling position' through its expertise in advocacy and youth led campaigning. PIB's ability to teach young people how to build a campaign and to offer them hands-on experience is a pulling factor to mobilise youth.⁸² This was corroborated by the young people themselves.⁸³ A study carried out by PIB at the end of the previous project however highlighted that young people lose faith in large INGOs, and that they are looking for concrete engagement that yields and shows immediate tangible impact of their volunteering.⁸⁴ This finding was confirmed by KIIs which mentioned that CAY are most motivated by tangible immediate impacts such as donations of clothes or working in a soup kitchen. The evaluation found no evidence to support this, however, the Plan team could explore the integration of Tik Tok into their youth mobilisation campaigns as a platform which has existing CAY engagement.

PIB made efforts to engage **marginalised youths** (with recent and difficult migration backgrounds) in its advocacy activities. It was reported during data collection that they were most motivated by a **feeling of belonging**, the opportunity to put in words their often unknown and trivialised lived realities, **have their voices heard** and show they exist, a feeling of **being meaningfully active**. Activities that they found most engaging were the meetings with decision makers and the workshop weekend with youth from Belgium.⁸⁵

Across qualitative data collection, it was noted that providing CAY with clear explanations about the **purpose of the activity**, as well as **feeding back to the project participants on the impact of their engagement** is instrumental to retaining youths' motivation.⁸⁶ Participants further noted that adapting activities logistical aspects to participants' constraints supported motivation, e.g. organising activities in universities or schools they attend, adapting timings to youths' schedules, etc.⁸⁷

It should be noted that no individual participants in campaign activities were invited to respond to the qualitative data collection⁸⁸, whereas the feedback from **adolescents** who participated in the campaign within a school setting was collected through their teacher. The latter specifically noted that their motivation came from a desire to mobilise and sensitise youth, to raise their awareness and bring them to act.⁸⁹ Though this has not been directly addressed in data collection, it transpires from other discussions with adult participants that secondary school age youths' participation is mainly driven by

⁸¹ FGD 1, CAY, Benin

⁸² KII 1, Project staff, Belgium

⁸³ FGD 2, CAY, Belgium; FGD 3, CAY, Belgium

⁸⁴ KII 1, Project staff, Belgium

⁸⁵ KII 4, Local partner, Belgium

⁸⁶ FGD 1, CAY, Benin; FGD 2, CAY, Belgium; FGD 6, CAY, Belgium

⁸⁷ FGD 2, CAY, Belgium; FGD 6, CAY, Belgium; KII 7, CAY, Belgium

⁸⁸ Plan BNO had not collected individual campaign participants' emails, preventing data collection.

⁸⁹ FGD 6, CAY, Belgium

school educational teams' motivation and personal interest in gender and/or international solidarity issues, i.e. that they participate in mandatory sessions organised by their teaching staff who have identified gender as subject they want to address. Data collection with adult participants indicate that adolescents are particularly interested in the 'fun factor' of activities and interactive and participative nature of activities, creative thinking, co-creating campaigns, and doing new things.⁹⁰ This corroborates PI guidelines on CoC Clubs that "hooks" for youth engagement are particularly important for the success of the project. While this finding shows that no evidence exists around the motivation to join the sessions in school as they are mandatory, the interactive and participative nature of activities motivates CAY to meaningfully engage with the session content when they are there.

Adult participants report that the lack of follow-up from PIB has reduced their motivation to fully engage,⁹¹ as has the lack of connection with the Brussels Headquarters,⁹² and low reactivity to requests to deploy⁹³. The following types of follow-ups and extra information may serve to increase motivation: more information on what the commitment would entail at the start of the engagement and a potential schedule of engagement opportunities which the volunteers could sign-up to in advance. Generally, they also noted that the changes in PIB team structure, and with it the loss of direct contact points has led to PIB disengagement with specifically Educational Volunteers.⁹⁴

To what extent are CAY (meaningfully) invited to participate in the design, planning and implementation of the project?

Whilst young people have not been directly involved in the design of the project,⁹⁵ PIB has proactively ensured their active participation in planning and implementation of the project's activities. For example, COC (university exchange students) have been directly involved in designing the Gender School trajectory, developing a questionnaire to assess gender dynamics in targeted secondary schools. They are also actively involved in defining how campaigns are being led (e.g. defining channels, proposing activities), in identifying and drafting priorities for youth-led advocacy with decision makers, etc.⁹⁶ Project participants' feedback is also collected through regular monitoring during implementation (e.g. evaluation of each activity).⁹⁷

Project staff report to continuously learn from CAY whilst implementing the project,⁹⁸ showing commitment to adapt its methodologies to respond to the feedback, suggestions and preferences of participating CAY. This was corroborated by CAY and adult participants to the qualitative data collection alike.⁹⁹ Whilst one PIB staff noted that more can still be done,¹⁰⁰ it can safely be said that the **youth-led ambition of the project is upheld**, and that PIB shows commitment to continue to enhance it to the extent possible within the resources allocated by the project.

How can the project be more efficient and inclusive in attracting CAY to participate in its activities?

Whilst PIB has succeeded in supporting language, ethnic, religious diversity and geographical coverage within its YAP and targeted schools, PIB project staff are conscious of the fact that the project struggles

⁹⁰ KII 2, Project staff, Belgium; KII 2, Project staff, Belgium

⁹¹ FGD 6, CAY, Belgium; FGD 6, CAY, Belgium

⁹² KII 8, Project Volunteer, Belgium

⁹³ FGD 4, Project Volunteers, Belgium

⁹⁴ FGD 4, Project Volunteers, Belgium; KII 8, Project Volunteer, Belgium

⁹⁵ KII 3, Project staff, Belgium

⁹⁶ KII 1, Project staff, Belgium; FGD 1, CAY, Benin; FGD 2, CAY, Belgium; FGD 3, CAY, Belgium; KII 7, CAY, Belgium

⁹⁷ KII 1, Project staff, Belgium; FGD 5, Teachers, Belgium

⁹⁸ KII 1, Project staff, Belgium, KII 2, Project staff, Belgium, KII 3, Project staff, Belgium

⁹⁹ FGD 1, CAY, Benin; FGD 2, CAY, Belgium; FGD 3, CAY, Belgium; FGD 5, Teachers, Belgium; FGD 6, CAY, Belgium; KII 7, CAY, Belgium

¹⁰⁰ KII 1, Project staff, Belgium

to ensure meaningful diversity (gender, vulnerability, socio-economic background, disability) and inclusion in project activities.¹⁰¹

Quantitative data shows an **unbalanced gender distribution** among both CAY and adult participants in the project, with a strong prevalence of female participants (cf. disaggregated data for Indicator 5 and Indicator 9). At least two participants in the qualitative data collection underlined that the **perception of PIB and its campaign topics as being ‘girls centric’ is a barrier to motivate young men to participate** in PIB campaigns. For example, the PI website and social media sites are all about girls. Of course, this is the PI mandate, but nonetheless it has an impact when trying to work with boys. Furthermore, out of the six YAP members who were interviewed, only one is a young man. One participant specifically shared the feedback from young men they try to mobilise to join PIB activities: “many of my male friends, whenever I talk to them about Plan, they view it as an organisation for girls, and they do not feel legitimate to participate in Plan projects.”¹⁰² Concluding by suggesting to identify topics for campaigns that speak to male participants as much as to female participants.¹⁰³ It was also suggested to increase the number of male animators, and to work with boys only and girls only groups.¹⁰⁴

Inclusion of marginalised/vulnerable young people (especially if trauma affected, with lower levels of literacy, language barriers) would require building relations of trust, both between said young people and PIB and between said young people and young people from more privileged backgrounds participating in the same activities. Attention should also be given to not overburden more marginalised and/or vulnerable CAY. This could be done by engaging with community-based associations specialised in working with marginalised and/or vulnerable groups, and by collectively adapting methodologies to their specific needs. Among those, the need to make the necessary time investments for additional capacity strengthening was noted, compared to law or political and social sciences students. Using different, better adapted tools (e.g. theatre, images and other creative tools versus formal text or public speaking in high level settings) would also be beneficial to increase meaningful participation of marginalised groups. Equipping privileged young people as well as decision makers with the necessary soft skills to engage with marginalised/vulnerable groups would be essential to the success of activities through which they co-create advocacy or campaigns, as well as investing the time needed to create positive group dynamics (which was reported as successful in the co-creation between youths from Belgium and Benin)¹⁰⁵. Finally, a vulnerable CAY protection risk assessment, or more detailed section of the existing standard Plan International safeguarding assessment would also be essential.¹⁰⁶¹⁰⁷ This would give partners more guidance when engaging with vulnerable groups such as refugees. **KIIs and the Bridge Workshop, moreover, show that Plan staff are aware of the barriers to participation of socio-economically vulnerable groups.**¹⁰⁸

More broadly, **suggestions made to encourage different groups of youths to participate** in PIB’s activities include enhanced **communication with and in schools**.¹⁰⁹ Working through schools might indeed allow access to young people from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds in a set-up that promotes learning without overburdening them. To enhance communication on social media (with a dominant suggestion to increase Plan’s presence on TikTok) to reach a wider public has been a

¹⁰¹ KII 1, Project staff, Belgium

¹⁰² KII 1, Project staff, Belgium; Bridge Workshop

¹⁰³ FGD 2, CAY, Belgium

¹⁰⁴ KII 1, Project staff, Belgium; Bridge Workshop

¹⁰⁵ FGD 2, CAY, Belgium

¹⁰⁶ KII 4, Local partner, Belgium

¹⁰⁷ It should be noted that some PI documents already have sections or guidance related to specifically vulnerable groups (cf. application to PI ERT, for instance) and could be used for this purpose.

¹⁰⁸ KII 1, Project staff, Belgium; Bridge Workshop

¹⁰⁹ FGD 6, CAY, Belgium

recurring suggestion made by both youths themselves and adults who work with them directly.¹¹⁰ Further suggestions include proposing **activities that are adapted to different groups' preferences** (by age, interest, etc. - this includes interactive and more practical activities for younger age groups or those with lower literacy (in national languages) for example); mobilise **project ambassadors from a variety of backgrounds**;¹¹¹ and **finding young people where they are**, namely in schools, universities, sports associations, etc., e.g. through awareness raising activities. It should be noted that all educational volunteer participants have reported to be available and motivated to be mobilised more.¹¹² A final recommendation is to **partner with organisations specialised in youth employment**.¹¹³ As one project staff noted, PIB is not a youth organisation, but a large INGO aiming to better integrate young people in its functioning; and direct mobilisation by PIB is not efficient: while it does yield results, it is extremely resource intensive, both human resources and time.¹¹⁴

How has the programme influenced CAY participants' self-esteem?

Qualitative data collection **CAY participants unanimously reported that participating in PIB activities has strengthened their self-esteem**. This ranges from increased knowledge on gender and international solidarity issues¹¹⁵ (corroborated by adult participants who were directly involved with CAY in schools¹¹⁶), leading to increased confidence to speak up about those issues with decision makers¹¹⁷ (corroborated by adult participants at policy level)¹¹⁸ and peers,¹¹⁹ to increased confidence in skills after doing something new (i.e. developing a questionnaire on an unfamiliar topic, developing a Memorandum, co-creating a product (Memorandum or questionnaire) with others, addressing high level decision makers, etc.).¹²⁰

Participation in Memorandum activities has strengthened particularly **Benin** participants' confidence not only in their capacities but also in their right to assertively speak publicly and to raise their concerns and suggestions with political decision makers, and to feel heard. One participant further reported that the project increased their leadership skills.¹²¹

Plan staff indeed noted an increased ease for youths to express their opinions as the project and activities progressed; and tend to identify the strengthening of soft skills (e.g. how to build a campaign, etc.) and the building of a safe space with a right to test, fail and try again as key elements contributing to this.¹²² This was widely corroborated by youths themselves.¹²³ As one participant put it: "I think they really trusted us and they saw our potential; and I think that's something they should keep (doing): trust students because of course we are young and we don't have a lot of experience but we can still come up with cool stuff and sometimes think in a different way than others."¹²⁴

¹¹⁰ FGD 2, CAY, Belgium; FGD 3, CAY, Belgium; FGD 6, CAY, Belgium; KII 7, CAY Belgium

¹¹¹ FGD 6, CAY, Belgium

¹¹² KII 8, Project Volunteer, Belgium; FGD 4, Project Volunteers, Belgium

¹¹³ KII 1, Project Staff, Belgium; KII 7, CAY, Belgium

¹¹⁴ KII 3, Project staff, Belgium

¹¹⁵ FGD 2, CAY, Belgium; FGD 3, CAY, Belgium; KII 7, CAY, Belgium

¹¹⁶ KII 8, Project Volunteer, Belgium; FGD 4, Project Volunteers, Belgium; FGD 5, Teachers, Belgium

¹¹⁷ FGD 2, CAY, Belgium

¹¹⁸ KII 5, Local authority, Belgium; KII 6, Local authority, Belgium

¹¹⁹ FGD 2, CAY, Belgium; FGD 3, CAY, Belgium; KII 7, CAY, Belgium

¹²⁰ FGD 2, CAY, Belgium; FGD 3, CAY, Belgium; KII 7, CAY, Belgium

¹²¹ FGD 1, CAY, Benin

¹²² KII 1, Project staff, Belgium; KII 2, Project staff, Belgium

¹²³ FGD 1, CAY, Benin; FGD 2, CAY, Belgium; FGD 3, CAY, Belgium; KII 7, CAY, Belgium

¹²⁴ FGD 3, CAY, Belgium

How has the project influenced CAY participants' mobilisation and interest?

One participant stated that whilst they had limited understanding and experience of solidarity work prior to participating in the COC activities, they had consciously chosen a social impact project for her second trimester following her experience with PIB. Both COC participants indicated that they **would consider a career in the social sector** based on their experience with PIB.¹²⁵

Young people who participated in the campaign also report to have gained confidence and knowledge to express themselves on gender issues, and that signing the wall has been a symbolically strong way to do so.¹²⁶ The wall was part of a PI campaign which involved CAY signing on a physical wall. From the limited sample, it appears that **participation in campaigns does however not have significant impact to increase participants' motivation to get involved in initiatives promoting gender equality and CAY rights**. The reason invoked is that they lacked resources, for example, the capacity to engage and understand the content and tools.¹²⁷

Adult participants active in schools have noted that **short sessions of +-2h are not the most adequate to create a safe space to address sensitive issues related to gender norms and gender-based violence**. This is because it takes time to start up an activity and create an atmosphere of trust. Once this is established there is not much time left over for the main activities. Moreover, gender power dynamics, toxic masculinities, have shown to have a negative impact on youths' meaningful participation in learning sessions and on their learning paths. Suggestions to address these challenges include the **use of larger themes around well-being as entry-points**, organising **longer sessions** as opposed to multiplying shorter sessions (which are intensive in group dynamic management, etc.)¹²⁸ There is moreover a consensus among interviewed Educational Volunteers that 1.5-2h sessions are too short to have a lasting impact on youth gender attitudes. This would require more follow-up activities.¹²⁹ Educational volunteers felt the theoretical training and resources they received were adequate,¹³⁰ yet felt that they needed more practical training. Given the sensitivity of the subject, a suggestion was also made to **include psychological first aid training** for the Educational Volunteers package to increase their skills to respond to reports of GBV or other types of violence and harassment that might come up in the schools they visit.¹³¹

How and to what extent have the youth empowerment approaches or methodologies contributed to the advocacy capacity, autonomy, and sustainability of youth led organisations in Belgium and elsewhere?

Young people participating in Memorandum in Benin report having benefited from training on communication and facilitation techniques. The participatory and interactive approaches used by PIB were particularly appreciated by participants from Benin. They felt that they had meaningful agency within the project and that this contributed to enhance their confidence and (leadership) skills to actively defend youth priorities and rights in their respective youth activist groups and communities. In addition, the enabling environment created by PIB for young people to present their recommendations to high level political decision makers has strengthened their belief that this could or should be replicable in Benin.¹³² The Beninois and Belgian young people's sense of having gained the necessary skills to defend their rights and present their priorities to decision makers was confirmed by local authorities, who had found them to be outspoken, able to articulate their thoughts in a structured manner.¹³³ Whilst

¹²⁵ FGD 3, CAY, Belgium

¹²⁶ FGD 6, CAY, Belgium

¹²⁷ FGD 6, CAY, Belgium

¹²⁸ FGD 4, Project Volunteers, Belgium; FGD 5, Teachers, Belgium

¹²⁹ FGD 4, Project Volunteers, Belgium; KII 8, Project Volunteer, Belgium

¹³⁰ FGD 4, Project Volunteers, Belgium; KII 8, Project Volunteer, Belgium

¹³¹ FGD 4, Project Volunteers, Belgium

¹³² FGD 1, CAY, Benin

¹³³ KII 6, Local authority, Belgium; KII 5, Local authority, Belgium

Beninois youths have clearly expressed that the skills they gained will benefit their active involvement in local feminist and youth organisations (cf. above), this did not come up in discussions with Belgian youths.

Young people from Benin reemphasised on multiple occasions that their experience on the Belgian Memorandum has fuelled their strong desire to see the **Memorandum methodology replicated in Benin towards the general elections** (presidential, legislative and communal) expected to take place in 2026.¹³⁴

Local authorities report that interactive, lively, concrete advocacy and campaigning methods are the most effective to engage even high-level decision makers. Examples provided were the meeting with young people from the YAP and Benin, conferences addressed by youths, activities around the International Day of the Girl to which the Minister was invited, etc. Direct meetings with youths are more impactful than reports and policy notes. For recommendations to be taken up by decision makers, **written advocacy tools should be short and contain clear messages that can be used as speaking points, for example.**¹³⁵

Are feedback mechanisms accessible to CAY and have they been used? What is done with the feedback?

Participants almost unanimously reported **informal oral feedback to PIB project staff** as the available feedback channel. They also report feeling that this feedback channel is accessible, that they are heard, and that their feedback is used and acted upon by PIB staff to review activities – both in instances where they were directly consulted (e.g. youth led campaigns for which PIB listened to youths' suggestions in terms of both contents and medium) or where feedback arose related to challenges to address (e.g. difficult group dynamics in school context that impacted the learning trajectory, which was subsequently adapted to the situation). Participants in the qualitative data collection unanimously reported a **real flexibility and adaptability from PIB to respond to their feedback**. This shows that the organisation makes true efforts to listen to participants and integrate their feedback into activity design, planning and implementation;¹³⁶ and corroborates practices expressed by project staff.¹³⁷ However, with changes in team structures, it was not always clear to participants who they could contact.¹³⁸ Project staff indicated that a **debriefing or evaluation moment is planned after each session or activity.**¹³⁹

While qualitative data collection expresses satisfaction with this direct feedback mechanism, it is nonetheless noteworthy that other feedback channels have hardly been mentioned. Data collected does not allow an assessment of the extent this responds to participants' preferences in terms of channels to provide feedback, or if none other are available, or if project participants are not aware of the existence of other reporting and feedback mechanisms. It is also noteworthy that there is a consensus among CAY participants that PIB succeeds in creating a safe space for CAY to participate in project activities. They noted that PIB staff made them feel comfortable and respected, emphasised participants' rights to share feedback and feel listened to at any time.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁴ FGD 1, CAY, Benin

¹³⁵ KII 6, Local authority, Belgium; KII 5, Local authority, Belgium

¹³⁶ FGD 1, CAY, Benin; FGD 2, CAY, Belgium; FGD 3, CAY, Belgium; FGD 4, Project Volunteers, Belgium; FGD 5, Teachers, Belgium; FGD 6, CAY, Belgium; KII 7, CAY, Belgium; KII 8, Project Volunteer, Belgium

¹³⁷ KII 1, Project staff, Belgium

¹³⁸ KII 4, Local partner, Belgium

¹³⁹ KII 1, Project staff, Belgium; KII 2, Project staff, Belgium; KII 3, Project staff, Belgium

¹⁴⁰ FGD 2, CAY, Belgium; FGD 3, CAY, Belgium; KII 7, CAY, Belgium

5.2.3. Progress of the gender transformative ambition of the programme

This section analyses the gender transformative ambition of the project. PIB assessed the project's potential and effective contribution to the six areas of the PI GTM at design and implementation stage. The progress towards the gender transformative ambition of the project was further assessed during qualitative data collection, allowing the evaluators to assess progress made towards identified areas for development and to identify key remaining obstacles. The Bridge Workshop allowed further analysis of preliminary findings and to propose concrete action plans to address these challenges. Insights from the action plan developed during the Bridge Workshop, as well as from qualitative data collection, are shared across the recommendations in Chapter 5 of this report.

It should be noted that most project staff participating in the Bridge Workshop were not familiar with the GTM matrix, raising questions around ownership by the entire team of the gender transformative dimension of the project.

Gender norms

The GTM matrix assessed the project as having high potential to address gender norms. More specifically, “the project works on general awareness raising, dialogues in schools and engagement with media and policymakers.”¹⁴¹ Qualitative data collection revealed that “gender stereotypes still have a bright future ahead of them” in Belgium.¹⁴² Educational volunteers and teachers interviewed confirmed this, noting that **awareness raising in school and through wider campaigns are still extremely relevant**,¹⁴³ that discussions in schools on gender issues are still difficult,¹⁴⁴ one even going as far as stating that there is a decline in tolerance and open-mindedness in general, including on gender issues, and that there is a strong need to create safe spaces to address gender related topics with youths¹⁴⁵. Data collection showed that CAY who participated in COC Club and YAP (Memorandum) activities had **gained substantial insight and knowledge on gender inequalities in Belgium and in third countries**. Participants also stated that this enhanced awareness had also given them the **confidence to speak up with peers on toxic gender behaviours and disparities**.¹⁴⁶ Young people who had not benefited from training but participated in campaigns around gender issues stated that they better understood the importance of gender equality and had gained awareness on girls' rights in the rest of the world.¹⁴⁷ In at least one targeted school, toxic masculinities impeded discussions and learning.¹⁴⁸ See the section on working with boys and men for further analysis.

Agency

PIB had assessed the project's potential to enhance girls and/or young women's agency as high. Data collection suggests it is **meeting its ambition in that regard, at least with youth from more privileged backgrounds**. COC Club and YAP (Memorandum) participants referenced above as having gained substantial insight and knowledge on gender inequalities in Belgium and in third countries, as well as confidence to speak up with peers on toxic gender behaviours and disparities are all university level students.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴¹ KII 1, Project staff, Belgium

¹⁴² KII 1, Project staff, Belgium

¹⁴³ KII 8, Project Volunteer, Belgium; FGD 4, Project Volunteers, Belgium; FGD 5, Teachers, Belgium

¹⁴⁴ KII 8, Project Volunteer, Belgium; FGD 4, Project Volunteers, Belgium; KII 1, Project staff, Belgium

¹⁴⁵ FGD 5, Teachers, Belgium

¹⁴⁶ FGD 2, CAY, Belgium; FGD 3, CAY, Belgium; KII 7, CAY, Belgium

¹⁴⁷ FGD 6, CAY, Belgium

¹⁴⁸ FGD 5, Teachers, Belgium

¹⁴⁹ FGD 2, CAY, Belgium; FGD 3, CAY, Belgium; KII 7, CAY, Belgium

The project did not fully meet its agency ambition with marginalised groups. While it is positive that they were given the opportunity to meet high level decision makers, data collection notes that they were un(der)prepared as they onboarded late, benefitted from less support - whilst needing more, and more tailored support. There is a need to develop tailored activities to engage marginalised groups and build their agency.¹⁵⁰ (See the previous section for a full analysis on this.)

Work with boys and men

The project has a high potential of mobilising boys and young men to act for gender equality, positive masculinities and inclusion. Data collection has however indicated that **challenges persist in meeting that ambition**. Whilst the project seems to succeed in increasing awareness and knowledge about gender equality and inclusion with young men it works with frequently, their numbers are extremely limited (one male YAP member, one male political leader) and the programme struggles to mobilise male participants (cf. quantitative data in Section 4.2.1). The reason for this is that the four relevant ministers for engagement were all female at the time of project implementation and that one of the campaigns was specifically targeting female leaders. Qualitative data collection suggests that the project fails to have a similar lasting impact on secondary school age boys, mainly due to the ad-hoc nature of activities in schools (Educational Volunteers) and/or challenges related to gender power dynamics and conservative mindsets within student groups (Gender Schools). Specifically, the Gender School model of mandatory classes is problematic as young men are being included in the activity who do not want to be there. This can create significant disruption and detract from the important content, making it less impactful for those who are interested in the topic or open to hearing and learning about new perspectives. Mobilising and engaging with the latter group would be more effective as an entry point to behaviour change on this topic. Once this first step has been taken, a second step of peer education with those who hold extremely conservative mindsets may be a more effective approach.

Data collected is insufficient to draw conclusions on the impact of wider public campaigns on the male public. In addition, it is noteworthy that participants did generally not mention any of PIB's work on masculinities. Suggestions to address these challenges include organising male only sessions, engaging more male volunteers.¹⁵¹

Condition and position

PIB has assessed the 'Lead for Rights' project's potential to improve equality of the conditions of CAY in families and communities and the position of girls and/or young women as high. Specifically, the project's objective is to address gender barriers by advocating for children's and girls' rights, and gender equality in international solidarity and SDGs. Whilst the project does not directly respond to the daily needs of CAY in families and communities, through its advocacy towards decision makers, it does actively contribute to ensuring international policy and programming take into consideration meeting these needs in third countries. In addition, the project actively contributes to enhancing leadership skills of young women in Belgium and third countries, to creating spaces for their voices to be heard through targeted youth led advocacy and campaigns.

Diversity

Diversity is a challenge for the project. It had also identified its potential in this area as medium. Activities include CAY from different language, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. The project has proactively included one group of vulnerable/excluded young people (namely young people from recent, often traumatic migration backgrounds) in their activities, however with mixed results (see Section 4.2.2). The project team also noted that very limited efforts have been made to include people with

¹⁵⁰ KII 4, Local partner, Belgium

¹⁵¹ FGD 2, CAY, Belgium; FGD 6, CAY, Belgium; Bridge Workshop

disabilities; and that the gender discourse is binary, and thus non-inclusive of **gender non-conforming people**. For example, PI is heavily associated with girls and not as focused on boys of non-binary genders, and all reporting of data monitoring and disaggregation by gender in binary. Suggestions have been made in the recommendations and Section 4.2.2 of this report on how to increase diversity. The Bridge Workshop also brought to light the specific challenges in mobilising vulnerable youths for PIB's new international solidarity approach as opposed to PIB's local work in which socio-economically marginalised youths see a stronger direct impact on their daily lives and challenges.

Enabling environment

As stated by the GTM, the project works with schools to train teachers on GE&I. It further works with policy makers to raise their awareness to enable gender equality and inclusion in international solidarity. The project has a specific objective aimed at creating an enabling environment for youth mobilisation, children's and girls' rights and gender equality in international solidarity. It has met or **exceeded expectations** in that area through Schools for Rights, seminars and conferences attended by NGOs, youth organisations and policy makers, and policy makers taking position in favour of youth participation on Belgium's external relations. It has however **struggled to promote structural youth participation** in decision making around international solidarity.

Training and capacity strengthening related to gender and inclusion

Overall, youth who received direct capacity building from PIB report to have **enhanced their knowledge on gender discrimination and equality, as well as their attitudes** (cf. Section 4.2.2). Participants in the Memorandum report increased awareness on non-binary gender definitions, increased inclusion and general confidence to speak up about those issues.¹⁵² One CAY participant rated their level of knowledge of gender equality in Belgium and around the world before and after joining the YAP as having evolved from 1-2/10 to 6-7/10.¹⁵³ Generally, CAY appreciated the balance between theoretical and practical learning methodologies, peer learning, and the fact that subjects were addressed in a clear manner, providing just enough detail without overcomplicating.¹⁵⁴

Whilst they consider these topics were addressed throughout other training and working sessions, participants in the MOU activity from **Benin reported to not have received training on gender and inclusion related issues**. Overall, the areas in which they report to have gained knowledge and skills relate to leadership and youth participation in decision making processes.¹⁵⁵

Data collection from the targeted **Gender School** reports that the **training received by teachers** was very well documented and very well put together. They appreciated the interactive dimension. They however also reported that it felt intense. They learnt a lot and felt confident delivering the training to students, particularly organising a dedicated gender session with students. Elements that they found useful include films, exercises, case studies, and gender sensitive class management. They however had unmet expectations with regards to tools and methodologies to integrate gender discussions in regular classes. This was particularly the case for colleagues who teach sciences versus social subjects. They further report being more aware of gender dynamics, but also of the decline in tolerance amongst young people. Whilst they see the added value and impact of such sessions, they also see a need to adapt the methodologies to anticipate toxic masculinity and conservative push back. In this context, it is noteworthy that they reported that positive and negative masculinities had not been part of the PI Gender School curriculum.¹⁵⁶ Other adult participants had suggested to integrate gender as one topic within a larger session on well-being, social skills, etc., to hold longer sessions (as opposed to a

¹⁵² FGD 2, CAY, Belgium

¹⁵³ KII 7, CAY, Belgium

¹⁵⁴ KII 7, CAY, Belgium; FGD 2, CAY, Belgium; FGD 3, CAY, Belgium

¹⁵⁵ FGD 1, CAY, Benin

¹⁵⁶ FGD 5, Teachers, Belgium

series of short sessions in the case of the Gender Schools) that allows time to create a safe space and ease into the sensitive topic, and/or organise separate sessions for boys and girls.¹⁵⁷ Gender School teachers noted that - whilst the activity had enhanced students' awareness on gender inequalities, GBV, sexual and reproductive rights - direct, interpersonal meeting and exchanges of experiences with young people from third countries had a stronger impact on Belgian students than the formal longer activities.¹⁵⁸ Adult participants (**Gender School teachers, Educational Volunteers**) confirm that, overall, students that received training or awareness sessions have gained knowledge and understanding of gender issues. They unanimously underline the (increasing) need to continue gender awareness raising among youth in Belgium.¹⁵⁹

Even young people who have not benefited from direct training but participated in more short-term targeted activities like **campaigns** report to better understand the importance of gender equality and to adopt more gender equitable behaviours, as well as to have gained awareness on girls' rights around the world.¹⁶⁰

5.2.4. Conclusions

The midterm evaluation highlights **significant progress against most indicators, and even overperforming on most of them**. However, some points of attention remain.

PIB has done particularly well on advocacy and influencing of policy makers. They benefited from a favourable political environment, but they have also shown that they are able to build and maintain key linkages and a strong reputation as an expert organisation on both children's rights and CAY participation. Their approaches to engage decision makers are successful, most particularly creating opportunities for policy makers to receive lived experiences and recommendations directly from CAY, both from Belgium and partner countries. Part of that success can be attributed to the solid preparation of youth who directly engage in advocacy. This includes training methodologies that prove effective to build not only young people's knowledge on gender and international solidarity, but also their self-esteem and leadership skills. In addition, the trajectory to co-create recommendations has had a solid impact on young people from both Belgium and the partner country. While successful, it might however not be the most cost-efficient approach to influence decision makers. Policy makers do indeed indicate that their participation in other events organised by PIB in which they had the opportunity to meet CAY from Belgium and partner countries were equally impactful to attract their attention on key issues related to gender in international solidarity.

One of the key challenges of the project in Belgium, however, remains Plan's ability to make youth participation systematic. One explanation is related to the fact that priority was given to influence political priorities in view of the national elections in 2024. PIB benefits from a key influencer position with Enabel, the development agency of the Belgian federal government, implementing Belgium's international development policy. Enabel is on its own strategic pathway to enhancing youth engagement and participation in their decision making. PIB therefore has a key opportunity to influence structural youth participation from 2025 onwards.

The second key challenge for the project is PIB's ability to mobilise young people, particularly young men and marginalised/vulnerable CAY. With the 'Lead for Rights' outcome, the project aimed to initiate two important shifts in the way PIB operates: i) increasing youths' voices in PIB's advocacy and campaigning work, ii) the introduction of a 'new narrative', in which PIB tries to mobilise Belgian young people to advocate for global issues and international solidarity. The latter especially has proven more challenging than expected. This is in part due to a national refocusing of societal debates in a

¹⁵⁷ KII 8, Project Volunteer, Belgium; FGD 4, Project Volunteers, Belgium; FGD 5, Teachers, Belgium

¹⁵⁸ FGD 5, Teachers, Belgium

¹⁵⁹ KII 8, Project Volunteer, Belgium; FGD 4, Project Volunteers, Belgium; FGD 5, Teachers, Belgium

¹⁶⁰ FGD 6, CAY, Belgium

context of political and social crises, as well as to a regression on values of tolerance and open-mindedness among youth.¹⁶¹ In this context, it is particularly challenging to mobilise young people on issues related to international solidarity as opposed to local priorities. This however indicates a strong need to continue to raise CAY awareness on gender and international solidarity issues, as well as a need to diversify mobilisation strategies - notably by increasing collaboration with structures actively engaged in (vulnerable) youth work.

¹⁶¹ Leçons apprises 'Lead for Rights' 2022, Plan International Belgium; Leçons apprises 'Lead for Rights' 2023, Plan International Belgium; Rapport narratif 2022, Programme DGD 2022-2026, Plan International Belgique

5.3. Bolivia Analysis

In Bolivia, the DGD Programme is implemented under the name EMPODERA-T. EMPODERA-T was launched in July 2022 after experiencing severe delays due to the country's political and economic crisis. The project is implemented in the department of Santa Cruz – within the municipalities of El Torno, Cabezas and Buena Vista – and La Paz – within the municipalities of Santiago de Huata, Pucarani and Achacachi. The project involves two implementing partners: Fundacion Trabajo Empresa in the department of Santa Cruz and FAUTAPO in the department of La Paz. Implementation is complementary between the two partners – whose programmatic focus is entrepreneurship and employment preparation - and Plan International Bolivia (PIB) who provides life skills training. The synergy between activities under the “habilidades para la vida” (life skills) and “espíritu emprendedor” (entrepreneurial spirit) components contributed to empower participants to explore their ambitions and have equipped them with essential entrepreneurial skills and practical knowledge for business development. More information on the outcome and result areas can be found in the Context section, Annex 2: Country ToC, and Project Overview Table 1.

5.3.1. Progress against logframe targets

This section integrates qualitative and quantitative data collected during the mid-term evaluation to describe the project's progress and challenges against the mid-term logframe targets. Data from the quantitative study were used across KIs and the Bridge Workshop to identify specific gaps and challenges in achieving the project objectives for discussion. The project logframe is also annexed to this report.

The programme has shown mixed progress in achieving its outcome. Key achievements include increased social empowerment and positive shifts in knowledge regarding gender equality and sexual and reproductive health. However, challenges persist, such as discrepancies in employment and entrepreneurship data, as well as barriers to sustainable entrepreneurship and limited life skills confidence among participants. Despite these hurdles, the programme has made significant strides in engaging youth networks and increasing access to local protection services, indicating a foundation for continued progress toward the endline targets.

During the Bridge Workshop, concerns were raised about the reliability of the data collected for indicators SOYI1.1.2, SOYO1.3.1, and SOYO1.3.2 due to significant data collection challenges, including widespread road blockades. The *Summary of the Quantitative Evaluation* document, shared by the programme coordinator, notes that the findings were unreliable because the sample of respondents was not representative. It included both CAY participating in the project and others attending partner or PIB-based activities.¹⁶²

Outcome: Adolescents and young people, especially adolescents and young women (15-24 years old), benefit from vocational training and life skills, improving their opportunities for economic and social empowerment, with resilience, gender equality, and inclusion in environments free from discrimination, exploitation, and violence.

At the midline stage, the program has demonstrated mixed progress toward its intended outcomes, with notable successes in some areas and significant underachievement in others. Notably, the quantitative study encountered several logistical issues, which resulted in indicators SOYI1.1.1 and SOYI1.1.2 being miscalculated and not entirely reliable.

¹⁶² Proyecto Empodera-T: Resumido Resultado Indicadores. Evaluación Media Cuantitativa.

Table 15: Indicator achievement for Bolivia Outcome

Impact Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
% of youth (both sexes) in salaried employment within 6 months after training (SOYI1.1.1)	Total: 0% Men: 0% Women: 0%	Total: 14.3% Men: 13% Women: 15%	MISCALCULATED Total: 14.55% Men: 14 Women: 15.10%	Total: 20% Men: 17% Women: 22%
% of youth (both sexes) with an operational business of their own within 6 months after training (SOYI1.1.2)	Total: 0% Men: 0% Women: 0%	Total: 46% Men: 40% Women: 55%	MISCALCULATED Total: 14.25% Men: 6.7% Women: 21.80%	Total: 63.3% Men: 69% Women: 60%
% of adolescents and youth reporting a high degree of social empowerment to promote gender equality and inclusion (LDI)	Total: 10.1% Men: 9.38% Women: 10.73%	Total: 51.4% Men: 48% Women: 55%	Total: 45.5% Men: 46.60% Women: 44.40%	Total: 68.27% Men: 65% Women: 70%
# of civil society and state leaders and decision-makers who promote social norms to provide a protective environment for adolescents and youth (LDI)	29	43	28	63
% of adolescents and youth who perceive that local protection services provide them with quality and care (LDI)	Total: 6.03% Men: 5.63 % Women: 6.34%	Total: 36.4% Men: 30% Women: 40%	Total: 55.4% Men: 58.9% Women: 51.90%	Total: 46.4% Men: 40% Women: 50%

For indicator SOYI1.1.1, the overall employment rate had allegedly reached 41.5 per cent (compared to the 14.3 per cent target), with both men and women achieving the expected rates. However, the partners' summary of the quantitative study suggests that **the data may not be entirely reliable**, as participants had not completed the training process and, therefore, did not hold salaried employment as a direct result of the Project.¹⁶³

Similarly, the proportion of youth who have successfully established their own operational businesses within six months after training (indicator SOYI1.1.2) might have been miscalculated. While the midline target was set at 46 per cent, actual results reveal a stark disparity, with only 6.7 per cent of men and 21.8 per cent of women reporting having a business. This shortfall highlights critical barriers to entrepreneurship, such as limited access to capital, mentorship, or market opportunities, which require urgent attention to meet the ambitious endline target of 63.3 per cent. However, also in this case, the partners' summary of the quantitative study suggests that these figures should be interpreted with caution. In some cases, the data may be misleading. For instance, in **Santiago de Huata**, most participants are likely self-employed, but not as a direct result of the Project's training. Furthermore, as of the evaluation date, there were **no young entrepreneurs in Santiago de Huata** who had been trained by the Project.¹⁶⁴

The percentage of adolescents and youth reporting a high degree of social empowerment to promote gender equality and inclusion has increased substantially compared to the baseline but did not meet the midline target, though the gap is not massive. While an improvement from the baseline figures is evident, the results — 46.6 per cent for men and 44.4 per cent for women—almost reach the expected midline values (48 per cent and 55 per cent, respectively). In the quantitative study, it is noted that 10 per cent (37) of the 365 respondents report having a high degree of social empowerment and being active promoters of gender equality and inclusion. 18 per cent (67) demonstrate a moderate level of empowerment, meaning they are familiar with this approach and apply

¹⁶³ Proyecto Empodera-T: Resumed Resultado Indicadores. Evaluacion Media Cuantitativa.

¹⁶⁴ Proyecto Empodera-T: Resumed Resultado Indicadores. Evaluacion Media Cuantitativa.

it occasionally due to a partial understanding of the topic. Most respondents, 72 per cent (261), are unfamiliar with this approach and, therefore, neither practice nor promote it.¹⁶⁵

The number of decision-makers involved in promoting social norms that support a protective environment for youth is 28 at the midline. These include 15 (51.72 per cent) are authorities from Municipal Governments, 2 (6.89 per cent) are National Authorities, 6 (20.68 per cent) are local educational authorities, and 5 (20.68 per cent) are representatives of local economic production units.¹⁶⁶

The proportion of youth who feel that local protection services provide quality care has surpassed expectations, reaching 58.9 per cent for men and 51.9 per cent for women—both exceeding their midline targets of 30 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively. This is a strong indication that interventions aimed at enhancing service accessibility and responsiveness have been effective and are well-received by beneficiaries. **Notwithstanding these achievements, the qualitative data collection reveals that a notable challenge persists in ensuring participants fully understand and effectively utilise mechanisms for protection from violence.** During FGDs, participants expressed dissatisfaction with the responsiveness of these services. One participant from Buena Vista remarked, “You go there, and they don’t do anything.”¹⁶⁷

Result 1: Adolescents and young people, especially women, with technical/technological and organisational skills to manage their own economic ventures and/or secure decent employment.

Result 1, has shown notable progress at the mid-term stage, although some areas still require attention to fully achieve the set targets.

Table 16: Indicator achievement for Bolivia Result 1

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
% of young people (of all genders) who demonstrate entrepreneurial skills at the end of the training (SOYO1.1.2)	Total: 0% Men: 0% Women: 0%	Total: 42.6% Men: 42.8% Women: 42.5%	Total:26.55% Men: 28.10% Women: 28%	Total:77.6 Men: 77.87% Women: 77.38%
% of young people who have sought self-employment 6 months after training (SOYO1.3.1)	Total: 0% Men: 0% Women: 0%	Total: 18% Men: 20% Women: 15%	Total: 21% Men: 20.20% Women: 21.8%	Total: 26% Men: 20% Women: 30%
% of young people who have sought salaried employment 6 months after training (SOYO1.3.2)	Total: 0% Men: 0% Women: 0%	Total: 13.2% Men: 10% Women: 15%	MISCALCULATED Total: 21% Men: 20.20% Women: 21.8%	Total: 23.2% Men: 20% Women: 25%
# of adolescent/young mothers who have income-generating economic initiatives to improve their quality of life and that of their children and who make decisions about the use of their earnings (LDI)	0	16	16	24
% of young people (of all genders) who demonstrate vocational competencies at the end of the training (SOYO1.1.3)	Total: 0% Men: 0% Women: 0%	Total: 55% Men: 61% Women: 51.56%	Total:38.5% Men: 34.30% Women: 41.8%	Total: 82.76% Men: 84% Women: 84%

¹⁶⁵ Reinventarse. (July 2023). Medición de Indicadores del Proyecto EMPODERA-T.

¹⁶⁶ Reinventarse. (July 2023). Medición de Indicadores del Proyecto EMPODERA-T.

¹⁶⁷ FGD 4, Girls, Buena Vista, Bolivia

For indicator SOYO1.1.2, the mid-term result indicates that only 26.55 per cent of young people demonstrated entrepreneurial skills, with men at 28.10 per cent and women at 28 per cent. Although progress is evident, the results fall short of the target, suggesting the need for further efforts to foster entrepreneurial skills among participants, particularly considering the ambitious end-term target of 77.6 per cent.

Regarding self-employment (SOYO1.3.1), the mid-term result surpasses this target, with 21 per cent of young people seeking self-employment. Men achieved 20.20 per cent, and women reached 21.8 per cent, exceeding the mid-term targets for all groups. This is a positive indicator of success in promoting self-employment, with a solid foundation to reach the end-term target of 26 per cent, especially for women, who are expected to reach 30 per cent.

During qualitative data collection, several respondents highlighted that contextual challenges have posed notable obstacles to promoting sustainable entrepreneurship and employment opportunities for project participants. **34 per cent of participants in the quantitative studies considered access to initial capital as the central challenge hindering their engagement in entrepreneurship.**¹⁶⁸ Although the project provides seed capital, many participants in the FGDs mentioned that they still rely on their families for financial support to launch or sustain their businesses. This challenge was also highlighted by the project's staff, with a key informant mentioning: "Participants are being trained and supported with resources to strengthen their entrepreneurial initiatives achieving the goals in terms of technical training, yet there's still some progress needed in entrepreneurship, but efforts are being made to meet the targets before the project ends."¹⁶⁹ Nonetheless, it was noted by the project coordinator that PIB will take into account the possibility to increase the amount of seed capital assigned.¹⁷⁰

For salaried employment (SOYO1.3.2), the mid-term result exceeded this target, with 21 per cent of young people seeking salaried employment. Men reached 20.20 per cent, and women reached 21.8 per cent, indicating that the project is effectively promoting salaried employment opportunities. This positive result suggests that the project is on track to meet the end-term target. However, as for indicators, **SOYI1.1.1 and SOYI1.1.2**, the partners highlight that the data is not representative of the Project, as at the time of data collection employability training processes were just beginning and participants likely misunderstood the tool while filling it out.¹⁷¹ In the summary, it is also noted that, despite the availability of private-sector job opportunities identified by the Project, it was observed that adolescents and youth show little interest in salaried employment. This may be due to their expectations of earning higher incomes abroad or through starting their own businesses.¹⁷²

The bridge workshop brought out reflections on contextual barriers to youth employment and how these impacted the project's initial objectives. A workshop participant noted that it is extremely complicated for young people to **secure loans**, due to their absence of collateral.¹⁷³ Another participant also noted that **the low wages offered by formal employment further motivate participants to pursue entrepreneurship rather than looking for a job**: "Our adolescents start their own businesses because salaries are very low."¹⁷⁴ Similar insights were highlighted across FGDs, where participants remarked that women are particularly affected by this issue. For example, one girl in Cabeza mentioned: "I want to study business administration, but it's difficult to find a job and if you find one you are a secretary and if you are a secretary you are still paid lower than a man."¹⁷⁵ These discussions provided

¹⁶⁸ Reinventarse. (July 2023). Medición de Indicadores del Proyecto EMPODERA-T.

¹⁶⁹ KII 1, Project Staff, Bolivia

¹⁷⁰ Comment to the draft report

¹⁷¹ Proyecto Empodera-T: Resumed Resultado Indicadores. Evaluacion Media Cuantitativa.

¹⁷² Proyecto Empodera-T: Resumed Resultado Indicadores. Evaluacion Media Cuantitativa.

¹⁷³ Bridge Workshop, Bolivia

¹⁷⁴ Bridge Workshop, Bolivia

¹⁷⁵ FGD 5, Girls, Cabeza, Bolivia

a nuanced understanding of the barriers faced by youth, especially young women, revealing how financial and social constraints shape their employment and educational opportunities.

The project has met the target of having 16 mothers now involved in initiatives to improve their own quality of life and that of their children. This is a promising outcome, and the project is on track to meet the end-term target of 24 mothers. The qualitative evaluation found that **schools have been crucial platforms for the project to involve participants across these activities and disseminate learning on GBV and gender equality.** In particular, the work within the school has been focused on generating awareness about how to prevent early pregnancies. For example, a girl from Cabeza shared:, “In secondary school, I had a classmate who became a mother but now, thanks to the activities of Plan there are less people because now we receive sexual education workshops.”¹⁷⁶ One of the authorities interviewed mentioned that these themes were not initially welcomed: “When the topic was first introduced, people laughed because it touched on things like the emotional responses, clothing colours, and participation opportunities for men and women but now, most people in high school see the value and want to learn more.”¹⁷⁷ **A key focus of the program has been including young mothers, with 24 women with children recorded as participants.** However, the qualitative evaluation highlights the need to extend outreach beyond schools to better engage young women who are out of school or have dropped out. One implementing partner emphasized this, stating, “Our efforts have focused on schools, but we need to work outside of them. That’s where we find young women who have dropped out or aren’t engaged in any activities. If we empower them and show them the benefits, the project will have a greater impact.”¹⁷⁸ **However, during the validation workshop, it was noted that efforts are being made to engage the out- of-school populations.**¹⁷⁹

Lastly, in terms of vocational competencies (SOYO1.1.3) the mid-term result shows 38.5 per cent overall, with men at 34.30 per cent and women at 41.80 per cent. While progress is evident, the results fall slightly short of the target, particularly for men. The project will need to intensify efforts to ensure that vocational competencies meet the end-term target of 82.76 per cent overall, with 84 per cent for both men and women.

Result 2: Adolescents and young people, especially women, with developed life skills and organisational capacities, make informed decisions to prevent unwanted pregnancies and influence the exercise of their rights and a life free from violence

Result 2, shows strong progress in some areas but requires continued attention in others to meet the mid-term and end-term targets. Three out of four indicators were achieved at the mid-term and one (SRHO1.1.1) has nearly achieved its end-term target.

Table 17: Indicator achievement for Bolivia Result 2

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
% of adolescents and young people who report being socially empowered to strengthen their agency in decision-making spaces (LEAO1.1.1)	Total: 5.75 Men: 4.83% Women: 6.83%	Total:45% Men: 44.9% Women: 48.87%	Total: 47.15% Men: 48.30% Women: 46%	Total: 72.94% Men: 70% Women: 75.98%
# and quality of individual and joint actions by youth organizations (LEAO1.3.2)	0	12	17	24
% of adolescents and young people who report having greater knowledge and a favorable stance on gender equality, inclusion, and	Total: 11.78% Men:12.5%	Total:40% Men:40% Women:40%	Total: 58.15% Men:57.30% Women:59%	Total: 55% Men: 55% Women: 55%

¹⁷⁶ FGD 5, Girls, Cabeza, Bolivia

¹⁷⁷ KII 5, Authority, Bolivia

¹⁷⁸ KII 6, Authority, Bolivia

¹⁷⁹ Validation workshop, Bolivia

protection against violence	Women: 11.22%			
% of NNAJ (children and adolescents) with correct knowledge of key SRHR topics (SRHO1.1.1)	Total: 5.21% Men: 6.25% Women: 4.39%	Total: 38.2% Men: 35% Women: 40%	Total: 63.75 Men: 67.4% Women: 65.30%	Total: 64.9% Men: 70% Women: 62%
% of young people (of all genders) who report feeling confident in their life skills at the end of the training (SOYO1.1.1)	Total: 0% Men: 0% Women: 0%	Total: 40% Men: 35% Women: 45%	Total: 23.1% Men: 24.20% Women: 20.10%	Total: 59.6% Men: 50% Women: 65%

In terms of social empowerment (LEAO1.1.1), the mid-term result has exceeded expectations, with 47.15 per cent overall, 48.30 per cent for men, and 46 per cent for women. This indicates significant progress in strengthening the agency of young people in decision-making spaces, and the project is on track to meet the end-term target of 72.94 per cent, particularly for women, who are expected to reach 75.98 per cent.

Youth networks also play an essential role in skill development and advocacy, with 17 networks identified as integral to the project's reach. This reflects the project's success in fostering the organizational capacities of youth groups, positioning it well to achieve the end-term target of 24 actions. This was also confirmed across qualitative data. In Santa Cruz, the youth network in El Torno is well-established, while those in Cabeza and Buena Vista are currently working on strengthening their structure and ensuring greater continuity.¹⁸⁰ In the district of La Paz, the legacy of previous Plan projects and a well-established organizational structure have strengthened the youth networks.¹⁸¹ Project staff noted that young networks are a crucial platform to disseminate knowledge about pathways of protection from violence: "Across youth networks, leaders are aware of the pathways for reporting violence and they are responsible for showing their peers."¹⁸² In La Paz, another staff member added: "Young people are aware of the official pathways to access public services through Plan's focal points for protection. Parents, teachers, and authorities are also familiar with these mechanisms."¹⁸³

For knowledge and attitudes toward gender equality, inclusion, and protection against violence, the mid-term target was 40 per cent overall, with the same target for men and women. **The mid-term result indicates a favourable increase, with 58.15 per cent overall, 57.30 per cent for men, and 59 per cent for women.** This demonstrates substantial progress in shaping positive attitudes toward gender equality and protection, surpassing the mid-term target, and suggesting that the project will likely meet the end-term target of 55 per cent.

In terms of knowledge of key sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) topics (SRHO1.1.1), the mid-term target was set at 38.2 per cent overall, with 35 per cent for men and 40 per cent for women. The mid-term results significantly exceeded this target, with 63.75 per cent overall, 67.4 per cent for men, and 65.30 per cent for women. This demonstrates a robust increase in the knowledge of SRHR topics, and the project is well on track to meet the end-term target of 64.9 per cent. This finding is supported by qualitative data. Boys highlighted how they were able to discuss topics that previously they considered taboo. One male participant from El Torno reflected: "Before, we didn't talk about sexuality but now we understand the importance of protecting and supporting women."¹⁸⁴ **Girls in both the districts of La Paz and Santa Cruz highlighted how learning about sexual and reproductive rights impacted their long-term life planning.** As noted by a girl from the district of La Paz: "Personally, the project helped me plan when I can start my family, which could be in five years.

¹⁸⁰ KII 1, Project Staff, Bolivia

¹⁸¹ KII 3, Implementing Partner, Bolivia

¹⁸² KII 1, Project Staff, Bolivia

¹⁸³ KII 3, Implementing Partner, Bolivia

¹⁸⁴ FGD 1, Boys, El Torno, Bolivia

In my community, they helped young women with gender issues.”¹⁸⁵ One girl from the same district also reflected on the concrete impact the project had on her life versus that of her sister: ““My younger sister didn’t participate in the training sessions. Now she has a partner and a 6-year-old daughter. I think that because she didn’t have this guidance, her life is different from mine, while I have plans, I study, and I want to travel and do many things.”¹⁸⁶

For life skills confidence (SOYO1.1.1), the mid-term target was 40 per cent overall, with 35 per cent for men and 45 per cent for women. However, the mid-term result shows 23.1 per cent overall, with men at 24.10 per cent and women at 20.10 per cent, which falls short of the target. This indicates that more work is needed to build young people’s confidence in their life skills to meet the end-term target of 59.6 per cent, particularly for women, who are expected to reach 65 per cent. Nonetheless, observations collected across the qualitative studies question this underachievement. For example, **male participants reported significant improvement in their emotional regulation and decision-making abilities.** A boy from Cabezas reflected, “These two years in the project have taught me not to act impulsively. Now I stay calm and face problems with serenity.”¹⁸⁷ Similarly, another participant from El Torno highlighted how life-skills-focused activities helped him make better decisions, communicate clearly and confidently, and disregard societal judgment, saying, “I’ve learned to focus on what matters and not worry about what others think.”¹⁸⁸ **Boys in El Torno particularly stressed how the project supported them in developing leadership skills, which have been fundamental in their roles across the youth network in their municipality.** A boy shared, “I learned to coordinate with different networks. Now I learned how to plan, organize meetings, follow up, and bring people together.”¹⁸⁹ Another participant noted, “I now understand the difference between being a leader and a boss and how to successfully guide a group.”¹⁹⁰

Female participants highlighted the project helped them develop a stronger sense of agency and self-worth. A girl from Cabezas explained, “I’ve learned to understand that as women, we can achieve things. It has boosted my self-esteem.”¹⁹¹ Another girl from Buena Vista echoed this sentiment, sharing the project helped her “handle life’s challenges and realize that (she) can achieve whatever (she) set my mind to.”¹⁹² **Participants also emphasized growth in empathy and respect.** A boy from El Torno explained, “I’ve become more empathetic. Before, I didn’t listen, but now I do. If someone makes a mistake, it’s okay because we all make mistakes.”¹⁹³ A girl from the same municipality also shared how her perspective on respect has changed: “We didn’t value respect as much before, but with the examples we’ve seen, we’ve learned its importance. We now focus on independence and not tolerating undue control.”¹⁹⁴ A similar perspective was also encountered during the FGD with participants from the Altiplano, where one participant remarked “the project helped me a lot to understand my limits and that of others. I was very rebellious when I was a kid but now, I am more respectful.”¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁵ FGD 6, Mixed participants from La Paz district

¹⁸⁶ FGD 6, Mixed participants from La Paz district

¹⁸⁷ KII 8, young male entrepreneur, Cabeza, Bolivia

¹⁸⁸ FGD, 1, Boys, El Torno, Bolivia

¹⁸⁹ FGD 1, Boys, El Torno, Bolivia

¹⁹⁰ FGD 1, Boys, El Torno, Bolivia

¹⁹¹ FGD 5, Girls, Cabeza, Bolivia

¹⁹² FGD 4, Girls, Buena Vista, Bolivia

¹⁹³ FGD 1, Boys, El Torno, Bolivia

¹⁹⁴ FGD 2, Girls, El Torno, Bolivia

¹⁹⁵ FGD 6, Mixed participants from La Paz district

Result 3: Adolescents and young people have a favourable environment, at different levels of the State and civil society, that is sensitized and promotes and implements norms, public policies, practices, and attitudes in favour of the social and economic rights of adolescents and young people.

Result 3 has seen mixed progress at the mid-term stage. Two out of four indicators were achieved, and one further indicator narrowly missed the mid-term target. An analysis of possible reasons is presented below.

Table 18: Indicator achievement for Bolivia Result 3

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
# Economic opportunities generated for youth, especially women, without any type of discrimination, through agreements established with the private sector. (LDI)	Total: 27	Total: 80	Total: 10¹⁹⁶	Total: 120
# Strengthened community protection mechanisms that implement prevention actions against violence towards adolescents and youth and identify and refer cases of psychological, physical, economic, and commercial and labour sexual exploitation to municipal protection services. (LDI)	10	15	14	20
# Public policies, plans, and programs with resource allocation at different levels of government aimed at generating decent employment and developing gender-transformative entrepreneurship. (LDI)	2	4	8	8
% adolescents and youth having a good perception of the quality of care provided by DNAS, SLIM, and Police protection services. (LDI)	Total: 0% Men: 0% Women: 0%	Total: 16% Men: 7% Women: 9%	Total: 52.20% Men: 59.80% Women: 51.90%	Total: 22% Men: 10% Women: 12%

Regarding the economic opportunities for youth, especially women, the mid-term target was set at 80 opportunities, and the mid-term result is 10¹⁹⁷, falling short of the target. The 10 economic opportunities identified correspond to the 10 agreements established with educational institutions, including Universidad Gabriel René Moreno, IRFA, Instituto Técnico de Buena Vista, and Instituto Técnico de Cabezas in Santa Cruz; and Universidad Católica Boliviana, UAC Batallas, Educación Permanente (EDUPER) de Jesús de Machaca, Tecnológico Jacha Omasuyus, CEA Avichaca and CEA Belén de Achacachi. Additionally, the implementing partners highlighted that agreements were made with institutions of higher and complementary education to certify the training of young people.¹⁹⁸ Looking ahead, they indicated that for the upcoming semesters of the project, new agreements are planned, specifically targeting partnerships with the private sector to further expand employment opportunities.¹⁹⁹

For strengthened community protection mechanisms, the mid-term target was 15, and the mid-term result shows progress, with 14 mechanisms being strengthened. This is still positive progress and

¹⁹⁶ Remark by PI Belgium: This value was later revised. The number of youths who have benefitted from economic opportunities generated for youth through agreements established with the private sector is 66 (50 female and 16 male).

¹⁹⁷ Remark by PI Belgium: This value was later revised. The number of youths who have benefitted from economic opportunities generated for youth through agreements established with the private sector is 66 (50 female and 16 male).

¹⁹⁸ 250305 DGD 22-26 Overview of all Indicators

¹⁹⁹ 250305 DGD 22-26 Overview of all Indicators

suggests that the project is on track to meet its end-term target of 20, assuming continued support for local protection services and a sustained focus on prevention actions. The Bridge Workshop also provided insights into **the effectiveness of community protection mechanisms**. One of the key challenges identified is that **these mechanisms are not always respected or recognized as authoritative figures within their communities**. In the case of promoters working in very remote areas, members of community-based protection mechanisms often lack the resources or means to travel to populated centres to report cases or escalate complaints to formal authorities.²⁰⁰

While improvement was recorded, **discussions during the bridge workshop revealed several challenges that limit their impact and effectiveness**. One major issue raised was the frequent turnover of child protection authorities, which disrupts continuity and erodes trust within communities.²⁰¹ It was also noted that authorities often adopt an intimidating and punitive style when addressing adolescents and youth, further straining relationships. Workshop participants also highlighted that many cases of violence fail to progress due to a history of poor management and unresolved issues. Finally, it was highlighted that municipal governments struggle to address the needs of numerous communities due to insufficient staff and budgetary constraints.²⁰² These limitations create significant gaps in service delivery and prevent the mechanisms from functioning effectively. Despite the presence of these protection mechanisms, substantial efforts are needed to formalize their operations, strengthen their capacity, and foster greater community engagement to ensure sustainable outcomes.²⁰³

In the area of public policies, plans, and programs aimed at generating decent employment and developing gender-transformative entrepreneurship, the mid-term target was set at 4, and the project has already exceeded this target, with 8 policies or plans in place. This is a significant achievement and positions the project well to meet the end-term target, as it has already reached the planned number.

During qualitative data collection, it was noted that **the political volatility in Bolivia has presented significant challenges for the achievement of this indicator**. During the Bridge Workshop, implementing partners noted that the project was initially designed during a period when there were promising employment opportunities, thanks to the introduction of a policy called *Mi Primer Empleo Digno* (My First Decent Job), which was expected to support youth in gaining work experience.²⁰⁴ Unfortunately, this policy was in place until 2022, the year in which the project began, and then it was discontinued, creating a considerable gap in the project's ability to rely on government schemes that could have supported youth employment.

Despite these setbacks, the project has made progress, particularly in fostering collaboration between various actors. Implementing partners and the public and educational sector actors interviewed emphasized **the importance of the synergy created among the different stakeholders involved in the project**. Both project staff and implementing partners defined the work with authorities as in progress and slowly but steadily leading to results. An implementing partner highlighted their experience in "establishing municipal laws and strengthening the economic ecosystem,"²⁰⁵ a crucial aspect of the project's long-term success. The partner explained how they have worked to build the capacity of young people to engage with municipal entrepreneurship laws: "In the municipalities where we are working, we have started by building the capacity for young people to take ownership of having

²⁰⁰ Bridge Workshop, Bolivia

²⁰¹ Bridge Workshop, Bolivia

²⁰² Bridge workshop, Bolivia

²⁰³ Bridge Workshop, Bolivia

²⁰⁴ KII 3, Implementing Partner, Bolivia

²⁰⁵ KII 2, Implementing Partner, Bolivia

an entrepreneurship law. We have engaged with youth leaders, explained how they can be part of this process, and we have also socialized the idea with mayors.”²⁰⁶

Finally, regarding the perception of the quality of care provided by key protection services (DNAS, SLIM, and Police), the mid-term target was 16 per cent overall, with men at 7 per cent and women at 9 per cent. **The mid-term result shows a slight increase to 22 per cent overall, with men at 10 per cent and women at 12 per cent.** Although this marks a positive change, the project still needs to enhance its outreach and support for protection services to meet the end-term target, which is set at a higher 22 per cent overall.

Result 4: The capacities of implementing partners are strengthened, and joint actions with Belgian NGOs are developed to enhance the economic and social empowerment of adolescents and young people.

Table 19: Indicator achievement for Bolivia Result 4

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
Number of partner organizations that, in the third year, meet at least 50 per cent of the capacity development expectations (defined in the results diary), and in the fourth year, 100 per cent of the expectations and 20 per cent of the desired outcomes.	0	2	N/A	2
Number of new synergies or complementarities with Non-Governmental Cooperation Actors (ACNG) and civil society actors.	0	2	N/A	4

At the time of this evaluation, actual values at midline stage were not yet measured for Result 4. **On a qualitative level, implementing partners noted positive collaboration with PI. They had helped partners formalize processes and improve procurement, administration, financial management, and governance.** Plan's methodologies have strengthened thematic components and create or improve efficient practices.²⁰⁷ One partner noted that adopting PI's policies enabled them to expand their work to include protection and safeguarding for broader beneficiary groups. Both partners also improved gender-responsive practices and integrated the gender marker methodology. As a next step in improving the relationship with Plan, implementing partners identified the need for more flexibility and better support for field teams, suggesting that coordinators should have more exposure to field realities to better understand feasibility.²⁰⁸

During the Bridge workshop, participants thoroughly discussed progress and challenges related to the four results. They engaged in subgroup sessions to develop concrete, impact-oriented action plans focused on three key themes: leadership, SOYEE and protection from violence. The finalized action plans are available in [Annex 8](#) of this report.

5.3.2. Assessment of progress on the AoGD

The AoGD selected for assessment in Bolivia was **Skills and Opportunities for Youth Economic Empowerment** (SOYEE). This choice was driven by the project's strong emphasis on economic empowerment and fostering youth entrepreneurship.

²⁰⁶ KII 2, Implementing Partner, Bolivia

²⁰⁷ KII 2, Implementing Partner, Bolivia; KII 3, Implementing Partner, Bolivia

²⁰⁸ KII 2, Implementing Partner, Bolivia; KII 3, Implementing Partner, Bolivia

What challenges do women face in their environments to find work and in the labor market? How does the project address these?

Women in the municipalities of Cabeza, El Torno and Buena Vista face significant and multifaceted challenges in securing employment and participating in the labor market. One of the primary barriers identified is the **difficulty women experience in finding paid employment**, which often pushes them towards self-employment or entrepreneurship. One participant shared: “For women, it’s harder to find a job, so they tend to focus on staying home or creating their own business.”²⁰⁹ This trend is worse for women who become mothers. As noted by one girl in Buena Vista: “When women have a child, as we are still old-fashioned, they have to stay home, so they choose entrepreneurship to be able to stay with their children.”²¹⁰ As mothers are expected to stay home and care for their children, the need for income makes it easier for them to consider business activities that allow flexible working hours or self-employment.

An interesting insight from the qualitative study was the perception that entrepreneurship is often the only viable option for women seeking income. Even those with higher education degrees face obstacles, as they are frequently overlooked in the hiring process in favor of men. One participant noted: “When in professional fields women are not given jobs, they turn to entrepreneurship. I see this a lot at the university—when they graduate, men are given more jobs than women, which is why women look to entrepreneurship.”²¹¹ **It was also noted by two male participants that a “taboo exists” about the fact that entrepreneurship is something “feminine.”** One participant from El Torno noted: “Sometimes people believe that entrepreneurship is only for women.”²¹² Similarly, a young boy from Buena Vista highlighted the stigma surrounding certain types of businesses: “Entrepreneurship is taboo for men; here, everything related to pastry and coffee is seen as a women’s field.”²¹³

According to the implementing partners the key strategy noted by project staff to address these challenges has been to focus on girls aged 18-24 as the central target groups of entrepreneurship-focused activities as well as **offering them training programmes in non-traditional fields**, such as drone operation, electrical work, and warehouse management, and prioritizing the participation of women to challenge these gender norms. The two objectives of breaking gender norms while guaranteeing training aimed at concrete employment opportunities are complementary in the project. As one project partner noted: “We are motivating women to break these patterns by offering careers that are not traditional for them, such as drone operation, electricity, and warehouse management.”²¹⁴

How does the EMPODERA-T project help young people develop personal and technical skills to encourage them to seek employment/ start their own business?

The project plays a pivotal role in equipping young people with a combination of personal and technical skills with the aim to support them across their personal and professional growth. **FGD participants highlighted that the activities of the project encourage them to identify their talents and career aspirations, helping them gain confidence in their abilities. For boys, the main impact highlighted was on setting their long-term career goals.** For instance, a boy from El Torno shared: “[the project] helped me search for and identify my vocation, what I enjoyed doing.”²¹⁵ Another boy from Cabezas emphasized how creating a business plan expanded his ambitions: “Before, when I didn’t know anything about the project, I only thought about having a small farm with 100 chickens. But after

²⁰⁹ KII 3, Implementing Partner, Bolivia

²¹⁰ FGD 4, Girls, Buena Vista, Bolivia

²¹¹ FGD 6, Mixed participants from La Paz district

²¹² FGD 1, Boys, El Torno, Bolivia

²¹³ FGD 3, Boys, Buena Vista, Bolivia

²¹⁴ KII 1, Project Staff, Bolivia

²¹⁵ FGD 1, Boys, El Torno, Bolivia

making my business plan, my mind opened, and my first goal is to grow 1,000 chickens.”²¹⁶ **Girls, on the other hand, spoke about how the project bolstered their confidence in their entrepreneurial endeavours and taught them practical skills.** A young female entrepreneur from El Torno shared: “They teach you how to communicate, promote, and sell. They help you learn where to buy, who can bring you products more beneficially, and who you can sell your products to.”²¹⁷ A girl from Buena Vista noted how the project’s focus on financial education was transformative for her: “before the project, I didn’t handle my income and expenses well, and there was a time when I couldn’t see any profits. I was investing a lot without making gains.”²¹⁸ Bolivia Another participant mentioned the importance of financial literacy for managing her business: “For me, financial education, offers, profits, communicating with customers, and recommending products according to their needs were very helpful.” The emphasis on financial literacy and customer engagement equipped girls with the confidence to manage their businesses effectively and meet client needs.

The project’s approach also included practical, hands-on activities that equipped participants with technical skills directly applicable to starting or growing a business. These activities varied by community, targeting opportunities suited to each area and identified in the labour market analysis conducted at the start of the programme. For instance, in Buena Vista, participants attended bartender workshops; in Cabezas, they gained skills in phone repair; and in El Torno, apiculture was a significant focus. As highlighted by an implementing partner, these skills were specifically designed to align with potential job opportunities in the municipalities: “For example, the municipality of Buena Vista has 40 different places that could be cafés, and people are investing in coffee centers. Just around the main square, there are 6 or 7. This gives participants a real chance to work there.”²¹⁹ **The project’s life-skills component was also fundamental to complement technical skills.** For example, a participant from Buena Vista shared: “Life skills helped me a lot. I apply it in my personal life. I attend to my customers myself; now I express myself better. I used to be shy. I took customer service and barista training, and I applied barista skills at home, in a casual way.”²²⁰ This shows how the project’s life skills component not only fostered business acumen but also enhanced participants’ self-confidence and interpersonal skills, contributing to their personal growth.

While showing a high satisfaction with activities, some young entrepreneurs expressed the desire to do more interactive activities that could enable them to see how other entrepreneurs work in the country and beyond. Several of the young entrepreneurs attending the focus groups referred to one initiative where they visited a business fair, highlighting they would want to do more there. Others referred to an online meeting with young entrepreneurs involved in the same project in Ecuador: “It was so interesting to see how other young people are working on the same themes and we could learn so much from one another.”²²¹ As noted by one girl in Cabeza “events like this one would help us increase our knowledge to have exchanges with other entrepreneurs who were small and are now bigger. It would help a lot, even to associate with entrepreneurs from other countries.”²²²

While the project specifically prioritized empowering young girls through entrepreneurship, boys expressed feelings of exclusion. Although they took part in various workshops and activities aimed at enhancing life skills and building confidence, most participants involved in entrepreneurial-focused activities were girls. Boys mentioned that, despite their interest in entrepreneurship training, they often felt overlooked or were unaware of these opportunities. For instance, two boys in El Torno shared their passion for cooking and expressed a strong desire to participate in programmes that could help them start their own cooking businesses. Male participants noted that although the project

²¹⁶ KII 8, young male entrepreneur, Cabeza, Bolivia

²¹⁷ FGD 2, Girls, El Torno, Bolivia

²¹⁸ FGD 4, Girls, Buena Vista

²¹⁹ KII 2, Implementing Partner, Bolivia

²²⁰ FGD 4, Girls, Buena Vista

²²¹ FGD 2, Girls, El Torno, Bolivia

²²² FGD 5, Girls, Cabeza, Bolivia

contributed to challenging the stigma that “entrepreneurship is for women,” it did not provide the same opportunities for boys to pursue entrepreneurship independently.²²³ A majority of boys interviewed across the three municipalities of Santa Cruz, were unaware of the entrepreneurship programme or that they could be considered for it. However, due to the small sample size of boys taking part in the FGDs, these findings cannot be considered representative or generalisable.

To what extent does the provision of seed capital help young entrepreneurs to achieve their goals for their business?

The provision of seed capital has played a crucial role in supporting young entrepreneurs, and particularly young women starting and improving their businesses. While both project staff and participants agreed that seed capital alone is not sufficient for long-term success, the evaluation confirmed that it does serve as a significant motivator for young people to pursue and sustain their entrepreneurial ventures. **Young female entrepreneurs highlighted how seed capital provided them with the means to enhance their business operations.** For example, a participant in El Torno shared, “I saw that seed capital was being given to young people, and I saw it as an opportunity to generate my own income.”²²⁴ This motivation was further supported by the availability of leadership and values workshops, which participants noted encouraged them to act and pursue their goals with confidence.

In particular, the seed capital facilitated the purchase of essential equipment, significantly improving the efficiency and scale of businesses. In El Torno, one entrepreneur shared: “Before, I made my preparations with a manual mixer and would end up very tired. With the seed capital, I was able to buy an electric mixer, which saved me time.”²²⁵ Similarly, in Cabezas, a participant owning a baking business highlighted: “The seed capital allowed me to buy a mixer, blender, and moulds, which made my work easier.”²²⁶ Another entrepreneur in Cabezas, who produces soy-based products, noted that the seed capital helped her purchase a freezer, enhancing her product storage capabilities. In Buena Vista, a honey producer mentioned, “With the seed capital, we improved our boxes, each holding six hives that produce 20 kilos every three months.”²²⁷

However, challenges related to the use of seed capital also emerged. On the one hand, a majority of participants highlighted that the seed capital is not enough and that, on several occasions, they still need to rely on parent or family support, when available. On the other, the seed capital can be seen as an opportunity to access money without necessarily having the intention of pursuing entrepreneurship. As highlighted by one of the implementing partners, some participants might be attracted to participate in the project for the seed capital alone and then leave the project: “Some participants engage in the project just to meet the requirement of having seed capital. However, when they weigh their priorities, they choose to continue studying, treating entrepreneurship as a secondary activity.”²²⁸ Sharing this information, the partner highlighted the importance of carefully selecting participants who are genuinely committed to entrepreneurship and have no alternatives. During the validation meeting, it was noted that initiatives involving seed capital always include a competitive component, or a “pitching” phase. While some participants already have a business endeavour in mind, others develop theirs throughout the process. This competitive aspect ensures that selected applicants not only have the willingness but also the capability to see their projects through to completion.

²²³ FGD 1, Boys, El Torno, Bolivia

²²⁴ FGD 2, Girls, El Torno, Bolivia

²²⁵ FGD 2, Girls, El Torno, Bolivia

²²⁶ FGD 5, Girls, Cabeza, Bolivia

²²⁷ FGD 5, Girls, Cabeza, Bolivia

²²⁸ KII 2, Implementing Partner, Bolivia

What was the impact of the “Life Project” methodology on participants?

The “Life Project” initiatives within the EMPODERA-T project has had a profound impact on participants, helping them articulate their goals and align their aspirations with practical pathways for achieving them.

For many participants, the project provided clarity and motivation to pursue education and career goals. A male participant from Buena Vista explained how the project helped him structure his life into achievable steps: "My project was outlined in parts: the first part is to finish school, the second part is to enter university and work—I want to study gastronomy and, with the support of my parents, cover the costs of my education. The third part is to find a job, the fourth is to enjoy the fruits of my labor, and the fifth is to donate to those in need."²²⁹ Another boy from Buena Vista shared how the project inspired him to support his family's business while pursuing his dreams: "They helped me cope with life's challenges and realize that one can achieve anything they desire. After finishing school, I want to study business administration at the university. If the opportunity arises, I would open my own business. My mother has a homemade bread business, and I want to expand it, develop its products, and improve our economy."²³⁰

In El Torno, male participants reflected on how this approach encouraged them to explore their interests and set ambitious goals. One boy shared, "I always liked car mechanics and cooking since I was young. I asked my mom to teach me to cook, and she did, even though my aunt didn't approve because I'm a boy. Now, I'm studying at the Technical Humanities High School for cooking, and I'm among the best students, scoring 100."²³¹ This experience underscores how the project also helped challenge gender norms and build confidence in nontraditional career paths. Another male participant from El Torno noted how the Life Project helped him discover a passion for guiding others, which shifted his career aspirations: "I wanted to be a teacher, but I realized I like working with groups of young people. Now I want to become a lawyer, study social communication, or psychology to work as an educator. I am inspired by leaders I have seen in organizations like Plan or CIES."²³² In the region of La Paz, participants also reflected on the benefit of this component: One participant reflected "Through the project, we have discussed the concept of a life plan as a medium- and long-term strategy, encouraging us as adolescents to reflect on our life goals. It helped us ask ourselves, 'Where am I now?' and 'Where do I want to go?'"²³³

For female participants, the highlight of this component was the consolidation of a life plan that included both family and financial planning. A girl from El Torno shared, "We talked about family planning—about having a family when we are financially stable so that it happens at the right time and when we are fulfilled."²³⁴ Another girl from the region of La Paz noted: "In my case, it has had a significant influence because now I have a foundation for planning my life, understanding how to plan and how things might affect me. Even at school, they used to say I was a bit crazy because I wanted to have children only after turning 30. In my community, many girls from school used to get pregnant and drop out, but now there are fewer pregnancies. And even if they do get pregnant, at least they finish school."²³⁵

²²⁹ FGD 3, Boys, Buena Vista, Bolivia

²³⁰ FGD 3, Boys, Buena Vista, Bolivia

²³¹ FGD 1, Boys, El Torno, Bolivia

²³² FGD 1, Boys, El Torno, Bolivia

²³³ FGD 6, Mixed participants from La Paz district

²³⁴ FGD 2, Girls, El Torno, Bolivia

²³⁵ FGD 6, Mixed participants from La Paz district

5.3.3. Assessment of the effectiveness of youth participation and leadership methods

Several participants noted that the project attracted them by offering a timely opportunity to acquire new skills during a pivotal moment in their lives. One boy from Cabeza explained, “I was about to finish high school and had no idea what I wanted to do, so this project kind of forced me to think about it more seriously.”²³⁶ This highlights how the project addresses a critical gap for young people transitioning into adulthood. **The promise of financial and entrepreneurial support** was also noted as a fundamental source of motivation: As one girl from Buena Vista shared, “When I saw they were providing seed capital to young people, I saw it as an opportunity to generate my own income.”²³⁷

Participants in both Santa Cruz and La Paz noted that their motivation was strongly linked to previous experiences with Plan. Participants view EMPODERA-T as a continuation of their positive experiences with previous projects. For example, a girl from El Torno shared, “I was part of another Plan International project in Porongo, but I moved to Buena Vista with my family and joined this project.”²³⁸ Another girl from Buena Vista reflected, “I’ve been attending Plan’s workshops for years, and now I’m in EMPODERA-T but I know I will want to also be in the next one.”²³⁹ Plan’s good reputation was also noted by participants in the region of La Paz: “Plan has done so many things here and we all like it and want to participate. When there is a project, it is very common to find your friends who you met there in the project before.”²⁴⁰

In both Santa Cruz and La Paz, respondents expressed highly positive perceptions of Plan’s partners during interviews. However, a majority appeared to be somewhat unclear about the distinct roles of Plan and its partner organizations. Many respondents referred to “Plan” even when discussing staff from FAUTAPO and Fundación Trabajo Empresa, suggesting a degree of confusion regarding the specific responsibilities and contributions of each entity. This indicates a need for clearer communication to ensure beneficiaries fully understand the roles and functions of the different organizations involved in program implementation.

Schools play a critical role in encouraging young people to engage. Many participants mentioned that they learned about the project through their teachers or school administrators, who shared information about workshops and training sessions. **Youth networks are another powerful driver, especially in El Torno, where they were instrumental in promoting the project.** One boy explained, “I joined the project through the Youth Network. They gave a presentation, and I was interested because of the workshops on life skills, empowerment, and entrepreneurship.”²⁴¹

How has the project influenced participants' self-esteem?

As noted in section 1.1.3, project participants reported having improved across a wide range of skills including communication, self-awareness and empathy. The project also has had a transformative impact on participants' self-esteem, enabling them to build confidence and feeling empowered. This is evident from one comment by a girl from the region of La Paz: “I used to look at myself in the mirror and ask, 'What are you going to achieve in life?' When I started attending the training sessions, they taught me to accept myself as a person. I didn’t express myself much, I didn’t speak,

²³⁶ KII 8, young male entrepreneur, Cabeza, Bolivia

²³⁷ FGD 4, Girls, Buena Vista, Bolivia

²³⁸ FGD 2, Girls, El Torno, Bolivia

²³⁹ FGD 4, Girls, Buena Vista, Bolivia

²⁴⁰ FGD 6, Mixed participants from La Paz district

²⁴¹ FGD 1, Boys, El Torno, Bolivia

and when I did, I spoke very quietly. I'm grateful to the Project for who I am now. They have so much patience in helping us build the confidence to speak."²⁴²

Participants, the project empowers them with better communication skills to break barriers in communication. A boy from Cabezas shared, "Through the project, I learned to communicate assertively. I even spoke with my parents to ask why we're so emotionally reserved. Now, I act as the intermediary for my family—what the facilitators did for me, I am now doing for my family. To start any business, you first need to work on yourself, stay motivated, and grow personally. That's how you'll grow your business."²⁴³ **They also highlighted the project provided them with a safe environment to practice and build self-confidence.** A girl from Cabezas reflected, "I've always liked speaking, but before joining this project, I couldn't do it. I would forget everything and freeze up. In the workshops provided by Plan to empower us, I learned to feel secure and not be afraid to express myself."²⁴⁴ Another girl from Cabezas shared, "I was too embarrassed to speak in front of others, but now, little by little, I'm learning. I even give presentations at school now—it's changing my life."²⁴⁵ **The project also encouraged participants to take leadership roles, within their communities and within the project itself.** Particularly, participants from the region of La Paz reflected on their ongoing experience as both project participants and facilitators: "We are several young people being trained to become facilitators, especially for the networks. Of course, it's not very comprehensive, but they start with simple topics. We must understand that we are just passing through, and that's why we must leave a legacy."²⁴⁶

How has the project influenced communities?

Overall, the data suggests that the project primarily benefits individuals and youth networks, with limited reach to the broader community. In El Torno, the program's collaboration with schools has fostered initiatives, particularly around sustainability. A participant shared, "Empodera works a lot with schools. For example, in my community, we grow a lot of citrus fruits, and during the season, much of it goes to waste. If there's a way to make marmalade from lemons or other citrus fruits, it could be very beneficial."²⁴⁷ A girl also noted: "Plan International helped us with an environmental project at school. We collected plastic bags, and the school that gathered the most won a prize. Since our school won, Plan donated plants, and now we have a garden."²⁴⁸ The project also contributed to support a meaningful partnership among beekeepers in El Torno. Before the project's intervention, beekeepers in the area were working independently, with limited collaboration or knowledge-sharing opportunities. The cooperative model allowed beekeepers to access better markets, improve the quality of their honey, and secure more stable incomes, demonstrating the long-term benefits of collective organization. A participant recounted how the project contributed to the growth of honey production: "I've seen a big change. Before, there weren't many beekeepers, but the project helped people in San Luis and La Angostura increase honey production by cooperating."²⁴⁹ Nonetheless, participants from other municipalities mentioned the project did not have a significant impact on whether their singular communities.

Most participants highlighted the positive impact the project could have on their parents, noting that while parents are generally supportive, they are not as involved as they or their children would like.²⁵⁰ Some parents still restrict daughters' participation, though many have become more supportive as they see the benefits, such as increased confidence.²⁵¹ Participants suggested that involving parents more,

²⁴² FGD 6, Mixed participants from La Paz district

²⁴³ KII 8, young male entrepreneur, Cabeza, Bolivia

²⁴⁴ FGD 5, Girls, Cabeza, Bolivia

²⁴⁵ FGD 5, Girls, Cabeza, Bolivia

²⁴⁶ FGD 6, Mixed participants from La Paz district

²⁴⁷ FGD 1, Boys, El Torno, Bolivia

²⁴⁸ FGD 1, Boys, El Torno, Bolivia

²⁴⁹ FGD 2, Girls, El Torno, Bolivia

²⁵⁰ FGD 7, Parents, Buena Vista, Bolivia

²⁵¹ FGD 6, Mixed participants from La Paz district

through workshops on entrepreneurship and gender issues, could improve their understanding and support. For example, one participant in El Torno suggested, “Parents should also attend workshops. It’s important they understand that what we do is important and they can also become entrepreneurs.”²⁵² Others proposed that workshops for parents include theoretical components on generating income to ensure they see the value of participation and avoid dismissing the activities as a waste of time.²⁵³ Another participant mentioned that it would be crucial to involve mothers, particularly those who don’t work, to give them a “purpose and direction.”²⁵⁴ **In response to this insight, project staff and implementing partners shared that there is an intention to increase parent-child activities in the project’s next phase and that some have already taken place.**²⁵⁵

How were the project's feedback mechanisms defined? How are young people involved in designing and participating in these feedback mechanisms?

The project has multiple feedback mechanisms in place, both formal and informal.

- **Formal mechanisms include:** anonymous Google Forms and a quarterly online survey. At time of data collection, the project was also in the process of piloting a systematized and confidential feedback mechanism.
- **Information mechanisms include:** verbal feedback from participants to implementing partners and the project team.

While the team has sought feedback through these various methods, they found that participants prefer more informal, conversational approaches. As one implementing partner noted, “We don’t have a systematized feedback process with any tool, but rather more colloquial approaches.”²⁵⁶ Despite this, participants feel that their voices are heard, and their opinions valued. For instance, a girl from Cabeza shared her experience: “at the Leadership School, they asked us how they can make sure we don’t get bored. We feel confident approaching them.”²⁵⁷ Another participant added, “they tell us about the types of workshops and topics, and always ask us what we would like to do.”²⁵⁸ There is, however, a clear intention to improve this aspect. Interviews with the PIB team and implementing partners reveal that an online survey is already designed for quarterly feedback. However, partners in La Paz highlighted the difficulty of introducing online feedback forms as the connectivity in the municipalities in La Paz does not work.²⁵⁹ At times of data collection, the project team was validating a feedback mechanism developed with support from Plan International Belgium and aimed to integrate young people into the design and evaluation processes.²⁶⁰ It was also noted that the online survey is already designed for quarterly feedback.²⁶¹

Across data collection, many participants also highlighted a crucial aspect they would like to provide feedback on activity scheduling. In particular, it was noted that activity times and locations are often communicated with short notice, locations are frequently changed, and activities tend to start at least 30 minutes later than the initially communicated times.²⁶² Some participants expressed frustration with this, especially as it impacts their other commitments.²⁶³ Nonetheless, the project staff

²⁵² FGD 1, Boys, El Torno, Bolivia

²⁵³ FGD 3, Boys, Buena Vista, Bolivia; FGD 4, Girls, Buena Vista, Bolivia

²⁵⁴ FGD 5, Girls, Cabeza, Bolivia

²⁵⁵ KII 2, Implementing Partner, Bolivia

²⁵⁶ KII 2, Implementing Partner, Bolivia

²⁵⁷ FGD 5, Girls, Cabeza, Bolivia

²⁵⁸ FGD 5, Girls, Cabeza, Bolivia

²⁵⁹ KII 3, Implementing Partner, Bolivia

²⁶⁰ The tool was tested during the bridge workshop on November 1st, 2024.

²⁶¹ Comment to the draft report

²⁶² FGD, Various.

²⁶³ FGD, Various.

highlighted that, following the evaluation data collection, this issue has been thoroughly discussed with partners to ensure it does not happen again.²⁶⁴

Therefore, the evaluation found that the mechanisms are not tailored to, nor are participants involved in designing the feedback mechanisms. Nonetheless, this does not seem to impact the design of future activities as respondents indicated above that they are comfortable engaging in dialogues with the implementing partners and project team.

How and to what extent have youth empowerment approaches or methodologies contributed to the advocacy capacity, autonomy, and sustainability of organisations, groups, or networks led by adolescents and young people in the region/country?

In the Department of Santa Cruz, youth networks are particularly strong in the municipality of El Torno, where the project has played a crucial role in building their capacity and ensuring their continuity. As a boy from El Torno explained, “What used to happen with the networks was that they would last two or three years and then disappear. But now with the project they are gathering us together always and they make us want to do more things together.”²⁶⁵ Networks are also platforms to support youth engagement in advocating for local policy making. One implementing partner noted: “With those from El Torno, we discussed the Youth Law so they could secure funding, and as it is now a municipal law, the network has a greater impact.”²⁶⁶ This shows the importance of exchanging experiences between youth and engaging with other municipalities. The youth network in El Torno has been noted for being involved in supporting other municipalities, including Buena Vista, to create their own. However, the main challenge remains ensuring the continuity of these networks, particularly in Cabeza and Buena Vista. As noted by the project staff: “There were networks, but some of them disbanded. Now, they are being regrouped and strengthened, especially in Buena Vista and Cabezas, which are focal points of the project.”²⁶⁷ In the department of La Paz, partners and participants portrayed a more engaging situation that is more favourable due to the strong foundation laid by previous projects. One participant noted: “Here, young women leaders are actively advocating for their needs with authorities and collaborating with Plan.”²⁶⁸

5.3.4. Progress of the gender transformative ambition of the programme

This section analyses the gender transformative ambition of the project triangulating data collected during the Bridge Workshop, analysis provided in the GTM matrix submitted in April 2024²⁶⁹ and the Gender Analysis conducted by the CO in January 2024.²⁷⁰ The finalised action plans are provided in [Annex 8](#) and recommendations developed during the session are included in chapter 5 of this report.

Gender norms

The GTM Matrix (2024) assessed the project as having medium potential to address gender norms in targeted communities.²⁷¹ The Bridge Workshop highlighted **the project's efforts to raise awareness about harmful gender practices, particularly among youth, and to challenge household and labor-related norms.**²⁷² The Gender Analysis revealed progress in challenging stereotypes, such as

²⁶⁴ Comment to the draft report

²⁶⁵ FGD 1, Boys, El Torno, Bolivia

²⁶⁶ KII 2, Implementing Partner, Bolivia

²⁶⁷ KII 1, Project Staff, Bolivia

²⁶⁸ FGD 6, Mixed participants from La Paz district

²⁶⁹ Plan International. (January 2024). Evaluación del potencial de contribución a la igualdad de género, los derechos de las niñas y la inclusión en proyectos

²⁷⁰ Reinventarse. (April 2024). Informe Final de Analisis de Genero

²⁷¹ Plan International. (January 2024). Evaluación del potencial de contribución a la igualdad de género, los derechos de las niñas y la inclusión en proyectos

²⁷² Bridge Workshop, Bolivia

normalizing women's workforce participation.²⁷³ A participant from La Paz noted: "Ten years ago, women only cooked and couldn't hold leadership roles. Now men encourage women to run for leadership positions, and access to education is equal."²⁷⁴ **Despite progress, significant challenges persist, especially in rural and isolated areas.** Women in these communities continue to shoulder disproportionate domestic and caregiving duties, often working double or triple shifts. One key informant explained, "It's normal for women to work outside the home, but they are still expected to return and manage caregiving roles."²⁷⁵ Traditional norms also limit girls' education, prioritizing their brothers' schooling. In Santa Cruz, gender norms remain entrenched in the labor market, with women confined to roles like secretaries or small-scale entrepreneurs, facing barriers to leadership. A participant observed, "Women may work in law offices, but lawyers, judges, and prosecutors are still men."²⁷⁶ The persistence of these norms is often linked to generational divides, with older generations upholding traditional stereotypes. **Participants emphasized the importance of intergenerational dialogue, reflecting positively on parent-child activities organized by the project.** The Bridge Workshop highlighted the need to engage families, schools, and communities through awareness campaigns, community meetings, and local authority involvement. Expanding intergenerational forums within decision-making spaces was also highlighted as crucial to challenging limiting norms and fostering change.

Agency

The GTM Matrix assesses the project as having medium potential to foster young girls' and women's agency, recognizing its efforts to enhance technical and professional skills for girls while raising gender awareness.²⁷⁷ These efforts have included workshops addressing agency, leadership, self-esteem, entrepreneurship, and sexual and reproductive health to prevent adolescent pregnancies.²⁷⁸ In the project's next phase, PIB has the objective to also strengthen young women's skills to lead initiatives and influence local governments.²⁷⁹ **Girl participants highlighted the project helped them develop a stronger sense of agency and self-worth.** A girl from Cabezas explained, "I've learned to understand that as women, we can achieve things. It has boosted my self-esteem."²⁸⁰ Another girl from Buena Vista echoed this sentiment, sharing the project helped her "handle life's challenges and realize that (she) can achieve whatever (she) set my mind to."²⁸¹

Despite these gains, challenges remain at family and community levels. The Gender Analysis highlights deeply rooted cycles of violence and entrenched perceptions that undermine women's self-worth and discourage them from pursuing positions of influence.²⁸² Even empowered women often fear judgment or feel they must work harder to justify their participation. Educational access also varies significantly, heavily influenced by family values.²⁸³ While younger girls increasingly stay in school and benefit from gender equality education, older women and those excluded from education face persistent barriers. A school principal noted: "Girls in school are more emancipated and conscious, and we see fewer pregnancies. But those who leave school are much more likely to become pregnant and confined

²⁷³ Reinventarse. (April 2024). Informe Final de Analisis de Genero

²⁷⁴ Bridge Workshop, Bolivia

²⁷⁵ KII 6, Local Authority, Bolivia

²⁷⁶ FGDs, various

²⁷⁷ Plan Internacional. (January 2024). Evaluación del potencial de contribución a la igualdad de género, los derechos de las niñas y la inclusión en proyectos

²⁷⁸ Plan Internacional. (January 2024). Evaluación del potencial de contribución a la igualdad de género, los derechos de las niñas y la inclusión en proyectos

²⁷⁹ Plan Internacional. (January 2024). Evaluación del potencial de contribución a la igualdad de género, los derechos de las niñas y la inclusión en proyectos

²⁸⁰ FGD 5, Girls, Cabeza, Bolivia

²⁸¹ FGD 4, Girls, Buena Vista, Bolivia

²⁸² Reinventarse. (April 2024). Informe Final de Analisis de Genero

²⁸³ Reinventarse. (April 2024). Informe Final de Analisis de Genero

to the household.”²⁸⁴ Reflecting on these findings, the Bridge Workshop emphasized the **need to complement school-based initiatives with targeted outreach efforts to reach more vulnerable and marginalized girls, ensuring the project’s benefits extend beyond educational settings.**

Condition and position

The GTM Matrix identifies the project as having medium potential to improve the condition and position of women within their immediate and extended environments.²⁸⁵ It highlights efforts made to address the daily needs and conditions of girls and young women within their families and communities and progress achieved through strengthening their capacities in both soft and hard skills, and providing seed capital for entrepreneurship.²⁸⁶ The focus envisioned for the next phase is on further enhancing young women's influence at local, community, and municipal levels, with the goal of shifting their position in these contexts.²⁸⁷ **Plan’s work has focused on building girls’ self-esteem and leadership skills within protected environments, such as youth networks and Plan’s activities.** These efforts have helped improve the condition and position of women and girls in these spaces, emphasizing that the limitations they face in society are not inherent and need to be challenged. At the individual level, the programme has worked to ensure women are included in non-traditional fields. For instance, girls in Cabeza have expressed enjoyment in attending workshops on phone repairs, motor repairs, and drone management.²⁸⁸ However, it remains to be seen whether acquiring these skills will result in job opportunities in these non-traditional fields. At the community level, challenges persist. **During the Bridge Workshop, it was noted that age is a significant factor affecting youth and particularly young girls’ exclusion from decision-making and leadership roles.** This observation highlights the generational gap that exists within communities. Adults, especially community leaders, were noted to be treated with great respect, which often hinders meaningful participation of youth in community decision-making.²⁸⁹ Data triangulation reveals that women continue to face significant barriers in accessing male-dominated professional opportunities, which restricts their choices and limits their progress. To address these issues, the Bridge Workshop emphasized the need for concrete actions to strengthen the role of youth networks within community councils, ensuring that female representatives are given public speaking opportunities and visibility among both young and older members of the community.

Diversity

The GTM Matrix rates the project as having medium potential in promoting diversity, highlighting progress in youth empowerment but noting challenges in addressing broader marginalization.²⁹⁰ During the Bridge Workshop, participants emphasized the need to address tensions between indigenous and conventional ways of living, with indigenous youth in La Paz struggling to balance cultural identity with personal and professional aspirations while facing discrimination.²⁹¹ Age-related discrimination was also identified as a significant concern. Adults over 24, excluded due to the project’s age restrictions, frequently expressed a strong desire to join workshops, particularly given high community

²⁸⁴ KII 7, Local Authority, Bolivia

²⁸⁵ Plan International. (January 2024). Evaluación del potencial de contribución a la igualdad de género, los derechos de las niñas y la inclusión en proyectos

²⁸⁶ Plan International. (January 2024). Evaluación del potencial de contribución a la igualdad de género, los derechos de las niñas y la inclusión en proyectos

²⁸⁷ Plan International. (January 2024). Evaluación del potencial de contribución a la igualdad de género, los derechos de las niñas y la inclusión en proyectos

²⁸⁸FGD 5, Girls, Cabeza, Bolivia

²⁸⁹ Bridge Workshop, Bolivia

²⁹⁰ Plan International. (January 2024). Evaluación del potencial de contribución a la igualdad de género, los derechos de las niñas y la inclusión en proyectos

²⁹¹ Bridge Workshop, Bolivia

unemployment rates.²⁹² While implementing partners occasionally made exceptions to include older participants, budget constraints and the need to meet project indicators limit these efforts. Participants suggested transferring methodologies to initiatives tailored to adults to sustainably address their needs.²⁹³ Lastly, the workshop highlighted the exclusion of youth not enrolled in school, who face significant barriers to benefiting from project activities.²⁹⁴ Participants stressed the urgency of promoting educational inclusion by specifically targeting out-of-school youth and accommodating diverse learning needs to ensure equitable access and participation.²⁹⁵ Plan staff highlighted that this point will be considered in 2025, with a particular focus on working with the non-schooled population.²⁹⁶

Work with boys and men

The GTM Matrix rates the project as having medium potential to promote positive, non-violent masculinities by raising awareness about gender equality and inclusion. Collaborations with youth networks have helped boys challenge stereotypes and express emotions, as reflected in FGDs. For example, participants highlighted redefining masculinity as “crying without judgment”²⁹⁷ or “helping in the kitchen.”²⁹⁸ Despite progress with youth, engaging adults, especially fathers, remains difficult. Many boys described strained relationships with their fathers, rooted in assertive parenting styles that hinder open communication. One boy shared, “I know I can cry, but I won’t do it in front of my dad because he’ll call me a girl.”²⁹⁹ Participants emphasized the importance of involving men in discussions on gender and violence, saying, “I didn’t see much inclusion of older people in our activities. It would be important to address gender issues with them, especially men, as many older adults are still very macho.”³⁰⁰

Participants across both FGDs and the Bridge Workshop emphasised that parent-child activities within the project have fostered better communication and call for more of such initiatives. One participant said, “During the activity, I felt like we were in a neutral space. We were still father and son, but we could communicate better, laugh, and learn together beyond our established roles in the household.”³⁰¹ In turn, the Bridge Workshop called for increased parental and community involvement. Suggested activities, such as sports tournaments and barbecues, were seen as promising strategies to promote positive masculinity when guided by technical experts.³⁰²

Enabling environment

The GTM identifies a medium potential in fostering an enabling environment, particularly emphasizing the project’s efforts to develop concrete actions in collaboration with local community actors and youth networks.³⁰³ This ambition aligns with the goal of implementing strategies aimed at advancing municipal laws focused on gender equality and inclusion. The Gender Analysis study highlights that existing regulations at both national and international levels extensively address the rights associated with living free from violence and ensuring participation, with a specific focus on women. Despite this, a **significant gap remains between national legislation and its effective implementation and**

²⁹² Bridge Workshop, Bolivia

²⁹³ Bridge Workshop, Bolivia

²⁹⁴ Bridge Workshop, Bolivia

²⁹⁵ Bridge Workshop, Bolivia

²⁹⁶ Comment from PIB

²⁹⁷ FGD 1, Boys, El Torno, Bolivia

²⁹⁸ FGD 3, Boys, Buena Vista, Bolivia

²⁹⁹ FGD 6, Girls and Boys, Santa Cruz

³⁰⁰ FGD 5, Girls, Cabeza, Bolivia

³⁰¹ FGD 6, Girls and Boys, Santa Cruz

³⁰² Bridge Workshop, Bolivia

³⁰³ Plan International. (January 2024). Evaluación del potencial de contribución a la igualdad de género, los derechos de las niñas y la inclusión en proyectos

awareness at the local level in the targeted communities.³⁰⁴ This gap underlines the urgency of continuing work with municipal institutions to raise awareness about gender equality, particularly through ongoing campaigns aimed at sustaining progress and shifting attitudes toward gender norms. During the Bridge Workshop, it was emphasized that such efforts need to be persistent and engaging to ensure that communities not only understand but also actively support gender equality in their daily lives.³⁰⁵ The importance of working with local authorities, community leaders, and citizens to create a lasting impact was underscored, with a focus on reinforcing these messages in local settings. Additionally, the need for continuous dialogue and education was stressed to maintain momentum and ensure that the progress made thus far translates into tangible, long-term change.³⁰⁶

5.3.5. Conclusions

The mid-term evaluation reflects positive progress towards the project's outcome although several contextual challenges continue to affect outcomes. The project had a good impact in creating opportunities for technical and life-skills development through actual employment and business growth that is hindered by limited access to capital and restrictive job markets. While young girls and boys are knowledgeable of gender issues, a gap persists in their understanding of and trust in protection mechanisms. Despite the political volatility affecting progress towards Result 3, the project has made strides in fostering collaboration among stakeholders and influencing local policies. Analysis of progress towards Result 4 reveals that while partnerships have strengthened internal governance and gender-responsive practices, there is a clear demand for greater field-level support and flexibility in project implementation. Specifically, implementing partners emphasized the need for more direct engagement from coordinators in the field to better understand local challenges and ensure that program expectations align with realities on the ground. Field support should include more frequent visits, hands-on guidance, and responsive troubleshooting to address emerging issues.

The evaluation highlighted women in targeted community challenges in securing paid employment, often turning to self-employment due to societal expectations, particularly after motherhood. Even educated women struggle with hiring biases, leading them to entrepreneurship as a viable option. The EMPODERA-T project addresses these challenges by offering skill training and business growth opportunities, empowering them to break gender norms. The project also helps youth develop personal and technical skills, with practical activities and life skills training to foster entrepreneurship. Seed capital provides a significant motivator, although it is not always sufficient for long-term success.

While beneficiaries of the seed capital are able to use the funds to purchase essential equipment (see previous section), many expressed challenges in sustaining their businesses over time without additional financial or logistical support. Several participants noted that, despite the initial investment, ongoing costs such as materials, rent, or marketing expenses make it difficult to maintain operations independently. As a result, many rely on financial assistance from parents or relatives to keep their businesses afloat. This highlights the need for continued support mechanisms, such as financial literacy training, mentorship programs, or access to microloans, to enhance the long-term viability of their entrepreneurial efforts. The "Life Project" initiative has helped participants define their career goals and align their aspirations with actionable plans, promoting both personal and professional growth.

The project motivates young people through skill-building and financial support, with many participants drawn by positive past experiences with PIB and encouragement from schools and youth networks. It boosts self-esteem by enhancing communication and leadership abilities, empowering participants to feel more confident. While it primarily benefits youth networks, parents are supportive but seek more involvement. Feedback mechanisms are informal and not anonymous. However, efforts are underway

³⁰⁴ Reinventarse. (April 2024). Informe Final de Analisis de Genero

³⁰⁵ Bridge Workshop, Bolivia

³⁰⁶ Bridge Workshop, Bolivia

to systematize and engage youth in the process. The project strengthens youth networks, ensuring their sustainability and supporting advocacy for local policies, while advancing gender transformative goals through ongoing integration of gender considerations.

The project has made progress in challenging gender norms, empowering young women, and improving their conditions, particularly through education and leadership initiatives. However, entrenched norms, especially in rural areas, and barriers in male-dominated fields persist. Efforts to engage boys and men in redefining masculinity have been positive, but more work is needed with adult men. Respondents noted that even if their fathers have become more tolerant of their participation in the project's activities, they still feel emotionally distant and disconnected. Many expressed that while the project has encouraged personal growth and self-awareness among participants, it has also made them more conscious of the lack of open and affectionate communication within their families. Some respondents shared their desire for a more honest and open relationship with their parents, seeing the project as an opportunity to help their families, especially their fathers, become more receptive to emotional expression—just as it has helped them. While strides have been made in promoting diversity, age-related discrimination and exclusion of out-of-school youth remain challenges.

5.4. Ecuador Analysis

The DGD project in **Ecuador**, launched in November 2022, is implemented in the provinces of Los Ríos and Bolívar. Los Ríos is a coastal region, inhabited predominantly by mestizo communities engaged in cultivating tropical fruits, coffee, and cacao. Bolívar is a mountainous area, primarily inhabited by Indigenous communities who rely on livestock farming and the production of artisanal goods. When the DGD project started, Plan International Ecuador (PIE) could count on pre-existing presence in both provinces to design tailored interventions with the support of local implementing partners: Fundación de Waal and CODESPA. Fundación de Waal started its intervention in November 2022. Fundación CODESPA joined in June 2023. The project was implemented across a total of 17 communities, of which 8 communities in the province of Bolívar and 9 communities in the province of Los Ríos. The work of the two implementing partners is complementary, with Fundación de Waal focusing on the components of life skills, SRHR, positive gender practices and protection from violence (Result 1 and 2) and CODESPA focusing on the component of economic empowerment (Result 3). Fundación de Waal works in both provinces, while CODESPA only works in Los Ríos.

5.4.1. Progress against logframe targets

This section integrates qualitative and quantitative data collected during the mid-term evaluation to describe the project's central progress and challenges against the mid-term logframe targets.³⁰⁷ Data from the quantitative study were used across KIIIs and the Bridge Workshop to identify specific gaps and challenges in achieving the project objectives. The project logframe is also annexed to this report.

Overall, **the findings from the evaluation show that the project demonstrates positive progress, achieving success across the majority of indicators for each result area.** Notably, there is strong synergy among the two implementing partners, volunteers, and participants, fostering cross-pollination and mutual learning across different stakeholders. **Thanks to decades of work with local communities, local authorities highly regard PIE,** enabling the implementing partners to build trust with communities and leaders. This is particularly relevant in Bolívar, where several respondents noted that access to NGOs is often challenging due to the indigenous context.

Result 1 has been particularly successful, with a relevant majority of participants reporting notable improvements in confidence and awareness of gender equality. For Result 2, however, a major challenge identified at the qualitative level is the **limited involvement of parents, particularly fathers, in project activities.** Another challenge identified is in the area of protection from violence. While participants have shown improvement in their awareness of gender issues and violence, further efforts are required to mainstream and strengthen protection mechanisms. This includes supporting their consolidation and ensuring their efficient functioning at both the community and local government levels. While Result 3 was not part of the quantitative study, the qualitative findings underscore **the importance of economic empowerment in motivating participants, particularly young girls to participate in the activities.** Activities such as financial literacy and initiatives like small-scale entrepreneurship were frequently highlighted during focus group discussions.

While progress has been consistently recorded across the two provinces, **Bolívar records lower rates of success across a majority of indicators.** Qualitative interviews reveal several factors contributing to lower rates of Bolívar. On the one hand, the remoteness and climate challenges in Bolívar make community engagement more difficult. On the other, tensions between Indigenous justice mechanisms and formal justice systems further complicate implementation.

³⁰⁷ Please refer to Table 7.

Outcome: Adolescent girls and young women (ages 15-24) enhance their core capacities needed to act as effective drivers of change in alignment with human rights, gender equality, and inclusion.

The quantitative evaluation indicates that the outcome has been achieved and exceeded for all indicators in Los Ríos and all but one Indicators in Bolívar.

Table 20: Indicator achievement for Ecuador Outcome

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	Bolivar	Los Rios	End-term target
% of adolescents and young people who demonstrated empowerment (LEAO1.1.1)	Total: 40% Boys: 40% Girls: 40%	Total: 60% Boys: 60% Girls: 60%	Total: 64.81% Boys: 62.24% Girls: 66.67%	41.5%	94.2%	Total: 80% Boys: 80% Girls: 80%
% of young people (of all genders) in salaried employment within 6 months after training (SOYI1.1.1)	Total: 0 Boys: 0 Girls: 0	N/A	Total: 13.73% Boys: 33.33% Girls: 7.70%	N/A	13.73%	Total: Boys: 20% Girls: 20%
% of young people (of all genders) with an operational business within 6 months after training (SOYI1.1.2)	Total: 0 Boys: 0 Girls: 0	N/A	Total: 40.02% Boys: 50% Girls: 48.72%	N/A	40.02%	Total: Boys: 20% Girls: 20%
The extent to which young people report that adults help them discuss and express their opinions on violence and abuse (PROO3.5.1)	Total: 20%	Total: 50%	Total: 92.31%	92,59%	92.31%	Total: 60%
% of community-based child and family protection mechanisms that ensure functional processes for identifying, referring, and following up on cases of violence (LDI)	Total: 0	Total: 20%	Total: 100%	100%	100%	Total: 40%

In Los Ríos, the implementing partners attributed progress for indicators 1 and 4 to different factors. First, the use of a **ludic and playful approach** in project activities supported active participation on behalf of participants. Specifically, incorporating gamified activities and sports boosted participant engagement and retention. As noted, “This is something that is always emphasized in the communities: the space we are providing is not a school. We don’t assign homework or tasks; instead, it’s a place for them to come and learn in a fun, playful way.”³⁰⁸ As a result, “young people feel empowered, they learn through play, and they feel confident about what they are doing.” Second, **a massive effort has been made to involve parents and adults in targeted communities in leadership roles linked to the projects.** Across targeted communities, the partners could count on already Plan-trained community volunteers. Their familiarity with Plan’s methodologies has enabled them to play an important role in the project, both in supporting the delivery of activities and recruiting new participants. As noted by the implementing partner: “Everything we do at the community level is planned and organized in coordination with community leaders and volunteers, and it is through this collaboration, that we can

³⁰⁸ KII 3, Implementing Partners, Ecuador

engage adolescents, girls and boys, as well as adults, to actively participate in each of the processes.”
309

The missed target for Indicator LEAO1.1.1 in Bolívar was explored during the bridge workshop and key informant interviews, revealing two primary challenges. The first challenge was geographical. Bolívar is a mountainous region with isolated communities scattered across significant distances, making it difficult to maintain consistent activity schedules. As one respondent explained: “We cannot hold weekly training sessions but only once a month due to the distance between communities, including those in lowland and highland areas.”³¹⁰ The second challenge was cultural. The target communities in Bolívar have strong Indigenous traditions that are deeply ingrained and resistant to change. Plan International’s longstanding presence in the province has been instrumental in overcoming this barrier. By building trust with Indigenous leaders and communities and “approaching them with respect for their deeply ingrained traditions,”³¹¹ the project has managed to lay the groundwork for change. However, the process required raising awareness about “human rights and positive gender practices” - topics that were initially “highly unfamiliar” to many participants, including both adolescents and adults. As a result, project staff acknowledged that achieving the target is an ongoing yet delicate and slow process. Nevertheless, achieving 41 per cent progress in this difficult context was recognized as a relevant milestone during the bridge workshop.³¹² A key good practice identified was the involvement of local authorities, such as Organización Runakunapa and the Centro de Salud, whose consistent participation helped foster trust and advance the project’s objectives.

Finally, the progress on LDI Indicator 5 can be attributed to the project's efforts in strengthening existing community protection mechanisms and fostering connections with local institutions and protection services. These include the Councils for the Protection of Rights, the Cantonal Boards for the Protection of Rights, and the National Intergenerational Council. The transfer of methodologies to partners was also highlighted as a valuable practice. As explained: “Plan has been incredibly helpful with providing a toolkit of protection policies to all implementing staff and we were able to use them to strengthen the community mechanism and create awareness of gender issues and types of violence.”
313

Result 1: Adolescent girls and young women (ages 15-24) enhance their core capacities needed to act as effective drivers of change in alignment with human rights, gender equality, and inclusion.

Result 1 is implemented by Fundación The Waal through the combined activities organized within the Leadership School for AyJ girls and the CoC Program for AyJ boys. **The quantitative evaluation reveals that Result 1 has been overachieved for all but one indicator across both provinces.** These findings were further validated during the qualitative research, with 100 per cent of FGD respondents in Los Ríos reporting improvements in their life skills, particularly in self-confidence and communication.

Table 21: Indicator achievement for Ecuador Result 1

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	Bolívar	Los Ríos	End-term target
------------	-----------------	-----------------	-----------------	---------	----------	-----------------

³⁰⁹ KII 2, Implementing Partners, Ecuador

³¹⁰ KII 3, Implementing Partners, Ecuador

³¹¹ KII 1, Project Staff, Ecuador

³¹² Bridge Workshop, Ecuador

³¹³ KII 3, Implementing Partners, Ecuador

% of young people (of all genders) who report feeling confident in their life skills at the end of the training (SOYO1.1.1)	Total: 0 Boys: 0 Girls: 0	Total: 50% Boys: 50% Girls: 50%	Total: 94.57% Boys: 93.71% Girls: 92.22%	87.65%	100%	Total: 85% Boys: 85% Girls: 85%
# and quality of individual and joint actions by youth organizations (LEAO1.3.2)	Total: 0	Total: 10	Misinterpreted in the quantitative study			Total: 20
# of initiatives by youth organizations that use social media for their collective action (LEAO1.3.3)	Total: 0	Total: 6	Total: 17	6	11	Total: 12

The data reveals a contrast between self-perception of abilities and low self-esteem, particularly among girls. Notably, 30.77 per cent of girls in Los Ríos and 50 per cent of girls in Bolívar reported that they "sometimes feel useless."³¹⁴ The bridge workshop provided an opportunity to discuss this issue in depth. While the project's activities have had a positive impact, it was noted that many participants continue to encounter negative gender norms and stereotypes at home or in school, which results in affecting their confidence and self-esteem.³¹⁵ To address this challenge, the workshop emphasized that activities focused on boosting self-esteem must continue, and efforts should be made to engage adults, and particularly parents—especially fathers—in the project's activities. Additionally, it is crucial to involve schools in fostering a supportive environment that challenges negative gender norms and encourages positive self-perception among girls. As noted by the project coordinator, this issue has been analysed and the team is working to strengthen this component of self-confidence among project activities.³¹⁶

During the Bridge Workshop, it was noted that indicator LEAO1.3.2. was miscalculated in the quantitative study.³¹⁷ Two out of the three organizations assessed (Leadership School and Champions of Change) are groups envisioned through Plan International methodologies, rather than youth organizations. In contrast, the project also includes several youth clubs across the communities that were not considered in the quantitative evaluation. **As a result, this indicator cannot be assessed in terms of targets.** It is nonetheless important to highlight that project implementing partners consider youth clubs a key asset in ensuring AyJ engagement and serve as platforms for activities like Champions of Change. As noted by one partner: "The clubs are very strong, with highly engaged and motivated participants and one of our key advantages is that when we conduct activities like the Champions for Change process, it's the same young people from the clubs who participate."³¹⁸

Finally, LEAO1.3.2. was met, as 17 out of the 19 youth clubs surveyed use social media for their collective activities, with 11 based in Los Ríos and 6 in Bolívar. The quantitative study also notes that, since these clubs are relatively new, "some have not yet defined clear objectives for awareness-raising and public engagement on social media platforms."³¹⁹ This observation was echoed in the qualitative data, where youth leaders mentioned that most of the communication about project activities

³¹⁴ Antroproyectos. (2024). Sistematización de información primaria y secundaria de evaluación intermedia del proyecto "Empoderamiento económico y social de adolescentes y jóvenes, particularmente mujeres (10-24 años)".

³¹⁵ Bridge Workshop, Ecuador

³¹⁶ Comment to the draft report,

³¹⁷ Bridge Workshop, Ecuador

³¹⁸ KII 3, Implementing Partners, Ecuador

³¹⁹ Antroproyectos. (2024). Sistematización de información primaria y secundaria de evaluación intermedia del proyecto "Empoderamiento económico y social de adolescentes y jóvenes, particularmente mujeres (10-24 años)"

within the clubs occurs via WhatsApp groups. This early use of social media suggests potential to enhance the visibility and impact of their initiatives as their goals are developed and clarified.³²⁰

Result 2: Family and community environments take on their role in protecting girls, boys, adolescents, and youth (ages 10-24), particularly against gender-based violence, early pregnancy, and early and forced unions.

Result 2 was achieved across all indicators, except for Indicator PROO1.4.1, and PROO3.3.1 in Bolívar. According to the project coordinator, success across this result was achieved through efficient adherence to the schedule and proper use of the budget.³²¹

Table 22: Indicator achievement for Ecuador Result 2

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	Bolivar	Los Rios	End-term target
% of children, adolescents, and young people (NNAJ) who report feeling confident in reporting a protection violation to a reporting mechanism (PROO1.4.1)	Total: 20% Boys: 20% Girls: 20%	Total: 30% Boys: 30% Girls: 30%	Total: 57.61% Boys: 52.83% Girls: 61.24%	30.00% girls 24.32% Boys	79.34 % girls 77.95 % Boys	Total: 40% Boys: 40% Girls: 40%
% of children, adolescents, and young people (NNAJ) who make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health (SRHO1.2.1)	Total: 24% Boys: 24% Girls: 24%	Total: 42% Boys: 40% Girls: 45%	Total: 65.77% Boys: 61.72% Girls: 68.82%	59.26%	73.53 %	Total: 50% Boys: 50% Girls: 50%
Degree to which law enforcement agencies and other allied services effectively contribute to the child and family protection system by their mandate (PROO5.6.1)	20%	30%	61.65%	40%	83%	40%
% of parents and caregivers (of all genders) who report using positive parenting practices with children and adolescents (PROO2.1.1)	Total: 40% Men: 40% Women: 40%	Total: 60% Men: 60% Women: 60%	Total: 100% Men: 14.55% Women: 85.45%	100%	100%	Total: 80% Men: 80% Women: 80%
% of community-based child and family protection mechanisms that meet minimum quality standards (PROO3.3.1)	30%	50%	55.56%	37.5%	70%	100%

According to the implementing partner in Los Ríos, progress across Indicators PROO1.4.1, SRHO1.2.1, and PROO2.1.1 was driven by a comprehensive approach focused on involving both AyJ and their immediate surroundings.³²² Using PI methodologies Fundación de Waal conducted workshops on sexual and reproductive rights, self-esteem, sexuality, and life planning, the project targeted both

³²⁰ Bridge Workshop, Ecuador

³²¹ Comment to the draft report

³²² KII 3, Implementing Partners, Ecuador

existing and newly formed clubs. Additionally, community engagement activities were conducted that involved parents and caregivers. Another key approach was strengthening community mechanisms for the protection of rights. As noted by the implementing partner: "These mechanisms are present in each of the communities and serve as a link between the community and the institutions responsible for protecting rights."³²³ As a result of this approach, 78.64 per cent of AyJ surveyed reported knowing where, how, and when to report a situation of violence; 73.53 per cent reported making informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health; and 85.29 per cent felt confident in seeking advice on sexual and reproductive health from a trusted person. A challenge that remained was involving fathers.³²⁴ As mentioned by the implementing partner: "We still have challenges involving fathers in our sessions. Most of them work during the day, and some remain sceptical about participating in the activities."³²⁵

In the quantitative study, Indicator PROO5.6.1 was measured by directly surveying law enforcement agencies and service providers involved in violence protection. While the target was met and overachieved in Los Rios, qualitative data showed that there is still a gap in this area.³²⁶ Although most civil servants feel well-prepared in their roles, a portion requires further training, particularly in legal expectations, child abuse policies, and gender sensitivity. Additionally, the quantitative study identified a divided perception regarding the clarity of mandates within the child and family protection system in policies and legal frameworks, indicating a need for improved communication in these areas.³²⁷ During the bridging workshop, participants emphasized the importance of developing a collaborative approach with local institutions to create a mapping of mechanisms with accessible language and including essential contact information. The workshop also highlighted the need for a community-centered approach when engaging with these institutions to improve their relevance and accessibility. Since the end of the data collection, the project team has been working with institutions to strengthen these weaknesses.³²⁸

According to project implementation staff, the achievement and overreaching of indicator PROO2.1.1 strongly linked to the Plan's continuous effort in transferring methodology to implementing partners, local leaders and volunteers. Nonetheless, implementing partners still identified several challenges.³²⁹ However, in Los Rios improvements have been made. As one participant noted, "Many times, they thought that inappropriate compliments were not violence, that words were not violence, and that the silent treatment or not speaking to each other was not violent. But now they know that ignoring someone is violence, psychological violence, and that violence doesn't necessarily have to leave bruises on the body."³³⁰

With regards to the missing target for Indicator PROO1.4.1 in Bolívar, this can be linked to the unique cultural and geographical challenges faced in implementing the project in the targeted communities. Particularly for women reporting to protection mechanisms can come with a lot of shame and stigma and there is little trust in their actual intervention. In addition, protection mechanisms coexist with mechanisms of indigenous justice which are often overstepping or disregarding ordinary justice. According to the project coordinator, "There is an ongoing and consistent effort in bridging the gap between Indigenous justice and protection mechanisms."³³¹ For the other indicators, the results were

³²³ KII 2, Implementing Partners, Ecuador

³²⁴ Antroproyectos. (2024). Sistematización de información primaria y secundaria de evaluación intermedia del proyecto "Empoderamiento económico y social de adolescentes y jóvenes, particularmente mujeres (10-24 años)"

³²⁵ KII 2, Implementing Partners, Ecuador

³²⁶ KII 7, Local Government partner, Ecuador

³²⁷ Antroproyectos. (2024). Sistematización de información primaria y secundaria de evaluación intermedia del proyecto "Empoderamiento económico y social de adolescentes y jóvenes, particularmente mujeres (10-24 años)"

³²⁸ Comment to the draft report

³²⁹ KII 2, Implementing Partners, Ecuador

³³⁰ FGD 3, Girls aged 18-24, Ecuador

³³¹ KII 1, Project Staff, Ecuador

less impressive compared to Los Ríos, but still successful. The success across other indicators was considered a great achievement, particularly for what concern indicator 2.2. are considered a relevant achievement on behalf of the project partners. In particular, the project coordinator noted, "When we started the project, there were 11 girls with adolescent pregnancies in the two educational units there. Now, a year and a half into the project's implementation, no young woman who participates in the project's activities has become pregnant."³³²

Result 3: Adolescents and youth, especially women (ages 15-24), develop skills to exercise their economic autonomy, whether through paid employment or self-employment.

The result was only applicable in Los Ríos, and according to the log frame indicators, there is no formal evaluation at the midline. However, qualitative insights reveal progress in this area.

Table 23: Indicator achievement for Ecuador Result 3

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	Bolivar	Los Rios	End-term target
% of adolescents and young people who report being economically empowered after training (composite index with demonstrated improvement in soft and technical skills, access to and control over resources) (LDI)	Total: 0 Boys: 0 Girls: 0	N/A	Total: 47.37% Boys: 44% Girls: 49.02%	N/A	47.37%	Total: 82% Boys: 85% Girls: 80%
% of SOYEE participants who report having engaged in SOYEE networks to promote economic empowerment (SOYO1.2.1)	Total: 0 Boys: 0 Girls: 0	N/A	Total: 100% Boys: 23.53 Girls: 76.47	N/A	100%	Total: 15% Boys: 20% Girls: 10%
% of young people who have engaged in self-employment activities six months after completing SOYEE training or activities (SOYO1.3.1)	Total: 0 Boys: 0 Girls: 0	N/A	Total: 96.08 Boys: 91.67 Girls: 97.44	N/A	96.08%	Total: 60% Boys: 60% Girls: 60%

The qualitative findings highlighted how the introduction of the activities focused on entrepreneurship and financial literacy boost both the motivation and the interest of participants, particularly **young women aged 18-24**. Activities empowering CAY and adults with financial and business development skills and promoting initiatives like small-scale entrepreneurship were frequently highlighted during FGDs as particularly attractive for participants. As noted by a 23-year-old girl: "We have learned about starting a business, including income, expenses and budgeting. (...) This has helped the young people a lot because before, a business would be started, but it wasn't clear whether they were making a profit or losing money. Now, the young people know all of this."³³³ Since the end of data collection, PIE and Fundación CODESPA have been working on empowering CAY with business planning and soft skills to help them understand how to make a business plan and calculate profits and losses.³³⁴

It is important to mention that the project encountered numerous contextual challenges linked to the lack of employment opportunities in the country, which have been further exacerbated by

³³² KII 1, Project Staff, Ecuador

³³³ FGD 3, Girls aged 18-24, Ecuador

³³⁴ Comment to the draft report

the crisis in the energy sector of 2024.³³⁵ As one implementing partner explained: “In our area, there are many people but few opportunities to access jobs. (...) While we have strengthened the skills and connections of young women and men, the reality is that there are limited opportunities for them to work locally.”³³⁶ According to the implementing partner, In 2023, a diagnostic was conducted across a cantonal youth network, which highlighted the lack of employment opportunities.³³⁷ As a result, the partners prioritise strengthening CAY capacities to achieve self-employment through entrepreneurship or local businesses. This explains the **project’s ongoing efforts to support young women in designing and launching their independent businesses.** Although introduced at a later stage, this component has been highly successful, with nearly half of the participants successfully starting small businesses and all young entrepreneurs interviewed reporting feeling highly empowered by the opportunity to have their own income-generating activity.

Result 4: Capacity-building of partners and fostering synergies/complementarities.

Table 24: Indicator achievement for Ecuador Result 4

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term Target
# of partner organizations that, by the third year, meet at least 50% of the defined expectations, and by the fifth year, meet 100% of the expectations (LDI)	0	50%	60%	100%
# of new synergies or complementarities established with Non-Governmental Cooperation Actors (ACNG) and civil society actors (LDI).	0	2	4	2

For Result 4, both representatives of the implementing partners emphasized the productive, mutually beneficial learning relationship with PI. It was noted that the PI’s transfer of methodology, particularly about protection mechanisms, and positive gender practices, has been crucial to complement partners’ technical intervention in the communities. One representative remarked: “As we focus on economic and social empowerment, there were many aspects of gender and protection that we didn’t know about,” They continued: “Thanks to Plan, we can use their methodologies to strengthen our intervention in this project and beyond.”³³⁸ At the same time, PIE staff highlighted that learning has been happening both ways, with one project staff member noting: “Plan is new to the component of economic empowerment, and we are learning a lot from our local partners.”³³⁹ A critical challenge identified by the partners, however, is the **heavy workload, particularly in Los Ríos, where the implementation team consists of only two members from CODESPA and one member from Fundación de Waal.** After the evaluation, CODESPA Foundation hired an additional technician to alleviate the workload and Fundacion de Wall received support from interns to bridge this gap.³⁴⁰

In terms of **external partnership**, the project was implemented in collaboration with several partner organizations, including the Ministerio de Salud Pública (MSP), Ministerio de Educación (MINEDUC), Ministerio de Inclusión Económica y Social, Consejo Cantonal de Protección de Derechos, Consejo Nacional para la Igualdad Intergeneracional Defensoría del Pueblo. While the project and implementation staff made efforts to establish these partnerships, **a recurring challenge noted by all project and implementing partners was the frequent turnover of administrative personnel within these institutions.** This turnover created a repetitive cycle of re-establishing relationships and reorienting new staff to the project, which often delayed progress. Despite this, these partnerships played a critical role in achieving the result, demonstrating the importance of multi-stakeholder

³³⁵ Comment to the draft report

³³⁶ KII 2, Implementing Partners, Ecuador

³³⁷ FGD 3, Girls aged 18-24, Ecuador

³³⁸ KII 3, Implementing Partners, Ecuador

³³⁹ KII 1, Project Staff, Ecuador

³⁴⁰ Comment to the draft report

collaboration in addressing community needs effectively. As noted by the project coordinator, this is an ongoing external risk to the project, but it is managed through continuous engagement and capacity-building efforts, including regular orientations for new staff members.³⁴¹

During the Bridge workshop, participants thoroughly discussed progress and challenges related to the four results. They engaged in subgroup sessions to develop concrete, impact-oriented action plans focused on three key themes: empowerment and self-esteem, strengthening protection mechanisms against violence, and identifying and partnering with other youth organizations. The finalized action plans are available in [Annex 8](#) of this report.

5.5. Assessment of progress on the AoGD

The Area of Global Distinctiveness (AoGD) selected for assessment in Ecuador was **Protection from Violence**, reflecting the project's strong focus on this component, particularly through the work of Fundación De Waal. Additionally, as CODESPA joined the initiative at a later stage, the SOYEE component was less developed by the midline phase, resulting in limited data on its progress.

To what extent do SRHR-related topics applied in the project contribute to the prevention of harassment and sexual violence?

The ZLEA programmatic model is implemented in the project in alignment with PIE's organizational guidelines.³⁴² **The project had a notable positive impact on CAY's understanding of SRHR**, particularly in promoting healthy sexual practices and sharing information about the risks and prevention of early pregnancies. Implementing partners highlighted their commitment in ensuring CAY understood both the theory and the practice of sexual health: "We've taught them how to use a condom correctly through a practical demonstration. They learned key details like checking the condoms' expiration date, not using scissors or teeth to open the package, and avoiding storing condoms in wallets."³⁴³ In the FGDs, boys also remarked this activity was a very useful one. One 23-year-old boy mentioned: "They taught us about many contraceptive methods, and the most recommended is the condom, which is 100 per cent effective."³⁴⁴ Another 21-year-old boy added: "They showed us how it works through a practical demonstration, and no one had ever done that before. I found it very helpful because now I know I always have to check the expiry date, for example."³⁴⁵

Indeed, a key outcome of the ZLEA programmatic model was reducing adolescent pregnancy in our intervention areas.³⁴⁶ CAY girls highlighted how the project helped them think through the consequences and risks associated with practising unprotected sex, particularly about early pregnancies. In the EdL, implementing partners addressed these topics by focusing on girls' empowerment and setting life goals. One partner emphasized, "What we tell them is that they should first fulfil their life goals, and then if they wish, they can pursue motherhood."³⁴⁷ One 17-year-old girl participant explained, "I learned that early pregnancies affect your life and what you can do afterwards. For example, I would need to provide for my child, so I might not be able to study. That's why it's better first to have a job and then have a baby."³⁴⁸

Many respondents noted that early pregnancy remains a prevalent issue in their communities, particularly affecting girls who are not involved. One project volunteer mentioned, "The programme

³⁴¹ Comment to the draft report

³⁴² Comment to the draft report

³⁴³ KII 1, Implementing Partners, Ecuador

³⁴⁴ FGD 4, Boys aged 18-24, Ecuador

³⁴⁵ FGD 4, Boys aged 18-24, Ecuador

³⁴⁶ Comment to the draft report

³⁴⁷ KII 1, Implementing Partners, Ecuador

³⁴⁸ FGD 1, Girls aged 15-17, Ecuador

is helping, but the girls who do not participate still lack this awareness and many still end up pregnant.”³⁴⁹ One 15-year-old girl remarked: “I think our thinking has changed a lot, but maybe not for girls who don’t attend the workshops. I’ve had many classmates who are already mothers. (...)”³⁵⁰ Other participants mentioned that the influence of social media, and pressure on younger individuals is contributing to this issue. As one participant noted, “On social media, you see a 14-year-old girl with a baby, and she says it’s the best thing in the world. It gives you the perception that this should be your goal too.”³⁵¹ Recognizing this gap, participants emphasized the importance of sharing the knowledge they had gained. As one participant in the same FGDs explained, “That’s why what we learn, we must replicate—for example, what I learned here, I talk about with my peers.”³⁵² This highlights their commitment to spreading awareness and empowering others to make informed decisions.³⁵³ As noted by the project coordinator, moving forward, efforts will focus on increasing the participation of more adolescents and women in training sessions on pregnancy prevention.³⁵⁴

While the project has made progress in supporting CAY’s understanding of positive practices, concerns persist regarding their immediate environments. Parents and caregivers involved in the project noted a drastic reduction in cases of violence within the communities,³⁵⁵ yet project partners observed that harmful gender norms and violence remain prevalent. One project partner noted: “The reality is that hitting a son or daughter feels very natural because they were your child.”³⁵⁶ Interviews with implementing and local government partners emphasized the importance of extending the project’s benefits to CAY’s families. This sentiment was echoed in FGDs, where a 16-year-old girl shared: “I love attending Plan’s workshops because it’s my safe space where I can talk openly and be myself, but at home, it’s different.”³⁵⁷ Another 18-year-old girl mentioned, “In the family, communication is somewhat different; sometimes I could never talk about my concerns or questions around sex and gender. However, in the activities, you can talk about anything, and they listen to you and, in one way or another, give you advice.”³⁵⁸

This finding highlights the gap between generations and between those actively participating in Plan’s activities and those who are not. While CAY are gaining knowledge and confidence in discussing sensitive topics within the project’s safe spaces, these conversations often do not extend into their homes, where entrenched norms and communication barriers persist. The contrast between the openness in project activities and the constraints within family settings underscores the need for broader engagement strategies that include parents and caregivers, ensuring that the positive shifts observed among CAY are reinforced within their immediate environments.

Overall, PI’s methodology contributed to deepening CAY’s understanding of GBV and promoting positive SRHR practices, both of which had a limited, yet notable impact on reducing violence, forced marriage and early pregnancies within the communities. CAY demonstrated improving **their understanding of GBV.** They recognized that violence is not limited to physical abuse but can also be verbal, economic, sexual, and psychological. For example, one 18-year-old girl noted that “before the programme we thought that unwanted compliments or that the silent treatment wasn’t violent, but now they know that ignoring someone is violence, a psychological form of violence, and that violence doesn’t always have to leave bruises on my body.”³⁵⁹

³⁴⁹ FGD 6, Project’s volunteers, Ecuador

³⁵⁰ FGD 1, Girls aged 15-17, Ecuador

³⁵¹ FGD 1, Girls aged 15-17, Ecuador

³⁵² FGD 1, Girls aged 15-17, Ecuador

³⁵³ FGD 1, Girls aged 15-17, Ecuador

³⁵⁴ Comment to the draft report

³⁵⁵ FGD 6, Project’s volunteers, Ecuador

³⁵⁶ KII 2, Implementing Partners, Ecuador

³⁵⁷ FGD 4, Boys aged 18-24, Ecuador

³⁵⁸ FGD 1, Girls aged 15-17, Ecuador

³⁵⁹ FGD 3, Girls aged 18-24, Ecuador

How does the project contribute to and impact cultural patterns?

The project is having a relevant impact on cultural patterns. It is promoting a critical understanding of gender norms and encouraging more inclusive and gender sensitive behaviors among participants. As noted by one boy: “I feel that with the activities, workshops, and all of this, I have really changed my mindset about gender because I used to believe in those old ideas that women need to stay in the kitchen and boys can only work.”³⁶⁰

CAY participants also reported challenging cultural patterns in their homes. A 15-year-old boy shared, “Normally in my house, my mom did everything at home and my dad worked but now my mom, my brother, and I divide the tasks, so if my mom does the work in the morning, I do it in the afternoon, and my brother does it at night, and that way we rotate, and everyone contributes.”³⁶¹ Girls also observed that boys are now more willing to engage in household chores without fear of judgment. One 17-year-old girl noted, “Before, if a father saw a boy helping his mom with the dishes or sweeping, he would tell him to stop because those were things women should do but is not the case anymore.”³⁶² Parents are also more aware of positive practices. One female parent shared: “Thanks to the workshops provided to the parents, they have changed their way of thinking and now teach better things to their children.”³⁶³ Another female observed, “It has changed a lot in people's thinking because in my community, we don't see much violence anymore because now women also work.”³⁶⁴ These changes have contributed to a more equitable and harmonious environment in households and communities.

Despite these positive developments, participants acknowledged that harmful cultural norms persist. A challenge that persists, however, is the resistance rooted in religion. One participant reflected, “Since here at Plan it is talked about respecting each person's gender, some people say that they are being taught to go and have relationships, but it is because of the religion they believe in.” This reflects a cultural challenge where some community members resist the program's gender-inclusive methodologies due to religious beliefs, demonstrating the need for continued dialogue and culturally sensitive approaches to ensure broader acceptance and participation. As noted by the project coordinator, a key challenge of the project has been engaging populations and families in these DS and DR processes. Moving forward, project staff committed to conduct training sessions with all groups to raise awareness and drive meaningful change on these issues.³⁶⁵

How are the project's models integrated with local protection services?

The evaluation found that PIE models and methodologies have improved the quality of protection services at both the community and institutional levels; however, a notable gap remains in CAY's knowledge of and confidence in these services. PI's methodologies were crucial in strengthening the knowledge and skills of implementing partners and protection service providers. As one implementing partner explained, “We are very clear about Plan International's Safeguarding Policies, and we are always socializing these policies with the community, so they understand that there is a code of conduct for both staff and those we engage with in the communities.”³⁶⁶ This improvement was acknowledged by participants from groups of parents, caregivers, and community volunteers, who noted that before PI's involvement, the protection system was limited to police intervention, with local inspectors in some communities acting as informal authorities.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁰ FGD 2, Boys aged 15-17, Ecuador

³⁶¹ FGD 2, Boys aged 15-17, Ecuador

³⁶² FGD 1, Girls aged 15-17, Ecuador

³⁶³ FGD 5, Parents and Caregivers, Ecuador; FGD 6, Project's volunteers, Ecuador

³⁶⁴ FGD 5, Parents and Caregivers, Ecuador; FGD 6, Project's volunteers, Ecuador

³⁶⁵ Comment to the draft report

³⁶⁶ KII 2, Implementing Partners, Ecuador

³⁶⁷ FGD 5, Parents and Caregivers, Ecuador; FGD 6, Project's volunteers, Ecuador

Local government partners acknowledged that gaps in efficiency and knowledge remain. One government partner noted, “We know that we have a lot to learn and, particularly among public servants, there is still a lack of understanding of protection routes and every department’s responsibilities.”³⁶⁸ Another added, “While PI’s workshops have been crucial, public servants keep changing, and as a result, a majority of them are not trained and do not have the understanding of protection and violence they should have.”³⁶⁹ Furthermore, a taboo around using protection services persists. As noted by one participant in the FGDs with parents/caregivers “Here we all know each other and people are often afraid of seeking help due to social stigma.”³⁷⁰

The evaluation also revealed a gap in CAY participants’ knowledge and confidence in protection services. Of the 368 survey participants, 57.61 per cent (212 individuals) reported knowing where, how, and when to report violence and felt supported by rights-guaranteeing institutions.³⁷¹ However, many CAYs were unable to specifically identify these institutions, suggesting a general awareness of the need for help but a limited understanding of the appropriate organizations. During FGDs, the disconnect between perceived and actual understanding of protection systems also emerged. Participants, especially those aged 15–18, frequently misidentified protection services. For example, both in the FGDs with girls and with boys, CAY aged 15-17 considered “Plan International”, “ONU” and “Fundacion de Waal” as formal protection authorities.³⁷² These gaps underline the need for clearer communication and practical, scenario-based learning to help CAY navigate and access protection services with confidence.

5.5.1. Assessment of the effectiveness of youth participation and leadership methods used

To what extent are CAY invited to participate across all stages of the project?

CAY are actively invited to participate across all stages of the project, and their involvement is evident in the design, planning, and implementation processes. The project leverages PI’s longstanding presence and trusted relationships in the targeted communities, enabling meaningful participation and fostering a sense of ownership among CAY and volunteers.

Across various activities and project components, CAY have been empowered to influence the project design by adapting activities to meet their interests and needs. As noted by one implementing partner, “As part of our approach, in each workshop, we train the facilitator to frequently ask participants for any suggestions or ideas, then these ideas are recorded and taken into account for future sessions.”³⁷³ This participatory approach was particularly successful in the introduction of economic empowerment initiatives implemented by CODESPA, where brainstorming sessions allowed CAY to identify market opportunities within their communities. One 21-year-old girl shared: “In our case, we had a chance to brainstorm business ideas as a group, looking at what’s available in our area, what’s missing, and identifying opportunities (...) we noticed a lot of fruit was going to waste, so we came up with the idea of making jams.”³⁷⁴ This example demonstrates how CAY’s contextual knowledge is integrated into project design, ensuring relevance and feasibility while promoting leadership.

Activities are implemented with a flexible, participant-centered approach which fosters ownership and ensures that activities align with the needs and preferences of CAY while maintaining the project’s

³⁶⁸ KII 7, Local Government partner, Ecuador

³⁶⁹ KII 4, Local Government partner, Ecuador

³⁷⁰ FGD 5, Parents and Caregivers, Ecuador

³⁷¹ Antroproyectos. (2024). Sistematización de información primaria y secundaria de evaluación intermedia del proyecto

“Empoderamiento económico y social de adolescentes y jóvenes, particularmente mujeres (10-24 años)”.

³⁷² FGD 1, Girls aged 15-17, Ecuador; FGD 2, Boys aged 15-17, Ecuador.

³⁷³ KII 3, Implementing Partner, Ecuador

³⁷⁴ FGD 3, Girls aged 18-24, Ecuador

objectives. As noted by project staff: “We are open to hearing what they want to do but we remain very clear about our objectives. For example, if they are tired and want to watch a movie, that’s okay, but the movie will be about a specific theme that relates to the project’s scope, and there will be an activity of reflection.”³⁷⁵ This adaptive approach balances flexibility with intentionality, allowing CAY to feel heard while staying aligned with the project’s gender-transformative goals.

A key strength of the project is its ability to foster leadership among participants and community leaders encouraging them to volunteer and take on responsibilities as moderators. This is one of the mechanisms the project employs to ensure the active participation of various stakeholders.³⁷⁶ Thanks to PI’s longstanding presence in the communities, both adults and CAY are already familiar with PI’s methodologies, and extremely involved in the delivery of the activities, which has allowed them to take a more active role in shaping the project. Among the community leaders attending the FGDs, two highlighted their volunteer work with Plan for “more than 20 years,”³⁷⁷ and the majority of participants had previous experience with the organization. In FGDs with girls aged 18-24, two participants spoke about holding “multiple roles,” including participating in activities, volunteering as moderators for the Champions of Change initiative, and leading youth clubs in their communities.³⁷⁸ This model empowers CAY to influence the project’s design by adapting activities to suit their interests and needs. One 23-year-old female participant shared, “I grew up attending Plan’s activities, and they have always been here for me. Now in this new project, I felt I was ready to take a more active role, so I started volunteering with them. Now I am the activity moderator, and I coordinate the youth club in my community.”³⁷⁹ This example illustrates how the project nurtures long-term engagement, enabling participants to transition into leadership roles shape the project’s delivery.

The project takes into account different schedules and time constraints when implementing its activities, placing a strong emphasis on weekends when participants have greater availability.³⁸⁰ **Nonetheless, challenges persist regarding the planning of activities, particularly for participants balancing work or university commitments.** A 21-year-old female participant highlighted the difficulties faced by those juggling academic and professional responsibilities: “Sometimes I want to go to an activity, but it’s during the day, and I cannot do that because I have to go to university.”³⁸¹ While schools are generally supportive, often granting permission for students to attend activities, the situation is more complex for those in university or employment. Community leaders also pointed to the lack of suitable spaces for activities, which sometimes results in sessions being held informally: “In my communities, some of the activities are held under a tree or in one of the volunteers’ houses.”³⁸² These logistical challenges underscore structural constraints, such as limited infrastructure and competing demands on participants’ time.

Have the project activities strengthened their self-esteem, interest, and participation in community activities with CAY?

The project activities have strengthened the self-esteem, interest, and participation of CAY in community activities. Participants across FGDs reported a boost in their self-esteem. As one 15-year-old girl noted, “They have taught us to love our insecurities because I learned that if I have an insecurity, I need to embrace it and not let it make me feel insecure.”³⁸³ This improvement in self-confidence is evident, it also noted as many girls mentioned being more confident in public. As one 17-year-old girl

³⁷⁵ KII 2, Implementing Partner, Ecuador

³⁷⁶ Comment to the draft report

³⁷⁷ FGDs volunteer and community leaders

³⁷⁸ FGD 3, Girls aged 18-24, Ecuador

³⁷⁹ FGD 3, Girls aged 18-24, Ecuador

³⁸⁰ Comment to the draft report

³⁸¹ FGD 3, Girls aged 18-24, Ecuador

³⁸² FGD 6, Project volunteers, Ecuador

³⁸³ FGD 2, Boys aged 15-17, Ecuador

participant explained, "I used to be very nervous, but now I can speak more confidently in public."³⁸⁴ It emerged that several participants learned that "they can do a lot more with (their) lives".³⁸⁵ In particular, the life-plan activities in the COC Club gave boys a sense of confidence about their future, which boosts their proactiveness. As noted by a 16-year-old boy: "I used to be scared when thinking about my future but now I know what I can do and I have ambitions and a clear plan to get where I want to be."³⁸⁶ Parents also noticed the change, observing that those involved in the project had "higher self-esteem" compared to those who were not.³⁸⁷

The project has sparked a strong interest in personal development and community involvement.

Many participants, especially boys aged 15-17, emphasized how the project helped them learn new values that were not taught in school, strengthening their personality and mentality. Girls were particularly motivated by the economic empowerment component, expressing interest in entrepreneurship and leadership skills to create their businesses and generate income. One girl shared, "they help us develop in leadership and entrepreneurship, and learn how we can have our own business."³⁸⁸ Similarly, one participant stated, "I didn't know what this was at first, but I started going, and the first workshop I attended was on entrepreneurship... now I know how to set prices for my business and what value we should have."³⁸⁹

A particularly helpful practice identified across the project is use of a ludic and playful approach in project activities supporting active participation of CAY.

The project has developed a targeted outreach strategy that aligns with community dynamics, ensuring the timely execution of demanding schedules. Engaging activities, such as film screenings, sports events, and camps in tourist locations, encourage the participation of adolescents.³⁹⁰ Specifically, incorporating gamified activities and sports boosted participant engagement and retention. As noted by implementing partners: "This is something that is always emphasized in the communities: the space we are providing is not a school. We don't assign homework or tasks; instead, it's a place for them to come and learn in a fun, playful way." As a result, "young people feel empowered, they learn through play, and they feel confident about what they are doing."³⁹¹ Parents also observed a growing enthusiasm for the activities, particularly through interactive workshops and games: "The kids are motivated by how the workshops are delivered... they feel inspired to keep going and not stop there."³⁹² This increasing engagement reflects a deeper sense of ownership and commitment to community activities.

How are youth involved in the design and participation of feedback mechanisms?

Youth actively give feedback through the available mechanisms. CAY expressed high satisfaction with the way their opinions are solicited, noting the approachability of the project staff. As noted by one boy aged 18: "They always ask us our opinion and encourage us to tell them what they can improve".³⁹³ A 15-year old girl also highlighted that "the opinions we give, they receive and use them to guide how to interact with others to get their support."³⁹⁴ Youth are encouraged to share their thoughts through various channels, including a physical suggestion box that is provided for every activity, where they can anonymously provide feedback on what can be improved or what they appreciate. This mechanism not only allows youth to voice their opinions but also influences the project's design. The implementing staff has also been very open in implementing feedback received. For example, in the COC, boys' feedback

³⁸⁴ FGD 1, Girls aged 15-17, Ecuador

³⁸⁵ FGD 4, Boys aged 18-24, Ecuador

³⁸⁶ FGD 4, Boys aged 18-24, Ecuador

³⁸⁷ FGD 5, Parents and Caregivers, Ecuador

³⁸⁸ FGD 1, Girls aged 15-17, Ecuador

³⁸⁹ FGD 1, Girls aged 15-17, Ecuador

³⁹⁰ Comment to the draft report

³⁹¹ KII 2, Implementing Partners, Ecuador

³⁹² FGD 5, Parents and Caregivers, Ecuador

³⁹³ FGD 4, Boys aged 18-24, Ecuador

³⁹⁴ FGD 1, Girls aged 15-17, Ecuador

led to the introduction of more dynamic and engaging activities, showcasing the project's adaptability based on the input of CAY.

While CAY expressed their satisfaction with the feedback mechanisms, it was not clear if CAY are actively involved in the design of the feedback mechanisms. If CAY are not involved, then this is a good time to elicit their inputs into the design of a systematic feedback mechanism that is CAY friendly.

How are children and adolescents connected with civil society organizations in the project's intervention areas?

CAY participants closely connected CSOs in the project's intervention areas through a range of collaborative efforts, though the project could benefit from a clearer mapping and engagement with CSO actors and youth networks. The project partners with local youth clubs and networks, and organisations such as the Movimiento Por Ser Nina (MPSN), Trias and Rikolto.³⁹⁵ The project coordinator noted that efforts are being made to strengthen the connection of the youth who participated in the EdL and CoC to the MPSN. Additionally, work is being done with the PU teams, focusing on the sustainability of these processes.³⁹⁶ At the time of data collection, implementing partners were reflecting on strategies to further strengthen collaboration with both government and CSOs, expanding their network of partners. The project team faced the challenge of establishing youth networks in collaboration with the National Council for Intergenerational Equality. Since the evaluation, they have been working on connecting participating adolescents and young people with other organized youth groups.³⁹⁷

While linkages with government partners have been a fundamental priority, **there is a big opportunity for implementing partners to establish closer connections with youth networks and other CSOs active in the territory.** This challenge was addressed during the bridge workshop, where participants agreed on the need to map and connect with local CSO organisations to avoid duplicating efforts and attract participants from diverse contexts.³⁹⁸ While linkages with government partners have been a fundamental priority, **there is a big opportunity for implementing partners to establish closer connections with youth networks and other CSOs active in the territory.** This challenge was addressed during the bridge workshop, where participants agreed on the need to map and connect with local CSO organisations to avoid duplicating efforts and attract participants from diverse contexts.³⁹⁹

How is the project exploring collaboration with local institutions in the organizations in the project's intervention areas?

A key achievement of the project has been its strong partnership with the Ministry of Public Health, particularly with the ministry's adolescent clubs. Initially separated from those run by PI, the clubs eventually merged, pooling resources and strengths. PIE played a pivotal role in addressing gaps in resources; for example, while the Ministry of Health often struggles with material shortages, PI provides essential support such as refreshments and stationery, enhancing the effectiveness of the clubs.⁴⁰⁰ **The project is also exploring new collaborations, notably with the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Council for Intergenerational Equality and other organised youth groups,** to focus on economic empowerment through commercialization and rural women's programs. This initiative seeks to integrate young women into agricultural processes traditionally dominated by men, facilitating their participation in local fairs and agroecological projects. **However, a persistent challenge in sustaining these partnerships is staff turnover,** which, as noted by both project and

³⁹⁵ KII 1, Project Staff, Ecuador

³⁹⁶ Comment to the draft report

³⁹⁷ Comment to the draft report

³⁹⁸ Bridge Workshop

³⁹⁹ Bridge Workshop

⁴⁰⁰ KII 6, Local Government partner, Ecuador

implementing partners, can disrupt continuity and hinder relationship-building. As a result, there is an ongoing need to strengthen and rebuild partnerships to ensure long-term collaboration and impact.⁴⁰¹

How do the approaches and methodologies influence the advocacy processes and sustainability of the activities under the Movimiento Por ser Nina (MPSN)?

The MPSN is an important ally for the project and a highly known and respected network across communities in Los Ríos. As noted by a government partner: "Girls in the movement are now seen as women and leaders in their communities and are also empowering other girls."⁴⁰² This recognition underscores the movement's role in fostering leadership and empowering young women to advocate for gender equality within their communities. **The project staff and implementing partner agree that there is a strong synergy between MPSN and the project, particularly in how both platforms create opportunities for girls to engage in community-driven advocacy.** For example, they remarked how during International Women's Day, the MPSN organized a fair in Chacarita, emphasising women as warriors who can overcome challenges.⁴⁰³ This focus on empowerment is closely aligned with the goals of the EdL. In turn, the implementing partners highlighted that they have a priority in integrating the work of the two platforms: "We want to ensure the visibility of the movement in EdL, where girls can share their stories of violence but also of participation, growth, and empowerment."⁴⁰⁴ During the bridge workshop, it was also noted that, while this synergy exists, it would also be beneficial to involve boys participating in the COC activities to connect with the MPSN. In particular, it was noted that the integration of MPSN with activities like the COC Club opens up opportunities to engage boys, creating a more inclusive space for youth advocacy.⁴⁰⁵

5.5.2. Progress of the gender transformative ambition of the programme

PIE evaluated to assess the project's potential contribution to the six areas of the PI GTM at the design stage. **At time of data collection, the CO had not yet completed the Gender Transformative Marker at the implementation stage.** This limits the comparative analysis that could be done across each area at design and implementation stage. Progress in each area was therefore thoroughly examined during data collection and the Bridge Workshop. These discussions engaged project staff, implementing partners, and project participants, allowing them to reflect on progress toward the envisioned objectives, identify key remaining obstacles, and propose concrete action plans to address these challenges. The finalised action plans are provided in [Annex 8](#) and recommendations developed across the action plans are included in chapter 5 of this report. During the validation meeting, it was emphasized that these initiatives will follow the evaluation process to ensure that the findings and information in this report are fully considered.⁴⁰⁶

Gender Norms

Data collection and the workshop highlighted that the project had an impact on shifting gender norms, particularly regarding women's roles within households, men's emotional expression (e.g., their ability to cry), and overall gender equality. While these themes were strongly embraced by CAY participants in project activities, the primary challenge remains in their homes and surroundings. Though the project provides a safe space for CAY to explore and adopt progressive gender norms, they often return to households where harmful practices persist. Examples include parents - particularly fathers - discouraging boys from participating in household chores, preventing girls from continuing their

⁴⁰¹ KII 3, Implementing Partner, Ecuador

⁴⁰² KII 6, Local Government partner, Ecuador

⁴⁰³ KII 1, Project Staff; KII 2,3, Implementing Partners, Ecuador

⁴⁰⁴ KII 1, Project Staff, Ecuador

⁴⁰⁵ Bridge Workshop, Ecuador

⁴⁰⁶ Validation Meeting, Ecuador

education and perpetuating verbal, psychological, or physical violence. To address this challenge, participants emphasized the need to engage parents—particularly fathers— across project activities.

Agency

The project focused on training and mobilizing young people through leadership and self-esteem sessions aimed at enhancing adolescents' agency and empowerment. Many girls shared that before the project, they believed their only future was to remain in the community and fulfil traditional roles as wives and mothers.⁴⁰⁷ The project had a profound impact on broadening and diversifying their aspirations, with several young women expressing ambitions to become business owners, doctors, teachers, or lawyers. Many are now pursuing university paths to achieve these goals.⁴⁰⁸ The EdL provided a fundamental space for young women to explore their potential and enhance their life skills and agency. Participants noted that they learned skills such as communication, motivation to learn, leadership, self-love, and sisterhood that now they apply in their daily lives⁴⁰⁹

Condition and position

During the design phase, the project identified potential to empower young women through entrepreneurship training and opportunities. However, it was also noted that due to their vulnerabilities, many participants face substantial barriers that hinder the sustainability of their ventures including a lack of financial literacy and difficulty in identifying demand for new business ideas and markets to expand these. The joint work of Fundación de Waal and Fundación CODESPA strengthens the work in the field and positions the program in the intervention communities and with government authorities.⁴¹⁰ The introduction of the new partner, CODESPA, brought activities aimed at strengthening young women's economic empowerment and addressing these challenges. During FGDs young and adult women reflected on the transformative value of learning financial literacy, managing accounts, initiating entrepreneurial ventures, and collaborating on group businesses. One participant shared: "CODESPA has helped me a lot because they've taught us how to generate income, maintain it in the market, and ensure our sales impact people. They've also helped us showcase the richness of our culture and the wealth that comes from our land and community."⁴¹¹ These activities have enabled participants to work toward economic independence, empowering them to take control of their choices and futures. Building on the success of CODESPA's activities, the workshop discussions emphasized strengthening the economic empowerment component and expanding its reach to more participants.

Diversity

The project has focused on raising awareness among participants about diversity and promoting an inclusive approach across all activities. During the Bridge Workshop, participants highlighted several forms of marginalization within the communities. It was noted that people with disabilities are often hidden by their parents due to shame or stigma. Economic and social discrimination is also prevalent, with issues like clothing serving as a visible indicator of economic status, leading to exclusion. There are also regional divides, with discrimination occurring between individuals from the "Costa" and "Sierra" regions, as well as between Indigenous and mestizo populations. Additionally, rural community members are frequently perceived as less intelligent compared to those from urban areas. At the time of the evaluation, there was no systematic approach to ensure the inclusion of all marginalized groups. However, both participants and staff involved in data collection and the bridge workshop emphasize an open-door policy, while the activities they plan are explicitly tied to a zero-tolerance stance on discrimination. As noted by the project coordinator, effort is needed to include people living with

⁴⁰⁷ FGD 1, Girls aged 15-17, Ecuador

⁴⁰⁸ FGD 1, Girls aged 15-17, Ecuador

⁴⁰⁹ FGD 1, Girls aged 15-17, Ecuador

⁴¹⁰ Comment to the draft report

⁴¹¹ FGD 3, Girls aged 18-24, Ecuador

disabilities, but this strengthening depends on a more structural intervention with institutions that guarantee rights.⁴¹²

Work with boys and men

The project had an impact on empowering CAY men to adopt transformative masculinities and positive gender norms. However, challenges remain when engaging adults, particularly fathers, in this transformation. A need has been identified to encourage fathers to become more involved in the upbringing of their children, challenging harmful patriarchal behaviours, such as visits to nightclubs or brothels, and reducing the authoritarian attitudes often assumed by men in households. As noted by the project coordinator, this is a challenge in all intervention projects, but, since the evaluation, the team has been working on strategies to intervene in the meeting spaces of men.⁴¹³ At the same time, while there have been positive changes within youth groups, these efforts need to be further strengthened to ensure their sustainability. In the Bridge Workshop. It was noted that there is a need to prepare youth leaders to become advocates for gender equality and to replicate these messages with other young people.⁴¹⁴

Enabling environment

The project envisioned working with both local institutions and communities to raise awareness about positive gender practices and create spaces for youth economic empowerment. Work with institutions has involved in building partnerships with the *Consejo de Protección de Derechos*, *Junta de Protección de Derechos*, *Defensoría del Pueblo*, *Consejo para la Igualdad Intergeneracional*, *Ministerio de la Mujer*, *Ministerio de Salud*, *Ministerio de Educación*, and collaborating closely with the *Policía Nacional* and *Fiscalía*. As noted by the project coordinator, these partnerships are being expanded to enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of the program processes. We are actively engaging with key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the Department of Social Development of the GADM of Ventanas, the Ministry of Labor, and the Council of the Judiciary, among others.⁴¹⁵ However, there is an issue of continuity, particularly related to the changing responsibilities of individuals responsible for partnerships and the need to maintain continuity with new agendas and names of people responsible. At the community level, the project leveraged PI's established presence and the role of Plan volunteers. As a result, there are many opportunities for involvement. During data collection, it emerged that several parents remain sceptical about Plan International's activities. For example, Plan volunteers reported rumours that they are paid to moderate the activities and the youth clubs.⁴¹⁶ From the volunteers' perspective, being paid would imply doing the work for profit, whereas they emphasize that they engage in it during their free time out of genuine care. Overall, several participants mentioned that in their communities, there are CAYs who would like to participate in the activities but cannot because their parents prohibit them.

5.5.3. Conclusions

The mid-term evaluation highlights the project's progress in achieving its outcomes and results.

The findings demonstrate measurable improvements across all targeted results, particularly in life skills development, informed decision-making regarding sexual and reproductive health, and economic empowerment through entrepreneurship. However, **challenges such as low self-esteem among participants, unclear mandates within protection mechanisms, limited local employment**

⁴¹² Comment to the draft report

⁴¹³ Comment to the draft report

⁴¹⁴ Bridge Workshop, Ecuador

⁴¹⁵ Comment to the draft report

⁴¹⁶ FGD 6, Project volunteers, Ecuador

opportunities, and high turnover of institutional staff amplify the need for a more cohesive and sustainable approach.

The findings highlight that the project has made progress in raising awareness of GBV, SRHR, and protection services among CAY, while also driving cultural shifts within the targeted communities. The program's SRHR activities have been instrumental in equipping CAY with practical knowledge, such as contraceptive use, and promoting informed decision-making around life goals, though early pregnancies and harmful norms remain prevalent challenges. Additionally, the project has positively influenced cultural norms, encouraging equitable household roles and more inclusive attitudes among families, though resistance tied to religious beliefs persists. **Despite these successes, gaps in CAY's knowledge and confidence in protection services point to a need for clearer, contextually relevant education on accessing these systems and effort to strengthen them.**

CAY play an active role throughout all project stages, contributing meaningfully to design, planning, and implementation. Flexible, participant-centered approaches ensure activities align with CAY interests while meeting gender-transformative goals. Leadership opportunities, such as moderating activities and coordinating youth clubs, empower participants to take active roles. However, challenges like **scheduling conflicts and limited infrastructure persist**, highlighting the need for tailored solutions to enhance inclusivity and feasibility of activities. Project activities boost CAY's self-esteem, leadership, and community participation, with life-planning and entrepreneurship workshops helping participants build confidence and skills, particularly in public speaking and goal setting. Playful, interactive methods keep engagement high, with parents noting increased motivation. CAY are enabled to give feedback on the activities across different channels, including an anonymous suggestion box and frequent consultations with activity moderators. Youth report feeling heard, with examples like boys' feedback leading to more dynamic COC sessions. These mechanisms strengthen project adaptability while fostering ownership and trust among participants. Collaboration with CSOs like MPSN strengthens youth advocacy and leadership. MPSN empowers girls as community leaders and advocates for gender equality. Joint activities, such as Women's Day fairs, align with project goals. However, challenges like limited CSO mapping and staff turnover hinder sustained partnerships. Efforts are underway to address these gaps and expand collaboration with local actors to ensure long-term impact.

The evaluation of progress towards the project's gender transformative ambition was limited by the lack of the Plan Gender Transformative Marker analysis at implementation stage. The PIE team has confirmed that this will be a top priority following the evaluation.⁴¹⁷ During the bridge workshop and data collection, progress was highlighted in key areas, with continued efforts needed to address existing challenges. In terms of **gender norms**, the project successfully shifted perceptions of women's roles and men's emotional expression, but challenges remain in participants' households, where harmful practices persist. The project demonstrated having impact empowered young women's **agency**, particularly by expanding their aspirations beyond traditional roles, with many pursuing higher education and entrepreneurial ventures. Regarding **condition and position**, the partnership with CODESPA helped young women gain financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills, but expanding these activities and offering digital marketing training could further support economic empowerment. In terms of **diversity**, the project raised awareness about marginalization but recognized more could be done to promote inclusivity. For **work with boys and men**, progress was noted in shifting masculinities, but further efforts are needed to engage fathers in positive parenting. Proposed actions include father-child bonding activities, active fatherhood workshops, and incentives for participation. Finally, while the project successfully partnered with local institutions and communities, there are challenges with continuity and community scepticism. To address these, the workshop recommended formalizing partnerships and organizing youth-led events to increase family involvement and awareness.

⁴¹⁷ Evaluation meeting, Ecuador

5.6. Benin Analysis

In Benin, the DGD Programme was implemented for the period of 2022-2026 as the second phase of a project called **Impact Elle** implemented in the departments of Atacora, Atlantique and Littoral. Between 2017 and 2021 emphasis was placed on gender equality and aims to provide adolescents and young people, particularly adolescent girls and young women, aged 10 to 24, with inclusive education and quality vocational training. PIB was thus able to use the lessons learned during the first phase of the project to strengthen the effectiveness of its interventions. The implementation took place in five communes in Atacora, 1 commune in Littoral, and 5 communes in Atlantique, in collaboration with two local NGOs: Institut de Filles de Marie Auxiliatrice (IFMA) for the Atlantique and Littoral departments, and Centre Béninois pour le Développement des Initiatives à la Base for Atacora (CBDIBA).

The project is based on five cross-cutting axes to maximize its impact, namely 1) the active participation of young people, who are considered as actors and actresses of change, 2) the transformation of social norms related to gender, 3) involvement and support of parents, communities and policy makers, close collaboration with local partners, 4) the promotion of a protective family, community, professional and educational environment.

5.6.1. Progress against logframe targets

This section integrates data from the quantitative mid-term survey to assess the project's progress against the logical framework targets. The project logframe is also annexed to this report. It is important to note that the SOYEE indicators have not been subject to data collection at this stage (they were not integrated into the quantitative mid-term survey) but will be collected for the end-term evaluation.

Outcome: Adolescents and young people, especially adolescent girls and young women (10 to 24 years), benefit from quality inclusive education and vocational training and become economically independent, in a protective and gender-equal environment.

The project has seven outcome level indicators, from which only two LDI indicators were measured at the mid-term. One outcome level indicator was not achieved, and one indicator was achieved in two project locations but in Atacora where the mid-term target was narrowly missed.

Table 25: Indicator achievement for Benin Outcome

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
% of adolescents and young people aged 10-24, particularly adolescent girls and young women, who actively participate in youth-led initiatives for gender equality (LDI 1)	Total: 10% Girls: 10% Boys: 10%	Total: 15% Girls: 15% Boys: 15%	Total: 0% Girls: 0% Boys: 0%	Total: 25% Girls: 25% Boys: 25%
% of community members who promote social norms to provide a protective environment for adolescent girls and young women (LDI 2)	Total: 53.3% Atacora: 53.3% Atlantique: 53.3% Littoral: 27.1%	Total: 50% Atacora: 50% Atlantique: 50% Littoral: 50%	Atacora: 48.3% Atlantique: 70.8% Littoral: 83.3%	Atacora: 55% Atlantique: 55% Littoral: 55%
# of adolescents aged 10 to 14, in particular vulnerable adolescent girls and young women who are not in school or who have dropped out of school, enrolled in an educational alternative and who successfully complete the CEP (LDI 3)	Total: 174	Total: 270	N/A	Total: 540
% of adolescents and young people aged 14 to 24, in particular vulnerable adolescents and young women who are not in school or who have	CQM: 5.6% CQP: 3.4%	CQM: 6.1% CQP: 4.9%	N/A	CQM: 6.1% CQP: 4.9%

dropped out of school, enrolled in an educational alternative and who successfully complete vocational training (LDI 4)				
# of adolescents and young people aged 14 to 24, in particular vulnerable adolescent girls and young women who are not in school or who have dropped out, enrolled in vocational training and who successfully complete it (LDI 5)	N/A	Girls: 55 Boys: 30	N/A	N/A
% of young people (of all genders) in salaried employment within 6 months after training (SOYI1.1.1)	Total: 0%	Total: 10%	N/A	Total: 20%
% of young people (of all genders) with an operational business within 6 months after training (SOYI1.1.2)	Total: 0%	Total: 50%	N/A	Total: 60%

The indicator measuring the **percentage of adolescents and young people aged 14 to 24, particularly adolescent girls and young women, actively participating (LDI) in gender equality initiatives does not show any progress in this dimension**. This situation is largely due to the method of calculation and the complexity of the participation criteria, which encompass 11 specific conditions such as inclusive representation, the use of participatory and inclusive methodologies, and equal management of resources within organized groups. Although nine components of the indicator perform well when considered separately, two specific components (inclusion of members with disabilities in clubs and participation of young people in online social networks) drag down the overall value of the indicator. When these two components are removed from the calculation criteria, the overall value of the indicator increases from 0 per cent to **39.4 per cent**.

During the Bridge Workshop, participants noted that it was difficult within the framework of the project's activities to engage young people and strengthen the integration of young people living with disabilities into existing youth groups, despite efforts to encourage their participation. This was partly explained by contextual reasons, including the difficulty of recruiting these young people on a large scale "there are not many young people living with disabilities in the communities"⁴¹⁸ noted all participants in the workshop. There was also a focus on physical/motor disability and a gap in the possible integration of young people living with mental disabilities although it was clarified by the project team that this group is not the focus of the project.

It was also noted that due to low penetration of **digital communication tools** (smartphones), the question related to the use of social networks as exchange platforms for young people mobilized in collective change activities was not adapted to the context and should be removed from the composite indicator during the next evaluation exercises. It should be replaced by another indicator that is more relevant and adapted to the reality of young people in communities, particularly in rural areas.

Regarding community members who promote social norms to provide a protective environment for adolescent girls and young women (LDI), this indicator was well achieved in two project locations leading to an average achievement of 135 per cent. This consists of a slight under achievement of 97 per cent against the mid-term target for Atacora, and over achievements of 142 per cent and 167 percent of the mid-term target for Atlantique and Littoral respectively. Nonetheless, with slightly greater attention paid to activities that support this indicator the project will continue to achieve in this area. It was noted that the most common act of promoting social norms was improving awareness of gender issues (explaining the difference between gender equality and equity) across all project locations. The area that was promoted the least was using digitisation to support sustainable solutions in Atlantique and Littoral and inspiring a young generation and taking their views into account in Atacora.

⁴¹⁸ Bridge Workshop, Benin

Result 1: Adolescents and young people aged 10 to 24, particularly vulnerable adolescent girls and young women, benefit from educational alternatives in an accessible, protective and safe learning environment by education sector rights holders and the community, and improve their results in national primary and secondary school examinations.

The project has four indicators under Result 1: one IQE indicator and three LDI indicators. Two indicators were measured as part of the quantitative survey. The results are displayed in the below table. IQEO5.1.2 was achieved, however, the mid-term target for the young people passing school examinations was only achieved for BEPC.

Table 26: Indicator achievement for Benin Result 1

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
% or number of teachers using learner-centred, inclusive and gender-responsive learning approaches at the time of observation/survey (IQEO5.1.2)	N/A	Total: 50% Atacora: 50% Atlantique: 50% Littoral: 50%	Total: 85.7% Atacora: 92.3% Atlantique: 77.8% Littoral: 75%	Atacora: 60% Atlantique: 60% Littoral: 60%
% of adolescents and young people aged 10 to 24, particularly vulnerable girls and young women, not in school or who have dropped out of school, who have access to an educational alternative and who complete the specified cycle (LDI 6)	Girls: 87% Boys: 90%	Girls: 90% Boys: 93%	N/A	Girls: 92% Boys: 95%
# of adolescents and young people aged 10 to 24, particularly vulnerable girls and young women, who complete primary and secondary education at the end of each school year (LDI 7)	Total: 3,824 Girls: 1,625 Boys: 2,199	Total: 3,918 Girls: 1,662 Boys: 2,256	Total: 5,547 Girls: 2,687 Boys: 2,860	Total: 3,824 Girls: 1,683 Boys: 2,277
% of adolescents and young people aged 10 to 24, particularly vulnerable girls and young women, who pass national primary and secondary education examinations each year (LDI 8)	CEP Girls: 80.8% Boys: 84.8% BEPC Girls: 49% Boys: 53.8% BAC Girls: 53.8% Boys: 58.4%	CEP Girls: 83.82% Boys: 88.92% BEPC Girls: 51% Boys: 47.8% BAC Girls: 56.16% Boys: 55.06%	CEP Girls: 72.14% Boys: 72.19% BEPC Girls: 71.41% Boys: 58.55% BAC Girls: 51.13% Boys: 45.81%	CEP Girls: 85.82% Boys: 89.8% BEPC Girls: 53% Boys: 57.8% CBAC Girls: 58.8% Boys: 63.4%

The percentage of teachers using learner-centred, inclusive and gender-responsive learning approaches (IQEO5.1.2) has well exceeded the mid-term target of 50 per cent, achieving a result of 92.3 per cent in Atacora, 77.8 per cent in Atlantique and 75 per cent in Littoral. This represents an average of a 163 per cent achievement across project locations. It was noted in the quantitative mid-term survey that there was a disparity between project locations with about nine out of ten teachers in Atacora using a learner centered approach compared to three quarters of those in Atlantique and Littoral. In 2023, 51 members of the from management bodies and primary and secondary school teachers were trained on inclusive education and gender equality, Sexual Health Education (SHE), and menstrual hygiene management at school which contributed to the achievement of this indicator.⁴¹⁹ It was highlighted in the 2023 narrative report⁴²⁰, that teachers now take ownership of the training themes

⁴¹⁹ Benin Narrative Report 2023

⁴²⁰ Benin Narrative Report 2023

and have made commitments to share their knowledge with their peers showing that this approach has a potential impact that is wider than the immediate group trained.

Regarding the LDI indicator related to educational achievement, significant progress for certain sub-indicators has been made, for example, the use of inclusive pedagogical approaches (85.7 per cent at mid-term). Overall, the mid- and end-term targets were achieved for the BEPC, showing notable progress from the baseline. It was noted, however, that the respective success rates for the CEP (74.6 per cent) and the BAC (48.9 per cent) are lower than the targets set, especially the basic values.

The following activities have contributed to the above results: capacity building through the implementation of School Government Action Plans, the organization and monitoring of tutorials for candidates for exams and remedial courses for some classes, and the Community Education Centres (CEC). These efforts directly contributed to the achievement of IQEO5.1.2 and LDI.⁴²¹

Result 2: Adolescents and young people aged 14 to 24, particularly adolescent girls and young women, have the technical and managerial skills and adequate production materials to obtain productive employment or create and develop an economic unit in a protective environment.

The project has four indicators under Result 2: one LDI indicator, two SOYEE indicators and one SRHR indicator. Only one indicator (SRHO1.1.1) was measured at the mid-term point which was not met.

Table 27: Indicator achievement for Benin Result 2

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
# of adolescents and young people aged 14 to 24, particularly girls, who have adequate production materials (work/manufacturing tools) to create and develop an economic unit in a protective environment. (LDI 9)	N/A	Total: 25	N/A	Total: 65
% of young people who demonstrate entrepreneurial skills at the end of training (SOYO1.1.2)	N/A	Total: 50%	N/A	Total: 70%
% of young people who demonstrate professional skills at the end of training (SOYO1.1.3)	N/A	Total: 50%	N/A	Total: 70%
% of adolescents and young people with accurate knowledge on key topics related to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHO1.1.1)	Girls: 0.5% Boys: 0.1%	Girls: 35% Boys: 035%	N/A	Girls: 55% Boys: 55%

While SOYEE indicators have not been measured as part of the mid-term quantitative evaluation, it was noted that progress against the workplan has been in this area. The following results were reported in the 2023 narrative report⁴²²:

- General meetings were held in 75 localities to identify young entrepreneurs
- Local committees were established for the promotion of entrepreneurship in 11 municipalities
- Pre-selection of 275 young potential entrepreneurs including 152 girls by members of local entrepreneurship promotion committees
- 264 young entrepreneurs were trained including 142 girls and 69 members of the local entrepreneurship promotion committee on entrepreneurial diagnosis including 20 women
- 110 young entrepreneurs including 70 girls were selected in all the municipalities
- A study on employment and market opportunities in the municipalities was conducted
- 70 community relays including 21 women were trained on the savings group methodology. These relays duplicated the training and set up 35 Savings Groups (AJEC and AVEC)

⁴²¹ Benin Narrative Report 2023

⁴²² Benin Narrative Report 2023

- 110 young people chose their careers after the sessions on sharing employment and market opportunities

Indicator SRHO1.1.1 is linked to result area 2 (but does not have a direct link with the result). This indicator was not measured at mid-term as the students had not been through 1 full intervention cycle. Nonetheless, the workshop discussions revealed that questions of sexuality remained difficult for parents and facilitators to implement: the taboos surrounding questions of sexuality, particularly marked in communities in the North, and the difficulties of dialogue between parents and children on these subjects, limit access to clear and precise information. To address this situation, it was deemed necessary to review awareness-raising approaches on issues of sexual and reproductive health of young people, with a greater emphasis on early pregnancy, reproductive health and contraceptive methods. As agreed in the Bridge Workshop, a key step will be to identify culturally appropriate awareness-raising methods that can overcome local resistance and foster a more open and effective understanding among young people and their families.

Result 3: Adolescents and young people aged 10 to 24, particularly adolescent girls and young women, understand protection risks, including gender-based violence (GBV) and domestic violence, and are supported by their parents and guardians, local, national authorities and community actors to enjoy their rights.

The project has four indicators under Result 3: one LDI indicator and three PfV indicators. The LDI indicator was not measured at mid-term. All mid-term targets were met for PfV indicators and even exceeded end-term targets.

Table 28: Indicator achievement for Benin Result 3

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
% of traditional, religious and/or community leaders who publicly denounce violence and abuse and encourage positive practices that promote the protection of adolescents and young people against all forms of violence (PRO3.4.5)	Total: 44%	Total: 48%	Total: 57.9% Atacora: 46.3% Atlantique: 63.2% Littoral: 68.8%	Total: 52%
% of adolescents and young people aged 10 to 24 who demonstrate knowledge of risks and behaviours related to child protection (PROO1.1.1)	Girls: 45.4% Boys: 48%	Girls: 47% Boys: 50%	Girls: 65.2% Boys: 65.2%	Girls: 50.4% Boys: 53%
% of local and national authorities that have taken measures favourable to gender protection and equality following the interventions of the programme in favour of child protection and equality for girls (LDI 10)	0%	20%	N/A	30%
% of parents and caregivers who report using positive parenting practices (PROO2.1.1)	Total: 95.5%	Total: 96%	Total: 98.7% Atacora: 98.9% Atlantique: 97.9% Littoral: 100%	Total: 96%

The project has achieved the mid-term target of 48 per cent and the end-term target of 52 per cent, achieving **an actual result of 57.9 percent of traditional, religious and/or community leaders who publicly denounce violence and abuse and encourage positive practices that promote the protection of adolescents and young people against all forms of violence (PRO3.4.5)**. The project locations of Atlantique (63.2 per cent) and Littoral (68.8 per cent) have performed better against this indicator compared to Atacora (46.3 per cent). A project location baseline was not provided and therefore it is not possible to understand levels of increased or decreased achievement from the baseline. This makes it difficult to establish the contribution of project activities in each location to the

mid-term results. Two project sub-locations did, however, pull these results down: Coby (Atacora) achieved a percentage of 12.5 and Ouidah (Atlantique) achieved a percentage of 13.3. The efforts made during project year 2023 to build capacity of traditional and religious leaders in GBV and early marriage, the leaders forum reaching 803 religious leaders and community actors, and hosting awareness raising meetings between community actors and intergenerational dialogues have contributed to these achievements.⁴²³

65.2 per cent of adolescents and young people aged 10 to 24 who demonstrate knowledge of risks and behaviours related to child protection (PROO1.1.1). This represents an achievement of 138 per cent of the target for girls and 130 per cent of the target for boys. This is a notable achievement of the project. This indicator was vastly overachieved in the project locations of Atacora (achieving 81.9 per cent) and Littoral (achieving 80.7 per cent). However, the project narrowly missed its target in Atlantique (42.3 per cent against a target of 44.7 per cent). Specifically, the project sub-locations of So-Ava, Ouidah and Ear all recorded low levels of achievement in Atlantique.

The project achieved 98.7 per cent of parents and caregivers who reported using positive parenting practices (PROO2.1.1). This slightly exceeded the target of 96 per cent. This represents a good level of progress in this area. Regardless of achieving this target, the quantitative mid-term survey noted three areas which the project should focus on in the second half of implementation: helping children with homework; punishments as related to mood; and disagreements with partners on household rules.

5.6.2. Assessment of progress on the AoGD

The AoGD selected for assessment in Benin was **Skills and Opportunities for Youth Economic Empowerment (SOYEE)**. This choice was driven by the project's strong emphasis on economic empowerment and fostering youth entrepreneurship.

To what extent do the SOYEE project, its implementing partners and activities create an environment conducive to learning for adolescents and young people?

Based on an in-depth analysis of the results of the quantitative mid-term evaluation (across all indicators), it appears that the Impact-Elle project, its partners and the activities implemented contribute to creating an environment conducive to learning for adolescents and young people. Although it is still too early to draw conclusions on impact. This conclusion was drawn for the following reasons:

- Signs of skill growth was reported by learners and trainers
- Positive signs that some of the young people in transition to employment are entering the labour market
- The significant integration of project activities, having an individual multiplied effect at the level of each young person, their family and community environment (SOYEE, protection, DSSR, education components)
- Reported overall satisfaction demonstrated by project participants (both boys and girls)
- The existence of community anchoring (presence of field facilitator in the communities)
- Integration of the project activities into the institutional landscape (local authorities, GUPS, ATDA) allowing strong ownership by institutional rights holders which is a sign of sustainability

It is also key to note that the project was particularly successful in fostering a safe and non-judgmental space for learning, encouraging participants to explore professional activities beyond traditional gender roles. For example, a young boy reported: "I learned to do men's hair, but today, since men and women

⁴²³ Benin Narrative Report 2023

can do the same things, I am learning to do women's hairdressing. Before, I could not have the courage to enrol in this training, since it is not a job for men."⁴²⁴

At the individual level, the impact of the project activities is perceptible thanks to a **promising integration of the package of activities** implemented by the project: for example, young people participating in the Youth Associations for Savings and Credit (AJEC) benefit not only from technical and entrepreneurial training to develop IGA, but also from sessions on financial management and life skills, including discussions on gender equality and sexual and reproductive health, which considerably amplifies the impact sketches at the individual level.⁴²⁵

The different project intervention areas reflect a multi-level approach to the **socio-ecological framework**.⁴²⁶ Intergenerational dialogues mobilize the community, including parents, village chiefs and local authorities, to reinforce positive norms while supporting young people in their technical training and gender education, thus creating a multiplier effect in the immediate environment of young people.⁴²⁷

The Impact Elle project has established a structured process for recruiting young people into vocational training. Village chiefs, in collaboration with project facilitators, played a key role in identifying potential beneficiaries, including young people from disadvantaged backgrounds or in vulnerable situations. As one participant testified: "The village chief informed us about the project and invited us to participate in meetings, where we were selected on the basis of our needs and professional ambitions."⁴²⁸ In addition, parents were engaged in the process to organize these training courses which were participatory, in consultation with parents.

Some challenges persist, however, particularly related to what some participants perceive as hidden costs of vocational training charged to the young people or their parents which constitute a major obstacle to the retention and attendance of young people in the training cycle. It should be noted however, that all costs are explained to participants when they sign a contract to agree to participate. Therefore, there seems to be a misunderstanding relating to costs of training.

- Young people mention that training locations are often far from their homes. The cost of daily **transport** becomes a major obstacle, forcing some to miss sessions or limit their attendance.⁴²⁹ This is despite having knowledge of training center locations in advance of joining the training and commitments obtained from parents to cover these associated costs. Nonetheless, the fact that participants noted these challenges is worth further exploration.
- Many participants indicate that they do not always have the means to have breakfast or lunch before or during the training. This impacts their concentration and energy, thus reducing their ability to fully benefit from the teaching.⁴³⁰

The overall combined financial burden of transportation and meal costs is causing some young people to consider dropping out of training. Some young people manage to get by through AJEC profits or other strategies, for example, some take days off to do odd jobs to cover their costs, such as transportation or meals, because their parents cannot meet these basic needs.⁴³¹ Some trainers and partner staff noted a negative effect of **parental disengagement**, where some parents consider the

⁴²⁴ FDG JH FP Ouidah

⁴²⁵ KII IFMA partner2

⁴²⁶ Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. *Developmental Psychology*, 22 (6), 723–742. Available at: [link](#).

⁴²⁷ KII IFMA partner2

⁴²⁸ FGD Boys Ze

⁴²⁹ FGD JF FP Ouidah; FGD AJEC Akassato; FGD boys Ze

⁴³⁰ FGD JH FP Ouidah; FGD AJEC Akassato; FGD boys Ze

⁴³¹ FGD, Patrons, Ouidah ; KII, IFMA, partner2

support of the project to be sufficient, and therefore reduce their involvement in the financial responsibilities related to their children's education, thus transferring the burden onto the latter.⁴³²

To support the retention of young people, some employers/training centre managers **cover** additional costs such as transport and meals for their apprentices on a pro bono basis to ensure their attendance. Others have set up a residential offer for students to offset the effects of transport on attendance, but they noted that the Impact Elle project has not allowed boarding funding to date.⁴³³

These constraints, although mitigated by the “informal” support of some employers/trainers, highlight the need to integrate more systematic measures to cover these needs. Despite these challenges, the overall impact of the project remains positive, with visible transformations in young people's attitudes towards their education, their role in society and their professional future.

To what extent are the training modules linked together? Are SOYEE participants well equipped to develop the technical skills they need as well as their professional project?

The training has two phases to meet the needs of young people. In the first phase, 24 young people were selected to participate in a three-day **training course in entrepreneurship**. At the end of this first phase, ten young people with high entrepreneurial potential among the 24 were selected to benefit from long-term training funding (110 in total).⁴³⁴ The **selection** was also made based on **vulnerability criteria**. **Multi-stakeholder committees**, including representatives of craft associations, CPSs, and territorial agencies for agricultural development (ATDA), validated the applications and supported the young people in choosing their profession.⁴³⁵

The training modules for youth who participated in **the entrepreneurship training** provided a practical introduction to the basics of entrepreneurship. This training focused on fundamental concepts such as the steps to start a business, financial management, and leadership. Young people reported that these modules improved their **understanding of the entrepreneurial process**. One participant noted, “I learned to analyze my goals and plan step by step how to start a business with few resources.”⁴³⁶

The short courses have their limitations. Participants who only received this initial introduction to entrepreneurship, although enthusiastic, report a need for follow-up training to help them apply what they have learned in practice and overcome the practical obstacles encountered in starting their own professional project: “After the three days of training, we learned a lot... but I still need to be reinforced on business management, determining strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to properly conduct my market research and manage my business.”⁴³⁷ While waiting for their recruitment for future cohorts, these young people are supported through the AJECs which enable them to generate a minimum profit, start IGAs and constitute significant support groups (see the section on the AJECs below).

Young people benefiting from long-term training in vocational training centres (CFP) have received/receive much more in-depth supervision and training. Furthermore, the content is regulated by each centre and leads to a professional certification (state examination recognised as the Professional Qualification Certificate - CQP or the Trade Qualification Certificate - CQM).⁴³⁸ These training courses combine theoretical courses and intensive practice in specific trades.

⁴³²FGD, Patrons, Ouidah; KII, IFMA, partner2

⁴³³FGD, Patrons, Ouidah.

⁴³⁴KII, IFMA, partner2 ; Project documentation: BEN233_Narrative report_2023_Plan Int BeninVF.

⁴³⁵KII, cheffe du GUPS, Akassato; KII, IFMA, partner2

⁴³⁶FGD, AJEC, Ze

⁴³⁷FGD, Boys, Ze

⁴³⁸ KII_IFMA_partenaire

The **choice of training courses** was informed by a preliminary market study, which aligned the training courses with specific needs and local economic opportunities in promising sectors. This study made it possible to identify promising professions adapted to rural areas, such as livestock farming and craft production, and to urban areas, such as graphic design or catering, by responding directly to local demand.⁴³⁹ For this training course, demonstrated a certain **adaptability** to the needs of young people and a concern for **continuity** between phase 1 and phase 2 of the DGD project: some learners have in fact benefited from continuous support since the previous phase of the project, others were supported for their first year entry and others (at risk of dropping out) were supported in the following years.

This evaluation collected many testimonies from young people who have **significantly improved their know-how** thanks to the funded training: Young people trained in carpentry, screen printing and graphics, sewing, hairdressing, cooking and electronics have acquired concrete technical skills that allow them to generate income and improve their autonomy. In **aluminium carpentry**, they now know how to manufacture and install frames for doors and windows. In **screen printing and graphics**, young people produce work such as posters and business cards. One of them shares: "I designed and produced an order for business cards with a profit of 2,000 francs."⁴⁴⁰

Satisfaction with the content of the long training course is generally positive, with participants expressing appreciation for the technical and transversal skills acquired. Young girls who were out of school explained that they were not doing anything before the project, which exposed them to abuse from their parents or risky sexual behaviours, and that the training offered them an alternative.⁴⁴¹

Many emphasize that the training course has brought significant changes to their lives, particularly by increasing their autonomy and enabling them to generate income. One participant explains: "I learned to do hair, and with the tools I received, I do small jobs to earn money and help my parents."⁴⁴² In the field of screen printing and graphic design, one participant states: "Thanks to the training, I was able to complete orders such as business cards, which allowed me to save money for my future projects."⁴⁴³ For young girls in particular, this newly gained autonomy has enabled them to reconsider their life choices and to reduce their dependency to their male relatives. For example, one participant explained: "I preferred to take the path of empowerment to start by earning my living independently of him [her father] and any boy."⁴⁴⁴

Finally, there are still challenges related to the **official recognition of apprentices' work** in training centers and workshops in Benin. One of the business owners consulted during this evaluation notes that "in the Beninese system, apprentices are not paid. This is described as a structural problem that limits apprentices' economic opportunities while keeping them in prolonged financial dependence on their parents/caregivers. "It's a real problem that few people talk about because they know there is no official solution for it, and we try to manage it amicably."⁴⁴⁵ This quote reflects the systemic nature of apprentices' non-payment, often compensated by informal arrangements to cover their basic expenses, but without a sustainable solution. Apprentices actively participate in the production or economic activities of training centers, but this is seen as an educational step rather than an activity that deserves remuneration.

⁴³⁹ KII_IFMA_partenaire

⁴⁴⁰FGD, Boys, Ze

⁴⁴¹ FDG filles AJEC Ze; FDG JF FP Ouidah

⁴⁴²FGD, AJEC, Ze

⁴⁴³FGD, JF FP, Ouidah

⁴⁴⁴ FDG filles AJEC Ze

⁴⁴⁵FGD, Patterns, Ouidah

To what extent does the provision of a start-up kit or capital to launch income-generating activities advance project outcomes?

In this area, the project's intervention took place in two ways: 1. the development and distribution on a case-by-case basis of a training kit (basic material) and a reintegration kit (for young people who have completed their studies) and 2. support for young people and parents via savings and credit groups (in AJEC and AVEC).

1. Training and reintegration kits

The **training kits** were widely distributed to all youth enrolled in vocational training. These kits included the basic materials needed to follow the apprenticeships in the workshops or training centers. For example, in hairdressing, the youth were provided with tools such as scissors, combs and other essential equipment to practice during their training. In sewing, the kits included threads, needles, and other supplies used on the machines in the training workshops.⁴⁴⁶ These kits were designed to enable the youth to fully participate in the practical classes during their training.

The **installation kits**, intended to support young people in launching their self-employed professional activity after the training, have not yet been fully distributed for most of the participants, who are still in training. At present, the timing of the distribution of these kits is not clear to the participants: **"They promised to give the kits, but we don't have a date yet."**⁴⁴⁷ This statement highlights the prolonged wait and the lack of precise information on the distribution schedule.⁴⁴⁸ **"I haven't received my kit yet, I don't know when it will come."**⁴⁴⁹ This illustrates a widespread frustration among beneficiaries regarding the uncertainty about the next steps. While delays are evident, the project team confirmed that most students have now received their kits. Delays were largely due to procurement procedures which must be upheld.

The list of installation kits was identified based on the specific needs of the professions chosen by the young people, local market standards and recommendations from trainers and trade experts. These kits include equipment intended to enable installation and financial empowerment of young people, such as 1. sewing machines, overlocking machines, and irons for tailors; 2. computers, screen printing frames, and inks for those trained in screen printing; 3. specific tools for technical professions, such as equipment for electricity and hairdressing.⁴⁵⁰

2. Savings groups

Youth Savings and Credit Associations (AJEC) allow members to contribute regularly to a common fund, take out loans to finance income-generating activities or cover urgent needs, for example. AJEC also benefits from training to develop skills in financial management, entrepreneurship, leadership, and awareness of the rights and responsibilities of young people, including sessions on gender equality and sexual and reproductive health. The loans obtained are often used for activities such as agriculture, processing of local products (e.g. peanuts), and selling products. **Participation in AJECs is an undeniable asset for young people in training**, it helps members generate income and improve their living conditions and it can also help young people meet the transportation and meal needs they need to stay in training for certain basic needs, for example, a participant uses a loan of 2,000 FCFA obtained through AJEC to buy ingredients and produce, milk, and tofu. This activity earns her between **400 and 700 FCFA per week**, covering her basic expenses such as transportation and meals.⁴⁵¹ The profit from

⁴⁴⁶KII, IFMA, partner2

⁴⁴⁷FGD, Boys, Zero

⁴⁴⁸FGD, Boys, Ze

⁴⁴⁹FGD, JH FP, Ouidah

⁴⁵⁰KII, IFMA, partner2

⁴⁵¹ KII, IFMA, partner2

AJECs therefore generally allows for financing certain basic needs. Significant success stories, were shared, including an example of a young woman from the commune of Ouidah who had started with a small capital thanks to an AJEC and who had managed to develop her peanut business and set up a wholesale point of sale thanks to a loan initially provided by an AJEC from the project.⁴⁵²

Village Savings and Credit Associations (AVEC) target adult members of the communities, often the parents of the young people supported by the project. When effective, this integration is doubly beneficial for the young people supported through the AJEC or training.

These two components ensure an essential part of the success of the project and the effective empowerment of young people for the following reasons:

- Training kits: are essential because the training centers do not have sufficient equipment to allow each young person to practice their profession without the need to purchase the minimum equipment (e.g. sewing thread, needles and fabric for sewing).
- Reintegration kits: are essential for the reintegration of young people because interventions that do not include adequate post-training support, including the provision of equipment to enable them to set up independently, risk compromising their success. This aspect was noted by most participants and is particularly important given the economic vulnerability of the selected participants.
- AJEC/AVEC: The simultaneous organization of young people in training in AJEC and adults (parents) in AVEC presents numerous advantages, particularly in terms of resilience in the family context.

The **challenges** faced by the participants are as follows:

- **The training/AJEC continuum:** Not all young people in the project are systematically in AJEC. Given that this integration between the training and savings component has repercussions on remaining in training, it is recommended to continue this integration at the family level.

Assessment of Community Child Protection Mechanisms

The responsibility of the **Community Child Protection Mechanisms (MCPE)** is to strengthen the prevention of GBV and the protection of children in rural communities through awareness-raising involving traditional chiefs, religious leaders and educators. They are supposed to facilitate the reporting of cases of violence, collaborate with formal protection services, and support vulnerable children to prevent their dropout from schools. In addition, their activities include intergenerational dialogues, promoting collective mobilization to resolve problems related to violence in the community. According to discussions with some members during the evaluation, it appears that **they are strong in preventing cases of dropping out of school and early marriage**. “We had a situation where a parent wanted to force his daughter into marriage, she approached the lady from the GS, and we quickly stopped that.”⁴⁵³ They also maintain links with the project’s training activities. For example, a member of the MCPE committee in the commune of Ze shared the story of a young girl who dropped out of school to support her brother, and described how the MCPE intervened to reintegrate her into the education system by enrolling her in an apprenticeship in the Impact Elle project.⁴⁵⁴ At the same time, the MCPE and the director of the CEG supported her brother by ensuring his schooling and meals, while continuing the steps to find their parents.

A major challenge for MCPEs is the culture of **impunity** in the communities and lack of financial resources. According to the Plan Protection Advisor: “Whoever gets up to go and talk to the police, you

⁴⁵² KII, IFMA, partner2

⁴⁵³ KII, Leaders, Kpomassè

⁴⁵⁴ FDG, Teachers, Ze

know that you have broken our social pact, because our problems must always be resolved between us.”⁴⁵⁵ In addition, members highlight the lack of **financial resources** that prevents MCPEs from covering essential functions, such as transportation to report cases of abuse or organizing regular follow-ups with formal protection actors.⁴⁵⁶ They suffer from a lack of organisational support, particularly in terms of continuous training and supervision to structure their activities and strengthen their impact.⁴⁵⁷

While the integration of the **CCPEs** into the formal protection system in Benin would be helpful, it faces several major obstacles. First, the absence of the facilitation of adoption of municipal decrees is remaining in both Atlantic and Littoral. This is necessary for the MCPEs to be officially recognised under the banner of the Municipal Committee for Child Protection (CCPE). Many NGOs support the CCPE, sometimes with a finding of competition (between these NGOs) in the project areas. In Attacora, Plan managed to mobilize them and strengthen the link with the formal system, and advocacy efforts are underway in the Atlantic, led by IFMA.⁴⁵⁸

5.6.3. Assessment of the effectiveness of youth participation and leadership methods used

How are CAY invited to participate in the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of activities that concern them (AJEC/AVEC)? To what extent is their participation meaningful and their point of view taken into account?

Overall, according to Richard Hart’s ladder of participation,⁴⁵⁹ youth participation at the activity level is at the highest level (Youth-initiated and shared decisions with adults) thanks to activities like vocational training and school governments. However, at the project design level, youth participation is rated at the ‘assigned but informed’ scale because CAY’s involvement in the design, planning and evaluation of the project remains limited. And, to the evaluator’s knowledge, there has been no specific opportunity for CAY involvement in the planning or evaluation processes of activities.⁴⁶⁰

CAY have been involved in the implementation of activities concerning them, mainly in the context of the **choice of training and the AJEC and AVEC**. For example, a young girl reports: “They asked us what we want to learn and each of us chose our profession.”⁴⁶¹ During the awareness-raising and selection sessions, they freely choose the professions or projects they wish to pursue, guaranteeing a certain autonomy in the process.⁴⁶²

In addition, CAY in the school governments are directly leading the development of action plans, as they are the ones proposing the activities to be implemented according to their local realities.⁴⁶³ This further highlights the project’s efforts to ensure meaningful participation of CAY.

⁴⁵⁵KII_Plan_Safeguarding_Protection Specialist

⁴⁵⁶ KII_Specialists_Plan

⁴⁵⁷ FDG Patrons Ouidah

⁴⁵⁸ KII, IFMA; Validation meetings. January 2025.

⁴⁵⁹ Mullahey, Ramona & Susskind, Y. & Checkoway, B. (1999). Youth participation in community planning. 1-70. Available at: [Link](#)

⁴⁶⁰ The active involvement of adolescents and/or youth in the Bridge Workshop taking place in the framework of this evaluation was duly considered but was cancelled due to financial and time constraints.

⁴⁶¹ FGD, AJEC, Ze

⁴⁶² KII, Head of GUPS, Akassato

⁴⁶³ Project documentation: BEN233_Narrative report_2023_ Plan Int BeninVF

What was the influence of the project activities implemented and the resources mobilised on (i) young people's self-esteem, (ii) young people's mobilisation and interest, (iii) young people's involvement (as leaders or participants) in community activities?

Young people report a significant improvement in their self-confidence thanks to the life skills training and awareness. For example, one participant testified: "I was very shy and did not react in public, but thanks to the training, I can speak easily and speak confidently."⁴⁶⁴ These learnings also helped to strengthen their ability to project themselves into the future and have plans, as illustrated by one participant: "Before, I stayed at home without a goal, but today, I think about what I want to do to move forward."⁴⁶⁵ One participant also explained: "When I think about what I want to do, I think about moving forward or at least gaining education."⁴⁶⁶

Increased capacity for decision-making in the family sphere was noted. The project activities have strengthened the autonomy and confidence of young people, allowing them to play a more active role in decision-making within their families. For example, one young girl explains: "Before, my parents decided everything, but thanks to the training, I learned to think about my professional choices and convince my parents to accept my hairdressing project."⁴⁶⁷ These changes are also observed in boys, who, after the training, take more initiatives to support their families, such as contributing to domestic tasks or assuming economic responsibilities.

Increased decision-making and leadership capacity in the community sphere was also noted. In the community sphere, trained youth become active leaders thanks to the skills acquired in communication, leadership and advocacy. For example, one participant reports: "I started to gain confidence in myself and speak in public, for example at church. Now, the young people in my community trust me, and I am a bit of a spokesperson for the young people. I am consulted to help them organize themselves or develop their projects."⁴⁶⁸ The project activities also encouraged CAY to get involved in collective actions in their community, such as awareness campaigns on GBV or intergenerational dialogues.

What motivates CAY to participate in project activities? How can the project more effectively attract CAY to participate in activities?

The AGR and training have increased CAY mobilization, because they see it as an opportunity to become independent.⁴⁶⁹ A young girl shares: "With the kit, I sell locks, and this produces profits in addition to the hairstyles I do."⁴⁷⁰

CAY are motivated to participate in project activities primarily thanks to the prospects of autonomy that it offers them. For example, one participant testifies: "What motivates me is that they paid for my training contract and the facilitator regularly monitors my progress with my boss, which gives me confidence and a desire to continue."⁴⁷¹ The starter kits provided, as well as the life skills and entrepreneurship training, also encourage their involvement by offering them a concrete opportunity to generate income.

⁴⁶⁴FGD 3, AJEC

⁴⁶⁵FDG Women's Day

⁴⁶⁶FGD, AJEC, Ze

⁴⁶⁷ FGD, AJEC, Ze

⁴⁶⁸ FGD, Boys, Ze

⁴⁶⁹FGD, AJEC, Ze

⁴⁷⁰FGD, AJEC, Ze

⁴⁷¹FGD 3, AJEC

How does the project team collect information on how participating CAYs rate the accessibility and performance of program activities?

Project teams collect information on CAY perceptions using regular meetings with facilitators from partners present in the locality. For example, feedback is obtained during follow-up visits to workshops or training centres, where young people share their experiences and difficulties directly with project managers. One participant reports: "The facilitator comes to see my boss to ask how my performance is progressing, which reassures me that I am being well supported."⁴⁷² These mechanisms allow for the collection of varied perspectives (albeit with "filter" of the facilitators), although some young people report difficulties in expressing their opinions, particularly in contexts where feedback mechanisms are not yet operational and inclusive.

The data collection tools developed to monitor SOYEE participants include a section on satisfaction of the training regarding content, format, accessibility, supervision, although it has not been used in Benin yet due to the absence of M&E Officer most of the first half of the programme.⁴⁷³

To what extent are feedback mechanisms adapted to the CAY in all their diversity? To what extent have they been used since the beginning of the project? What is the nature of the feedback received from the CAY? To what extent is it recorded? What is done with the feedback?

Two types of feedback mechanism were observed by the evaluator:

- Community feedback mechanisms in the project are still under development, with training planned for November 2024 to strengthen them.
- In schools, suggestion boxes have been installed, although the feedback is not always directly related to the project.

The nature of the feedback varies, ranging from assessing the accessibility of training (e.g., transportation costs or distance) to the quality of the training content and materials provided. This feedback is recorded by facilitators and shared with project managers to adjust activities. Several adaptations have been made which include improvements in access to starter kits, better planning of training, and greater consideration of youth financial constraints. While this feedback is used to adapt some activities, its overall integration could be strengthened, including by expanding the participation of the most marginalized youth and ensuring full traceability of feedback for ongoing evaluation of program impact.⁴⁷⁴

Efforts have clearly been made to tailor the feedback mechanisms to CAY, by placing the suggestion box in schools where it is accessible. It is not clear to what extent CAY were involved in designing the mechanism.

5.6.4. Progress of the gender transformative ambition of the programme

PIB assessed the project's potential contribution to the six areas of the PI GTM at the design stage. At time of data collection, the CO had not yet completed the GTM at the implementation stage. This limits the comparative analysis that could be done across each area at design and implementation stage. Progress against focus GTM elements was agreed with PIB and thoroughly examined during data collection. These discussions engaged project staff, implementing partners, and project participants, allowing them to reflect on progress toward the envisioned objectives, identify key remaining obstacles, and propose concrete action plans to address these challenges.

⁴⁷²FGD, AJEC, Ze

⁴⁷³ Written comment. Programme staff.

⁴⁷⁴FGD, AJEC, Ze; FGD, AJEC, Akassato

Gender norms

The project has initiated progressive changes in gender norms, including helping to transform **perceptions about the roles of girls and boys, particularly in the workplace**. Girls, traditionally limited to domestic roles, are participating in a variety of careers such as welding, screen printing and farming, which were previously considered exclusively male occupations. One participant noted, "I was told that welding was not for girls, but thanks to the program, I am now able to work in this field and my parents are proud of me."⁴⁷⁵

However, challenges remain, including limited access to resources for young women in rural areas and still insufficient support for young people with disabilities, despite intentions of inclusion. The development of specific activities such as IGAs and the distribution of start-up kits has helped to alleviate financial barriers for many female participants, but strengthening inclusive monitoring is recommended.⁴⁷⁶

Despite these notable advances, social norms continue to limit girls' opportunities, often confining them to domestic roles. Some families prefer to invest in boys' education, leaving girls without the means to train or work.⁴⁷⁷ Early and forced marriages, unwanted pregnancies also exacerbate their exclusion from the job market.⁴⁷⁸ A facilitator notes that "awareness-raising among parents has started to change this dynamic, but it remains a constant challenge."⁴⁷⁹

Agency

Through various initiatives including but not limited to the School Governments (training on quality inclusive education, public speaking, gender-based violence and reporting mechanisms, menstrual hygiene management and resilience and maintaining a healthy environment), media and listening groups, CoC approach, the project has been working to strengthen girls' confidence and self-esteem, and also contributed to developing their skills to mobilise and influence others.

As mentioned above, young people also report a significant improvement in their self-confidence thanks to the life skills training and awareness.

Work with men and boys

Training on positive masculinities and gender equality has encouraged the involvement of boys and men as allies. For example, one facilitator points out: "Boys now support girls in AJEC and in their economic activities, which was rare before."⁴⁸⁰ On the boys' side, the project has introduced concepts of **positive masculinity**, encouraging their support for girls in their economic activities and in the distribution of domestic tasks. For example, one facilitator reports: "Boys now support their sisters and participate in domestic work, which helps reduce inequalities at home."⁴⁸¹ Intergenerational dialogues have also played a key role in involving parents and community leaders in this transformation, making these changes more acceptable and sustainable. However, according to partners, although progress has been noted, some resistance persists, particularly in rural areas where traditional norms remain

⁴⁷⁵KII, Leaders, Compassion

⁴⁷⁶ KII, IFMA

⁴⁷⁷KII_Plan_Gender_Inclusion_Specialist

⁴⁷⁸KII_Plan_Gender_Inclusion_Specialist

⁴⁷⁹KII_Plan_Gender_Inclusion_Specialist

⁴⁸⁰KII_gender_Inclusion_Specialist; KII, IFMA

⁴⁸¹KII, Leaders, Kpomassé; KII, IFMA

strongly anchored. Continued monitoring and prolonged awareness-raising campaigns are essential to consolidate these advances.⁴⁸²

Condition and position

In the GTM conducted at the design phase, the project was rated as having high potential in this area.⁴⁸³ SOYEE activities are playing a key role in addressing barriers to girls and young women's economic empowerment and are directly contributing to improving their condition through allowing participants to generate income and improve their autonomy. In addition, the simultaneous organization AJEC and AVEC was found to increase CAY (including girls and young women) resilience in the family context.

Diversity

The project, despite its efforts to include the most vulnerable youth (including youth with high levels of poverty and youth from ethnic minorities),⁴⁸⁴ **failed to integrate youth with disabilities into its SOYEE activities.** Although the selection criteria include vulnerability related to disability, limited beneficiaries with disabilities were identified or integrated. This absence reflects several challenges, including the lack of awareness in communities about the rights of people living with disabilities, the absence of specific measures to meet their particular needs and the restricted definition of disability. According to an observation by the evaluators, the training centers and activities offered do not seem adapted to young people with disabilities, and the project's financial resources do not allow to cover the additional costs necessary to ensure inclusive participation, such as adapted transport or specific equipment.⁴⁸⁵

Nonetheless, these challenges are specifically related to the SOYEE component as youth with disabilities have been successfully included in school government and CoC activities.

Enabling environment

In the GTM conducted at the design phase, the project was rated as having high potential in this area.⁴⁸⁶ Good progress has been made in achieving that potential as targeted initiatives under each project results are contributing to strengthening structures and systems to enable gender equality and inclusion, this includes but is not limited to the training of APE and AME of primary schools on inclusive education, and the establishment and capacity building of School Governments (under Result 1); and training and retraining of community volunteers to facilitate intergenerational dialogues on positive masculinity; capacity building of traditional and religious leaders (on SRHR, the fight against GBV and environmental protection), community child protection workshops to combat GBV and promote a healthy environment, and the implementation of community action plans for child protection (Under Result 3).

5.6.5. Conclusions

The mid-term evaluation reflects positive progress towards the project's outcome although several contextual challenges, and some gaps in the project's approaches, continue to affect results. With regards to Priority Indicator 1 (Result indicator), two specific components (inclusion of members with disabilities in clubs and participation of young people in online social networks) drag down the overall value of the indicator. The project faced difficulties in engaging young people and integrating young people living with disabilities into existing youth groups (although some were successfully integrated in the CoC groups). This was partly attributable to problems of scale, as

⁴⁸² KII, IFMA

⁴⁸³ Project documentation: BEN100233 GTM D.

⁴⁸⁴ Project documentation.

⁴⁸⁵ KII, Head of GUPS, Akassato

⁴⁸⁶ Project documentation: BEN100233 GTM D.

recruitment on a large scale was a challenge. Additionally, due to low penetration of digital communication tools, it was observed that an alternative method of evaluating exchanges between groups of young people should be included in the future. The project made significant progress with inclusivity in education, which did not reflect in the analysis of indicators (under Result 1), illustrating a failure at the methodological level.

The assessment of progress against the AoGD was positive. Based on an in-depth analysis of the results of the quantitative mid-term evaluation, it appears that the Impact-Elle project, its partners and the activities implemented contribute to creating an environment conducive to learning for adolescents and young people. Although it is still too early to draw conclusions on impact. Impact was reported at the individual level and the project has established a structured process for recruiting young people into vocational training in collaboration with community leaders. Challenges persist in the form of financial barriers to participation, transport to the training centers and subsistence during the training period. In addition, the course duration is also a challenge. The short nature means that the content is limited, and CAY require further follow-up support.

CAY meaningful participation at the project level is limited, however, CAY participation at the activities level is strong. CAY have been involved in the implementation of activities concerning them, mainly in the context of the choice of training and the AJEC and AVEC. This has led to increased capacity for decision making and leadership within the family and the community. Young people also report a significant improvement in their self-confidence thanks to the life skills training and awareness. Feedback is collected regularly by facilitators in the community and through Suggestion Boxes in schools. Several adaptations have been made which include improvements in access to starter kits, better planning of training, and greater consideration of youth financial constraints. While this feedback is used to adapt some activities, its overall integration could be strengthened, including by expanding the participation of the most marginalized youth and ensuring full traceability of feedback for ongoing evaluation of program impact.

The project has shown progress in changing gender perspectives and engaging young women in economic empowerment pathways traditionally reserved for men. Life skills, gender, and protection training have had measurable positive effects, reducing early pregnancies, forced marriages, and gender discrimination.⁴⁸⁷ Awareness-raising tailored to local needs has enabled better integration of communities into protection actions. The integration of the protection/gender approach/SRHR and economic empowerment components has also enabled a change of direction towards better acceptance by young people and communities of gender equality in the family and professional spheres. The participatory approach and strong community anchoring guarantees better acceptability of awareness-raising on the rights and gender approach and gender norms that are sometimes complex to deconstruct. In particular, the presence of facilitators in villages and GBV focal points ensured increased responsiveness, effective prevention of violence and better community acceptance of the project's actions.

⁴⁸⁷ FDG, Teachers, Ze; KII_IFMA_partenaire; KII_Plan_Gender_Inclusion_Specialist

5.7. Niger Analysis

In Niger, the first two years of the DGD Programme (2022-2026) were implemented in the Maradi and Dosso regions by Plan International in collaboration with three local partners with expertise and experience in the key areas of intervention of the project, namely: 1) Association Nigérienne pour le Traitement de la Délinquance et la prévention du crime (ANTD), responsible for supporting protection actions and economic empowerment with a view to the emancipation of young people (especially young girls and adolescents), 2) Coalition des Associations et Syndicats en faveur de l'éducation pour tous (ASO-EPT), in charge of supporting actions around the schooling of young people, with a focus on the schooling of young girls and the creation of a school environment conducive to learning while respecting the rights of young girls, and 3) Alternative Espaces Citoyens (AEC), in charge of governance, capacity building of project stakeholders and advocacy.

The overall objective of the program is to contribute to ensuring that "Adolescents and young people, particularly adolescent girls and young women (10-24 years), are economically and socially empowered to thrive in a protective and gender-equal environment and have access to sustainable economic opportunities."

5.7.1. Progress against logframe targets

This section integrates qualitative and quantitative data collected during the mid-term evaluation to describe the project's progress and challenges against the mid-term logframe targets. Data from the quantitative study were used across KILs and the Bridge Workshop to identify specific gaps and challenges in achieving the project objectives. The project logframe is also annexed to this report.

As part of this evaluation, a Bridge Workshop was organised with PIN and partners. The workshop fostered discussions around the areas for development to improve indicator results and the participants collaboratively proposed actions for improvement under each sector of activity (economic empowerment, protection and education). The proposed actions were developed to align to the existing resources and capacity, so they can realistically be implemented without needing additional funds or making major budget adjustments, and can be found in [Annex 8](#).

Outcome: Adolescents and youth, especially adolescent girls and young women (10-24 years), are economically and socially empowered to thrive in a protective and gender-equal environment, and access sustainable economic opportunities

The project has six outcome level indicators related to the outcome, two SOYEE indicators and four LDI indicators. All six indicators were met at mid-term, although LDI 4 was not met for young women by a very narrow margin.

Table 29: Indicator achievement for Niger Outcome

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
% of young people (of all genders) in salaried employment within 6 months after training (SOYI1.1.1)	N/A	Total: 11% Adolescent Girls: 11% Young Women: 11%	Total: 33% Adolescent Girls: 30% Young Women: 35%	Total: 13% Adolescent Girls: 13% Young Women: 13%
% of young people (of all genders) with an operational business within 6 months after training (SOYI1.1.2)	N/A	Young Adolescent Girls: 35%	Young Adolescent Girls: 93%	Young Adolescent Girls: 52.5%

		Adolescent Girls: 35% Young Women: 35%	Adolescent Girls: 93.5% Young Women: 92.5%	Adolescent Girls: 50% Young Women: 55%
% of adolescents and young people, especially adolescent girls and young women, who actively participate in youth-led initiatives for gender equality (LDI 1)	N/A	Adolescent Girls and Young Women: 27%	Adolescent Girls and Young Women: 55.8%	Adolescent Girls and Young Women: 47.5%
% of community members who promote social norms to provide a protective environment for adolescent girls and young women (LDI 2)	Women: 13% Men: 18.5%	Total: 26% Women: 22% Men: 30%	Total: 50.8% Women: 46.2% Men: 54.2%	Women: 42% Men: 45%
% of adolescent girls and young women (15-24 years) married before age 15 (LDI 3)	Girls 15-18: 6% Young Women 19-24: 17%	Total: 8.5% Girls 15-18: 4% Young Women 19-24: 13%	Total: 25.5% Girls 15-18: 37.8% Young Women 19-24: 18.5%	Girls 15-18: 2% Young Women 19-24: 10%
% of adolescent girls and young women (15-24 years) married before age 18 (LDI 4)	Girls 15-18: 97% Young Women 19-24: 76%	Total: 75% Girls 15-18: 80% Young Women 19-24: 70%	Total: 75.5% Girls 15-18: 86.5% Young Women 19-24: 69.2%	Girls 15-18: 75% Young Women 19-24: 65%

Despite operational delays due to ECOWAS sanctions on Niger effecting banking transfers, the project has achieved very well against its mid-term and end-term targets for the percentage of young people in salaried employment (SOYI1.1.1) and with an operational business (SOYI1.1.2) within 6 months after training. The project achieved 300 per cent against the mid-term target for young people in salaried employment and 260 per cent against the mid-term target for young people with an operational business. This is a huge achievement for the project, showing the success of the training at preparing young people for entering IGAs. There was a slight difference in age group for those in salaried employment with a higher percentage of young women in employment than adolescent girls. There was a significant difference in project location with both age groups scoring much higher in Dosso than Maradi.

Regarding percentage of young people with an operational business, there was no significant difference between age groups, but there was a difference in project location with a higher percentage of young people with a business in Maradi compared to Dosso. The difference across both indicators by project location is interesting, showing that CAY in Dosso were more successful in employment and CAY in Maradi were more successful in entrepreneurship. Furthermore, although the data for the SOYI1.1.2 indicator are very positive, the quantitative assessment report does not provide details regarding the measurement of this indicator and the criteria for an operational business. It is therefore essential not to overestimate the success of this progress, especially since the quantitative survey reveals that the majority of young people earn less than 40,000 f per month (97.2 per cent) through their commercial activity and that young people who earn between 40,000 and 49,999 f and those who earn 50,000 or more represent only 1.4 per cent in each of the two cases.

55.8 per cent of adolescents and young people, especially adolescent girls and young women, who actively participate in youth-led initiatives for gender equality (LDI 1), which exceeds both the mid-term and end-term targets. There was a significant difference by project location for this indicator, with CAY in Dosso participating a lot less than CAY in Maradi. Between 66.7 and 76.9 per cent of CAY in Maradi reported actively participating in youth-led initiatives for gender equality, compared to between 9.1 and 42.1 per cent in Dosso. This is worth investigating further.

The mid-term survey found that **50.8 per cent of community members promote social norms to provide a protective environment for adolescent girls and young women (LDI 2) which is well over the mid-term target of 26 per cent and the end-term target.** A greater percentage of men (54.2 per cent) were found to promote positive social norms than women (46.2 per cent). There was also a significant difference by project location with 60 per cent of all leaders in Maradi promoting positive social norms and only 33.3 per cent of women and 48.6 per cent of men reporting the same in Dosso. This can be explained by socio-cultural differences between these two areas, and in particular the strong influence of the great leaders in Dosso who are very listened to and can potentially constitute an obstacle to the evolution of social norms (while leaders in Maradi do not have the same level of influence).

The project has met both mid-term targets for the percentage of adolescent girls and young women (15-24 years) married before the age of 15 (LDI 3) and before the age of 18 (LDI 4). When broken down by age group, however, young women aged between 19-24 had narrowly missed the mid-term target. This is a very difficult indicator to have at the outcome level as it relies on multiple factors that are outside of the project's control and therefore not a good indicator of project success.

Result 1: Adolescents, especially girls (12-18 years), have access to inclusive and quality education in an environment that empowers girls and engages boys to achieve gender equality

This result area has exclusively IQE indicators (related to formal education). This result area includes four indicators. Two indicators were met, including one which has been vastly overachieved. Two indicators were not met.

Table 30: Indicator achievement for Niger Result 1

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
% of EAJ who report experiencing violence, discrimination or mistreatment from peers or school staff in the last quarter (IQEO1.2.2)	<p>DOSSO & MARADI (Total)</p> <p>Girls (10-13): 49.5%</p> <p>Girls (14-17): 28%</p> <p>Young Women (18-24): 26.5%</p> <p>Boys (10-13): 72.5%</p> <p>Boys (14-17): 48.5%</p> <p>Young Men (18-24): 51.5%</p> <p>DOSSO:</p> <p>Girls (10-13): 52%</p> <p>Girls (14-17): 32%</p> <p>Young Women (18-24): 20%</p> <p>Boys (10-13): 56%</p> <p>Boys (14-17): 42%</p> <p>Young Men (18-24): 60%</p> <p>MARADI:</p> <p>Girls (10-13): 47%</p> <p>Young Girls (14-17): 24%</p> <p>Young women (18-24): 33%</p> <p>Boys (10-13): 89%</p> <p>Young boys (14-17): 55%</p>	<p>DOSSO & MARADI (Total)</p> <p>Girls (10-13): 40%</p> <p>Girls (14-17): 23%</p> <p>Young women (18-24): 20%</p> <p>Boys (10-13): 57%</p> <p>Boys (14-17): 37%</p> <p>Young men (18-24): 43%</p> <p>DOSSO:</p> <p>Girls (10-13): 40%</p> <p>Girls (14-17): 27%</p> <p>Young women (18-24): 15%</p> <p>Boys (10-13): 45%</p> <p>Boys (14-17): 30%</p> <p>Men (18-24): 52%</p> <p>MARADI:</p> <p>Girls (10-13): 40%</p>	<p>DOSSO & MARADI TOGETHER</p> <p>Girls (10-13): 87%</p> <p>Girls (14-17): 56.78%</p> <p>Women (18-24): 60.98%</p> <p>Boys (10-13): 36.96%</p> <p>Boys (14-17): 43.22%</p> <p>Young men (18-24): 39.02%</p> <p>DOSSO:</p> <p>Girls (10-13): 36.96%</p> <p>Young girls (14-17): 40%</p> <p>Young women (18-24): 43%</p> <p>Boys (10-13): 33%</p> <p>Young boys (14-17): 33%</p> <p>Young men (18-24): 25%</p> <p>MARADI:</p>	<p>DOSSO & MARADI TOGETHER</p> <p>Girls (10-13): 23%</p> <p>Girls (14-17): 17%</p> <p>Young Women (18-24): 11%</p> <p>Boys (10-13): 20%</p> <p>Boys (14-17): 20%</p> <p>Young Men (18-24): 20%</p> <p>DOSSO:</p> <p>Girls (10-13): 20%</p> <p>Girls (14-17): 15%</p> <p>Young Women (18-24): 12%</p> <p>Boys (10-13): 20%</p> <p>Boys (14-17): 20%</p> <p>Young Men (18-24): 20%</p> <p>MARADI:</p> <p>Girls (10-13): 25%</p>

	Young men (18-24): 43%	Girls (14-17): 18% Women (18-24): 25% Boys (10-13): 70% Boys (14-17): 45% Men (18-24): 35%	Girls (10-13): 33% Young girls (14-17): 10% Young women (18-24): 50% Boys (10-13): 7% Young boys (14-17): 8% Young men (18-24): 11%	Girls (14-17): 20% Young women (18-24): 10% Boys (10-13): 20% Young boys (14-17): 20% Young men (18-24): 20%
% of girls who assume leadership roles in their school's governance activities (IQEO1.3.2)	N/A	Girls (10-13): 50% Girls (14-17): 50% Young women (18-24): 50% DOSSO: Girls (10-13): 50% Girls (14-17): 50% Young women (18-24): 50% MARADI: Girls (10-13): 50% Girls (14-17): 50% Young women (18-24): 50%	Girls (10-13): 47% Girls (14-17): 45% Young women (18-24): 0% DOSSO: Girls (10-13): 47% Girls (14-17): 39% Young women (18-24): 0% MARADI: Girls (10-13): 47% Girls (14-17): 53% Young women (18-24): 0%	Girls (10-13): 55% Girls (14-17): 55% Young women (18-24): 55% DOSSO: Girls (10-13): 55% Girls (14-17): 55% Young women (18-24): 55% MARADI: Girls (10-13): 55% Girls (14-17): 55% Young women (18-24): 55%
Extent to which schools and learning spaces/centres meet national/global standards set for an accessible, safe and protected environment (IQEO4.2.3)	Total: 60% Dosso: 60% Maradi: 60%	Total: 70% Dosso: 70% Maradi: 70%	Total: 50% Dosso: 50% Maradi: 50%	Total: 80% Dosso: 80% Maradi: 80%
% of teachers observed to be using gender-sensitive, inclusive and student-centred teaching approaches at the time of assessment (IQEO5.1.2)	N/A	Total: 35% Female: 35% Male: 35%	Total: 68.2% Female: 58.1% Male: 77.1%	Total: 60% Female: 60% Male: 60%

25.5 per cent of EAJ reported experiencing violence, discrimination or mistreatment from their peers or school staff during the last quarter (IQEO1.2.2). The midline data for this indicator shows mixed results in achieving targets, as the data shows a worsening of the situation regarding level of violence and discrimination against girls, whereas it shows an improvement regarding level of violence and discrimination against boys. Indeed, the cumulative results for Dosso and Maradi show that violence and discrimination have increased among girls (10 to 13 years old) (from 49.5 per cent to 87 per cent), young girls (14-17 years old) (from 28 per cent to 56.78 per cent), and young women (18-24 years old) (from 26.5 per cent to 60.98 per cent). On the other hand, the cumulative results for Dosso and Maradi show that violence and discrimination have decreased among boys (10 to 13 years old) (from 72.5 per cent to 36.93 per cent), young boys (14-17 years old) (from 48.5 per cent to 43.22 per cent), and young men (18-24 years old) (from 51.5 per cent to 43 per cent). In view of these results, it would be beneficial to engage in discussion to identify the levers and factors that have led to the improvement of the situation among boys, young boys and young men to also foster positive change in the context of girls, young girls, and young women.

Across genders and locations, 20.7 per cent of cases of violence were physical violence and 3.8 per cent were psychological or emotional violence. In Dosso, the main perpetrators of violence against EAJ were teachers (36.1 per cent). In Dosso, most respondents did not respond to that question but 2 per cent reported that perpetrators were other students and 2 per cent reported that it was parents. Although a lot of efforts were deployed by the project to raise awareness among parents, students and teachers, and to train teachers on violence against children and young girls in particular, the above figures suggest a gap between the knowledge acquired and ongoing violent behaviours. In other words, although the target groups might have a better understanding of the rights of children as well as the risks associated with violence, there are still gaps in terms of applying this knowledge. Discussions around this during the Bridge Workshop organised as part of the evaluation highlighted the need for close support for teachers after their training for the effective implementation of their knowledge and the adoption of new behaviors, especially towards girls. For example, this could include training on alternative methods to violence and nonviolent communication, with role plays to maximise understanding and uptake. Identifying champions amongst students who can act as role models in the school settings was also discussed as a strategic approach to further promote behavioural changes amongst peers.

Unfortunately, the mid-term quantitative survey showed a decline in the **extent to which schools and learning spaces/centres meet national/global standards set for an accessible, safe and protected environment (IQEO4.2.3)** from 60 per cent at baseline to 50 per cent at mid-term, which falls below the mid-term target of 70 per cent. There was no difference between project locations.

The project has well achieved the mid-term target of 35 per cent of **teachers observed to be using gender-sensitive, inclusive and student-centred teaching approaches at the time of assessment (IQEO5.1.2)**, achieving a score of 68.2 per cent. There was a difference between genders observed at mid-term, a higher percentage of male teachers were observed to be using greater-sensitive approaches (77.1 per cent) than female teachers (58.1 per cent). There was a slight difference in percentage of teachers observed to be gender-sensitive by project location with higher percentages recorded in Maradi than Dosso. This can be explained by a higher mobility of teachers and supervisors (inspectors and educational advisors) in Dosso than in Maradi.

Result 2: Out-of-school girls and young women (14-24 years) are economically empowered and benefit from life skills that improve their social status

Result 2 has four indicators, including one LDI indicator which was not measured as it was not relevant given the lack of microfinance institutions in the proximity of the intervention areas, and the fact that girls and young women found that the interest rates were too high. For these reasons, no AJEC contracted credit with these institutions. Three SOYEE indicators were vastly overachieved.

Table 31: Indicator achievement for Niger Result 2

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
% of AJEC who have access to credit (LDI 5)	Dosso: 0% Maradi: 0%	Dosso: 30% Maradi: 30%	N/A	Dosso: 80% Maradi: 80%
% of adolescents and young people reporting at the end of their training that they feel well prepared to face life (SOYO1.1.1)	N/A	Total: 60% Teenage girls: 60% Young women: 60% Teenage boys: 60% Young men: 60%	Teenage girls: 75% Young women: 91% Teenage boys: 100% Young men: 95%	Total: 80% Teenage girls: 80% Young women: 80% Teenage boys: 80% Young men: 80%
% of adolescent girls and young women demonstrating an aptitude for	N/A	Total: 45% Teenage girls: 45%	Total: 100% Teenage girls: 100%	Total: 60%

entrepreneurship at the end of their training (SOYO1.1.2)		Young women: 45%	Young women: 100%	
% of adolescents and young people reporting having benefited from the support of their family to enroll in SOYEE training and then to seek paid or self-employed employment (SOYO2.1.1)	N/A	Total: 35% Teenage girls: 35% Young women: 35%	Total: 100% Teenage girls: 100% Young women: 100%	Total: 55% Teenage girls: 55% Young women: 55%

Regarding the **percentage of AJECs that have access to credit (LDI 5)**, the results of the quantitative survey show that no AJEC has access to credit from a microfinance institution. This is explained by the fact that in most intervention areas there are no microfinance institutions, and that in areas where they exist those institutions are far away from the participants.⁴⁸⁸ Nonetheless, it is key to specify that the members of the AJECs do not yet need large amounts to operate their activities, given that they are still at the beginning of their economic activities. The microcredits that the members obtain from the AJEC thanks to their savings are largely sufficient at this stage to meet the needs of the young girls who are members of the AJECs.

The mid-term target for the percentage of teenage girls and young people declaring at the end of their training that they feel well prepared to face life (SOYO1.1.1) was vastly overachieved at mid-term. The results of the mid-term survey reveal that the mid-term targets of 60 per across all age and gender groups was largely achieved and for most target groups (young women, teenage boys and young men) the results already exceed the final targets. One group that has been noted as not achieving the same level is the girls aged 14-17 years old from Maradi. From this group 60 per cent report feeling prepared to face life after training. While this is an achievement of the mid-term target, it is quite different to reporting across all other age, gender and location variables and therefore, would require further investigation. The qualitative data did not find an explanation for this result.

Again, the mid-term target for the percentage of adolescent girls and young women demonstrating an aptitude for entrepreneurship at the end of their training (SOYO1.1.2) was also vastly overachieved. The results at midline for this indicator show a significant improvement in the abilities of participants to the training and exceed endline targets. This result shows that the training is performing very well when it comes to creating aptitude for entrepreneurship. No differences were reported by age or project location. Caution should be taken, however, with this result as a very small sample was used to collect this data.

Furthermore, the mid-term target for the percentage of adolescents and young people reporting having benefited from the support of their family to enrol in SOYEE training and then to seek paid employment or self-employment (SOYO2.1.1) was again vastly overachieved. Indeed, this indicator has achieved 100 per cent of respondents reported having benefited from the support of their family to which is above the end-term target. No differences were reported by age or project location. This aligns with qualitative data collected as part of this evaluation which indicates that the young girls and young women who participate in the project were well supported by their parents, partners and in-laws, which facilitated their participation in training. This may be due to the numerous awareness sessions held with parents in the first half of the project which are proving successful. For example, in 2023 alone a total of 3849 parents were reached by these sessions.⁴⁸⁹ This is explored in greater detail in the following sections. Similarly, caution should be taken, however, with this result as a very small sample was used to collect this data.

⁴⁸⁸ Written comment. Project staff. February 2025.

⁴⁸⁹ Plan International Belgique - Plan International Niger, PROGRAMME DGD 22-26, Rapport narratif, Janvier – Décembre 2023

Result 3: Girls and young women (10-24 years) enjoy their rights and live in protective communities through the empowerment of themselves, community members and their parents.

Result 3 has four indicators focusing on PfV. Three out of four indicators were well achieved including one (PROO3.4.7) which exceeded the end-term target.

Table 32: Indicator achievement for Niger Result 3

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
% of adolescents and young people who demonstrate knowledge of child protection risks and behaviors (PROO1.1.1)	Total: 18.92% Girls: 12.5% Boys: 26.47%	Total: 30% Girls: 25% Boys: 35%	Total: 37% Girls: 41.9% Boys: 33.8%	Total: 50% Girls: 45% Boys: 55%
% of parents/guardians who care for children who report using positive parenting practices (PROO2.1.1)	Total: 81.2% Women: 79% Men: 83.4%	Total: 82.5% Women: 81% Men: 83%	Total: 89.4% Women: 89.4% Men: 94%	Total: 84% Women: 83.75% Men: 85%
% of community child and family protection mechanisms that meet minimum quality standards (CVPE - Village Child Protection Committees) (PROO3.3.1)	Dosso: 20% Maradi: 30%	Total: 60% Dosso: 60% Maradi: 60%	Total: 32.5% Dosso: 20.2% Maradi: 49.1%	Total: 80% Dosso: 80% Maradi: 80%
Extent to which traditional, religious and/or community leaders publicly challenge practices of violence against EAJ, particularly young women (PROO3.4.7)	N/A	Between 41-79% Average	Total: 98.2% High Women: 100% Men: 98%	Between 41-79% Average

The project has well achieved the mid-term target of 30 per cent of adolescents and young people who demonstrate knowledge of child protection risks and behaviors (PROO1.1.1). Indeed, when disaggregated by gender, the findings show that the project has nearly achieved the end-term target for girls, but that the mid-term target for boys was actually narrowly missed. When disaggregated by age group the mid-term survey found that CAY aged between 18 and 24 demonstrated the highest levels of knowledge (44.2 per cent) with CAY in Dosso achieving 24.1 per cent and 56.25 per cent in Maradi. The same pattern of achievement by location was found for the 15-17 age group. This shows that the project is proving very effective at working with girls to improve their knowledge base but less effective at working with boys, especially as it was found at baseline that a greater number of boys compared to girls demonstrate knowledge in this area. These findings were confirmed by the qualitative data as explored in more detail in the following sections.

The project has shown great success in working with parents and caregivers which is confirmed by the quantitative data: 89.4 per cent of all parents across genders and locations reported using positive parenting practices (PROO2.1.1). This is a great achievement as it even exceeds the end-term target. Female parents and caregivers have shown an improvement of 10.4 percentage points since baseline compared to male parents and caregivers who saw an increase of 10.6 percentage points. When disaggregating by gender and location, females in Dosso achieved a score of 100 per cent compared to females in Maradi who scored 78 per cent. The same trend appears for males by location. Males in Dosso scored 97 per cent and in Maradi scored 90 per cent. This shows that the engagement of parents in Dosso is more effective than that of Maradi.

32.5 per cent of community child and family protection mechanisms that meet minimum standards (PROO3.3.1), which is less than the mid-term target of 60 per cent. The percentage of community child and family protection mechanisms that meet minimum standards is particularly low in Dosso (20.2 per cent compared to 49.1 per cent in Maradi). These results converge with those of the qualitative data collected for this evaluation which show that whilst the mechanisms are in place and able to organise awareness-raising and protection actions, the fact that members are volunteers hinders the effectiveness of these mechanisms. Their members therefore need to be further motivated and

need capacity-strengthening on their roles and responsibilities, as well as adequate support to access resources to implement activities. In addition, qualitative data collected revealed that the complaint and feedback channels are very little known to the project participants.

The project scored a rating of “high” for the extent to which traditional, religious and/or community leaders publicly challenge practices of violence against EAJ, particularly young women (PROO3.4.7). This is an over achievement of the mid-term and end-term target, a great achievement for the project. When disaggregated by gender the mid-term survey found that women (100 per cent) leaders scored higher than men (98 per cent), but only marginally. When disaggregated by location, the mid-term survey found a small difference with Maradi scoring 100 per cent and Dosso scoring 96 per cent. These differences are not significant.

5.7.2. Assessment of progress on the AoGD

To what extent do the project, its implementing partners and its activities (skills training) create an environment conducive to learning for adolescents and young people?

The evaluation identified that the project fostered a supportive environment for adolescents and young people. Indeed, parents and families have demonstrated high levels of support for the participation of young girls in project activities, and husbands and in-laws have also encouraged and facilitated the participation of adolescent girls in vocational training. This support is evidenced by the signing of the parental document by parents and husbands/in-laws allowing the participation of girls and teenagers in the training. Families also encouraged young girls and adolescents to participate through several supportive actions, for example through relieving girls and teenagers from certain household tasks during the period of the day dedicated to learning in order to allow them to participate in the training, through regularly reminding and advising girls on the importance of attendance at training, looking after minor children by mothers-in-law in order to facilitate the participation of teenage girls, and financial contribution to purchase certain small materials for sewing and knitting learners.⁴⁹⁰ This demonstrates the recognition by families of the importance of vocational training for the participants. Young girls and adolescents also reported being satisfied with the support of their parents and families, which has greatly contributed to their participation and retention in the training provided under the project.

Are participants in the trades training program well equipped to develop the technical skills they need and their career plans?

As the project ensured a participatory and inclusive vocational training process taking into account the socio-cultural context and the opinions of the beneficiaries, this ensured alignment with participants’ needs and local realities. Indeed, the participatory market study and consultations at the local level organised by the project team ensured that the trades training program was developed to best equip participants with technical skills they need.

The trades training programme successfully equipped participants with the technical skills they need, as for example the state technical services who conducted field monitoring reported that the chosen trainers had adequate skills to train project participants.⁴⁹¹

Significant efforts were made to collaborate with technical services from the outset and to involve them in monitoring of the trades training programme.⁴⁹² For example, joint monitoring missions were implemented between PIN and the state technical services for vocational training. However, it was highlighted that technical services’ expertise could be further leveraged, including through increased

⁴⁹⁰ FDG Tuteurs Kargui Bangou; FGDs parents.

⁴⁹¹ KII service technique promotion de la femme.

⁴⁹² Project documentation : NER290_Rapport_Annuel_2023_PQ22-26_VF.

participation of those services at the departmental level to provide pedagogical support.⁴⁹³ This could maximise the quality of the training provided to project participants.

To what extent does the provision of start-up kits or capital to launch IGAs to advance project outcomes?

The process of supporting participants with an installation kit is highly appreciated by the participants as it promotes their autonomy.⁴⁹⁴ All participants in the trades training who completed the training cycle were provided with start-up kits or capital. Participants in the sewing training (ongoing) will receive kits at the end of the cycle. However, in the case of the sewing learners, it was noted that it could have been beneficial to provide them with sewing machines and sewing kits from the start of their training so that they could practice to strengthen their learning. Whilst this was initially planned, following the coup d'état with the embargo which resulted in the rise in the prices of items, the planned budget could not cover the purchase of a machine for each learner.⁴⁹⁵ The project did not receive additional funding to cover the purchase of sewing machines, and the number of machines available to girls and women for training was reduced. Instead of one machine per learner, the project provided one machine per village, or four learners per machine.

On all the sites surveyed, it appears that girls and adolescents benefiting from vocational training activities derive financial and material benefits from conducting their activities. Participants have successfully set weekly meetings during which they discuss key issues concerning them and make payments of shares in the AJEC/AVEC. Indeed, participants from the project were able to make their sewing, knitting and small businesses profitable and to earn enough to meet their small needs, such as clothing, ointment, deodorant, etc.) and to contribute to the AVEC/AJEC on a weekly basis.⁴⁹⁶ They also reported managing to help their parents, husbands and mothers-in-law financially. In addition, the evaluation found that in Nikki Beri, young girls and adolescents had access to land through their AJEC/AVEC groups, to produce sesame, cowpea and vouanzou. This allowed them to diversify their sources of income and in turn strengthen their AJEC/AVEC funds.⁴⁹⁷

Participants highlighted a low capacity of young girls and adolescents benefiting from the livestock fattening activity to save at the start of the AJEC activity because their livestock activity does not yet generate daily income that would allow them to contribute to the AJEC/AVEC.⁴⁹⁸ This forces them to ask for help from parents, husbands and in-laws to contribute to the AJEC fund. Nonetheless, this does not represent a project's limitation and is simply linked to the nature of the activity.

SOYEE activities also yielded significant social benefits for project participants. This includes the strengthening of social cohesion between members of AJEC/AVEC. Indeed, members support each other in the event of happy or unhappy events and even contribute financially to help each other. For example, one of the participants in the village discussions reported: "The young girls and teenagers are united and help each other, which strengthens their groups. For example, I have a sister who is part of the AJEC group who got married a few months ago. On the day of the ceremony, the whole group got together and contributed money to give her as a gift. My sister was very happy and proud to belong to the girls' group. We brothers and parents were also very happy with the gesture that the young girls had made towards the young bride."⁴⁹⁹ In addition, SOYEE activities contributed to building the social capital of the participants as the community perceptions towards them changed as they became role models at the local level.

⁴⁹³ Atelier du Pont.

⁴⁹⁴ FGD jeune fille AJEC Kargui Bangou; FGD adolescentes AVEC Nikki Beri; FGD Adolescentes AVEC Kargui Bangou.

⁴⁹⁵ Written comment. Project staff. February 2025.

⁴⁹⁶ FGDs AJEC/AVEC participants.

⁴⁹⁷ FGD parents Papa de Nikki Beri; FGD Parents maman Nikki Beri.

⁴⁹⁸ FGDs AJEC/AVEC participants.

⁴⁹⁹ KII tuteur village de Kargui Bangou.

In the village of Kargui Bangou, participants reported that the water chore takes up a lot of time for young girls and adolescents,⁵⁰⁰ and in Nikki Beri, according to information collected from mothers, young girls and adolescents, the lack of a grain mill is also a major constraint to the participation of young girls and adolescents in economic activities.⁵⁰¹ Whilst these chores did not impact girls' participation in project activities (training), they could potentially present risks to their economic empowerment and their ability to dedicate sufficient time to their professional activities.

Project participants highlighted the need for some improvements to further reduce the barriers to girls' access to economic empowerment. This includes for example, providing technical support and local monitoring to the trained learners so that they master their fields and be more competitive on the market; taking appropriate measures to reduce the workload of girls within households in order to free them up to give more time to their professional careers; and reinforcing learners with substantial installation kits to enable them to make a better profit, because the kits represent the start-up capital for young people's economic activities.⁵⁰² In addition, participants highlighted the need to continue to raise awareness among parents, husbands and future husbands on the importance of young girls learning trades in order to remove any potential blockage from them and strengthen their support for young people; and the need to establish a more formal framework to the management of vocational training activities for young people in order to optimise training time and provide a permanent framework for vocational training for other young people within the village.⁵⁰³

Assessment of Community Child Protection Mechanisms

Village child protection committees are key actors who actively participate in the implementation of the project's actions. Made up of 12 members, a quarter of whom are women, the CVPEs play a key role in supporting young girls and boys in their activities, but also in raising awareness among parents, and husbands. For example, in Nikki Beri, the committee members visit the project participants once a week to inquire about the smooth running of their activities and their relationships with their guardians. They also play an active role in raising awareness among parents and husbands, as well as young people, about child protection and the importance of trades.⁵⁰⁴ As part of the vocational training of young people, the members of the CVPE advise the young girls on the importance of this activity and provide close monitoring for their continued training. This includes regularly visiting girls to assess their progress, advising them and raising awareness of their parents on the importance of encouraging girls in their trades. According to the young girls participating in the project, the members of the CVPE asked for their opinion when choosing the meeting site for the AJEC. Also, the CVPE consults them whenever necessary on decisions that concern them.⁵⁰⁵

CVPEs also play a key role in promoting child protection. All CVPEs are in direct contact with child protection officers at the municipal and departmental levels and are familiar with the mechanisms for reporting protection cases. Anecdotally, one of the members of a future husbands' club said that in collaboration with the CVPE: "every morning, we go around the village to make sure that all the children enrolled in school are actually in class in order to prevent our little brothers from making the same mistake as us, that of not continuing school."⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁰ FGD Jeunes fille AJEC Kargui Bangou; FGD parents Kargui Bangou.

⁵⁰¹ FGD Parents maman Nikki Beri.

⁵⁰² FGD jeunes filles AJEC Kargui Bangou; FGD Adolescentes AVEC Kargui Bangou; FGD Jeunes filles AJEC Nikki Beri; FGD écoles des maris Kargui Bangou.

⁵⁰³ FGD jeunes filles AJEC Kargui Bangou; FGD Adolescentes AVEC Kargui Bangou; FGD Jeunes filles AJEC Nikki Beri; FGD écoles des maris Kargui Bangou.

⁵⁰⁴ FGD CVPE Nikki Beri.

⁵⁰⁵ FGD jeune filles AJEC Kargui Bangou; FGD Adolescentes AVEC Kargui Bangou; FGD Jeune filles AJEC Nikki Beri; FGD Adolescentes AVEC Nikki Beri.

⁵⁰⁶ FGD club des futurs maris, village de Kargui Bangou.

The level of inclusion in CVPE management was also well appreciated by community participants who highlighted that decision-making by the CVPE is done in a participatory and inclusive manner, in a concerted manner with the various groups of key community stakeholders.⁵⁰⁷ For example, one of the members of the future husbands' club said: "To make our decisions, we ask the members of the CVPE committee for advice and they themselves advise us before making certain decisions."⁵⁰⁸ This level of collaboration ensures ownership and greater acceptance of decisions by the community, in turn maximising the compliance to the rules and achievement of collective goals.

However, whilst they might be active and able to play their role, they still fall short of meeting quality criteria (as per the results for Indicator PROO 3.3.1), which might highlight gaps in their level of formalisation. However, the analysis is limited as quantitative data collected did not explore which quality criteria exactly were not met.

5.7.3. Assessment of the effectiveness of youth participation and leadership methods used

How are children, adolescents and young people (CAY) invited to participate in the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of activities that concern them (AJEC/AVEC)? To what extent is their participation meaningful and their point of view taken into account?

Overall, according to Richard Hart's ladder of participation,⁵⁰⁹ youth participation at the activity level is at the highest level (Youth-initiated and shared decisions with adults), as described in paragraphs below. However, at the strategic project design level, youth participation is rated at the 'assigned but informed' scale.

The project applied a participatory and inclusive approach for young people to maximise their participation, including in the design of the activities, in order to maximise their ownership of the project's objectives and initiatives. This includes awareness-raising among young people and communities on the objective of the project. The project teams came to discuss with the communities in order to explain the objectives of the project and its implementation approach. These awareness-raising sessions facilitated the understanding of the project by young people (girls and boys) on the importance of vocational training, as a prelude to their enrolments. The awareness-raising sessions also contributed to raising awareness among parents and other key community stakeholders on the importance of the work of young girls and their economic empowerment.⁵¹⁰ These awareness-raising activities were carried out with the support of the technical service of vocational training and accompanied by field facilitators to help young people better refine their career choices.⁵¹¹

The selection of participants was then also conducted in a transparent manner, at the occasion of a general community assembly organised by the project facilitators (from the partner ONG ANTD, where eligibility criteria were clearly stated).⁵¹² The identification and choice of the types of professions by the young people then took place in two stages. The first step consisted of choosing promising professions according to the socio-economic context of the intervention area, based on a market study.⁵¹³ Seven professions were chosen: Sewing, knitting, small business, livestock breeding, baking, oil extraction and cosmetics (the sectors may differ from one village to another). After identifying these, a draw was used for the allocation of trades to each participant. Participants interviewed as part of the evaluation

⁵⁰⁷ FGD clubs des futurs maris Kargui Bangou; FGD club des futurs maris Nikki Beri.

⁵⁰⁸ FGD club des futurs maris Kargui Bangou.

⁵⁰⁹ Mullahey, Ramona & Susskind, Y. & Checkoway, B. (1999). Youth participation in community planning. 1-70. Available at: [Link](#)

⁵¹⁰ FGD jeunes filles AJEC Kargui Bangou; FGD Adolescentes AVEC Kargui Bangou; FGD jeune filles AJEC Nikki Beri; FGD parents Papa Nikkiberi.

⁵¹¹ KII service technique de la formation professionnelle; FGD école des maris Kargui Bangou.

⁵¹² FGD jeunes filles AJEC Kargui Bangou; FGD parents Kargui Bangou.

⁵¹³ Project documentation: Narrative report_DGD 22-26_FINAL

expressed their satisfaction with the allocation.⁵¹⁴ The reasons given for the draw include ensuring fairness in the allocation of trades as several participants wanted to learn the same trade, which risked saturating the offer for that service in the village.

The choice of working hours with tutors was made on a case-by-case basis according to the type of trade. Indeed, each tutor consulted with the learners and their parents and in-laws to set the schedules, according to the context, which would allow young girls and adolescents to participate in training without this having major effects on the life of households in which young girls and adolescents contribute a lot to household chores. However, depending on the seasons and/or the occurrence of a major event in the village (celebration, wedding, death, market day), working hours are readjusted in order to facilitate the participation of young people, but also to ensure the availability of tutors.⁵¹⁵ This demonstrates the project's commitment to maximising activities' alignment with participants needs and competing priorities in order to ensure their participation and retention.

The project also demonstrated a good capacity for adaptation based on participants' feedback.

For example, it was reported that based on girls and young women (who are members of AJEC and AVEC) concerns over the relevance of linking them with MFIs given the distance and very high interest rates, it was decided that the funds for this activity would be directed towards strengthening their capacities in life skills.⁵¹⁶ In addition, as boys and young men who are members of the Future Husbands Clubs and Husbands School expressed the need to be supported in engaging in IGAs, this was taken into account in activity planning.⁵¹⁷

What was the influence of the project activities implemented and the resources mobilised on (i) young people's self-esteem, (ii) young people's mobilisation and interest, (iii) young people's involvement (as leaders or participants) in community activities?

Project activities directly contributed to improving the decision-making capacity of young people and adolescents in the family sphere. The evaluation identified an improvement in the consultation of young girls by their parents and older male brothers before making decisions at the household level. This can be explained by the fact that young girls have acquired a new financial capacity, which comes with the expectation that they can contribute to the realisation of the decision, hence their involvement in decision-making.⁵¹⁸ Similarly, married adolescent girls are also more listened to by their husbands, better respected by their in-laws and are increasingly consulted in decision-making in their households.⁵¹⁹

The decision-making and leadership capacity of young girls and adolescents in the community sphere has also improved. There was a general consensus amongst participants who participated in this evaluation, including technical services of the state that participates in the quarterly monitoring of the project's actions, parents, members of the husbands' schools and future husbands' clubs, that the young girls and adolescents who participate in the project are different from the other girls in the community.⁵²⁰ The difference noted is linked to the open-mindedness of the young girls and adolescents, their ability to organise, their autonomy, their public speaking abilities, and their capacity to express their opinions. For example, a representative of a technical service highlighted the ability of the girls to express themselves in public without fear nor embarrassment.⁵²¹ In addition, the leadership

⁵¹⁴ FGD Jeunes filles AJEC Kargui Bangou; FGD adolescentes AVEC Kargui Bangou; FGD Jeunes Filles AJEC Nikki Beri; FGD Adolescentes AVEC Nikki Beri.

⁵¹⁵ FGD jeunes filles AJEC Kargui Bangou; FGD Adolescentes AVEC kargui Bangou; FGD Jeune fille AJEC Nikki Beri; FGD Adolescentes AVEC Nikki Beri.

⁵¹⁶ Written comment. Project staff. February 2025.

⁵¹⁷ Written comment. Project staff. February 2025.

⁵¹⁸ FGD jeunes filles AJEC Kargui Bangou.

⁵¹⁹ FGD Adolescentes AVEC Nikki Beri.

⁵²⁰ KII services technique de l'enseignement National. FGDs parents, clubs des futurs maris.

⁵²¹ KII services technique.

capacity of the girls and adolescents who participate in the project is reflected in the fact that they inspire other girls in the community to participate in the project in order to change their lives too.

Young girls and adolescents also demonstrate strong decision-making capacity with regards to their professional activities. In the village of Nikki Beri, one of the parents explained that girls are successfully leading their business and making decisions that allow them to succeed in their activities.⁵²² For example, it was reported that the girls saved the profits from their activities to buy fabrics and other small knitting materials to sew sheets and resell in the village. In Kargui Bangou, the example of a girl leader of the young girls' group was given by one of the tutors: "This good girl, still in training in sewing, takes the contract for women's loincloths for wedding ceremonies. Not only do they order the loincloths to resell to women, but she also sews the majority of women's loincloths, which gives her a double profit."⁵²³ These examples illustrate the strategic decision-making capacities that girls have developed.

There is also an overall improvement in the level of confidence of the girls supported by the project. For young girls, newly acquired economic independence and knowledge around living together, the rights and duties of the child as well as hygiene and reproductive health contributed to strengthening their self-esteem and their ability to look to the future with more serenity. For example, they are now conscious of their status as role models and their positive influence at the local level.⁵²⁴ They also demonstrate a sense of pride regarding their trade as for example a young girl in the AJEC in Kargui Bangou reported: "Look at me for example, I learned to sew. And the clothes I'm wearing now, I sewed them myself."⁵²⁵

Young members of future husbands' clubs also demonstrate greater decision-making and initiative capacity than other young boys in the community. This is explained by the fact that they have received awareness-raising and coaching actions from the project facilitators and are empowered to cascade the knowledge acquired to other young people in the community. The members of the future husbands' clubs demonstrate leadership in advocating for behavior change amongst young people, towards improved respect for children's rights (and particularly girls' rights). Indeed, in each of the villages surveyed, the clubs of future husbands reported mobilising young people for awareness raising and other types of activities of community interest such as night patrol, monitoring of school children who are absent from school without reason, etc. However, limits are observed in the conduct of actions and in the capacity to innovate and make decisions because these clubs work as volunteers and have not received any support from the project except the supervision of the facilitators. In addition, given that these future husbands clubs are composed of young people who are mostly out of school without any economic activity or professional training and who plan to leave the village for urban centers or even neighboring countries to seek a better living condition, the sustainability of these clubs is likely to be limited. In order to be able to continue implementing their awareness-raising and mobilisation activities, the members of the future husbands' clubs therefore reported wishing to have support in vocational training similar to that given to young girls as well as receive starter kits to conduct economic activities.⁵²⁶ In addition, public health and awareness-raising being their flagship activities, the members of the clubs are requesting support from the project in materials (wheelbarrow, rakes, shovels, masks, gloves, megaphones, carts, in order to facilitate their work).

At the school level, members of the school government, including girls are also reporting improved leadership abilities. The government is composed of a president and several ministers including girls. The government holds regular meetings and discusses the difficulties that hinder the creation of a good school environment that encourages and facilitates learning. Following several meetings, they developed an action plan for their schools. They also established rules of conduct for

⁵²² FGD parents Nikki Beri.

⁵²³ KI tuteurs Kargui Bangou.

⁵²⁴ FGD jeunes filles AJEC Kargui Bangou.

⁵²⁵ FGD jeunes filles AJEC Kargui Bangou.

⁵²⁶ FGD clubs des futurs maris de kargui bangou; FGD club des futurs maris de Nikki beri.

their school, and this helped reduce the rate of absence or lateness of students. The students who are members of the school government reported that this experience allowed them to develop good leadership skills, as well as problem identification and prioritisation skills.⁵²⁷ However, it appears that some of the actions proposed in the school government action plan have not been carried out (for example increasing the number of latrines), which discourages the members of the government.

Because of their knowledge of the rights and duties of children, the CAYs participate in awareness-raising activities aimed at their peers. The evaluation identified strong levels of commitment amongst CAYs to serve as role models in the community by showing the appropriate behaviors in order to enforce children's rights and protect young people. For example, in the village of Kargui Bangou, young members of the clubs of future husbands join forces with other young people in the village to carry out night patrols from 10 p.m. to ensure that all children have returned home. In addition, in the village of Kargui Bangou as well as in Nikki Beri, the CAYs conduct daily rounds to ensure that all children of school age are in class. According to one of the members of the AJEC girls' group, they also know that they must report any information they receive on gender-based violence and early marriage. One of the members of the girls' group from Kargui Bangou al reported: "We give advice to our young sisters to be diligent and work hard at school so that they benefit from the benefits of education."⁵²⁸ These examples provide evidence of the ownership of the project's objectives and values among CAYs, and indicate a strong potential for sustainability.

5.7.4. Progress of the gender transformative ambition of the programme

This section provides a summary of current GTM areas' status and areas for further development. Progress in each area was thoroughly examined during data collection and the Bridge Workshop. These discussions engaged project staff, implementing partners, and project participants, allowing them to reflect on progress toward the envisioned objectives, identify key remaining obstacles, and propose concrete action plans to address these challenges. The finalised action plans are provided in Annex 8 and recommendations developed across the action plans are included in chapter 5 of this report.

Gender norms

Whilst, the evaluation identified an increased recognition of girls' contribution to household expenses, this highlights a gap in awareness raising on the importance of gender equality as girls' work is mostly valued for what it brings to the household. A member of the future husbands' clubs said: "now that girls work and earn money, parents do not need to sell their animals to buy them party clothes. The advantage of their work in the eyes of parents is that not only parents will not have to sell their animals, but above all, they receive the contribution of young girls for the holidays."⁵²⁹ Similarly, one of the participants in the parents' discussion groups reported that the girls' work is very important to them as it contributes to meeting the households' needs.⁵³⁰ This shows parents' recognition of the value of their daughters' work, which in turn encourages the retention of young girls and adolescents in the trades. In addition, it should be added that men who have wives who have a trade appreciate their contributions within their households through the purchase of small condiments, taking care of some of their needs and taking care of part of the needs of the children. This positive feedback from parents and partners of participants in the project highlights the relevance of the project's approach to engaging with families to contribute to attitudinal and behavioural changes related to girls' contribution in the productive sector. However, it appears that the recognition of the value of girls' work is tied to their contribution to household needs and welfare. Indeed, as girls' work is being praised for how it benefits their family and lifts parents' responsibilities rather than for how it contributes to her own

⁵²⁷ FGD gouvernement scolaire de Kargui Bangou.

⁵²⁸ FGD Jeune filles AJEC Nikki Beri.

⁵²⁹ FGD clubs des futurs maris village de Nikki Beri.

⁵³⁰ FGD Parents.

autonomy. This shows the risk of girls' work being instrumentalised and ultimately reinforcing unbalanced gender dynamics.

Agency

In the GTM assessment at the design phase, the project was rated as medium potential in this area.⁵³¹ Good progress was made towards achieving this potential as the MTE collected testimonies from girls and young women explaining that project activities contributed to boosting their leadership and decision-making abilities (see more in the section on assessment of progress on the AoGD). Anecdotal evidence suggests that thanks to increased financial autonomy gained through the SOYEE activities, girls and young women can make different life choices. For example, a young girl in the AJEC Kargui Bangou reported "If it wasn't for this activity [trades training], we would be married by now, but now we're waiting for the age of majority."⁵³² Project staff explain that other testimonies collected from the girls of Garguibankou and Goroubankassam also confirm this.⁵³³

Work with boys and men

The young members of the husbands' schools interviewed as part of this evaluation demonstrated strong supportive attitudes as they unanimously reported being in favor of girls' involvement in economic activities. They demonstrated a strong understanding of the benefits of girls' engagement in economic activities, including positive repercussions for the household. For example they explained that it would reduce their own burden and pressure as the girls could contribute, and that when they are away they can be reassured that their wife would be in a position to manage until they return or send money.⁵³⁴ One of the participants of the Nikki Beri future husbands' club reported: "It is more to our advantage when they work because they will contribute to the household expenses."⁵³⁵ However, as highlighted previously, this shows an appreciation of girls' economic empowerment not because it is girls and women's rights, but because it is in their interest.

In addition, to illustrate the importance of the jobs of young girls, another participant told the anecdote of a couple from their village: "When the man and the woman got married, the man did not have a job, it was the woman who was a seamstress. This woman convinced her husband to take up the trade and she taught him the job, now he is a seamstress in the village. He is independent and earns his living."⁵³⁶ This highlights the strong potential of the project in challenging gender norms around roles and responsibilities.

However, young boys interviewed highlighted the importance of mutual respect in the household between the woman and the man, even if the woman works and contributes to the home. Indeed, one of the concerns of young boys is that the empowerment of young girls will negatively impact their respect towards their husbands.⁵³⁷ This fear is one of the aspects blocking men's adherence to women's economic empowerment, which highlights the relevance of engaging with boys and men to challenge their beliefs around this and increase their awareness of shared benefits of gender equality for families and communities.

⁵³¹ Project documentation: NER100290 GTM D.

⁵³² FGD Jeunes filles AJEC Kargui Bangou

⁵³³ Written comment. Project staff. March 2025.

⁵³⁴ FGD clubs des futurs maris de Kargui Bangou.

⁵³⁵ FGD club des futurs maris de Nikki Beri.

⁵³⁶ FGD club des futurs maris de Nikki Beri.

⁵³⁷ FGD club des futurs maris de Nikki Beri.

Condition and position

Anecdotal evidence of a change towards greater gender equality has been collected through the evaluation. For example, it was reported that the perceptions of some young married men changed positively as they reported recognising the role they can play in supporting their wives engaged in professional activities under the project by collecting wood, fetching water and looking after children in order to allow them to find time to carry out their economic activities.⁵³⁸ This willingness to take on chores traditionally performed by girls and women directly suggests a change towards greater gender equality, at the family level, with more shared responsibilities regarding the household's needs.

Nonetheless, gender inequalities persist, with several participants recognising that there is still a separation of tasks and rights between women and men in their communities despite awareness-raising actions carried out under the project. For example, young girls who participated in the AJEC reported that some trades are still considered as unsuitable for girls and women, including carpentry and electrical work.⁵³⁹ In addition, amongst young boys who are members of the clubs for future husbands, their reluctance is still perceptible regarding the issue of doing certain tasks said to be done by girls at the community level, for example knitting.⁵⁴⁰ Therefore, in the context of the project's target areas, more systemic changes will require sustained efforts in terms of raising awareness among the stakeholders who can block the achievement of gender equality (including men, parents, community leaders) but also further strengthening the economic and leadership capacities of young girls and adolescents.

Diversity

In the GTM assessment at the design phase, the project was rated as high potential in this area.⁵⁴¹ Indeed, under each result, the project targeted CAY from vulnerable groups, including for out-of-school girls who are targeted in under Result 2 for literacy classes and under result R3. The project also introduced a 10 per cent quota for girls with disabilities for the different activities which further illustrate the project's commitment to inclusion. In addition, the latrines built considered the accessibility needs of girls with disabilities. Strategic partnerships were also leveraged to improve the project's work with youth with disabilities as for example a MoU was signed with HI to facilitate training for the project team on the inclusion of EAJ with disabilities and the project team connected with the Fédération Nigérienne des Personnes Handicapées to leverage their expertise in the field of community awareness on inclusion.⁵⁴²

Enabling environment

In the GTM assessment at the design phase, the project was rated as medium potential in this area.⁵⁴³ Significant efforts were deployed to improve the school environment, including for example through teacher training; the dissemination of a code of good conduct; support for CAPED; and rehabilitation of latrines. Under Result 2, the establishment of agreements with the private sector (local tutors) to regulate the supervision of girls and young women enrolled in apprenticeship, as well as the training of those tutors on safeguarding, gender and social inclusion also demonstrates the project's contribution in strengthening structures in place to ensure greater gender equality and inclusion. And under Result 3, activities like training and mobilisation of religious leaders; training of parents on positive parenting and strengthening of CVPE also directly contribute to fostering an enabling environment for gender equality. This improvement in the environment is visible for example through progress related to indicator PROO3.4.7. (Extent to which traditional, religious and/or community leaders publicly challenge

⁵³⁸ FGD Club des futurs maris de Kargui Bangou.

⁵³⁹ FGD Jeunes filles AJEC, Kargui Bangou.

⁵⁴⁰ FGD clubs des futurs maris.

⁵⁴¹ Project documentation: NER100290 GTM D.

⁵⁴² Project documentation: NER290_Rapport_Annuel_2023_PQ22-26_VF

⁵⁴³ Project documentation: NER100290 GTM D.

practices of violence against young people, particularly young women), as it went from 'medium' to 'good' between 2021 and 2023.

5.7.5. Conclusions

The mid-term evaluation reflects positive progress towards the project's outcome although some challenges continue to affect results. Although a lot of efforts were directed towards raising awareness among parents, students and teachers, and to train teachers on violence against children and young girls, there was a gap between the knowledge acquired and the application of that knowledge in action. There were mixed results on adolescents' experiences of violence, discrimination, or mistreatment at school, as the situation improved for boys but worsened for girls. Identifying the factors that have improved reporting among boys, young boys and young men could provide a basis for fostering positive change in the context of girls, young girls, and young women. The project exceeded its mid-term targets for the economic empowerment of adolescent girls and young women out of school which highlights the effectiveness of SOYEE activities implemented. However, it also fell short of meeting its target on minimum standards for community child and family protection mechanisms.

The assessment of progress against the AoGD was positive. The evaluation identified that the project fostered a supportive environment for adolescents and young people. Indeed, parents and families have demonstrated high levels of support for the participation of young girls in project activities, and husbands and in-laws have also encouraged and facilitated the participation of adolescent girls in vocational training. SOYEE activities also yielded significant social benefits for project participants. This includes the strengthening of social cohesion between members of AJEC/AVEC. Indeed, members support each other in the event of happy or unhappy events and even contribute financially to help each other.

According to Richard Hart's ladder of participation,⁵⁴⁴ youth participation at the activity level is at the highest level (Youth-initiated and shared decisions with adults). However, at the strategic project design level, youth participation is rated at the 'assigned but informed' scale. Project activities directly contributed to improving the decision-making capacity of young people and adolescents in the family and professional spheres. The evaluation identified an improvement in the consultation of young girls by their parents and older male brothers before making decisions at the household level. There is also an overall improvement in the level of confidence of the girls and boys supported by the project.

The project has initiated progress in addressing gender inequalities. Behavioural changes are also noticeable within the households of married adolescent girls in connection with gender equality, as their husbands increasingly participate in household chores. Although there is a positive trend towards normative change, in the context of Niger, this is a long-term process that will require continuous awareness-raising, training and coaching actions for key community actors and participants to lead to an effective internalisation of the knowledge and skills acquired so far, alongside strategic advocacy actions with political authorities to prioritise gender equality on the national development agenda. Significant changes in community members, namely leaders, men and young boys' understanding on issues around protection and girls' rights have been identified. CVPEs have played a key role in triggering these changes through their actions at the community level, although given their non-compliance with the standards of the CVPE, further efforts are needed to improve their quality and effectiveness, to better use them as a lever for change within the community. Through the introduction of the approach of vocational training and the economic empowerment of young girls and adolescents, the project has strengthened the technical capacities of girls and adolescents on the trades and especially to conduct economic actions and generate income. Girls and adolescents have been able to improve their living conditions and to support their family members and are seen as role models by their

⁵⁴⁴ Mullahey, Ramona & Susskind, Y. & Checkoway, B. (1999). Youth participation in community planning. 1-70. Available at: [Link](#)

peers in the community. Given the success of this approach, a strong demand has been created within the target communities, which highlights a strong potential for scale-up.

5.8. Senegal Analysis

In Senegal, the DGD Programme was implemented under the name **Economic empowerment and social emancipation of adolescents and young people** (10-24 years old) in the regions of Thiès and Kaolack, particularly in the departments of Thiès, Kaolack and Nioro du Rip. It is based on a holistic, inclusive and gender transformative approach, integrating human rights. Key activities include capacity building for teachers, community awareness raising on protection against gender-based violence, support for Gender Clubs and other youth groups, as well as the introduction of innovative and market-adapted technical training. Violence reporting mechanisms and psychosocial support are also being put in place.

The overall objective of the project is that adolescents and young people, especially adolescent girls and young women (10-24 years), thrive and are protected, including in school and professional environments, and access sustainable educational, professional and economic opportunities. The expected results are structured around the creation of safe and inclusive school environments, the development of skills to improve access to the labour market, and the involvement of communities in the prevention of violence. In the project implementation, Plan International Senegal collaborated with partners APROFES, Réseau Siggil Jigéen, and Young Men's Christian Association.

Project implementation faced delays in 2022 due to challenges such as the staggered establishment of the project team, school holidays, and transport strikes, which postponed the start of activities to late December, with some extending into January 2023. At the partner level, difficulties included leadership gaps at the Réseau Siggil Djiguen, limited engagement by the Association pour la Promotion de la Femme Senegalaise (APROFES) coordinator, and delays in deploying a YMCA animator to Kaolack, all of which underscored the need for improved communication and clearly defined roles to ensure smooth programme implementation.

5.8.1. Progress against logframe targets

This section integrates the data from the quantitative study in order to assess the progress of the project in relation to the mid-term achievement against the logical framework, which is also annexed to this report.

During the Bridge Workshop priority indicators (under Result 1 and Result 3) were identified and action points for their achievement were discussed. In addition, methodological issues pertaining to the quantitative mid-term study were also identified and discussed, including:

- Despite clear guidance from PI, there was a difference between measurement tools for the baseline and mid-term studies used by the quantitative consultants which means that some results are not directly comparable.
- The mid-term study does not provide a description of the results relating to the composite indicators (the description only contains the individual indicators) so it is not possible to identify what has weighed down certain multidimensional indicators.
- The selection of participants in the mid-term study does not allow us to differentiate the impact of the project compared to other Plan projects in the same area: this has resulted in some higher indicators at baseline and lower at mid-term.

Outcome: Adolescents and young people, particularly adolescent girls and young women (10-24 years), thrive and are protected, including in school and work environments, and access sustainable educational, professional and economic opportunities

The project has achieved well at the outcome level regarding both SOYEE and LDI indicators. The SOYEE indicators show the project is strong when it comes to training CAY to engage in IGAs. The project is doing less well at engaging CAY to participate in youth-led activities and community members to promote change in social norms related to protection for CAY.

Table 33: Indicator achievement for Senegal Outcome

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
% of young people obtaining paid employment within 6 months of training (SOYI1.1.1)	N/A	Total: 8% Girls: 8% Boys: 8%	Total: 24% Girls: 22% Boys: 25%	Total: 13% Girls: 13% Boys: 13%
% of young people becoming self-employed and operational within 6 months of training (SOYI1.1.2)	N/A	Total: 35% Girls: 35% Boys: 35%	Total: 69% Girls: 69% Boys: 69%	Total: 40% Girls: 40% Boys: 40%
% of adolescents and young people, especially adolescent girls and young women, who actively participate in youth-led initiatives for gender equality (LDI 1)	Total: 23.25% Girls: 26.4% Boys: 19.6%	Total: 35% Girls: 40% Boys: 30%	Total: 19% Girls: 17% Boys: 3%	Total: 45% Girls: 50% Boys: 40%
% of community members who promote change in social norms to provide a protective environment for adolescent girls and young women (LDI 2)	Total: 58% Women: 66% Men: 53%	Total: 65% Women: 70% Men: 60%	Total: 56% Women: 59% Men: 41%	Total: 75% Women: 80% Men: 70%
% of community child and family protection mechanisms supported by the program that ensure functional processes for identifying, referring and monitoring the management of cases of violence (LDI 3)	Total: 20%	Total: 40%	Total: 11%	Total: 40%

Regarding the two SOYEE outcome indicators, young people gaining employment (SOYI1.1.1) and becoming self-employed (SOYI1.1.2), the project has well exceeded its mid-term and end-term targets. This achievement is reflected in the achievement of the SOYEE result level indicators.

The project failed to achieve the target of 35 per cent of **adolescents and young people who actively participate in youth-led initiatives for gender equality (LDI)**, instead achieving 19 per cent just over half of the target. In fact, this indicator saw a decline in percentage since the baseline score of 23.25 per cent. The decline was most evident for boys. The age group which saw the lowest results was girls (3 per cent) and boys (0 per cent) aged between 10-14. Furthermore, the quantitative survey found declining levels of male **community members who promote change in social norms to provide a protective environment for adolescent girls and young women (LDI)**. The project did not achieve its target of 65% of community members promoting positive social norms, instead achieving 56 per cent. The results related to the LDI outcome indicators demonstrate the **project's difficulty in engaging men and boys** in activities for gender equality and the promotion of positive social norms. This aspect was discussed during the Bridge Workshop with CAY and project staff. The reasons for these results are discussed in later sections.

Result 1: Adolescents and young people, especially adolescent girls and young women, benefit from a safe, inclusive and egalitarian school environment and are strengthened to identify and address school-related violence and GBV

Result 1 has five result level indicators focusing on IQE and PfV. The project achieved one indicator out of the five: percentage of schools that have safeguarding policies and processes in place and implement them effectively (IQEO4.2.1). The below analysis displays the possible reasons for underachievement on the remaining four indicators.

Table 34: Indicator achievement for Senegal Result 1

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
% of schools that have safeguarding policies and processes in place and implement them effectively (IQEO4.2.1)	5%	20%	42%	65%
% of adolescents and young people who demonstrate knowledge of child protection risks and behaviors (PROO1.1.1)	Total: 42% Girls: 43% Boys: 40%	Total: 62% Girls: 62% Boys: 62%	Total: 58% Girls: 66% Boys: 34%	Total: 87% Girls: 87% Boys: 87%
% of adolescents and young people who feel they have enough confidence to be able to report a breach of their protection to a reporting structure (PROO1.4.1)	Girls: 78% Boys: 85%	Total: 90% Girls: 90% Boys: 90%	Total: 29.6% Girls: 29.9% Boys: 29%	Total: 95% Girls: 95% Boys: 95%
% of teachers who increasingly employ practices that promote the learning and well-being of all students – girls and boys (IQEO5.1.1)	F Teachers: 5% M Teachers: 7%	Total: 15% F Teachers: 15% M Teachers: 15%	Total: 9% F Teachers: 20% M Teachers: 6%	Total: 25% F Teachers: 25% M Teachers: 25%
% of adolescents and young people who indicate that their school offers a favorable learning environment for all (IQEO4.1.6)	Total: 62% Girls: 67% Boys: 57%	Total: 70% Girls: 70% Boys: 70%	Total: 55% Girls: 34% Boys: 21%	Total: 80% Girls: 80% Boys: 80%

The project has shown high levels of achievement when working with schools to establish and implement safeguarding policies and processes (IQEO4.2.1). The quantitative evaluation found an achievement of 210 per cent. Showing that 42 per cent of schools surveyed had safeguarding policies and processes in place and implementing them effectively. The project is well on track to achieving the end-term target for this indicator.

The results related to indicator PROO1.1.1 and PROO1.4.1 demonstrate a difficulty for young people to report problems of violence encountered in the communities. While **knowledge of the child protection risks and behaviours** has improved since the start of the programme (PROO1.1.1) and the mid-term target set for girls overall has been surpassed, boy's knowledge, however, is a cause for concern and an area that should be improved in the next half of the programme. The results show that only 34 per cent of boys demonstrate the right level of knowledge which is a decline compared to the baseline level of 40 per cent and a 55 per cent achievement rate against the mid-term target. A possible reason for this is that far less boys were included within capacity building sessions on this topic. Furthermore, while the mid-term result did show a decline from baseline, the decline was very low, indicating that knowledge more or less remained the same. This indicates that the training topics may need to be reviewed in order to attract and effectively build knowledge with boys.

A similar pattern of decreasing confidence to report abuse from baseline was found for indicator PROO1.4.1. Only 29.9 per cent of girls and 29 per cent of boys have confidence to report a breach of their protection, compared to a baseline of 78 per cent and 85 per cent respectively. These figures are also much below the mid-term targets 90 per cent for both girls and boys and show a worrisome trend for achievement of the 95 per cent end-term target. Physical and sexual violence are most reported, a

culture of silence and intra-family resolution limits reporting, particularly for emotional violence, economic exploitation and neglect. This can potentially be explained by lower levels of awareness around the latter forms of violence or abuse, which could be an area of focus for the rest of the project's period of implementation.

Fear of community stigma and lack of follow-up on reported cases discourage victims from reporting, and confidence to report abuse is still very low. This is mainly due to cultural factors and a lack of trust in institutions, particularly with regards to confidentiality. Nonetheless, Bajenu Gox (influential women, or "neighbourhood godmothers" who mobilise to carry out community health actions) play a key role in reporting violence, supported by the efforts of awareness-raising projects.

Regarding indicator IQEO5.1.1, the percentage of teachers who increasingly employ practices that promote the learning and well-being of all students, the project did not meet its mid-term target of 15 per cent. Instead, it only reached nine per cent. There was a stark disparity between project location findings. From the numbers of teachers observed 0/19 teachers met all criteria for this indicator in Nioro and only 4/26 met the criteria in Thies. While this is a cause for concern across project locations, more attention should be directed to Nioro to reach the end-term target by the end of the project. There was a stark gender difference found for this indicator with 20 per cent of female teachers employing positive practices compared to six per cent of male teachers.

The project did not meet its mid-term target of 70 per cent of adolescents and young people who indicate that their school offers a favorable learning environment for all (IQEO4.1.6). Instead, the quantitative survey found that the project had declined the percentage from 65 per cent at baseline to 55 per cent at mid-term. The decline was most evidence for girls who saw a 49 per cent drop in those indicating a favorable learning environment in schools. There was a disparity found between the project locations. In Nioro 75 per cent of adolescents and young people indicated that their school offers a favorable learning environment compared to 50 per cent in Thies.

Result 2: Young people (15-24 years), especially young women, develop their skills and use them to engage in paid or self-employment.

The project has performed very well against all four SOYEE indicators in Result 2. Whilst no baseline information was provided for this result area, all mid-term targets were surpassed based on project database information. The below analysis displays the possible reasons for over achievement.

Table 35: Indicator achievement for Senegal Result 2

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
% of young people demonstrating professional skills at the end of their training (SOYO1.1.3)	N/A	Girls: 15% Boys: 20%	Total: 94% Girls: 95% Boys: 91%	Girls: 20% Boys: 25%
% of young people demonstrating an aptitude for entrepreneurship at the end of their training (SOYO1.1.2)	N/A	Total: 50% Girls: 50% Boys: 50%	Total: 57% Girls: 60% Boys: 51%	Total: 60% Girls: 60% Boys: 60%
Level of training acquired by young people over the last 6 months and subsequently seeking to create their own business (SOYO1.3.1)	N/A	Total: 40% Girls: 40% Boys: 40%	Total: 74% Girls: 72% Boys: 78%	Total: 50% Girls: 50% Boys: 50%
Level of training acquired by young people over the last 6 months and who subsequently sought paid employment (SOYO1.3.2)	N/A	Total: 15% Girls: 15% Boys: 15%	Total: 79% Girls: 72% Boys: 85%	Total: 25% Girls: 25% Boys: 25%

The project has well surpassed the mid-term target for the percentage of young people demonstrating professional skills (SOYO1.1.3), and an aptitude for entrepreneurship

(SOYO1.1.2) at the end of their training. In total, 94 per cent of CAY (95 per cent of girls and 91 per cent of boys) demonstrated professional skills against a target of 15 per cent and 20 per cent respectively. A total of 57 per cent of CAY (60 per cent of girls and 51 per cent of boys) demonstrated an aptitude for entrepreneurship against a target of 50 per cent for both girls and boys. Girls saw higher achievements despite having a lower target for demonstrating professional skills. The project has exceeded its end-term targets for both indicators already.

Similarly, **the project has well surpassed the mid-term target for the percentage of young people subsequently seeking to create their own business (SOYO1.3.1) and seek paid employment (SOYO1.3.2) six months after completion of the SOYEE training courses.** A total of 74 per cent against a target of 40 per cent was found for young people seeking to create their own business and a total of 79 per cent against a target of 15 per cent was found for young people seeking employment. This shows that after taking the SOYEE course that young people feel they have gained the technical skills and confidence to enter into IGAs despite some of the challenges reported by the young people during the qualitative data collection (discussed in subsequent sections).

Part of the reason for the high levels of achievement under this result is due to the volume of activities undertaken that contribute to the result area. Considerable work was undertaken in 2023 to establish a good foundation for engaging young people in vocational training courses.

Result 3: Parents, young people and other community stakeholders, authorities are committed to providing a protective environment for adolescent girls and young women and conducive to their emancipation and empowerment

Result 3 includes four PfV indicators, of which, three indicators well overachieved their mid-term target. One indicator (PROO3.5.1) fell short of the mid-term target and seemed to fall below the levels recorded at baseline. The following analysis presents the reasons for these over and under achievements.

Table 36: Indicator achievement for Senegal Result 3

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
% of community child and family protection mechanisms that meet minimum quality standards (PROO3.3.1)	10%	35%	44%	65%
% of parents and caregivers who report using positive parenting practices (PROO2.1.1)	Women: 55% Men: 47%	Women: 65% Men: 55%	Women: 88.3% Men: 93.4%	Women: 70% Men: 65%
% of female and male children and/or adolescents who report having been encouraged by adults to discuss and express their views on violence and abuse (PROO3.5.1)	Girls: 56% Boys: 58%	Girls: 61% Boys: 63%	Girls: 26% Boys: 36%	Girls: 66% Boys: 68%
Extent to which traditional, religious and/or community leaders publicly challenge practices of violence against CAY, particularly young women (PROO3.4.7)	Women: 10% Men: 5%	Women: 20% Men: 15%	Total: 69.6% Women: 82.9% Men: 59.1%	Women: 30% Men: 25%

The project has surpassed the mid-term target of 35 per cent of community child and family protection mechanisms that meet minimum quality standards (PROO3.3.1) by achieving a percentage of 44. While this indicator is reported as being achieved, when the results are disaggregated by project location protection mechanisms in Niore (out of the three included in the quantitative survey) were all found to be effective and meeting minimum quality standards. Out of the five protection mechanisms assessed in Thies, only one was found to be meeting minimum quality standards. This points to a lack of achievement in the project of Thies which requires urgent attention for the second

half of the programme.⁵⁴⁵ A possible reason for the disparity in results by location is the number of activities taking place in the different locations. For example, in 2023 seven mechanisms were established and trained in Nioro reaching a total of 179 members, whereas only three training sessions were held in Thies reaching a total of 51 protection actors.⁵⁴⁶

The project made good progress in delivering training sessions for parents and caregivers in schools. Three sessions were held in Thies and two sessions in Nioro (with nine multiplication sessions) in 2023 alone.⁵⁴⁷ This has contributed to the **project surpassing its mid-term target for the percentage of parents and caregivers who report using positive parenting practices (PROO2.1.1)**. The project achieved 88.3 per cent of women and 93.4 per cent of men who reported using positive parenting practices against targets of 65 per cent and 55 per cent respectively. This is an achievement of 136 per cent and 170 per cent respectively of the target. Interestingly there was a disparity between the overall results per location, with a higher percentage of parents and caregivers in Thies (95 per cent) reporting the use of positive practices compared to Nioro (79 per cent). There does not seem to be a trend between the use of positive parenting practices by age group. The quantitative survey reported very mixed results.

The project did not meet the mid-term target of 61 per cent of girls and 63 per cent of boys who report having been encouraged by adults to discuss and express their views on violence and abuse (PROO3.5.1). Instead, the project achieved 26 and 36 per cent respectively. Furthermore, this is a decline in the level reported at the baseline. There was a difference in the percentage of CAY reporting being encouraged by parents by project location and by age group. In Nioro, 23 per cent of CAY reported being encouraged by parents and in Thies 33 per cent of CAY reported being encouraged by parents. This finding is in line with the previous indicator finding of higher levels of positive parenting in Thies. In terms of age group disparity, CAY aged 15-17 years old reported higher levels of encouragement by adults (the only exception to this finding was for boys aged between 15-17 in Nioro where 10 per cent reported being encouraged compared to boys aged between 18-24 where 13 per cent reported being encouraged).

The project has well surpassed its mid-term and end-term targets with respect to traditional, religious and/or community leaders publicly challenging practices of violence against CAY, particularly young women (PROO3.4.7). The evaluation found that 82.9 per cent of female and 59.1 per cent of male community leaders reported publicly challenging practices of violence against CAY compared to a target of 20 and 15 per cent respectively. There was a slight disparity between project locations with 75.76 per cent of all community leaders surveyed reporting publicly challenging practices of violence against CAY and 65.22 per cent of all community leaders surveyed reporting publicly challenging practices of violence against CAY in Thies. This level of support for challenging practices of violence against CAY is categorised as “Average” in the quantitative survey. The project could, therefore, do more to increase this level further to score a “High” result which would mean an average percentage of 80 or over.

During the Bridge Workshop⁵⁴⁸ several challenges were identified that contribute to low achievement across these indicators:

- **Lack of harmonized reporting tools** in child protection committees and absence of a centralized database to track cases.
- **Low sustainability** of protection mechanisms after the end of the project.

⁵⁴⁵ Senegal Quantitative Mid-term Report, 2024

⁵⁴⁶ Senegal Annual Report 2023

⁵⁴⁷ Senegal Annual Report 2023

⁵⁴⁸ Senegal Bridge Workshop 2023

- **Fragmentation** of initiatives, with a lack of national coordination between actors and different levels of power (AEMO, CDPE, CCPE, etc.).
- **Stigma and cultural taboos** prevent reporting of emotional, economic or neglectful abuse. Physical and sexual abuse are the most reported.
- **Low trust in institutions:** only 29 per cent of young people feel confident in reporting violence.
- Budget limitation to organize longer training courses (on identification, referencing and monitoring of cases) or cover participants' costs.

5.8.2. Assessment of progress on the AoGD

The AoGD selected for assessment in Senegal was **Skills and Opportunities for Youth Economic Empowerment** (SOYEE). This choice was driven by the project's strong emphasis on economic empowerment and fostering youth entrepreneurship.

To what extent does the SOYEE project, its implementing partners and activities create an environment conducive to learning for adolescents and young people?

As mentioned in the section above, the project has performed very well against all four SOYEE indicators in Result 2, as all mid-term targets were surpassed. However, qualitative data collected as part of this evaluation sheds some light on areas for improvement.

Community awareness-raising activities aimed at showing young people vocational training opportunities and encouraging them to enroll in vocational training centers were effective as for example, activities on the existence and usefulness of the CFPs have potentially had an impact on the increase in training registrations, according to the director of the Khombole CFP: "we felt a slight increase in young people".⁵⁴⁹

The **short entrepreneurship training courses** (413 young people in Thiès and 318 in Kaolack) that took place in spring 2024, often limited to a few days, were too short and poorly attended, as one participant noted: "We received 4-day entrepreneurship training and 5-day technical training."⁵⁵⁰ The impact of this activity was limited due to a **significant delay in carrying out the activities** and a **poor understanding of the beneficiaries regarding the continuation of the initiatives, which led to some frustration on the part of the young people**. As the Director of the Khombole CFP points out, "They wonder how Plan will come to help them start a business, and their families ask us: 'where is Plan?'".⁵⁵¹ Some young people mentioned that they were not informed about the continuity of activities: "We were not informed about the continuation of activities", which reduced their motivation and confidence in the project and indicates a gap between the beneficiaries' expectations and the actual implementation.⁵⁵²

The evaluation participants unanimously stressed that the lack of information and monitoring could compromise the success of the business plans set up; for example, at the Khombole CFP, it was mentioned that "the young people have all the data, but they have not written good projects. It is good to train them, but they must be supported in writing them", reflecting a lack of post-training support to translate the knowledge acquired into concrete results.⁵⁵³

The project also supported a small group of young people in their training by paying their registration fees. For example, at the Thiès CFP, eight learners had their registration fees covered as part of the project. These young people were mainly selected based on vulnerability criteria, such as

⁵⁴⁹ KII Director CFP Khombole.

⁵⁵⁰ KII CEP Thies; KII Director ANPEJ

⁵⁵¹ KII Director CFP Khombole.

⁵⁵² FGD Young people training Tassette; FDG young people of the CoC Tassette.

⁵⁵³ KII Director CFP Khombole

disability or socio-economic difficulties. The previous year, YMCA had financed the registration of four learners in the same center.⁵⁵⁴ This activity remains limited, however, in terms of the number of learners financially supported. Among the young people consulted who benefited from this support, some do not seem to be aware of the project's support for their training costs, others acknowledge having benefited from it but there has been no follow-up during the current year: "I am a student at the Thiès CFP. Last year YMCA topped up my registration with 10,000 CFA francs. Since then, I have not heard from them, and I do not know who to contact. Otherwise, I am currently in need because I come from a destitute family. Until now, I am not yet registered".⁵⁵⁵

Finally, some collective projects were supported by the project, such as the cereal processing project in Tassette, but a community facilitator pointed out that this initiative was not in line with local market realities: "Cereals, no, that can't work, because they can't sell, in fact everyone knows how to do it here in the village (processing cereals) so there is no market".⁵⁵⁶ This highlights a gap in the labour and training market study that was undertaken, as the section on the identification of job-creating professions is based on adolescents and young people's interests and needs, and did not sufficiently take into account local market realities in some areas.⁵⁵⁷

Parental and family support can play a crucial role in young people's participation in vocational training. Several young people expressed that their parents or guardians had actively encouraged them. For example, one participant said: "My parents motivated me to participate in the training because they approve of Plan International's activities."⁵⁵⁸ In some cases, initial reluctance was overcome through explanations from project managers, such as in the following testimony: "At first, my mother was reluctant, but after understanding the objectives of the training, she allowed me to participate."⁵⁵⁹ For others, this family support facilitated access to training by removing social or financial barriers, as one young person noted: "My older brother allowed me to explore the project to assess whether it is beneficial," showing conditional but positive support.⁵⁶⁰ Limitations remain, however, particularly in rural areas where families' lack of financial resources sometimes prevents enrolment or continuation in training.⁵⁶¹

Youth satisfaction with the support provided by the project is mixed, although many acknowledged the benefits of the training. Some youth expressed gratitude for the skills acquired, such as writing business plans and marketing techniques, which gave them more confidence: "The project taught me communication techniques to the point that now I know how, when and why to communicate."⁵⁶² In addition, positive results for SOYEE indicators (SOYO1.1.2; SOYO1.3.1 and SOYO1.3.2) further demonstrate the high level of satisfaction amongst participants.

But as reported above, overall satisfaction is limited by unmet expectations, particularly on post-training follow-up. For example, at the Khombole CFP, the director reported: "They [the youth] wonder how Plan is going to come and help us to start a business", reflecting a lack of clarity and continuity in the support offered.⁵⁶³ A young boy from Lalanne emphasized: "We were told that once our business plan was written, we would receive funding, but since then, we have received nothing."⁵⁶⁴ This contrast between

⁵⁵⁴ KII CEP Thies

⁵⁵⁵ KII beneficiary of training support

⁵⁵⁶ KII, Animator, Tassette

⁵⁵⁷ Project documentation: Rapport Étude de Marché Plan Version Finale.

⁵⁵⁸ FGD, Girls, Khombole

⁵⁵⁹ FGD, Girls, Lalanne

⁵⁶⁰ FGD, Boys, Khombole

⁵⁶¹ KII, Director CFP, Khombole

⁵⁶² FGD, Girls, Khombole

⁵⁶³ KII, Director CFP, Khombole

⁵⁶⁴ FGD, Boys, Lalanne

the recognition of the training received and the lack of support for the next steps creates a feeling of incompleteness among the participants.

To what extent are the training modules linked together? Are participants in SOYEE activities well equipped to develop the technical skills they need as well as their professional project?

The short entrepreneurship training has enabled participants to acquire fundamental skills in entrepreneurship, marketing, and project management, although their scope remains limited. For example, young people have learned how to write business plans, master marketing strategies, and manage inventory, as one participant mentioned: "Now I know what inventory is, when to stock up, and how to manage it." Others highlighted having strengthened their self-confidence and their ability to communicate effectively: "The project taught me communication techniques to the point that now I know how, when, and why to communicate."⁵⁶⁵ These skills, however, lack consolidation and follow-up for real long-term impact.

Indeed, although the training provided basic concepts, the limited duration (often four to five days) and the lack of available resources limited their impact. One participant said: "We received training for four days, but there was no follow-up to help us apply what we learned."⁵⁶⁶ Furthermore, the equipment provided remains insufficient (since the kits distributed do not allow young people to actually set up on their own) as one manager indicated: "The young people go to work for people who have their own workshop, because they cannot afford to buy their own machine."⁵⁶⁷ Finally, the training alone did not allow for the operationalization of the acquired skills to be put into practice: "Theory alone is not enough, we also want to do practice."⁵⁶⁸

To what extent does the provision of a start-up kit or capital to launch income-generating activities advance project outcomes?

To the evaluator's knowledge, no activity related to the establishment of savings and credit groups (AJEC or AVEC) that could facilitate access to financing for young people in training is planned. In some CFPs (Khombole), there are "Entrepreneur Clubs" to which all registered young people are automatically invited to participate, but their participation is not initiated by the project or facilitated.

Some young people have been involved in community initiatives or local associations to develop collective projects or share their skills, although this remains limited and often depends on their own initiative rather than structured support. As the Director of the Lalane CFP indicates: "We have an entrepreneurship club, but it too has not been funded. We ask members to contribute, the group bought packets of biscuits that they resold for example to resell to establishments. They have an office, a WhatsApp group, we had two projects including one for a chicken coop at 400,000 francs, these are collective projects."⁵⁶⁹

In summary, young people acquired theoretical skills, but the lack of materials, funding and post-training follow-up limited their ability to implement this learning. It was also noted that there was little integration of SOYEE, protection and education activities, although some members of the COC Club were also engaged in vocational training. Finally, and although the issue was only addressed incidentally, the evaluators observed a lack of clarity on the consideration of children in situations of begging (Khombole town hall) in the child protection system.

⁵⁶⁵ FGD, Girls, Khombole

⁵⁶⁶ FGD, CAY, Tassette training

⁵⁶⁷ KII, Director CFP, Khombole

⁵⁶⁸ FGD, Girls, Lalane

⁵⁶⁹ KII, CFP, Lalanne

5.8.3. Assessment of the effectiveness of youth participation and leadership methods used

How are children, adolescents and young people (CAY) invited to participate in the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of activities that concern them (training)? To what extent is their participation meaningful and their views taken into account?

Overall, according to Richard Hart's ladder of participation,⁵⁷⁰ youth participation in activities is at the highest level (Youth initiated and decisions shared with adults). The contribution of young people is often focused on local activities and the choice of areas to prioritize in their plans to replicate their training at school level.

At the project design level, youth participation is rated at the 'Consulted and informed' level. The participation of most CAY in the design, planning and evaluation of the project remains limited. Their involvement in strategic decisions and project planning remains marginal and sometimes solely focused on reporting: "After each activity, (the facilitator) asks me to give her a report."⁵⁷¹ However, the establishment of youth advisory committees is a relevant strategy to move towards more meaningful CAY participation (see more below).

Design and planning: Although they can identify important themes, their role is often limited to the level of carrying out activities and, for example, the multiplication of activities at the level of their school, without any real influence on the overall strategy of the project. Nonetheless, the creation of two youth advisory committees (one in each region) to involve them in decision-making related to the project is a good practice. After receiving training on topics including gender, positive masculinity and advocacy techniques, these committees are consulted and actively engaged to take part in decision-making. For example, workshops were organized with each advisory committee to collaboratively identify the training needs for the champions of change modules.⁵⁷²

Evaluation and monitoring: Young people provide feedback on the training, but there is a lack of robust mechanisms to integrate their perspectives into the continuous improvement of the project and there is a lack of follow-up, especially for those who have just joined the project. "The trainings were good, but we want more follow-up to apply what we have learned; I was chosen as a supervisor, we have to follow the activities of the COC youth, but I have only followed one training, which is not enough. The project must organize other trainings to allow me to do this follow-up".⁵⁷³

Increased decision-making capacity in the family sphere: The vocational training allowed young people to develop their self-confidence and strengthen their ability to take part in decisions within their family. For example, one participant shared: "Thanks to the project, I feel better regarded and sought after by my family members who think that I am more mature after attending the training."⁵⁷⁴ Some also pointed out that the training had allowed them to better communicate with their parents: "before, when my mother criticized me, I would quickly get angry and even say outdated things to her. Now, when it comes to introspection, I tell myself that no one is more capable than her of correcting me and that I must be polite by showing her respect. This has allowed me today to be more in tune with her because she asks me about certain decisions to be made. I now communicate with my dad, whereas this was not the case before because there was a barrier."⁵⁷⁵

⁵⁷⁰ Mullahey, Ramona & Susskind, Y. & Checkoway, B.. (1999). Youth participation in community planning. 1-70. Available at: [Link](#)

⁵⁷¹ FGD, Mixed CAY, Notto

⁵⁷² Project documentation; SEN308 Rapport Annuel 2023 DGD.

⁵⁷³ FGD youth of the CoC tassette

⁵⁷⁴ FGD girls Khombole

⁵⁷⁵ FGD mixed youth Notto

Increased decision-making and leadership skills in the community: In their community, young people have strengthened their leadership roles thanks to the skills acquired during the CoC training. One participant said: “We organize talks in our schools, about two per term, on topics such as physical and sexual violence.”⁵⁷⁶ Another participant shared: “I advise my friends to join the training center rather than stay in the neighborhood playing football. Some have become aware and have started vocational training.”⁵⁷⁷ Others have led awareness-raising activities on topics such as teenage pregnancy or gender stereotypes that have led to concrete actions at the local authority level: the initiative on **sanitary towels distribution** is a concrete example of how young people, especially girls, have used the skills acquired during the trainings to solve a problem they were facing at school. One participant advocated at the city hall to address the needs of girls who lacked sanitary pads, a situation that often forces them to stay home during their periods and miss school. She explained: “I learned to communicate better. Every time, I was ashamed to ask for sanitary pads. I went to the city hall to advocate, and we asked for pads. The mayor ended up making a commitment to give us some, more than 2,000 packs.”⁵⁷⁸

How did the project activities implemented and resources mobilized influence youth self-esteem, youth engagement and interest? What motivates CAY to participate in project activities?

Self-esteem: Young people reported positive changes in their self-confidence through vocational training and participatory activities. One participant said, “Group exercises allowed us to express ourselves better, understand our strengths, and not be afraid to speak in front of others.”⁵⁷⁹ Others reported an increased ability to manage their emotions: Before “I had trouble controlling my emotions, especially when I was nervous about difficult situations. So, after the training, I am able to control myself in all situations.”⁵⁸⁰

Youth engagement and interest: The project generated strong engagement, particularly through the concrete professional opportunities offered. One participant shared: “Before, I didn’t think about vocational training, but thanks to the awareness-raising, I saw the importance of learning a trade to integrate.”⁵⁸¹ In Tassette they reported: “The activities organized motivated us to stay active in our community and look for solutions together.”⁵⁸²

How can the program more effectively attract CAYs to participate in project activities?

Youth participation in project activities can be improved along the following lines:

- **Following up on the business plans desired by young people:** “Funding will be an asset so that we can carry out our projects. In this case we will be able to work with other young people to train them so that they can become independent.”⁵⁸³
- **Reducing financial and logistical barriers:** Providing partial or full coverage of costs related to training, transportation or necessary materials. For example, a participant from the Khombole CFP noted that transportation costs remained a major obstacle to remaining in training for some young people.
- **Strengthen local awareness of the usefulness of vocational training:** Conduct targeted campaigns using accessible tools, such as local radio and digital platforms. One participant

⁵⁷⁶ FGD youth of the CoC tassette

⁵⁷⁷ FGD boys Khombole

⁵⁷⁸ FGD youth of the CoC tassette

⁵⁷⁹ FGD girls Khombole

⁵⁸⁰ FGD mixed youth Notto

⁵⁸¹ FGD boys Lalane

⁵⁸² FGD Young Tassette training

⁵⁸³ FGD boys lalane

suggested: “Young people need to be better informed about the benefits of training to fully engage in it.”⁵⁸⁴

How and to what extent have youth empowerment approaches or methodologies contributed to the advocacy power, autonomy and sustainability of youth organizations in the region/country?

Advocacy Power: Advocacy skills training has enabled youth to better structure their demands and engage with decision-makers. For example, in the training in Tassette, one participant mentioned: “We learned how to present our ideas clearly to local authorities, which allowed us to advocate for our vocational training needs.”⁵⁸⁵

Autonomy: Methodologies focused on developing practical skills, such as writing business plans, have strengthened the autonomy of young people. In Lalane, one participant said: “Thanks to the workshops, we were able to identify our strengths and create projects that we could manage on our own.”⁵⁸⁶

Sustainability of youth organizations: The support provided to youth groups, particularly through structures such as the COC, has encouraged their community anchoring, particularly through their actions in schools and the link with other youth organizations. In Tassette, a young person testified: “We were put in touch with the Municipal Youth Council... we got on well... we now know that young people have our say.”⁵⁸⁷

How do project teams collect information on how CAYs participating in the project assess the accessibility and performance of project activities? What is the nature of the feedback received from CAYs? To what extent is it recorded? What is done with the feedback?

The evaluation found two types of feedback mechanism, one formal and one informal. Formal feedback is gained through questionnaires and informal feedback is gained through discussions between project participants and implementing partners and the project team. “After the training we received a visit from a Plan agent with our principal. The activity took place like a chat where we were asked questions about the different types of violence”.⁵⁸⁸ Sometimes, the follow-up is organized remotely but it is not always functional: “We created a WhatsApp group with the Plan agents but unfortunately the group does not work as we thought”.⁵⁸⁹

Throughout the duration of the project, it has adapted and tailored feedback mechanisms to make them more effective. For example, when it appeared that feedback questionnaires were not used by project participants, the project team shifted to collecting verbal feedback which is recorded in an online database to ensure timely response.⁵⁹⁰ This is a good example of adaptation to minimise barriers to providing feedback by CAY. It was not clear to what extent CAY were consulted on how they prefer to provide feedback, but that the project team identified a challenge and decided to adapt the mechanism to focus on existing mechanisms that were working well. This shows the project team reflected on what was working well and chose to prioritise efforts and funds accordingly.

5.8.4. Progress of the gender transformative ambition of the programme

This section provides a summary of current GTM areas' status and areas for further development. Progress in each area was thoroughly examined during data collection and the Bridge Workshop. These discussions engaged project staff, implementing partners, and project participants, allowing them to

⁵⁸⁴ FGD boys Khombole

⁵⁸⁵ FGD mixed youth Tassette

⁵⁸⁶ FGD girls Lalane

⁵⁸⁷ FGD CoC Tassette

⁵⁸⁸ FGD mixed Notto

⁵⁸⁹ FGD girls Lalane

⁵⁹⁰ Written comments. Project staff. February 2025.

reflect on progress toward the envisioned objectives, identify key remaining obstacles, and propose concrete action plans to address these challenges. The finalised action plans are provided in [Annex 8](#) and recommendations developed across the action plans are included in chapter 5 of this report.

Gender norms

The project had a notable impact on gender norms and attitudes, as well as a strong appreciation of gender equality and inclusion training by participants. The project has fostered **greater inclusion of girls in spaces traditionally dominated by boys**. In Lalane, one participant noted, “Now we feel that our ideas are respected and taken into account, even in groups led by boys.”⁵⁹¹ It has enabled young women to overcome stigma in non-traditional careers. One (female) participant from Lalane shared, “Before the training, I thought I would not return to the garage for an internship or a job as a mechanic because I was stigmatized. However, thanks to the program, no one is prouder of my job than I am.”⁵⁹²

Participants particularly valued the interactive and participatory methods used during the training. In Tassette, one participant emphasized: “The group exercises and open discussions allowed us to understand the importance of gender equality in society.”⁵⁹³ This led to a better understanding and ownership of the concepts of inclusion.

Agency

In the most recent GTM, the project was rated as having medium potential in this area.⁵⁹⁴ Indeed, significant efforts were made to support girls in acting including through capacity-building sessions which have been held with young girls within the framework of gender clubs and the CoC clubs. In addition, discussions held with young people through the Youth Advisory Committee further contributed to encouraging girls to express themselves and contribute to decision making as part of a group. However, further opportunities to increase girls’ agency were identified, including supporting young girls in the implementation of advocacy and influence activities aimed at authorities and communities.⁵⁹⁵

Working with boys and men

The sessions on positive masculinities and gender equality helped to deconstruct **stereotypes related to traditional roles**. These changes in attitudes reflect an increased awareness of shared responsibilities. A participant from Khombole said: “Before, I thought that household chores were only for women, but now I understand that everything must be shared in a family.”⁵⁹⁶ In Tassette, another participant noted: “Society thinks that only men can undertake, but I now know that women can too.” This learning was reinforced by symbolic messages from Coumba Gawlo Seck’s song, such as: “It is two hands that tie the belt or the loincloth” and “What a man does, a woman can also do.” During the sessions, the girls even sang Coumba Gawlo Seck’s song, “Refuser, on n’est pas des femmes objet,” demonstrating their appropriation of the messages of emancipation and respect for women’s rights.⁵⁹⁷

A discussion session was held during the final workshop on the objectives and perspectives for improving the **gender transformative dimension** and the following action points were identified:

⁵⁹¹ FGD girls Lalane

⁵⁹² FGD girls Lalane

⁵⁹³ FGD youth of CoC Tassette

⁵⁹⁴ Project documentation: SEN100308 GTM I - Mise en oeuvre_2024

⁵⁹⁵ Project documentation: SEN100308 GTM I - Mise en oeuvre_2024

⁵⁹⁶ FGD boys Khombole

⁵⁹⁷ FGD young mixed Tassette

- **Strengthening positive masculinities:** Continue and expand training for **COC boys' cohorts**, with a focus on strengthening their capacities to promote gender equality and become agents of change in their communities.
- **Sustainability of actions:** Further encourage trained young people to integrate into **existing youth structures**, to continue to convey messages about positive masculinities and gender equality beyond the project. Integrate the project clubs with **youth champion** organizations, in synergy with other projects, such as the YOUCA project for example to ensure continuity of activities after the end of the project.
- **Development of a multiplication strategy:** Move to a stage of **multiplying community dialogues** and talks from 2025, taking advantage of the knowledge acquired by the COCs.
- Create **diversified communication platforms**, beyond WhatsApp groups, to reach a wider audience via social networks like X or TikTok. Partner with organizations who have expertise in social media management, to amplify the reach of messages.
- Integrate **digital awareness raising tools** to creatively engage youth and strengthen their buy-in to project messages.

Condition and position

In the most recent GTM, the project was rated as having medium potential in this area.⁵⁹⁸ Integrating discussions on barriers to access, training and employment into awareness-raising activities on positive masculinity was identified as a key opportunity for increasing the project's transformative impact around this element. Nonetheless, significant progress has already been made through the provision of guidance to young girls who have already started their career path and through strengthening their life skills and employability in different professions. Evidence gathered through this evaluation suggests that this has directly contributed to improving girls' status as they reported being increasingly respected at the family and community level (as highlighted previously).

Diversity

In the most recent GTM, the project was rated as high potential in this area.⁵⁹⁹ To maximise this potential, it was highlighted that the project should aim to continue to monitor compliance with vulnerability criteria in the choice of beneficiaries and to identify the types of vulnerability depending on the context and the types of discrimination (for example single mothers, married adolescent girls, disabled adolescent girls and/or survivors of GBV.)

Enabling environment

In the most recent GTM, the project was rated as having medium potential in this area.⁶⁰⁰ Implementation of activities including but not limited to the training of guardian parents on gender and protection, training of teachers on gender, and capacity building of protection actors on issues of protection against abuse and violence against children demonstrates the project's commitment to strengthening structures and systems to enable greater gender equality and inclusion. Opportunities were also identified to maximise the project's potential in this area, including through leveraging internal (within the project) and external synergies. For example, given that the budget for recreational activities in child-friendly spaces was withdrawn, it was noted that it could be reallocated towards collaboration with other structures or spaces already existing for the rehabilitation and carrying out of animation activities and awareness-raising.⁶⁰¹

⁵⁹⁸ Project documentation: SEN100308 GTM I - Mise en oeuvre_2024

⁵⁹⁹ Project documentation: SEN100308 GTM I - Mise en oeuvre_2024

⁶⁰⁰ Project documentation: SEN100308 GTM I - Mise en oeuvre_2024

⁶⁰¹ Project documentation: SEN100308 GTM I - Mise en oeuvre_2024

5.8.5. Conclusions

The mid-term evaluation revealed notable progress but also persistent challenges in the project's implementation. The project demonstrated difficulty in engaging men and boys in activities for gender equality and the promotion of positive social norms. It was also difficult for young people to report problems of violence encountered in the communities; while knowledge of the risks has improved, girls experience a lower rate of confidence to formally report abuse as compared to boys. Fear of community stigma and lack of follow-up on reported cases are among the reasons that victims feel discouraged from reporting. The community child and family protection mechanisms supported by the project also faced difficulties in carrying out their mission of identifying, referencing and monitoring the management of cases of violence encountered in the communities. Relevant action points were discussed during the Bridge Workshop to tackle these challenges.

The assessment of progress against the AoGD was mixed as whilst the project has performed very well against all four SOYEE indicators in Result 2, qualitative data collected as part of this evaluation sheds some light on areas for improvement. The project has partially achieved an environment conducive to learning. The awareness raising activities may have led to an increase in course registrations, but this was limited to the testimony of one person. A review of the short-course impact would be beneficial to understand whether a longer-course for few people may be more impactful. Youth satisfaction with the support provided by the project is mixed, although many acknowledged the benefits of the training. Some youth expressed gratitude for the skills acquired, such as writing business plans and marketing techniques, which gave them more confidence. The overall satisfaction rating was, however, limited by unmet expectations, particularly on post-training follow-up. Training modules are complimentary which is helpful for CAY to build a complete picture about how to run a business, however, the impact is limited again by the short-term nature of the course. Whilst the budget was not sufficient to consider long-term training with a certificate recognised by the State, short-term courses limit the content that can be delivered.

The evaluation found good levels of participation and involvement of CAY in the project. According to Richard Hart's ladder of participation,⁶⁰² youth participation in activities is at the highest level (Youth initiated and decisions shared with adults). Within their own communities, young people have strengthened their leadership roles thanks to the skills acquired during the training. Some led awareness-raising activities on social issues that led to policy action at a local level, including an initiative on access to sanitary towels in schools. The training also promoted their self-confidence and decision-making abilities within their families, including positive communication with parents. However, their involvement in decision-making and planning of project activities was marginal and sometimes solely focused on reporting or carrying out activities. Young people provided feedback on the training, but a lack of robust feedback mechanisms prevented the integration of their perspectives into the project's improvement.

The project had a notable impact on gender norms and attitudes, as well as a strong appreciation of gender equality and inclusion training by participants, including greater inclusion of girls in spaces traditionally dominated by boys. It has raised awareness among communities about GBV and the rights of children and young people. Training on positive masculinity and communication around sexual violence has transformed perceptions and behaviors in several communities, particularly in terms of gender stereotypes related to the employment of girls and women. However, the project's communication on positive masculinity and SGBV remains limited, and the need for diversifying communication platforms to reach wider audiences (at the target community level and beyond) was identified. Young people were also encouraged to integrate into existing youth structures, to continue to convey messages about positive masculinities and gender equality beyond the project.

⁶⁰² Mullahey, Ramona & Susskind, Y. & Checkoway, B.. (1999). Youth participation in community planning. 1-70. Available at: [Link](#)

5.9. Tanzania Analysis

In Tanzania, the DGD Programme is being implemented for four years, 2022-2026. It is locally known as **Vijana Elimu Malezi na Ajira** (VEMA). The VEMA project aims to socially and economically empower adolescents and young people between the ages of 10 and 24 years. These adolescents and young people are spread across 13 wards and two districts in Mwanza region; Ilmela and Nyamagana districts. The project works with several stakeholders to achieve its objective including primary and secondary level school children and teachers, social welfare officers, education officers, community development officers, ward education officers (WEO), village executive officers (VEO), the police gender desk officers, youth and their leaders, and influential traditional and religious leaders.

5.9.1. Progress against logframe targets

This section integrates qualitative and quantitative data collected during the mid-term evaluation to describe the project's progress and challenges against the mid-term logframe targets. Data from the quantitative study were used across KII and the Bridge Workshop to identify specific gaps and challenges in achieving the project objectives for discussion. The project logframe is also annexed to this report.

Outcome: A society in which the rights of children, adolescents and young people are fully realized while respecting gender equality.

The VEMA project had five outcome indicators. Four of the five indicators outlined below (SOYI1.1.1, SOYI1.1.2, LDI 1 and IQEO4.2.3) were not measured during the midline quantitative survey. Outcome indicators measuring the percentage of young people with wage employment or with their own operational businesses within 6 months after training were not measured because the project started the vocational training interventions late. These indicators could therefore not be assessed at the time the study was conducted.⁶⁰³ However, despite being highlighted as an indicator to be measured in the midline quantitative report, indicator LDI 1 assessing the percentage of young people actively involved in youth-led initiatives for gender equality was not measured during the midline. Neither the midline report nor the logical framework outlines why it was not measured.

Table 37: Indicator achievement for Tanzania Outcome

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
% of young people in wage employment within 6 months after training (SOYI1.1.1)	N/A	30%	N/A	45%
% of young people with an own operational business within 6 months after training (SOYI1.1.2)	N/A	30%	N/A	45%
% of adolescents and young people who are actively involved in youth-led initiatives for gender equality (LDI 1)	7.7%	40%	N/A	50%
Degree to which schools and learning spaces, are meeting national or global standards on providing accessible, protective and safe spaces for learning at the time of measurement (IQEO4.2.3)	39%	49%	N/A	64%
% of adolescents who have successfully completed lower secondary level (LDI 2)	82%	84%	85%	88%

⁶⁰³ KII, Project Staff, Tanzania

Indicator LDI 2 reporting on the percentage of adolescents who successfully completed lower secondary level education missed its midline target by 1 per cent, reporting 84 per cent against a target of 85 per cent. This result indicates that the project is on a positive trajectory towards achievement of the midline target.

Result 1: Marginalized adolescents and young people (10-18 years), particularly adolescent girls and young women, feel safe at school, learn in a conducive environment, and receive additional support if needed

Four of the five indicators within Result 1 surpassed their midline targets at the time the mid-term quantitative survey was conducted. One indicator slightly missed its target while two indicators were not reported against.

Table 38: Indicator achievement for Tanzania Result 1

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
Indicator 1.1: % of adolescents and young people who report that their school provides a supportive learning environment for all (IQEO4.1.6)	Overall: 62.2% Girls: 62.7% Boys: 60%	Overall: 75% Girls: 71% Boys: 72%	Overall: 81.7% Girls: 85% Boys: 77.3%	Overall: 82% Girls: 81% Boys: 82%
Indicator 1.2: % of schools with established child protection mechanisms/structures (LDI 3)	Overall: 86.7%	Overall: 70%	Overall: 100%	Overall: 75%
Indicator 1.3: % of teachers who are observed using learner-centred, gender-responsive, inclusive teaching approaches at the time of measurement (IQEO5.1.2)	Overall: 89%	Overall: 95%	Overall: 100% Men: 20% Women: 80%	Overall: 100%
Indicator 1.4: % of adolescents and young people with special needs who report that they receive the additional support they need to remain in school and achieve good learning outcomes (IQEO4.1.4)	Overall: 58.3% Male: 57.1% Female: 60%	Overall: 70% Male: 70% Female: 70%	Overall: 43.9% Male: 48.3% Female: 51.7%	Overall: 80% Male: 80% Female: 80%
Indicator 1.5: % of children, adolescents and young people who report experiencing, violence, discrimination or abuse from peers or staff in school within the last month (IQEO1.2.2)	Overall: 43% Boys: 45.22% Girls: 41.14%	Overall: 38% Boys: 39% Girls: 37%	Overall: 20.8% Boys: 14.3% Girls: 25.6%	Overall: 33% Boys: 33% Girls: 33%

IQEO4.1.4 fell short due to two key reasons. The main reason relates to cultural and societal norms where parents and guardians do not believe in inclusive education therefore keep their children with special needs from attending school. A study participant reported that most parents/caregivers keep their children away from school because they do not believe that they have the capacity to learn, but rather see their children with special needs as a bother to the rest of the children.⁶⁰⁴ Furthermore, parents and caregivers are concerned about the safety of their children with disabilities when they are away from home.⁶⁰⁵ The second reason is most schools lack the requisite infrastructure to support children with special needs. For example, accessibility ramps are not available in most schools, braille or alternative learning techniques are also not available making it difficult for these children to fully integrate with their peers and learn.⁶⁰⁶ People with disabilities also lack essential items like wheelchairs, or persons to guide them to school to enable them to access the schools.⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰⁴KII, Ward Education Development Officer, Tanzania

⁶⁰⁵ Comment from Plan International Tanzania Project Team

⁶⁰⁶ KII, Project Staff, Tanzania

⁶⁰⁷ Bridge Workshop, Tanzania

At the institutional level, all schools (100 per cent) reported having established child protection mechanisms. While LDI 3 reported fully achieving its target, teachers reported facing challenges reporting cases of abuse. The matrons and patrons use their own resources to report and follow up on abuse cases, which is financially draining on them. At times, they must remove the child from the unsafe environment and put them in different homes at their own costs and cater for their upkeep; a cost that they bear out of their own pocket. This affects their own ability to meet their needs and has been flagged as a deterrent to effectively supporting children facing abuse. In addition, social and cultural norms have made teachers fearful of engaging some community members for fear of losing their jobs and for their own personal security. Teachers reported that some of the perpetrators are linked to individuals with power and influence who can have them transferred to far locations away from their families or interdicted and lose their jobs. For this reason, they fear involving themselves in some cases because the project does not provide any safeguards to ensure their safety, well-being and jobs are assured.⁶⁰⁸

During the Bridge Workshop, participants reported that LDI 3 (% of schools with established child protection mechanisms/structures) was not well-defined to report on progress made towards achievement of functional protection mechanisms. Participants reported that while all schools had set up child protection structures, they were not being used effectively. For example, some suggestion boxes were placed in unfriendly locations such as near the head teachers' office which made some children fear using them, while others were installed high up on the wall which was out of reach for some children. Some suggestion boxes were also opened after two weeks, contrary to the recommended frequency of opening and reviewing the comments. In some instances, it took longer for the patron and matrons to report any cases identified through the suggestion boxes, putting vulnerable children at more risk of harm.⁶⁰⁹ Such instances demonstrate that while the target against the indicator was achieved, the effectiveness of the activity needs to be investigated further.



Figure 2: Suggestion box mounted in one of the schools visited during the survey

While IQEO1.2.2 achieved its midline target, several gaps were identified that continue to expose children to discrimination, abuse and violence within the school. Participants of the Bridge workshop also identified teachers as perpetrators of violence in schools. Participants mentioned that caning of students is used as a form of positive behaviour reinforcement across all schools in the region, a habit that has been practised for a long time. While the headteachers and matrons were involved directly in

⁶⁰⁸ Field observation notes. Mwanza. November 2024.

⁶⁰⁹ Bridge Workshop, Tanzania

project activities, most of the teaching staff were periodically invited to capacity building sessions. Despite attending the capacity building sessions, teachers continue to practice caning, which indicates that more needs to be done to capacitate teachers to practise positive forms of positive behaviour reinforcement and shun away from this level of violence which exposes children to physical and psychological harm.⁶¹⁰ Findings from the midline study also highlight that CAY face challenges accessing a safe and inclusive environment in school. The midline report outlines challenges such as lack of sufficient infrastructure like classrooms and teaching materials to meet the student population needs, low numbers of teachers to support learning in schools and lack of disability friendly infrastructure to enable students with disability to access the classrooms and other resources. The report also highlighted that some teachers are still using outdated teaching methods, as access and capacity building on the new curriculum is still a challenge and high mobility of teachers.⁶¹¹

Teachers also reported that due to stigma and victimisation, some children fear speaking up about abuse cases. In some cases observed in Nyamagana district, a student who reported a case of abuse was victimised for breaking the family setup and creating financial hurdles that affect their siblings. The perpetrator of the abuse was the father, who was the sole breadwinner of the household. When the case was reported, the husband was arrested, leaving the wife and the remaining household members without a source of income or livelihoods to make ends meet. The situation was made worse when the wife sided with the arrested husband, making the home unsuitable for the child to live in. In addition, the incident was the talk of the village, with many people reporting how the child's actions ruined that family.⁶¹²

Result 2: Young people, especially young women, with no or limited employability skills (15-24 years) build on and develop market-driven skills to pursue decent work opportunities, wage employment, or self-employment.

Out of the four indicators in Result 2, two indicators were measured at the mid-term point (SOYO1.1.1 and SOYO1.1.2), of which one met the mid-term target (SOYO1.1.1) and one did not (SOYO1.1.2). Two indicators were not measured (SOYO1.3.1 and SOYO1.3.2). They were not measured as the corresponding activities had not yet been completed.

Table 39: Indicator achievement for Tanzania Result 2

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
Indicator 2.1. % of young people who report at the end of the training feeling confident about their life skills (SOYO1.1.1)	Overall: 0% Male: 0% Female: 0%	Overall: 50% Male: 50% Female: 50%	Overall: 61.1% Male: 59.5% Female: 62.7%	Overall: 75% Male: 75% Female: 75%
Indicator 2.2. % of young people who demonstrate at the end of the training entrepreneurship competencies (SOYO1.1.2)	Overall: 0% Men: 0% Women: 0%	Overall: 70% Men: 70% Women: 70%	Overall: 53% Men: 51.4% Women: 52.7%	Overall: 80% Men: 80% Women: 80%
Indicator 2.3. Degree to which young people trained within last 6 months have pursued starting their own business (SOYO1.3.1)	Overall: 0% Men: 0% Women: 0%	Overall: 30 % Men: 30% Women: 30%	N/A	Overall: 45% Men: 45% Women: 45%
Indicator 2.4. Degree to which young people trained within last 6 months have pursued waged employment (SOYO1.3.2)	Overall: 0% Male: 0% Female: 0%	Overall: 50% Male: 50% Female: 50%	N/A	Overall: 70% Male: 70% Female: 70%

⁶¹⁰ Bridge Workshop, Tanzania

⁶¹¹ PIT (2024). VEMA Project Midline Study Report. Plan International Tanzania

⁶¹² Field observation notes. Mwanza. November 2024.

Participants of FGDs and key informants reported that the partner organisation implementing this result called Social and Economic Development Initiatives of Tanzania (SEDI) successfully mobilised out of school youth in YSLA groups and trained them on entrepreneurship and supported them to build their financial resources to venture into businesses. In addition, they engaged the VLSA groups in life skills lessons which helped them navigate day to day life challenges as they work to address economic challenges they face.⁶¹³ Youth taking part in discussions also reported that engaging in YSLA activities have enabled them to be financially stable, learn about family planning, sanitation and menstrual health and learn new skills about how to navigate life's challenges and their rights in the community.⁶¹⁴

"R2: I have gain education to develop my business well without any problems.

R3: I have benefited from educational programs regarding gender education and development. In addition to that I have acquired knowledge about entrepreneurship and how to save.

R5: I have been able to open up intellectually, such as how to run my business, even online."

- **FGD with Male Youth 18-24 years old**

Although SOYO1.3.2 was not measured, two project staff interviewed reported that they have mobilised youth, undertaken skills mapping to identify the technical skills and vocational training sites where they can attend vocational training. The start of training sessions have been delayed for months due to logistical and planning challenges with VETA.⁶¹⁵ Two community level key informants reported that delays with starting off the vocational training sessions have led to youth being sceptical about Plan's intent, with some saying the organisation promised the training just to enrol them into the project but the training will not be happening.⁶¹⁶ It is expected that once vocational training starts, the indicator performance will improve.

Result 3: Families and communities are engaged to end violence against adolescents and young people (10-24) and to ensure that survivors of violence receive quality age and gender-responsive protection services.

All indicators across Result 3 were achieved, except for indicator 3.1 that slightly fell short of its midline target.

Table 40: Indicator achievement for Tanzania Result 3

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
Indicator 3.1. % of parents and caregivers who report using positive parenting practices (PROO2.1.1)	Overall: 87.1% Male: 82.7% Female: 89.1%	Overall: 90% Male: 90% Female: 90%	Overall: 87.3% Male: 83.3% Female: 89.4%	Overall: 95% Male: 95% Female: 95%
Indicator 3.2. % of adolescents and young people who report that they are confident to report a protection violation to a reporting structure (PROO1.4.1)	Overall: 69.6% Male: 66% Female: 72.9%	Overall: 75% Male: 75% Female: 75%	Overall: 95.7% Male: 98.3% Female: 93.8%	Overall: 80% Boys: 80% Girls: 80%
Indicator 3.3. % of social service workers who are confident in their ability to manage and respond to cases of violence against children	Overall: 88%	Overall: 92%	Overall: 100%	Overall: 96%

⁶¹³ KII, IP, Tanzania

⁶¹⁴ FGD, Female youth aged 18-24 years, Tanzania

⁶¹⁵ KII, Project Staff, Tanzania

⁶¹⁶ KII, CRP, Ilmela District

(VAC) and intimate partner violence (IPV) (PROO5.1.1).				
Indicator 3.4. Degree to which child protection mechanisms at government-level and other allied services effectively contribute to the child and family protection system as per their mandate (PROO5.6.1).	Overall: Low degree	Overall: Medium	Overall: Medium	Overall: Medium
Indicator 3.5: % of community members who report that they are confident to report a protection violation to a reporting structure (PROO3.2.1)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

730 parents and primary caregivers (243 male and 487 females) took part in various training and capacity building sessions facilitated by the project.⁶¹⁷ In two FGDs held with male and female parents and caregivers, participants reported they attended most of the parental meetings where various discussions were held touching on topics like improving parenting skills and supporting children's well-being. Through these sessions, they have learnt to stop using violence as a way of enforcing positive behaviour among their children. Instead, they work with their children to establish clear guidelines, set time limits for domestic and recreational activities and discuss with them how to be safe and protect themselves when walking around the community.⁶¹⁸

“Since the project started, there has been a notable change in how cases of violence are reported. Now, whenever an incident occurs, we immediately report it to the community leadership. This has become the standard practice, ensuring that the issue is addressed quickly and with the involvement of the appropriate authorities.” - Female Parent

Poverty is, however, still rampant in these communities, especially in Ilemela district where rural communities live within the lake region. Parents are often busy seeking income generation opportunities to enable them to provide food and other resources to the children. As a result, the majority of parents do not attend community meetings to learn about positive parenting practices, nor do they have time to ensure their children live in a safe environment.⁶¹⁹ The project however made deliberate efforts to engage with parents and strike a balance in scheduling so that project activities do not affect their livelihoods and socio-economic activities. This enabled the project staff to work with parents to capacitate and reinforce positive parenting practices while encouraging participation in activities.⁶²⁰ In addition, children have been taught their rights, responsibilities and the reporting mechanisms within the community, and community leaders have been proactive in supporting children to report incidences of abuse.⁶²¹

5.9.2. Assessment of progress on the AoGD

The AoGD selected for assessment in Tanzania was **Protection from Violence (PfV)**. This choice was driven by the project's strong emphasis and achievements on protection related activities.

⁶¹⁷ PIT (2024). VEMA Project Midline Study Report. Plan International Tanzania

⁶¹⁸ FGD, Parents, Nyamagana district

⁶¹⁹ KII, Police Gender Desk, Tanzania; KII, Ward Education Development Officer, Tanzania

⁶²⁰ KII, Project Staff, Mwanza

⁶²¹ KII, Project Staff, Mwanza

To what extent have the project models (SOYEE Life Skills, Digital Awareness and YSLA) applied and how do they contribute to the protection of violence in the region?

The Ilemela and Nyangamana districts in Mwanza are areas affected by **high poverty rates** and low literacy levels.⁶²² As mentioned earlier, parents have neglected their parenting roles and this has exposed CAY to violence.⁶²³ CAY in some instances have had to adopt negative coping mechanisms such as prostitution and child labour to fend for themselves, in the wake of parental neglect. Other parents opt to marry off their young children in anticipation of getting a payout through dowry.⁶²⁴ Traditional and cultural harmful practices such as FGM and child marriages further expose CAY to violence.⁶²⁵ In the initial consultations with project participants, it was highlighted that poverty at family level was a major cause of violence, especially violence against women and children.⁶²⁶

Through life skills, SRHR, YSLA and business training, the project has provided avenues for youth to earn dignified income, reducing vulnerabilities related to economic constraints. Through the same training, the project has also created awareness on the different forms of violence and strengthened awareness on the existing avenues through which abuse and violence can be reported and addressed. Girls have also been empowered to explore their economic potential, enabling them to earn dignified income and either leave situations that expose them to violence or avoid practising the aforementioned negative coping mechanisms.⁶²⁷ In addition, life skills training enabled the CAY to identify and address risks to violence, enabling them to be safe from violence.⁶²⁸

The intervention implemented by SEDIT also encompasses a GBV component which champions inclusive implementation of project activities. According to the study participant, SEDIT perceives that excluding one group may lead to violence. The respondent explained that empowering girls and young women without including boys and men will lead to power struggles at the household due to expected economic empowerment and increased rights awareness among the girls and young women. Empowering boys and men alone still leaves girls and young women vulnerable to neglect, abuse and violence, which further reinforces traditional norms, values and practices. This led to SEDIT advocating for inclusion of both boys and girls in the project, to both economically empower boys and girls, but also negotiate for economic inclusion of girls and young women. This will also ensure girls are economically empowered and free from violence. SEDIT has gender mentors within each YSLA group who ensures the safety of all members, including female youth. They create awareness among the community to ensure the adolescent girls and young women are safe to engage in economic activities without discrimination or being restricted by their parents or community members.⁶²⁹

How does the engagement of community leaders, gender desk officers and parents/caregivers contribute towards an enabling environment by changing harmful gender norms?

The involvement of key stakeholders has greatly contributed to providing an enabling environment that negated harmful gender norms. Key community leaders, religious leaders, Ministry of Education officials, VEO and WEO used their various platforms like community gatherings and religious meetings to address harmful practices. Community Resource Persons (CRPs) reported that they have been involved in training youth and CAY on the harmful effects of traditional gender norms and the economic opportunities most of them miss by abiding by traditional gender norms and values. For instance, CRPs

⁶²² Hebron, Fredrick. (2019). The Impact of Fishing Activities in Mwanza, A Case of Kigoto Area. Available at [Link](#).

⁶²³ KII, Police Gender Desk, Tanzania; KII, Ward Education Development Officer, Tanzania

⁶²⁴ University of Nottingham Rights Lab (2020). Protecting Child Domestic Workers in Tanzania: Evaluating the Scalability and Impact of the Drafting and Adoption of Local District Bylaws. Available at [Link](#)

⁶²⁵ KII, CRP, Ilemela district

⁶²⁶ TanzConsult Limited (2021). Conducting Initial consultations with beneficiaries for DGD 2022-2026 Program, Ilemela and Nyamagana, Mwanza Region, PIT

⁶²⁷ FGDs, Youth and Parents, Tanzania

⁶²⁸ FGD, Female CAY, Tanzania

⁶²⁹ KII, IP, Tanzania

noted that abiding by traditional gender roles and norms prevented men who had interest in cooking from starting up food businesses, as cooking is perceived to be a female profession. Girls and young women feared taking up careers in electrical installation, as it is perceived to be a male profession. Abiding by the traditional gender norms and values limited their ability to explore their areas of interest and create economic opportunities out of them. The police and health workers have also supported them in creating awareness on GBV and SRHR during community meetings.⁶³⁰

At school level, students take it in turns to share cleaning duties in the classroom. There are also reports of more female students taking on leadership roles in the school, including as class and school prefects, as well as leaders of school clubs and associations.

A key informant reported that health workers are not fully integrated into the project, which affects their ability to adequately respond to cases that need medical assistance like sexual and physical abuse. The same respondent reported that, while other stakeholders have worked well together, the referral pathway to medical assistance is not effective as other stakeholders such as community and local administrative leaders do not have direct communication channels with health facilities to seek emergency medical assistance, nor are health workers sensitised to provide youth friendly services to the CAY.⁶³¹

What can be strengthened to move forward?

The ratio between CRPs and groups they oversee is too high which limits the effectiveness of their supervisory role. This affects nascent YSLA and community groups who may need more support to set up group operations and learn how to manage their own affairs. To increase contact time between the groups and CRPPs, the project should recruit more to reduce the workload of the current team and offer more support to existing groups.⁶³²

Community awareness on harmful gender norms and cultural practices is still a challenge. Despite efforts to sensitise community members during “barazas” most parents and caregivers are usually engaged in economic activities therefore reaching them has been problematic. While progress has been made to reach parents and caregivers, the project needs to invest more resources in adapting behaviour change approaches to strengthen perception changes.

Poverty remains a constant factor that influences community behaviours. Most of the parental neglect, early marriages and incidents of GBV are associated with poverty or economic challenges and frustrations. While Result Area 2 focuses on livelihoods and economic empowerment, the participant reach for this intervention is limited as the project reached 1,407 young people to be included in the 49 YSLA groups created at the time of this assessment. Activities addressing economic empowerment, including vocational training, need to be rolled out to supplement the YSLA interventions and provide more opportunities for youth to generate income.⁶³³⁶³⁴

The target audience for GBV, and child marriages should include adults and the elderly. Now, these demographics are the key perpetrators. While the project has empowered CAY, some parents and caregivers forcefully marry off their young children and use culture and tradition as justification.⁶³⁵ To increase the effectiveness of the intervention, awareness and sensitisation efforts should lay emphasis on adults and the elderly as well.

⁶³⁰ KII, CRP, Ilemela district

⁶³¹ KII, Ward Education Development Officer, Tanzania

⁶³² KII, CRP, Ilemela district

⁶³³ KII, IP, Tanzania

⁶³⁴ TanzConsult Limited (2021). Conducting Initial consultations with beneficiaries for DGD 2022-2026 Program, Ilemela and Nyamagana, Mwanza Region, PIT

⁶³⁵ KII, CRP, Ilemela district

5.9.3. Assessment of the effectiveness of youth participation and leadership methods used

In what ways are CAY invited to participate in the design, planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project? To what extent is their participation meaningful?

CAY were involved in project planning and implementation through various participatory mechanisms. At the onset, they mobilised themselves into groups with the support of the project, chose their own leaders and representatives, including in-school CAY who nominated their own matrons and patrons. Across the project, they have been consulted on various activities like assessing their priority areas of need they feel the project should focus on and for out of school youth selecting the technical courses they are interested in and whether they prefer to learn them from an institution or a skilled and experienced technician. These opportunities, including feedback from learning and reflection meetings, have provided the participants with opportunities to contribute to the planning and implementation of project activities.⁶³⁶

How adapted are the feedback mechanisms to CAY in all their diversity? To what extent have they been used by them since the start of the project? What is the nature of the feedback received from the CAY? To what extent is it recorded? What is done with the feedback?

Several feedback mechanisms were highlighted to the evaluator:⁶³⁷

- Dialogue between project staff and participants involved in school-based interventions.
- Feedback from CAY through their patrons and matrons, head teachers and ward education development officers.
- Suggestion boxes placed in schools for CAY to share anonymous feedback.
- Regular surveys to understand the needs and priorities of CAY.
- Project staff monitoring visits and interactions with community and religious leaders.
- Quarterly project reviews.
- Reflection sessions to get feedback from CAY.⁶³⁸

The multiple forms of feedback mechanisms offered by the project and the fact that these mechanisms are tailored to the needs of the participants by placing them in accessible locations shows that the project is thinking and designing the mechanisms with the participant in mind. The current mechanisms are not without their challenges. A member of the project team highlighted only nine out of the 60 schools with Suggestion Boxes are following the correct process. Some boxes were reported as damaged or misused and teachers open them alone which is not the correct process. “While feedback mechanisms were introduced early in the programme, their effectiveness has been compromised by improper handling and misuse. A review of the process and stricter adherence to the rules could help improve the quality of feedback and the overall programme”.⁶³⁹

It was not clear whether CAY had fed into the design of mechanisms, and this would be a good point to reflect further on this to understand whether additional mechanisms or adaptations to the current

⁶³⁶ KII, Project Staff, Tanzania

⁶³⁷ KII, Project Staff, Tanzania

⁶³⁸ KII, IP, Tanzania

⁶³⁹ KII, Project Staff, Tanzania

mechanisms may be suggested by CAY. This process would also increase the CAY participation level in the overall design of the project.

What motivates CAY to take part in project activities? How can the project more efficiently attract CAY to take part in our project activities?

The majority of the in-school CAY are driven by their thirst for knowledge, learning new concepts and making decisions on issues that affect them. Engagement in project activities also helped them to connect to their peers and have a better relationship with them. Discussions and debates among their peers was also reported as a key motivator because they get to interact and speak freely among people of their own age.⁶⁴⁰⁶⁴¹ Taking part in leadership activities also motivates some CAY as they are able to find purpose to discuss the needs of their friends and find solutions to common challenges affecting them.

“R1: what motivated me to take part in this project was my desire to educate my fellow peers about violence .

R3: I have been able to increase my knowledge. The activity has helped me meet with other people such situation created connection to me with my fellow students

R5: I created good relationships with my fellow, the activity has created the chance to be respected by other students” - FGD with participants aged 10-14 years

In the four FGDs conducted with male and female youth, participants reported that they are primarily motivated by prospects of financial independence. Most youth recruited into the project do not have income sources to meet their daily needs and are struggling with multiple economic and social challenges.⁶⁴² They are motivated by the business development training, life skills training, entrepreneurship, financial literacy training, and other activities that will help them mobilise resources to start businesses, learn how to effectively manage their businesses and understand the formal and legal requirements to ensure their businesses are compliant with local and national government regulations.⁶⁴³⁶⁴⁴

“R1: Am interested in Entrepreneurship as it reduces economic dependence among youth, and it keeps them busy which helps them to stay away from bad influence from bad peer pressure groups.” - FGD with female participants aged 18–24 years

“R1: What pushed me to join this project is that there are various trainings, such as business training, entrepreneurship and digital business

R5: What motivated me to join this project is business education. They also teach how to manage money well and how to save.” FGD with male participants aged 18–24 years

How and to what extent have the youth empowerment approaches or methodologies contributed to the advocacy power, autonomy and sustainability of youth led organizations in the region/country?

Advocacy Power: Young people taking part in an FGD reported that project activities have helped them build their power and confidence to enable them to speak up on issues that affect them.⁶⁴⁵ Two project participants taking part in different FGDs reported that;

⁶⁴⁰ KII, Ward Education Development Officer, Tanzania

⁶⁴¹ FGD, Male and Female CAY, Tanzania

⁶⁴² FGD, Male CAY, Tanzania

⁶⁴³ KII, IP, Tanzania

⁶⁴⁴ FGD, Female CAY, Tanzania

⁶⁴⁵ FGD, Female CAY, Tanzania

“It has really helped me to build confidence and ability to give opinions on issues related to community development.” - FGD with female participants aged 18-24 years

Autonomy: Participants in three FGDs reported that participating in the project has enabled them to identify and find solutions to problems that affect them. Participants reported that based on the training they received on business skills, entrepreneurship and financial management, they are able to identify business opportunities and start businesses to generate income.⁶⁴⁶

“R2: I have gain education to develop my business well without any problems.

R3: I have benefited from educational programs regarding gender education and development. In addition to that, I have acquired knowledge about entrepreneurship and how to save.

R5: I have been able to open up intellectually, such as how to run my business, even online.”
- FGD with young men aged 18–24 years.

Sustainability of youth organisations: Young people have been mobilised into YSLA groups that both serve as contact points for project implementation activities and capacity building sessions. The youth have demonstrated both economic empowerment and a dynamic shift in perception away from harmful cultural practices and gender norms across the three FGDs conducted with them. These practices are expected to continue as the youth see value in continuing to participate in group activities and will continue to support each other. In addition, some youths have reported planning to incorporate more members into their groups, which will increase the project’s reach indirectly.⁶⁴⁷

How can we improve the way we do youth-led advocacy (campaigning)? How can we be more inclusive in the recruitment of youngsters?

Male youth taking part in an FGD reported that the project should involve more young people in the planning process to ensure the project activities are relevant to the needs of young people.⁶⁴⁸ Other participants proposed that the project should have exchange workshops between groups to enhance peer learning. Having young people learn from each other’s experiences will strengthen the effectiveness of the interventions, and their resolve to take up more roles in advocating for what matters most to them.⁶⁴⁹

“In order to encourage cooperation and exchange of ideas among various youth, the project should also organize networking events for youth.” - FGD with male participants aged 18-35 years

FGD participants also reported that having young people speak to their peers about their experiences with the project will also support inclusion and recruitment of more young people in the project. In addition, participants in two FGDs reported that some young people are not able to participate due to resistance from their parents and guardians. The young people recommended that during recruitment, community and religious leaders should be involved in advocating for participation and inclusion of young people among parents and guardians. This will help parents and guardians understand the importance and value add of project activities, especially when it comes from community figures they respect and look up to.⁶⁵⁰⁶⁵¹

The project does not have a special needs expert in the team to cater for recruitment or programmatic needs of people with disabilities. Having a designated member of staff, an independent consultant,

⁶⁴⁶ FGD, Female CAY, Tanzania

⁶⁴⁷ FGD, Male CAY, Tanzania

⁶⁴⁸ FGD, Male CAY, Tanzania

⁶⁴⁹ FGD, Male CAY, Tanzania

⁶⁵⁰ FGD, Female CAY, Tanzania

⁶⁵¹ FGD, Male CAY, Tanzania

working with government staff or other organisations who are adept at working with people with disability will support the project in ensuring inclusion of people living with disability in project activities. This will ensure specific needs of people with disability are included in project design and implementation, including cost-effective measures to ensure inclusivity of activities. Having people with disabilities leading some project activities will also increase confidence in those who shy away from taking part in project activities.⁶⁵²

Youth will be more attracted to social activities tailored towards them. In addition to the project activities, social activities such as road shows where a moving truck is used to showcase project activities and create awareness across the community, sporting tournaments and festivals/exhibitions are known to attract youthful audiences. Such events can be used to attract and recruit more youth while creating awareness about the project.⁶⁵³

5.9.4. Progress of the gender transformative ambition of the programme

This section analyses the gender transformative ambition of the project triangulating data collected during the KIIs, FGDs, Bridge Workshop, analysis provided in the **GTM assessment** conducted at design and implementation phases.⁶⁵⁴ The section is presented along the six elements of change in the PI GTM Guidance. Insights from the action plan developed during the Bridge Workshop are also shared across the Recommendations chapter.

Gender norms

The project has medium potential in addressing discriminatory gender norms in the communities and schools the project was implemented in. The project has dialogue sessions with various community stakeholders to address harmful gender norms in the community. Among CAY, there has been a change in perceptions of professions deemed to be for men and women. For example, technical training courses in electrical installation were deemed to be male dominated but these have since seen women apply to join the course. Plumbing, another male dominated field, has recorded more females subscribing to the training course than males. Men on the other hand have subscribed to cooking courses to enable them open restaurants, a previously women dominated economic activity. A study participant also reported that some men have expressed interest in learning about beauty products to enable them to open a beauty shop.⁶⁵⁵

In schools, leadership positions that were often thought to be for male students have now had female students express interest in them, and some have been selected as leaders. More female students have been reported to be taking up leadership roles like classroom and school prefects as well as taking up leadership roles in school-based clubs and associations.⁶⁵⁶ A study participant also reported that girls are more proactive and share their opinions during discussions and debates, sharing controversial opinions without fear of attracting a negative reaction or response from boys in the group.⁶⁵⁷

Gender norms are, however, still influenced by harmful traditional and cultural practices among adults and elderly people. Those within their care still hold typical gender stereotypes that dictate the role of men and women in society. While the project has made strides to negate these stereotypes among participants and at community level, a significant proportion of parents/caregivers are still not exposed to this messaging in the community therefore they tend to reinforce traditional stereotypical gender roles

⁶⁵² KII, Project Staff, Tanzania

⁶⁵³ KII, Ward Education Development Officer, Tanzania

⁶⁵⁴ Gender Transformative Marker (GTM) assessment conducted at design and implementation phases (n.d.)

⁶⁵⁵ KII, IP, Tanzania

⁶⁵⁶ KII, Ward Education Development Officer, Tanzania

⁶⁵⁷ KII, Ward Education Development Officer, Tanzania

within the household. While several community stakeholders have been engaged in addressing this challenge at community level, the majority of parents and guardians are yet to be reached.⁶⁵⁸

Agency

The project has demonstrated high potential in improving the agency of girls and young women, building their confidence, knowledge and consciousness on issues that affect them. The project worked with mentors, patrons, matrons and junior council members to address knowledge gaps in protection and safeguarding of girls and young women, build their capacity to identify protection risks and empower them to feel confident and speak up on issues that affect them. Girls and young women now engage in conversations with their peers and leaders and speak out confidently about retrogressive norms and practices.⁶⁵⁹ They have also been empowered to understand their areas of interest, strengths and weaknesses and how to explore and exploit various economic opportunities available to them.⁶⁶⁰ There has been a significant change in perceptions towards what roles men and women play in the family both at decision making roles and income generation. This is also demonstrated by young women who have taken the lead to economically empower themselves and participate in decision making within the household.⁶⁶¹

Working with men and boys

The project demonstrated high potential in promoting gender equity, changing power dynamics and promoting inclusivity of both men and women in leadership and other activities. The project has incorporated boys and men in several activities to ensure they support and negotiate for girls and young women inclusion. In leadership roles in the junior councils and mixed gender YSLAs, boys and men offer equal opportunities to girls and young women to take part in activities, including leadership roles. In school, both boys and girls equally participate in cleaning classrooms and other tasks assigned without discrimination. At home, the same takes place where boys and girls jointly participate in domestic duties and responsibilities without defining the domestic duties along gender lines.

Condition and position

The project demonstrated high potential in improving equality of the conditions of CAY in families and communities and the position of girls and women. The project team has worked with CRPs and other community stakeholders to empower girls and young women through training and skills development. Girls and young women are now taking leadership positions and supporting their own peers to impact knowledge and empower them. Young women have also engaged in various types of businesses through the project and are empowered to run these businesses having gained knowledge on business management, financial literacy, entrepreneurship and policies and laws governing operating businesses.^{662,663} According to findings from the quantitative midline study, 70.8 per cent of young men and 59.2 per cent of young women who attended financial literacy training managed to establish their own businesses.⁶⁶⁴ The project team have made the training activities inclusive to all young women by scheduling the training to be sensitive to other roles they had and providing a conducive environment where those with childcare responsibilities could attend training with their children.⁶⁶⁵

⁶⁵⁸ KII, Project Staff, Tanzania

⁶⁵⁹ FGD, Female CAY, Tanzania

⁶⁶⁰ KII, IP, Tanzania

⁶⁶¹ KII, Project Staff, Tanzania

⁶⁶² Bridge Workshop, Tanzania

⁶⁶³ FGD, Female CAY, Tanzania

⁶⁶⁴ PIT (2024). VEMA Project Midline Study Report. Plan International Tanzania

⁶⁶⁵ Bridge Workshop, Tanzania

Diversity

According to participants of the Bridge Workshop, the project demonstrated medium potential in addressing the different needs of CAY in all their diversity. The project made efforts in selection and inclusion of different community groups in project activities including youth, adolescents, in-school and out-of-school participants and people with disabilities. For example, 43.9 per cent of project participants in the YSLA intervention were people with disability. The project also supported men and women to join different professions and business ventures not predominant with their sex, increasing diversity in those sectors. However, the project failed to meet its target of inclusion of people with disabilities in different project activities. In addition, participants reported that underage school dropouts were not specifically targeted for inclusion during recruitment activities.⁶⁶⁶

Enabling environment

The project demonstrated medium potential in strengthening societal structures, systems and civil society to enable gender equality and inclusion, and to promote joint, aligned efforts for gender equality across the five stakeholder groups of individuals, community, civil society, service providers and policy makers. Young women with children reported that some of their peer's husbands have supported them through the training by looking after their children when they had to come in to attend training or YSLA meetings. The project also provided training to 120 teachers on inclusive and gender-responsive pedagogy. According to midline study, 100% of teachers who are observed were reported using learner-centred, gender-responsive, inclusive teaching approaches.⁶⁶⁷ However, the trained teachers have been facing government sanctioned transfers to other schools, which affects the effectiveness of this intervention.⁶⁶⁸ Men have also been involved in reporting cases of child abuse and calling out gender discriminatory practices in their community, ensuring that girls and young women feel free and encouraged to take part in any activity they deem appropriate, regardless of their sex. Girls and young women have also been engaging different stakeholders to account to ensure they uphold and provide opportunities for non-discriminatory and inclusive participation of girls and women in all activities⁶⁶⁹

5.9.5. Conclusions

Despite not meeting its midline evaluation targets for some of the indicators, the VEMA project is on course to achieve all indicators except for output indicator 1.4 (% of adolescents and young people with special needs who report that they receive the additional support they need to remain in school and achieve good learning outcomes (IQEO4.1.4)) which continues to be problematic to achieve. While the project continues to achieve milestones and demonstrate evidence of empowering CAY involved in the project, cultural and traditional practices along with gender norms continue to affect the overall outcome of project activities. Limited effort was made to understand the outcome of some of the result indicators like the effectiveness and user-friendliness of child protection structures and mechanisms at community level and referral pathways to address violence. Qualitative findings also indicated a gap in interventions targeting parents and caregivers, and integration of health workers that if addressed would significantly increase the effectiveness of interventions at school level, household level and within the communities they live in.

The VEMA project worked with multiple stakeholders and community leaders to implement interventions aimed at protecting CAY from violence. Among those in school and below the age of 18 years, awareness creation and sensitisation formed the basis of the intervention, along with creation of a referral pathway to report incidents. However, stigmatisation and victimisation of survivors who

⁶⁶⁶ Bridge Workshop, Tanzania

⁶⁶⁷ PIT (2024). VEMA Project Midline Study Report. Plan International Tanzania

⁶⁶⁸ KII, IP, Tanzania

⁶⁶⁹ FGD, Protection board, Tanzania

report incidents still exist due to low understanding of child rights at community level coupled with retrogressive cultural practices and gender norms. Among out of school youth, economic empowerment and life skills training proved to be effective in ensuring youth can make informed choices when faced with the risk of violence in their primary residences. At the community level, community leaders and youth peers also supported project participants in ensuring they were safe in the environments they lived in. However, active and consistent participation of female youth was affected by social activities such as marriage and early pregnancy, despite the project making effort to provide a youth and child-friendly learning environment for them.

Young people were actively involved in the implementation and management of project activities. While most activities had been pre-designed based on the needs assessment conducted, several opportunities were used to consult the young people on the proposed activities, implementation strategy to be used and what could be adapted to meet each group's needs. The CAY took part in the project in groups where they autonomously selected their group leaders and representatives who they felt would best represent their interests to the project implementation team. Diversity in age and gender amongst the selected leaders demonstrated the project's effectiveness in ensuring inclusivity and participation of all participants, ensuring equal representation of all genders in leadership. However, inclusion of participants living with disability remains problematic, as mentioned earlier.

While the project demonstrated effectiveness in addressing retrogressive gender norms among its participants, the wider community members are influenced by cultural and traditional definitions of the roles of men and women in society. Participants who have gone through project activities demonstrated confidence and sufficient knowledge on their rights and can speak up and defend their perspectives when discussing issues that affect them. Men and boys taking part in the project have also been supportive of the girls and young women, encouraging them to take leadership roles. In addition, boys and men have also been sharing domestic roles equally with girls and women without discriminating roles along gender lines. Similarly, both young men and young women have selected vocational training courses that traditionally were not aligned to their genders as per societal norms. While the project aimed to ensure diversity by age, gender, education status and disability among its participants, incorporating persons with disability still proved to be a challenge. Among those that the project was able to reach, interventions were delivered in child-friendly and youth-friendly environments to ensure the participants were able to fully express themselves and participate in project activities without fear or feeling discriminated against.

5.10. Vietnam Analysis

Plan International Vietnam (PIV) implements the DGD Programme (**Economic and social empowerment for adolescents and youth**) in two provinces in Vietnam: Lai Chau and Quang Tri. The project was launched in September 2022 and will close in 2026. Originally, the project was designed to be implemented in Kon Tum and Quang Tri, however, challenges and delays in receiving government approval to implement in Kon Tum led to a change of location. Kon Tum was removed and implementation in Lai Chau was agreed where PIV had existing government approval to implement. Lai Chau was a good replacement location as it has a similar demographic, needs and challenges. Implementation in Lai Chau started in May 2024. This challenge accounts to significant delays to budget expenditure and indicator target achievement for the project as a whole. Therefore, the mid-term evaluation focused on assessing implementation in Quang Tri only.

The project provides education and training in the school environment for ethnic minority girls and boys and vocational skills training for young people. **PIV works with the Provincial Women's Union in each location to design and deliver activities.** Stakeholders at the local level include the Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, the Department of Education and Training (DOET), the Agricultural Development Center, and local government agencies. Stakeholders at the community level include the Commune People's Committee, Commune Youth Union and the Middle School Leadership. Data collection for this evaluation was carried out in Huong Hoa District, Quang Tri Province. This is the same location as the quantitative evaluation.⁶⁷⁰ More information on the outcomes and results can be found in the Context section, Annex 2: Country ToC, and Project Overview Table 1.

5.10.1. Progress against logframe targets

This section integrates qualitative and quantitative data collected during the mid-term evaluation to describe the project's progress and challenges against the mid-term logframe targets. Data from the quantitative study were used during KIIs and the Bridge Workshop to identify specific gaps and challenges in achieving the project targets and explore qualitative reasons for these. The project logframe is also annexed to this report.

Outcome: Adolescent and young people, especially ethnic minority adolescent girls and young women (11-24) are economically and socially empowered to learn and thrive in a protective environment and live free from violence including in school and professional environment

The project has five outcome level indicators. Of which four indicators were measured at mid-term. PROI1.1.3 was not measured at mid-term as there was a lack of available data. One indicator (SOYI1.1.2) showed a good level of progress and overachieved compared to its target. The other three indicators were not met. The following analysis explores the possible reasons for this level of achievement.

Table 41: Indicator achievement for Vietnam Outcome

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
% of young people in wage employment within 6 months after training (SOYI1.1.1)	Total: 61% Boys: 62% Girls: 60%	Total: 65% Boys: 65% Girls: 65%	Total: 8.3% Boys: 0% Girls: 11.1%	Total: 70% Boys: 70% Girls: 70%
% of young people with an own operational business within 6 months after training (SOYI1.1.2)	Total: 19% Boys: 9% Girls: 26%	Total: 60% Boys: 60% Girls: 60%	Total: 66.7% Boys: 66.7% Girls: 66.7%	Total: 75% Boys: 75% Girls: 75%

⁶⁷⁰ Mid-Term Evaluation Report in Quang Tri DGD Program 2022-2026, T&C Consulting, 2024

% of adolescents and young people who lead initiatives with a potential for gender equality and/or who are active members of such initiatives in their communities (LDI 1)	Total: 0% Boys: 0% Girls: 0%	Total: 40% Boys: 40% Girls: 40%	Total: 16.7% Boys: 23.08% Girls: 11.8%	Total: 60% Boys: 60% Girls: 60%
% of community members who promote social norms to provide a safe environment for adolescent girls and young women (LDI 2)	Total: 9% Boys: 7% Girls: 12%	Total: 35% Men: 35% Women: 35%	Total: 29.9% Boys: 25.8% Girls: 33.9%	Total: 55% Boys: 55% Girls: 55%
% of reported cases of violence against CAY that receive appropriate and timely services (PROI1.1.3)	Total: 100%	Total: 50%	N/A	Total: 65%

The project has experienced delays in implementation and has not yet achieved the SOYI1.1.1 indicator. Currently, only 12 ethnic minority young people have received vocational training, of whom only one has secured employment with a stable income. The remaining trainees have created self-employment opportunities within their families. **This equates to 8.3 per cent against a target of 65 per cent.**⁶⁷¹ The delays in conducting vocational training courses were primarily due to the extensive time required for assessing needs and identifying suitable training partners. Given the project's mountainous location, identifying appropriate vocations that meet the criteria of securing employment and income after training posed significant challenges, necessitating a lengthy needs assessment process. Additionally, the absence of high-quality vocational training institutions in the local area, coupled with the reluctance of ethnic minority young people to study far from home, further contributed to the delays.⁶⁷² This insight was triangulated by discussions during KIIs. The project team experienced difficulties with selecting a partner and suitable training venue. In 2024, this issue was resolved and a vocational training coordination unit, REACH⁶⁷³, was identified and is now organizing training in Huong Hoa⁶⁷⁴. This approach meets dual objectives: organizing training courses in the local area and partnering with a high-quality training provider. With this solution, the project is optimistic about achieving its targets by the end of the implementation period.

Conversely, the project has overachieved in terms of **young people with their own operational business within 6 months after training (SOYI1.1.2)**. This shows that when the training takes place young people are interested, have the skills and are motivated to engage in IGAs but that starting their own business is more appropriate for them given the geographical and social context, especially for young women.

With regard to the two LDI indicators, the percentage of adolescents and young people who lead initiatives with a potential for gender equality and/or who are active members of such initiatives in their communities, and the percentage of community members who promote social norms to provide a safe environment for adolescent girls and young women, the project did not meet its mid-term targets. The project achieved only 41 per cent of the target for the percent of adolescents and young people who lead initiatives. There was a large difference in the achievement rate for girls and boys. Only 11.8 per cent of girls compared to 23.08 per cent of boys led or were active members of these initiatives. This points to the difference in confidence between girls and boys and a need to focus more efforts in the second half of the programme on promoting confidence of girls to lead these initiatives. The opposite gender trend was seen for the percentage of community members who promote social norms to provide a safe environment for adolescent girls and young women. For this indicator, the quantitative survey found that more female community members (33.9 per cent) promote positive social norms compared to male community members (25.8 per cent). This finding mirrors social norms

⁶⁷¹ Mid-Term Evaluation Report in Quang Tri DGD Program 2022-2026, T&C Consulting, 2024, p23

⁶⁷² Bridge Workshop, Vietnam

⁶⁷³ REACH for your future, Available at: [Link](#)

⁶⁷⁴ KII 7, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

and attitudes and points to a greater focus needed on engaging men and boys to change attitudes and behaviours and take action in the second half of the project.

Result 1: Ethnic minority girls and boys aged 11-18 benefit from an enabling educational environment and are empowered to make positive choices in a gender equal and protective school environment

The project has four result level indicators under Result Area 1. All indicators were met, including three indicators that showed vast over achievements.

Table 42: Indicator achievement for Vietnam Result 1

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term Target
% of adolescents who report at the end of the training feeling confident about their life skills (SOYO1.1.1)	Total: 25% Boys: 23% Girls: 27%	Total: 35% Boys: 35% Girls: 35%	Total: 100% Boys: 100% Girls: 100%	Total: 60% Boys: 60% Girls: 60%
% of school (as community-based child and family protection mechanisms) which meet minimum quality standards (PROO3.3.1)	23%	40%	100%	60%
Degree to which schools and learning centers are implementing gender-responsive and inclusive policies at the time of measurement (IQEO6.5.1)	45%	55%	100%	75%
% of adolescents who report feeling supported, included and encouraged by their fellow students in their learning spaces (IQEO1.2.1)	Total: 97.1% Boys: 99% Girls: 96%	Total: 97% Boys: 97% Girls: 97%	Total: 98.8% Boys: 100% Girls: 97.9%	Total: 97% Boys: 97% Girls: 97%

The project has exceeded the SOYO1.1.1 indicator target regarding improving confidence and life skills among young people. 100 per cent of young people reported improved confidence and skills compared to a target of 35 per cent. Training activities on soft skills such as presentation, communication, teamwork, knowledge of gender equality, and prevention of gender-based violence have enhanced youths' confidence in expressing their opinions to adults (teachers, local leaders, or parents) during communication or dialogue activities. Notably, COC Club members have gained confidence in planning their group activities and independently facilitating communication sessions on preventing early marriage and school violence for other students at schools and during dialogues.⁶⁷⁵ This was triangulated by the KIIs. One project staff member said: "They develop their own scripts and manage communication activities. When implementing communication activities in the community, the Women's Union invites COC members to participate and selects some of their drawings on the topics of child marriage and preventing school violence to use in communication activities."⁶⁷⁶ A gap remains, however, as many students in COC clubs are still not confident in facilitating communication activities. Given that these students are from ethnic minority groups, they need additional opportunities to practice their skills to confidently express their opinions.⁶⁷⁷ Moving forwards, the target should be increased and developed further to understand how new or improved skills were used.

The project has partially achieved the PROO3.3.1 indicator on the percentage of schools meeting the minimum quality standards set by the Child Protection Committee. At the project communes, the commune-level Child Protection Committees have been established by the local government leaders and relevant specialized agencies, such as schools, commune health stations, women's unions, youth unions, and the local police. The project has conducted activities to enhance the knowledge and skills of the committee members in child protection⁶⁷⁸. Yet members of the board requested further training in processing and handling cases to improve their practices.⁶⁷⁹ Additionally,

⁶⁷⁵ Bridge Workshop, Vietnam

⁶⁷⁶ KII 5, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

⁶⁷⁷ Bridge Workshop, Vietnam

⁶⁷⁸ KII 5, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

⁶⁷⁹ KII 4, Members of the Protection Board, Vietnam

the project has supported the Child Protection Committees in holding regular meetings to share information about the challenges and difficulties in child protection, as well as discussing solutions to address them. However, a remaining gap is the skill to identify issues in order to detect risks and available resources to carry out specific activities such as communication, counselling, and support for children in need of protection. In particular, there is a need to improve the skill of connecting resources to support child protection efforts.⁶⁸⁰ Further, it was noted by a KII participant that Commune-level Child Protection Committees are needed to connect victims/survivors to essential services.⁶⁸¹

The project has achieved the IQEO6.5.1 indicator on implementing gender-responsive policies.

Currently, five out of nine project schools in Quang Tri have adopted child protection policies and applied several measures to ensure gender accountability in their implementation. This is reflected in several aspects, such as ensuring the balanced participation of both boys and girls in all school activities. Children with disabilities are also encouraged to participate. Efforts have also been made to eliminate gender stereotypes regarding children's involvement in school activities. Topics related to gender equality have been integrated and addressed through school communication activities, such as campaigns against early marriage and GBV against children. The role of psychological counselling rooms has been emphasized in identifying and addressing cases of GBV within schools. "The Women's Union has provided equipment for nine psychological counselling rooms for students at nine project schools and has provided counselling support for students when they encounter problems, such as poor academic performance, doing too much housework and lack of time for study, provide training knowledge and skills for teachers and supporting COC clubs to conduct communication activities on preventing child marriage, GBV, violence prevention, and reproductive health care."⁶⁸² Special attention is given to groups of children at risk of dropping out, students from poor households or with absent parents, and ethnic minority children, ensuring they receive the necessary support and care.⁶⁸³

For the IQEO1.2.1 indicator regarding adolescents who report feeling supported, included, and encouraged by their fellow students in their learning spaces, the evaluation results indicate that students report receiving strong support from teachers and parents to participate in school activities.

In the process of developing and implementing the COC model, teachers ensure the participation of both girls and boys. They cooperate in carrying out COC Club activities, with no discrimination based on gender, gender characteristics, or gender expression. All the project schools consist of ethnic minority students, so they understand and support each other. All students are encouraged by their peers and teachers to become agents of change. They are motivated to engage in communication activities that raise awareness among their fellow students. An area for improvement, however, is creating more opportunities for COC Club members to participate in activities, helping them further build their confidence.⁶⁸⁴

Result 2: Ethnic minority young people, especially young women aged 18-24 have agency to pursue decent work opportunities of their choosing, whether wage employment or self-employed

The project has four result level indicators under Result Area 2. All indicators showed vast over achievements at mid-term.

Table 43: Indicator achievement for Vietnam Result 2

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term Target
------------	-----------------	-----------------	-----------------	-----------------

⁶⁸⁰ Bridge Workshop, Vietnam

⁶⁸¹ KII 7, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

⁶⁸² KII 8, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

⁶⁸³ Bridge Workshop, Vietnam

⁶⁸⁴ Bridge Workshop, Vietnam

% of young people who demonstrate entrepreneurship competencies at the end of the training (SOYO1.1.2)	Total: 64%, Boys: 58.3%, Girls: 69.2%	Total: 70% Boys: 70% Girls: 70%	Total: 100% Boys: 100% Girls: 100%	Total: 75% Boys: 75% Girls: 75%
Degree to which SOYEE training curricula and materials as well as practices are gender-responsive (SOYO6.1.1)	0%	70%	100% GOOD	80%
Degree to which training courses are accessible to young people, in particular young women (SOYO6.2.1)	0%	30%	100% GOOD	50%
% of young people who report being supported by their family to enrol in SOYEE trainings and to pursue wage or self-employment opportunities (SOYO2.1.1)	Total: 69.33% Boys: 78.6% Girls: 63.8%	Total: 75% Boys: 75% Girls: 75%	Total: 100% Boys: 100% Girls: 100%	Total: 80% Boys: 80% Girls: 80%

The project has vastly exceeded its 70 per cent target of young people who demonstrate entrepreneurship competencies at the end of training (SOYO1.1.2) at the end of training. This represents an increase from baseline of 41.7 per cent for boys and 30.8 per cent for girls. This result shows that the training course is fit for purpose and being implemented well. Measures have been taken to ensure the course is available and tailored to supporting both young men and young women as detailed further below. As noted by the quantitative survey, however, the sample size for this indicator was very low (only 11 people) and no participants from the entrepreneurship course were included in this result. Given the early stage of implementing the entrepreneurship course it is important to track this result to implement course adaptations quickly for the second half of the project.

The project has exceeded the SOYO6.1.1 and SOYO6.2.1 indicator targets related to ensuring gender accountability and age accessibility in vocational training implementation. The gender responsiveness of the curriculum achieved 100 per cent, while the target was 70 per cent. Several measures have been applied to promote gender accountability, including: integrating topics on gender equality and life skills into the vocational training curriculum; selecting both men and women participants, with priority given to women; and inviting both husbands and wives to participate if they are interested. A critical gap remains, however, in developing a set of criteria to evaluate gender accountability in vocational training materials and programmes. Subsequently, the curriculum and materials need to be comprehensively reviewed against these criteria. Rather than including standalone gender equality content in the training, the focus should be on reviewing the training materials, methods, and processes to effectively integrate gender considerations. This includes refining visuals, language, and narratives to avoid gender stereotypes in vocational orientation and training.⁶⁸⁵ These changes would ensure the project activities are rated as “fully gender responsive”. The project has also exceeded the target of 30 per cent accessible to young people by achieving a score of 100 per cent accessibility. Vocational training sessions have been implemented with participation from both males and females, with a higher priority given to women.⁶⁸⁶

100 per cent of all young men and women reported feeling supported by their family to enroll in training and pursue IGA opportunities (SOYO2.1.1). Analysis of this achievement is difficult given the small sample size used in the quantitative survey and the focus of the qualitative data collection on different stakeholder groups.

It should be noted that it is possible for end-term results for indicators SOYO1.1.2 and SOYO2.1.1 to be lower than mid-term results. This is due to the very small sample size and low implementation rate at mid-term. As the project delivers more courses in the second half of the project the achievement

⁶⁸⁵ Bridge Workshop, Vietnam

⁶⁸⁶ Bridge Workshop, Vietnam

rates may fluctuate. This should not be taken as a drop in quality of the course and support from families but rather a more accurate reflection of the course quality and family support levels.

Result 3: Ethnic minority adolescent girls and young women aged 11-18 thrive in an enabling and protective environment and live free from violence, at home and in their communities

The project has four result level indicators under Result Area 3. Three indicators were met, and one indicator was not met by a narrow margin. One indicator (LEAO3.1.1) was not measured at mid-term.

Table 44: Indicator achievement for Vietnam Result 3

Indicators	Baseline result	Mid-term target	Mid-term result	End-term target
% of adolescents and young people who demonstrate knowledge of child protection risks and behaviors (PROO1.1.1)	Total: 36.5% Boys: 35.3% Girls: 38%	Total: 66% Boys: 65% Girls: 68%	Total: 53.1% Boys: 55.3% Girls: 51.1%	Total: 76% Boys: 75% Girls: 78%
% of adolescents and young people who report that they are confident to report a protection violation to a reporting structure (PROO1.4.1)	Total: 89.0% Boys: 86.2% Girls: 92.0%	Total : 90% Male: 90% Female: 90%	Total : 94.4% Male: 94.7% Female: 94.1%	Total: 90% Male: 90% Female: 90%
% of parents and caregivers who report using positive parenting practices (PROO2.1.1)	Total: 51.8% Male: 48.8% Female: 54.1%	Total: 62% Male: 59% Female: 64%	Total: 89.5% Male: 96.6% Female: 83.3%	Total: 67% Male 64% Female: 69%
% of community members and leaders who report that they are satisfied that CBCPMs are gender-responsive, child friendly and supportive (PROO3.3.2)	Total: 83.6% Males: 81.1% Females: 86.0%	Total: 85.50% Males: 83% Females: 88%	Total: 88.60% Males: 87% Females: 90.2%	Total: 90% Males: 90% Females: 90%

The project has also partially achieved the PROO1.1.1 indicator regarding the percentage of children with knowledge and skills to prevent risks and engage in child protection behaviors. COC members from grades seven and eight have shown great confidence in conducting communication activities and sharing information with other students in the school. However, students in grade six who participate in the COC group still lack confidence, so there is a need to provide more opportunities for them to experience and practice their skills. Possible reasons for a lack of confidence could be that grade six students are younger and that they have not spent as much time in the clubs as those in grades seven and eight. In boarding schools, when students face challenges, they confidently approach teachers to discuss their issues.⁶⁸⁷

The project has achieved its target of percentage of adolescents and young people who report that they are confident to report a protection violation (PROO1.4.1). The quantitative survey found a small increase in the percentage of people who feel confident since the baseline (89 per cent) compared to 94.4 per cent at mid-term. The proportion of young men and young women is almost equal, showing no significant difference between the genders. This result shows that the project is on track to achieve its target for end-term.

For the PROO2.1.1 indicator, parents have been involved in parent clubs and have increased awareness, improved attitudes, and developed skills in childcare and education. “The project has integrated topics of raising awareness on gender equality and preventing gender-based violence and child marriage into regular meetings of the Parents' Club (established by another PIV Project). In Huong

⁶⁸⁷ Bridge Workshop, Vietnam

Hoa district, there are currently 31 parents' clubs and in Dak Rong district, there are 27 parents' clubs."⁶⁸⁸ Parents have gained knowledge on positive discipline and child protection. After receiving communication, they have applied these skills in their daily interactions, guiding their children on how to prevent the risks of violence and abuse. All parents support and create opportunities for their children to participate in the COC club.⁶⁸⁹

The project has also achieved its mid-term target for the percentage of community members and leaders who report that they are satisfied that CBCPMs are gender-responsive, child friendly and supportive (PROO3.3.2) with a modest over achievement of 88.6 per cent against a target of 85.5 per cent. There was no significant difference between the results for men and women reporting satisfaction. This result being on track is a positive reflection of the training provided by PIV to the Child Protection Board and school psychological counselling room. From the community members surveyed by the quantitative survey it is clear to see that these CBCPMs are providing multiple types of support that community members value: "56 per cent received counselling, advice, and visits; 47 per cent received assistance with paperwork; 39 per cent were referred to other services; and 17 per cent received treatment". Nonetheless, qualitative data from both the quantitative survey and this evaluation found that, of those included within FGDs and KIs, no participants reported using the services of the Child Protection Board as they did not observe any incidents worth reporting.

5.10.2. Assessment of progress on the AoGD

The AoGD selected for assessment in Vietnam was **Protection from Violence** (PfV). This choice was driven by the project's strong emphasis and achievements on protection related activities.

To what extent have the PI Child protection and SGBV project models been integrated in the project, at all levels?

Training on and dissemination of the **Child Protection Models** and policy is provided for all partners participating in the project including: Provincial Women's Union, Department of Education and Training and district and commune level agencies. When conducting communication sessions, there are instructions on regulations and methods for child protection including how to prevent risks of child abuse. In addition, when consulting with communes on activity plans, a review of safety risks for children is undertaken and consent from parents/caregivers is always obtained.⁶⁹⁰

The project has successfully utilized the **COC Clubs approach** to engage children meaningfully in identifying issues, discussing causes, and implementing solutions to address their concerns. Through this model, both boys and girls have improved their leadership skills. They have become active participants in communication activities, raising awareness among other students in the school. COC Club members have proactively identified issues, developed communication plans, and carried out activities to change the awareness of their peers. As one KI participant stated: "The leaders of the COC Club have been very bold in running communication activities and actively participating in school activities. They confidently participated in competitions on gender equality and prevention of school violence organized by the Department of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs, in which students of Huong Hoa won second prize and third prize."⁶⁹¹ PIV has provided GBV prevention materials to teachers in project communes to support the COC Club and other activities at the school level, for example, school psychology counselling rooms.⁶⁹² In the future, "PIV needs to guide partners to effectively implement regulations related to preventing school violence and GBV; support the integration

⁶⁸⁸ KI 5, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

⁶⁸⁹ Bridge Workshop, Vietnam

⁶⁹⁰ KI 5, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

⁶⁹¹ KI 3, DOET, Vietnam

⁶⁹² KI 5, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

of project activities and existing programmes of the Women's Union on topics such as preventing child marriage, consanguineous marriage and preventing gender-based violence.”⁶⁹³

The **child-centered approach** has been adopted by all schools when conducting activities to ensure the active participation of both boys and girls. Activities at the schools involve children in leadership roles, with teachers primarily supporting the children's initiatives. To maximize student participation, facilitators (core teachers) have been trained in techniques to engage children. This team then supports the COC Club children in building and carrying out communication activities at the schools. In addition, this approach is used when implementing the school counselling room activity. It is used for early identification and provision of support for bullying and SGBV. The approach is key to encouraging children participation and for service providers, such as teachers, school counsellors and members of the Child Protection Committees. More training and refresher training is needed for service providers to encourage children to take up these services on a more regular basis.

The project has also supported children's participation in the **District Children's Council model**. This model includes key child representatives, and these children are given opportunities to engage in dialogues with local leaders. “Children are given a voice on issues that concern them such as: substance abuse, cyberbullying; school violence and gender-based violence.”⁶⁹⁴ During these dialogues, they share their challenges and propose recommendations to local authorities. At the national level, they represent their peers at the National Children's Parliament, where they discuss issues affecting children with children from other provinces. This approach not only enhances the children's leadership skills but also creates a platform for actively involving children in decision-making processes that concern them.⁶⁹⁵

How does the Gender Responsive Parenting and Caregiving model (engagement of teachers and parents/caregivers) contribute towards an enabling environment by changing harmful gender norms?

The model of engaging parents and teachers in training sessions and awareness raising events have improved the enabling environment as teachers and parents are more likely to have open and equal discussions with CAY. Education on gender equality has also changed the beliefs and behaviours of some parents as stated in the parent FGDs, they are more likely to ask their children more questions, share information with them and respect each other within their families. A male respondent with the FGDs stated: “There is no longer any discrimination. Both sons and daughters are treated equally.”⁶⁹⁶

Parents are more aware of protection risks on the way to and from school. For example, they reported that now they remind their children not to walk home from school alone. They make sure their children return home on time and when a child goes out of the home “parents must supervise them and find out who they are playing with. Parents will regularly contact the teacher to check if the child has returned home and where they have gone.”⁶⁹⁷ Most of the activities engaging parents also have a residual impact on the wider community as, similar to the COC Club, parents share their new knowledge and skills with their peers through communication events. **This model is a very effective way of reaching a large audience and achieving greater impact.**

⁶⁹³ KII 5, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

⁶⁹⁴ KII 7, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

⁶⁹⁵ Bridge Workshop, Vietnam

⁶⁹⁶ FGD 13, Parents, Men, Vietnam

⁶⁹⁷ FGD 13, Parents, Men, Vietnam

5.10.3. Assessment of the effectiveness of youth participation and leadership methods used

An assessment of the effectiveness of youth participation and leadership was carried out to specifically understand whether participation is meaningful, what motivates young people to take part and what and how feedback mechanisms are used by the project.

In what ways are CAY invited to participate in the design, planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project? To what extent is their participation meaningful?

PIV and partners put a lot of effort into ensuring that CAY participates in different phases of the project. In the planning phases consultations are undertaken⁶⁹⁸ and “every year there are dialogues between parties to listen to the concerns of children and stakeholders”⁶⁹⁹ for example, “increasing children’s participation in the COC group when designing and implementing communication initiatives; organizing exchange activities to learn and share experiences about COC activities to create opportunities for children to share and contribute ideas.”⁷⁰⁰ During activities, adults always act as facilitators and CAY are leading the activities, for example, during COC Club meetings the CAY are responsible for leading the discussions, designing and implementing the communication activities on topics such as “the risks and forms of GBV they encounter and promote behavior of seeking support from their surroundings when they have concerns and worries”.⁷⁰¹ Furthermore, CAY have been leading dialogue with government bodies through the **People’s Council** and **National Children’s Parliament**. According to Richard Hart’s ladder of participation, CAY participation is at its highest step: **youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults**. There exists a strong partnership between the project and the CAY participants.

These sentiments were triangulated by KIIs and FGDs with CAY. For example, during COC Club communications sessions the **COC Club Head Girl takes on “the role of host and guide my peers in games and answering questions related to knowledge and communication content.”**⁷⁰² She also added “both myself and my peers feel braver and more confident since joining.”⁷⁰³ It should be noted that while some CAY reported feeling more confident as a result of taking part in the COC Club, others who had not been participating for a long in the clubs felt less confident. Therefore, an assumption can be made that confidence increased the longer CAY participated in the clubs.

What are the barriers to meaningful CAY participation in project activities and how can these be addressed?

There is a language barrier between the teachers and the members of the Vân Kiều ethnic minority community, of which most of the students come from. This issue affects the participation of CAY in project activities. This point was well illustrated by a girl KII participant: “They are not yet enough confidence to share their opinions at public. Communication sessions in the Vân Kiều language make key children like me feel more confident, but the participants (teachers) do not understand our language. When speaking in Vietnamese, we sometimes lack confidence. At school, we must speak in Vietnamese, but if the communication [activities] were done in Vân Kiều, it would be easier to understand and more effective for our peers.”⁷⁰⁴

⁶⁹⁸ KII 7, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

⁶⁹⁹ KII 5, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

⁷⁰⁰ KII 5, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

⁷⁰¹ KII 7, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

⁷⁰² KII 9, CAY, Vietnam

⁷⁰³ KII 9, CAY, Vietnam

⁷⁰⁴ KII 9, CAY, Vietnam

What motivates CAY to take part in project activities? How can the project attract CAY more efficiently to take part in project activities?

Overall, seeking the opinions of CAY and allowing them to lead activities and decide the topic of activities is what motivates CAY to take part in the project activities. Teachers stated that they have observed that asking the opinions of the CAY through consultation sessions and listening to their concerns and ideas so that activities reflect their interests and supporting CAY to design activities that are engaging for CAY such as drawing contests or quizzes is the best way to motivate them to take part.⁷⁰⁵ This finding was triangulated by CAY themselves. During both the KIIs and FGDs CAY of both genders stated that they were most motivated to take part in the activities to gain, and then share, knowledge in topics of interest to them (preventing GBV in schools and child marriage).⁷⁰⁶ One KII CAY stated that: “The signs are that my friends are excited to participate in club activities; they are more proactive and engaged in communication activities” of the COC Clubs.⁷⁰⁷

Parents and caregivers participating in the FGDs, actively encourage their children to take part in the project activities noting that they “come home with more love for their parents, open sharing with their siblings, and taking initiative in doing household chores”.⁷⁰⁸ They are also more active in the community and share the knowledge they gained from the Club activities.⁷⁰⁹ This shows the broader positive impact of the project activities and the knowledge gained through the activities. Both FGD parent groups stated that they provide encouragement and ask their children questions about how the activities went to show their interest and engagement in the activities.

When asked what else could be done to increase and support CAY participation, they suggested two areas for improvement:

- While the FGDs with both girls and boys suggested their parents are very supportive of their participation. One KII suggested that more awareness raising with parents would be helpful so that they understand and support participation in the activities.⁷¹⁰
- As mentioned above, it was highlighted in a KII and a FGD with girls that the COC Club members and their peers feel more confidence when communicating in the Vân Kiều language, therefore, they wished that some of the activities could be conducted in this language as well.⁷¹¹

What is the most significant intervention for promoting CAY participation and decision making to prevent and respond to GBV?

The most significant activity for promoting CAY participation and decision making is the COC Club which was mentioned by CAY, teachers and project staff. There are several reasons for this, but a clear one is the variety of CAY friendly activities that are geared towards increasing confidence in communication and presentations, and leading the organisation of the activities and managing the club themselves. A teacher mentioned that the COC Club has been especially significant for girls, who “have become more confident; have a better understanding of gender and age psychology and are confident in sharing their knowledge with others. When encountering problems, they are bold and confident in approaching and discussing with teachers.”⁷¹²

Furthermore, parents and caregivers noted positive changes in their children as a result of participating in the COC Clubs. For example, there is a noted improvement in communication among

⁷⁰⁵ KII 6, Teachers, Vietnam

⁷⁰⁶ KII 9, CAY, Vietnam, FGD 10, Boys, Vietnam, FGD 11, Girls, Vietnam

⁷⁰⁷ KII 9, CAY, Vietnam

⁷⁰⁸ FGD 12, Parents, Women, Vietnam

⁷⁰⁹ FGD 12, Parents, Women, Vietnam, FGD 13, Parents, Men, Vietnam

⁷¹⁰ KII 9, CAY, Vietnam

⁷¹¹ KII 9, CAY, Vietnam, FGD 11, Girls, Vietnam

⁷¹² KII 6, Teachers, Vietnam, FGD 2, Teachers, Vietnam

CAY, with boys becoming gentler in their interactions with girls, reflecting a shift towards respectful and empathetic relationships. The involvement in the COC Club has had a positive impact, as it has helped the children become more knowledgeable and open-minded, suggesting that such programs play a valuable role in promoting social and personal development.⁷¹³ They also noted the broader positive impact on their engagement with their husbands/wives. For example, parents noted increased communication and sharing with each other. They consult each other when making decisions. Husbands are more respectful of their wives and ask for their opinion when making decisions on purchases. Everyone in the family shares household chores and their sons and daughters work together more.⁷¹⁴ Overall, this approach by the parents, along with structured group activities, seems to support the children's holistic growth, fostering both academic motivation and respectful interpersonal behaviour.

What are the feedback methods for CAY to share their views?

The project has maintained and promoted several mechanisms for CAY to contribute their opinions and share their views including:

- **Organize annual dialogues with children** which provides an opportunity for children to express their opinions on issues of concern to them.⁷¹⁵
- **Establish and maintain regular meetings of the Plan Project Steering Committee** at the commune level where CAY opinions are indirectly reflected through project stakeholders.⁷¹⁶
- **Through facilitators** who are carefully selected and in direct contact with CAY so they understand their roles and responsibilities. Facilitators can reflect children's opinions and feedback to the project team.⁷¹⁷
- **Through Plan field staff:** project communes often have many different Plan project activities and have project staff in the field, so children and stakeholders can give feedback to PIV field staff.⁷¹⁸
- At the school level, CAY and teachers seem to have a positive relationship when it comes to sharing feedback. There is a **Suggestion (what I want to say) Box**, where students can anonymously share feedback, which is managed by teachers. The Suggestion Box does not receive many suggestions, however. Both CAY and teachers confirmed that confident students seem to share feedback directly with their teachers and school facilitators.⁷¹⁹ All of the CAY involved in this study stated that they have not provided any feedback about the project activities because they did not have anything to comment on, or had no feedback to give. While this can show that things are progressing well, the lack of both positive and negative feedback is a cause for more investigation. Possible explanations for the lack of feedback include: CAY are not aware of the type of feedback that would be helpful for the project team or they do not believe anything will happen if they were to provide feedback. For example, teachers noted that they lack skills “to work with and listen to children's thoughts to grasp their problems or concerns”⁷²⁰. Increased training on how to understand and interpret CAY concerns may encourage conversations and therefore increase the feedback provided through this avenue. This is an area of concern and may account for the lack of feedback received from students through teachers as conduits for feedback to the project.

⁷¹³ FGD 12, Parents, Women, Vietnam, FGD 13, Parents, Men, Vietnam

⁷¹⁴ FGD 12, Parents, Women, Vietnam, FGD 13, Parents, Men, Vietnam

⁷¹⁵ KII 5, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

⁷¹⁶ KII 5, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

⁷¹⁷ KII 5, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

⁷¹⁸ KII 5, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

⁷¹⁹ KII 9, CAY, Vietnam, KII 6, Teachers, Vietnam, FGD 11, Girls, Vietnam

⁷²⁰ KII 6, Teachers, Vietnam

There are additional, indirect, feedback mechanisms via the Women's Union and DOET including:

- **At the partner level, communication between the Women's Union at all levels and Plan has been established closely to enable regular information sharing and reporting on activity outcomes.** Both parties actively listen to challenges and difficulties encountered during implementation to discuss timely solutions. Information is updated and captured from the grassroots level through the field staff system. Additionally, project staff at all levels are part of a shared Zalo group where members can discuss and share all issues related to the project, including feedback from CAY.⁷²¹
- **DOET shares feedback with PIV through periodic reports to the Plan Project Management Board at the commune level.** DOET is notified of all activities coordinated and facilitated by PIV, so that everyone has the same information. PIV field staff have a close relationship with the DOET and regularly exchange information by phone about project activities. "Thanks to that, both sides grasp information promptly and effectively."⁷²²

How is the feedback recorded and used to adapt the project?

PIV field staff and local staff are preliminary responsible for gathering feedback from the various mechanisms and sharing that information throughout the project.⁷²³ This evaluation did not find a formal system of recording and tracking the implementation of feedback and the restitution to CAY. Closing the feedback loop is essential for encouraging further and more meaningful communication and feedback.

How are the feedback mechanisms adapted to CAY in all their diversity?

Great care and discussion were taken by PIV when considering the establishment of feedback mechanisms to ensure that they were appropriate for the audience to encourage them to share feedback. PIV discussed issues of creating multiple parallel and complex feedback mechanisms for CAY. A discussion was taken that the introduction of new feedback mechanisms would be too complex or confusing for CAY. Therefore, existing feedback mechanisms are utilised to minimise this impact.⁷²⁴

5.10.4. Progress of the gender transformative ambition of the programme

This section analyses the gender transformative ambition of the project triangulating data collected during the KIIs, FGDs, Bridge Workshop, analysis provided in the **GTM assessment** conducted at design and implementation phases⁷²⁵ and the **Analysis of Social and Gender Norms and How it Impacts on Ethnic Minority Adolescent Girls' Access to Education and TVET** conducted by PIV in June 2023⁷²⁶. The section is presented along the six elements of change in the PI GTM Guidance. Insights from the action plan developed during the Bridge Workshop are also shared across the Recommendations chapter.

Gender norms

In the most recent GTM, the project was rated as having high potential in this area.⁷²⁷ The project has made significant effort to address and eliminate some common gender stereotypes in the local community, such as the belief in son preference (valuing sons over daughters in the family); the idea

⁷²¹ KII 8, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

⁷²² KII 3, DOET, Vietnam

⁷²³ KII 5, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam, KII 7, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

⁷²⁴ KII 7, Project Team and IPs, Vietnam

⁷²⁵ Gender Transformative Marker (GTM) assessment conducted at design and implementation phases (n.d.)

⁷²⁶ Analysis of social and gender norms and how it impacts on ethnic minority adolescent girls' access to education and TVET (June 2023).

⁷²⁷ Gender Transformative Marker (GTM) assessment conducted at implementation phases (n.d.)

that girls don't need to pursue higher education; the notion that girls should focus on household work and stay close to home; and the view that girls shouldn't participate much in community activities.

Through community communication activities, regular parent club meetings, and COC Club communication efforts in schools, the project has raised awareness among parents and students about these stereotypes. The project has also taken concrete actions to challenge these biases, such as providing gender equality training for COC Club children and integrating topics like school violence, child marriage, and GBV prevention into the communication activities led by COC Clubs. These initiatives aim to foster a more inclusive and equitable mindset within the community. Evidence from the KIs and FGDs triangulates these findings as referenced above.

Agency

In the most recent GTM, the project was rated as having high potential in this area.⁷²⁸ The project has successfully empowered the leadership roles of COC Club members across the nine target communes. Each school has established and maintained one COC Boys and one COC Girls club, with a total of 180 boys and 180 girls participating in these clubs. Other activities which have contributed to improved agency of girls and boys include the District Children's Council and the mock National Children's Assembly. To help these children become agents of change, they have been trained to increase their knowledge and skills, and enabled to carry out communication activities within their schools and the communities where they live with authority. These efforts have not only enhanced the knowledge and skills of participating children but have also enabled them to become change agents who actively participate in identifying and addressing issues they face. Furthermore, they have gained the confidence to engage in dialogues with adults (teachers, parents, and local government officials) about issues that matter to them.⁷²⁹

Working with boys and men

In the most recent GTM, the project was rated as having medium potential in this area.⁷³⁰ It is important to include boys and men, as well as girls and women, when seeking to implement any activity to advance gender equality and prevent GBV. They are change agents and often gatekeepers in communities where PIV works. This is particularly important for this project because it seeks to create an enabling environment for CAY.

In all project activities, both boys and girls are ensured equal participation. Both boys and girls have been involved in carrying out communication activities within the community and the school on topics such as preventing GBV within schools. To ensure the active participation of both boys and girls in school activities, activities may be organized separately for boys and girl groups when necessary to prevent any dominance of opinions. Both boys and girls are given opportunities and supported to actively participate in the project's activities.

Furthermore, the project facilitates positive parenting clubs, which involve both female and male parents. From the FGD with male parents, male participants shared how they are changing their beliefs and attitudes to equal gender norms and positive masculinities. Now fathers and male caregivers are taking "the initiative to regularly drop off and pick up their child from school" and "the husband respects his wife and children more."⁷³¹

The project also takes into account the barriers that may hinder the participation of both genders in vocational training activities, making timely and appropriate adjustments to overcome these challenges drawing from the initial gender analysis.⁷³² This approach helps to ensure gender equality and equal opportunities for both boys and girls in all aspects of the project. More could be done however, to focus

⁷²⁸ Gender Transformative Marker (GTM) assessment conducted at implementation phases (n.d.)

⁷²⁹ Bridge Workshop, Vietnam

⁷³⁰ Gender Transformative Marker (GTM) assessment conducted at implementation phases (n.d.)

⁷³¹ FGD 13, Parents, Men, Vietnam

⁷³² Analysis of social and gender norms and how it impacts on ethnic minority adolescent girls' access to education and TVET (June 2023).

on positive masculinities, for example, within male parenting groups focus on specific actions men can take to promote responsive parenting or fatherhood responsiveness when taking care of their children. This would move beyond creating awareness.

Condition and position

In the most recent GTM, the project was rated as having high potential in this area.⁷³³ The project has made significant efforts to elevate the social position and role of children, especially girls, in decision-making processes related to children's issues. Children have had the opportunity to participate in events such as the District Child Council and dialogue sessions with adults (teachers, parents, and local leaders). Through these dialogues, children have been able to express their views and raise the issues they face, calling for timely responses and support.

The activities that mostly contribute to this area, TVET training and support, have been limited to date, therefore, it is difficult for the evaluation team to assess how transformative the project has been in this area. This will surely be a focus and area of transformation in the second half of the project now that a training partner has been identified.

Diversity

In the most recent GTM, the project was rated as having medium potential in this area.⁷³⁴ The project has paid special attention to vulnerable groups and the social barriers that hinder their participation, implementing measures to adjust activities accordingly. Among the groups given greater focus are: children from ethnic minority communities, children at risk of dropping out of school and CEFMU, children from low-income families, and children with disabilities. These groups have received extra attention by identifying the barriers and challenges that prevent their participation in school activities. The project has worked to overcome these obstacles, ensuring that these children are not left behind and are provided with equal opportunities to engage in the activities, helping to foster more inclusive participation in education and community efforts. Nonetheless, as the project team identified, more effort needs to be made to ensure the inclusion of members of the LGBTIQ+ community.⁷³⁵

Enabling environment

In the most recent GTM, the project was rated as having high potential in this area.⁷³⁶ The project has made initial efforts to create an environment conducive to student participation and protect students from GBV risks. Key initiatives discussed in the Bridge Workshop⁷³⁷ include:

- Maintaining the **school counseling room** to identify and address psychological issues early, particularly those leading to GBV. Teachers were trained in the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure the counseling room remained effective in supporting students.
- Strengthening the capacity of the **Children's Protection Committees** at the commune level. These efforts have enhanced the local community's ability to identify and address GBV issues effectively. The project provided training and skills to committee members, ensuring they could perform their child protection duties competently. This is an intersectoral coordination mechanism that ensures the participation of multiple stakeholders in effectively carrying out child protection work at the commune level. The project has made significant efforts to enhance the knowledge and skills of the committee members to ensure the effective implementation of child protection duties, particularly in safeguarding children from risks and preventing gender-based violence at the local level. The activities of the Commune Child Protection Committees are maintained regularly to share issues, discuss causes, and identify solutions to address child-related problems in the community in a timely manner. This ongoing collaboration helps strengthen the protection of children and supports the development of sustainable solutions for

⁷³³ Gender Transformative Marker (GTM) assessment conducted at implementation phases (n.d.)

⁷³⁴ Gender Transformative Marker (GTM) assessment conducted at implementation phases (n.d.)

⁷³⁵ KII 7, Project Staff, Vietnam; Bridge Workshop Vietnam

⁷³⁶ Gender Transformative Marker (GTM) assessment conducted at implementation phases (n.d.)

⁷³⁷ Bridge Workshop, Vietnam

their well-being.⁷³⁸ Importantly, this mechanism encourages cross-sector collaboration and shared responsibility among various stakeholders, ensuring effective child protection.

- **Implementing existing local policies.** By supporting the continued operation of school counseling services, the project helped ensure the effective implementation of national guidelines, such as Circular 31/2017/TT-BGDĐT on school counseling and Circular 33/2018/TT-BGDĐT on social work in schools. Furthermore, the COC Club intervention models and gender equality communication efforts contributed to the success of Component 8 of the project, which focuses on gender equality and critical issues for women and children, especially in ethnic minority areas, led by the Women's Union.

Other key activities which have had an impact on the environment include the training of schoolteachers, Parent Clubs and COC communication activities. Areas for further development activities related to TVET. Creating an enabling environment for young women to gain employment is essential to achieving the full potential of the project in this area.

5.10.5. Conclusions

Both the quantitative and qualitative evaluations find that the project is progressing well against its mid-term targets and is on course to achieve its outcomes and results by 2026. The findings show that considerable progress has been made on Results 1 and 3. CAY are meaningfully participating in project activities such as the COC Clubs and children's committees. These activities have shown improvements in self-esteem and confidence for boys and more so for girls. There were notable delays on Result 2, however, mainly due to a lack of understanding of what type of training CAY wish to receive and the practicalities of finding a training partner who can deliver training near the CAY homes. Now this challenge has been overcome and one training course has already been delivered, PIV can expect to see progress in this area in the next half of the project. Furthermore, some indicators that have been exceeded should be reviewed to increase the difficulty or to develop a deeper reflection on the achievement.

The project models on child protection, SGBV and engagement of parents/caregivers have worked efficiently and effectively. PIV has trained and disseminated information to partners to support them to undertake activities to address various protection needs and risks. It communicates well and has a strong relationship with stakeholders across the project including DOET which helps to ensure the models are being implemented well and adaptations can be made when needed. The COC Club model is particularly efficient as it reaches a large number of people through an amplification effect as CAY share their knowledge with their peers; and effective as CAY report increased levels of confidence gained by designing and delivering activities on topics of interest to them. Similarly, the model of engaging parents/caregivers in training and awareness raising activities has created a positive environment in the home and the community. Parents/caregivers also reported sharing their experiences and knowledge with their peers thus also having an amplified impact effect.

Regarding Results 1 and 3, project staff, partners, teachers, CAY and parents/caregivers all agreed that CAY participation was meaningful, and CAY were motivated by being in control of the activities. They were given several opportunities to feed into the design of activities and design the activities themselves. Indeed, this is the main reason for their motivation to participate in the project. One suggestion for the next half of the project included adding or delivering existing activities in the Vân Kiều language so that CAY from the Vân Kiều community would feel more confident when delivering the activities. While there are several feedback mechanisms in place, more work could be done at the school level, to define the feedback mechanisms and ensure the CAY understand what type of feedback would be helpful and provide training for teachers to receive feedback in a positive manner.

⁷³⁸ Bridge Workshop, Vietnam

The project team has done well to stay on track to achieving the gender transformative ambition of the project given the significant delays to implementation. Areas where the project has performed well include influencing discriminatory gender norms and expectations through flagship activities such as the COC Club and various children's committees. The project has also performed well in creating an enabling environment through Parent Clubs, providing training for schoolteachers and engagement of other stakeholders including local authorities. These areas of high performance should be replicated when expanding into the new project location. There are, however, areas for further development including diversity of project participants and working with boys and men. Priority activities have been laid out in the action plan, developed as part of the Bridge Workshop.

6. Recommendations

Recommendations have been presented by country and at the global level. They have been divided into priority recommendations and long-term recommendations. Priority recommendations are those which either need to be addressed quickly or would create an immediate increase in impact. Long-term recommendations are those which could be implemented over a longer period and would provide a smaller, but no less important, increase in impact for programme participants.

6.1. Global

Priority recommendations

Create communities of practice and facilitate exchange visits between project staff: This would benefit all countries within the DGD programme and unite approaches across countries. Potential themes for communities of practice could include: Feedback mechanisms, CBCPMs, SOYEE training approaches, and successful approaches to diversity inclusion and working with men and boys. The three French speaking countries and the two Spanish speaking countries greatly would benefit from sharing regional experiences including common problems, successes and challenges. Challenges could be brainstormed to develop creative and regionally appropriate solutions. Furthermore, Belgium could be further integrated with implementation in other countries to understand how student level exchange visits could be beneficial to each country. Vietnam is showing many areas of excellence which could be showcased for other countries to learn from.

Introduce a systematic programme and project review and adaptation process: the evaluators did not find evidence of a systematic review and adaptation process which is linked to project planning. While there were examples of project review, feedback integration and planning these systems were not standardised and complete across countries. There are several popular models used by different donors and NGOs ranging from the problem-driven iterative adaptation (PDIA) to the USAID Adaptive Management⁷³⁹ approach. These approaches employ similar cyclical processes linked to work planning cycles where challenges, lessons and feedback are systematically documented, and adaptations are subsequently made to the project to increase accountability and drive greater impact. Additional approaches and resources include:

- [PDIA Toolkit](#)
- [FCDO Programme Operating Framework](#): Section 5 Life Cycle
- DFAT: [What is adaptive management and how does it work?](#)
- ODI: [LearnAdapt: a synthesis of our work on adaptive programming with DFID/FCDO \(2017–2020\)](#)
- OPM: [MEL and adaptive programming: Experience from two multi-year programmes in international development](#)
- Abt Associates: [Implementing adaptive management: A front line effort Is there an emerging practice?](#)

Support projects to integrate better feedback collection, documentation and restitution mechanisms: by providing *How To* guidance, short training or briefing sessions on the importance of receiving, documenting, tracking and providing updates on how feedback has been acted upon. By ensuring each project has a functioning feedback mechanism in place, two potential outcomes could

⁷³⁹ USAID, 2028, Discussion Note: Adaptive Management. Available at: [Link](#)

happen: 1) participants will be more motivated to share feedback; and 2) the activities will be better targeted to the participants' needs.

Review the approach to seed capital and start-up kits as part of the SOYEE model: Two elements should be reviewed: 1 who receives seed capital and start-up kits and 2. how is the seed capital monitored?

- In order to avoid misunderstanding about who will receive capital and start-up kits the same resources should be given to all students who take the course. In order to agree on the amounts of seed capital a survey could be conducted with CAY on currently taking the courses to understand what they believe the capital and kits should cover. Seeking feedback on this matter would increase CAY participation in the design of the project.
- Thorough monitoring of the use of seed capital should take place including collecting “best practice” examples and case studies from CAY about how they have used the seed capital. Furthermore, alumni could be invited to talk to current students about the best way to use the seed capital. The creation of a support network for alumni may help to keep motivation strong and avoid misuse of seed capital.

Harmonise end-term evaluation tools: It was noted that before the mid-term studies took place in all countries, tools were prepared (in different languages) and shared so that all consultants would use the same approach. Baselines studies, however, took place before the start of the programme and some teams reported changes in project locations and participants between baseline and midline. Furthermore, some quantitative survey consultants did not properly follow the AoGD measurement specifications. Therefore, great attention should be made during the end-term evaluation to ensure this challenge is avoided in the future. It may be possible to train and embed a member of the CO project teams (or a member of another CO project team for enhanced objectivity) within end-term evaluation data collection teams to increase the participatory nature of the evaluation and to ensure standardisation across all countries. This approach will also serve as a learning opportunity for embedded CO staff. This approach will also ensure that the qualitative evaluation is used in the most effective way to measure real differences in achievement vs difference due to different measurement practices and tools.

Long-term recommendations

Increased focus on the integration of people living with disabilities: It was identified across multiple countries that more should be done to integrate and include people living with disabilities. This evaluation recommends two options to improve this area:

- Training for all project and partner staff on the Washington Group Short Set Questions which would raise the knowledge base about the different types of disabilities and the different accommodations that should be made to enable people living with disabilities to meaningfully participate in project activities.
- Partnerships with CSOs who work directly with people living with disabilities should be explored in cases where access to people living with disabilities seems to be an issue.

Sustainability and transition: This evaluation did not find project sustainability strategies at the programme or project levels. At the midpoint of the programme, it is advisable to start producing these strategies to ensure the sustainability of project outcomes and impact, as well as the financial sustainability of project offices and partner organisations. One area of focus is where the programme currently distributes seed capital and start-kits for IGAs. Consideration should be made on how to continue providing this support to students after the programme, for example, through VSLA approaches.

Greater collaboration and increased exchanges should take place between the participants of the Belgium project and the other countries. This would increase the elements of international solidarity across the programme exposing CAY to different cultures and experiences while engaging in similar projects. Benin can serve as an example for other countries that have only benefited from the first phase. After the exchange, greater efforts should be made to understand and track the impact of the exchange.

Improve project documentation: for key project documents provide standardised templates to ensure the same level of information is documented and retained across the programme. For example, a short project brief document should be available at the project and programme levels mapping activities, partners, and other key stakeholders across the programme. These documents could be shared with other projects (COs) under the DGD Programme to increase visibility and communication between country teams.

6.2. Belgium

Priority recommendations

Strategically define geographical focus of the project: While maintaining meaningful geographical coverage (across the country's linguistic regions, (semi-)rural and urban), consider a refocusing to enable mutually reinforcing activities. For example, work with local municipal authorities and raise awareness in school and youth organisations in the same locations, and target those for campaign events to capitalise on the enabling environment created and the CAY skills built.

Engage with Enabel on youth participation in its decision-making processes: Maintain discussions with Enabel to support their development of a Youth Engagement Circle or Youth Sounding Board. PIB has a strong opportunity here to contribute to structural youth engagement at policy level, benefiting from its reputation as an expert organisation on both youth participation and child protection and safeguarding, as well as Enabel's own calendar to set up a youth engagement mechanism (2025, still in exploration and consultation phase leaving room for influence).

Reactivate the group of (French-speaking) Educational Volunteers: Identify a clear focal point for engagement of Educational Volunteers on the French speaking side and reactivate the group. This may include refresher and new training and/or 'on the job' coaching sessions, as well as actual deployment. Create a community of practice among Educational Volunteers from both regions of the country. Develop a concrete action plan.

Recruit volunteers with more diverse backgrounds, especially male: Whilst reactivating Educational Volunteers groups, ensure a broader diversity of profiles to address pushbacks and difficult discussions on gender related topics. There is a stark need to increase the number of male volunteers; but attention should also be given to religious and ethnic diversity.

Provide CAY feedback on the impact of their engagement: When CAY have engaged in, mobilised for, provided input to campaigns and advocacy activities, ensure to feed back to them on what PIB and/or policy makers have done with their recommendations.

Carry out a vulnerable CAY protection risk assessment: Assess how participating in PIB advocacy and campaigning activities can affect and put at risk vulnerable CAY, disaggregated by vulnerability criteria.

Enhance engagement on social media: Enhance PIB engagement on social media, especially on TikTok which is CAY's preferred channel. To that effect, hire a social media manager (staff or consultant). Build PIB's capacity on leading online campaigns.

Organise boys only and girls only awareness raising sessions: To address (toxic) gender (power) dynamics, particularly when working with youths who have not chosen to participate in gender awareness raising sessions (e.g. mandatory in school setting), consider organising separate sessions for boys and girls. Make sure male animators (Educational Volunteers, teachers) facilitate the sessions with male adolescents. Consider a focus on positive masculinities.

Increase number of male YAP members and COC: Consider male only COC groups with male animators.

Long-term recommendations

Find effective entry points to engaging male participants: Identify topics for campaigns that speak to male participants as much as to female participants. Start gender discussions from a broader perspective like general well-being, harassment, non-violent communication, etc.

Partner with organisations specialised in youth and/or solidarity work: This may include arts groups to actively engage in campaigns, solidarity focused student groups, community-based youth work organisations like Kras, etc. This is with a two-fold purpose: mobilise more (diverse) youths, and better adapt activities to different groups' preferences (by age, interest, etc. this includes interactive and more practical activities for younger age groups or those with lower literacy, (in national languages) for example).

Strengthen work with vulnerable populations, through:

- **Collaborating with organisations working with young people in vulnerable situations.** In order to increase diversity in a safe and meaningful way, consult, collaborate and partner with organisations specialised on working with vulnerable/marginalised CAY to identify the most appropriate methodologies.
- **Training privileged youths as well as decision makers on soft skills to engage with marginalised / vulnerable groups.** Examples of soft skills that would be helpful include patience, flexibility, sensitive and inclusive communication and language skills. This includes investing the time needed to create positive group dynamics.

Strengthen Educational Volunteers training: Complement solid theoretical training of Educational Volunteers with increased 'on-the-job' training. Add psychological first aid and referral to the training package to equip them to respond to abuse and/or trauma that may be reported to them during awareness raising sessions.

Hold longer awareness raising sessions: Consider reviewing the awareness raising, Gender Schools and similar methodologies to fewer but longer (e.g. 1 full day sessions) rather than a large number of shorter sessions to allow more time to establish trust and rapport with participants.

Increase engagement with CAY from other DGD Programme countries: This could be done in several ways including:

- **Inviting CAY representatives from partner countries to co-define priorities for the next DGD programme.** Engage with CO and youths from DGD programme partner countries in the design and planning phases for the next DGD programme.
- **Inviting young leaders and activists from partner countries to key events in Belgium.** Continue to invite CAY from (DGD Programme) partner countries to meet and share their experiences and priorities with both Belgian youths and policy makers.
- **Replicating the Memorandum activity in other programme countries.** Benin CAY specifically have expressed a strong desire to see the youth participation experience they had in Belgium replicated in Benin in face of the upcoming 2026 elections.

Invite policy makers to meet CAY: Continue to invite high level decision makers to meet and exchange with CAY at interactive, lively, concrete advocacy and campaigning activities.

Better connect activities to leverage impact: For example, capitalise on Schools for Rights and Gender Schools to draft advocacy recommendations, participate in campaigns, etc.

Capitalise on existing CAY rights and participation structures: Engage with PKIO, Vlaamse Jeudraad, Forum des Jeunes to build synergies towards structural youth participation on international solidarity topics, in addition to national priorities.

Advocate with donors on the specific requirements of behaviour change programmes: Join collective advocacy around funding issues, specifically on funding behaviour change projects. More specifically, sensitise donors on how human resources intensive such programmes are, and advocate for such programmes to benefit from a higher eligible ratio of administration/human resources costs versus activity costs.

6.3. Bolivia

Priority recommendations

Develop and implement an anonymous and systematized feedback mechanism: The project currently lacks a structured mechanism for participants to provide anonymous feedback. To ensure a participant-centred approach, it is essential to develop and implement such a system as soon as possible. One option is to adopt the "buzón de sugerencias" (suggestion box) model, successfully applied by PIE and its implementing partner. This mechanism has been reported as effective by both participants and staff, offering a simple and reliable way to collect feedback while maintaining anonymity.

Conduct community engagement sessions to raise awareness about the role and importance of community protection services: Data reveals that protection mechanisms are not always respected or recognized as authoritative figures, particularly in La Paz. To address this issue, it is recommended to conduct community engagement sessions to raise awareness about the role and importance of protection services, including the work of local promoters. These sessions should involve influential community leaders, youth networks and formal protection authorities. During the session, PI, implementing partners and local mechanisms could prepare and present a clear visual mapping of existing protection mechanisms and how they work. To increase credibility, it would be good to have women working across these mechanisms presenting using concrete examples (in anonymous form) of cases reported and proceeded.

Implement reliable scheduling and communication mechanisms for activities: In light of participants' widespread highlighting of miscommunication, delays and rescheduling of activities, It is recommended that the project team implement a more structured and reliable communication system for activity scheduling. This could include providing participants with confirmed schedules at least one week in advance, with clear details on activity times, locations, and any changes. Additionally, a digital platform or messaging service could be utilized to send timely updates or reminders about any changes to the schedule, ensuring participants are well-informed and can plan accordingly. This would help alleviate frustration and support better planning around participants' other commitments.

Strengthen and expand intergenerational activities: participants highlighted the positive impact of having intergenerational activities involving themselves and their parents. It is therefore strongly suggested that these types of activities be replicated on a larger scale across all the communities.

Design and deliver activities targeting participants' parents: Project participants have expressed a desire for greater involvement of their parents in the project. To address this, the project could develop a parent engagement strategy, exploring the technical and life skills parents could benefit from. To ensure the activities are attractive, relevant and accessible, feedback could be gathered from parents during intergenerational events to determine their interests and availability, ensuring that the activities meet their needs and schedules.

Implement creative and inclusive campaigns in native languages: In the context of La Paz, this will help increase participation and engagement, expand strategic alliances with community leaders and local authorities to enhance local ownership and sustainability. Additionally, promote intergenerational spaces, such as family gatherings or joint projects, to challenge traditional norms and foster more sustainable cultural change.

Supporting entrepreneurs in identifying opportunities for product commercialization: Entrepreneurs involved in the project expressed a desire for more support in identifying opportunities to sell their products. To address this, PIB and the implementing partner could organize workshops focused on mapping local markets and business fairs. Budget permitting, the project could further support entrepreneurs by organizing visits to local fairs and providing materials to help them set up their stands, enhancing their visibility and sales potential.

Establish regular meetings with PIE coordination and implementation teams: One key finding from the evaluation is that strengths and challenges in the Bolivia and Ecuador projects are complementary. Although the contexts differ, coordination and implementing partners in both countries could greatly benefit from sharing best practices and lessons learned. For Bolivia, the work in Ecuador offers valuable insights into the implementation of an anonymous feedback mechanism, the active participation of adult volunteers and broader aspects related to the component of protection from violence.

Long-term recommendations

Consider updating the balance of girls targeted for self-employment and employment courses based on their stated preferences and the barriers that the current societal norms place on girls. This could be addressed by having short-term and long-term targets.

- **Short-term target** - would reflect what the girls are reporting that they feel self-employment is much easier for them due to expectations in the workplace and also the flexibility it offers so that they do not feel too pressured to deviate away from their current responsibilities and expectations outside of the workplace. This would mean targeting more girls for the self-employment courses over the employment courses in the short-term.
- **Long-term target** - changing societal expectations and gender roles and responsibilities is a long-term process. It is perhaps unrealistic to think that you might be able to target the same numbers of girls and boys for the employment course due to the current existence of these societal expectations and gender roles and responsibilities. It may be achievable to increase the target for girls' inclusion in the employment stream over time.

Organise in-person experience exchange with Female entrepreneurs in Ecuador: Leveraging on the enthusiasm that emerged among both staff and participants about the online meeting between participant entrepreneurs in Ecuador and Bolivia, the two COs in Bolivia and Ecuador could organise an in-person exchange in one of the two locations. These exchanges would provide inspiration, foster collaboration, and enable participants to learn from diverse success stories.

Strengthening and expanding partnerships for trainee contracts: To tackle contextual challenges in the labour market, it is recommended to strengthen existing partnerships and establish new ones with potential employers who are directly linked to the skills training offered to participants. Building on

Fundación Trabajo Empresa's experience and network, these partnerships could include sectors such as phone repairs, motorcycle repairs, travel agencies, and bakeries, ensuring that training aligns with real-world employment opportunities for participants.

Establish mobile protection units to support community protection mechanisms: Findings indicate that community protection mechanisms, particularly in remote areas in La Paz, face significant barriers in reporting cases due to a lack of resources and means to access formal authorities. To address this, PIB could establish mobile protection units that can regularly visit remote communities, ensuring that services are accessible to promoters and residents who cannot travel to urban centres. These units should include trained personnel capable of responding promptly to reports of violence, offering immediate support, and connecting individuals with further resources.

6.4. Ecuador

Priority Recommendations

Address scheduling conflicts to enhance CAY's participation and continuity in the project: To ensure meaningful participation and continuity among participants, activities should be scheduled during evenings or weekends. This approach accommodates CAYs who attend school, university, or work, making it easier for them to participate. Additionally, offering evening or weekend sessions can encourage parental involvement, as these times are often more convenient for families, serving as an added incentive for their engagement.

Develop user-friendly protection from violence referral pathway: As discussed during the bridge workshop, the CO could collaborate with rights-guaranteeing institutions to co-create a visual referral pathway that is easy to understand and navigate by both CAY and adults living in targeted communities. The pathways should include clear steps for accessing services; contact details for key actors (e.g., social workers, law enforcement, child protection officers), and guidance on how to escalate issues when services are inadequate.

Strengthen the capacity of community leaders and volunteers on protection mechanisms: To address gaps in knowledge of trust in protection mechanisms, PIE could conduct a training session specifically targeting community leaders and volunteers on the legal frameworks and protection mechanisms. The training should focus on clarifying the mandates, understanding roles, and providing tools to help these leaders and volunteers better navigate and explain protection services to community members.

Support the creation of a youth-led network of empowered girls and women: Build on positive partnerships established with MPSN, the network could become a safe space for girls and women to share their challenges and achievements. As suggested in the bridge workshop, it can also work as a platform to organise peer mentoring and speeches from former participants as role models for young girls in the project's communities.

Train former EdL and COC participants to become facilitators: To ensure the project's impact is carried out to younger generations it would be good to incentivise former EdL and COC participants to become facilitators. This approach ensures they remain empowered while fostering sustainability by equipping new generations with these valuable skills and offering them role-models to look up to.

Conduct a CSOs mapping: To ensure the project is embedded in existing initiatives, PIE could conduct a detailed mapping of CSOs and youth networks active across the two territories, including their focus areas and target groups.

Develop and deliver father-child bonding activities: Building on the positive experience of PIB, PIE could deliver father-child bonding activities where fathers and their children can engage in shared activities like sports, arts, or community projects. These activities will provide fathers with the opportunity to connect with their children in a positive, supportive manner, while also reinforcing the message of active fatherhood.

Strengthen and extend the economic component so more girls and boys can benefit: The evaluation shows that girls participating in activities related to Result 3 felt particularly empowered and reported notable improvements in their agency. In the short term, it would be beneficial to raise awareness among more girls about the opportunities provided under this component in Los Ríos. This could be achieved by organizing community fairs where project participants present their products and share the journey that led them to develop their small businesses. In the long term, it was noted that the component should also be expanded to Bolívar, as the region has great potential for artisan businesses.

Develop COC and EdL peer outreach programmes: Train programme alumni as peer educators to replicate lessons within their schools and social circles. Provide a toolkit that includes key SRHR messages and guidelines for delivering impactful sessions.

Establish regular meetings with PIB coordination and implementation teams: One key finding from the evaluation is that strengths and challenges in the Bolivia and Ecuador projects are complementary. Although the contexts differ, coordination and implementing partners in both countries could greatly benefit from sharing best practices and lessons learned. For Ecuador, the work in Bolivia offers valuable insights on supporting the development of small entrepreneurship, seed capital allocation, and the broader aspects related to Result 3.

Long-term Recommendations

Organise in-person experience exchange with female entrepreneurs in Bolivia: Leveraging on the enthusiasm that emerged among both staff and participants about the online meeting between participant entrepreneurs in Ecuador and Bolivia, the two COs in Bolivia and Ecuador could organise an in-person exchange in one of the two locations. These exchanges would provide inspiration, foster collaboration, and enable participants to learn from diverse success stories.

Design and deliver active fatherhood module: Design evening activities based on PI methodology to promote active fatherhoods. To encourage participation, it was suggested during the bridge workshop that these activities incorporate playful and engaging elements, such as being organized alongside sports tournaments or other recreational events, to make them more appealing to fathers. CAY participating in the bridge workshop suggested this initiative could build on the COC structure to provide tailored sessions for fathers, addressing gender norms and parenting practices separately to ensure targeted and meaningful engagement for both groups.

Creating an “alumni” network for formed COC and EdL participants: This initiative can foster long-term engagement and amplify the program’s impact. Such a network would serve as a platform for alumni to continue sharing experiences, mentoring new participants, and collaborating on community initiatives.

Establish regular coordination platforms for local communities to meet and know protection services: Create forums or working groups that bring together volunteers, local leaders, and institutional representatives to facilitate ongoing dialogue, share updates, and troubleshoot challenges related to protection mechanisms.

Address sustainability of volunteer-led activities: Create a formal mechanism to sustain and scale the efforts of community volunteers who have been instrumental in engaging adolescents and parents. This could include a small stipend, recognition, or career development opportunities within the local government or partner organizations. This will help maintain high volunteer spirit and ensure the continuity of youth clubs and other community-led activities.

Collaborate with schools and educational *unidades educativas* to advocate for the integration of PIE activities on sexual and reproductive health education: As of now, the project has not worked within schools, missing an opportunity to target more participants and having a bigger impact. It would be good to establish partnerships with schools, particularly to introduce awareness activities on gender equality, healthy sexual relationships, and the implications of early pregnancy. Partner with educational authorities to ensure that this education becomes a standard part of the curriculum for both boys and girls, thereby reaching a wider audience and providing essential knowledge at an earlier stage in students' lives.

6.5. Benin

Priority Recommendations

Increased parental support: Increase awareness-raising among parents to ensure their continued financial and moral support for their children in education, particularly for young people once they join the project in training. This should work to maintain participation of CAY in the training courses.

Manage the expectations of young people by sharing a distribution schedule for installation kits to enable young people to better anticipate their installation and begin their economic activities in better conditions as soon as they finish their training. Furthermore, share the criteria for which installation kits are distributed so that young people know if they will be receiving a kit or not.

Include post-training monitoring or employment support to support young people to set up micro-enterprises as this track needs an increased level of post-training support.

Tailor course classes to the needs of different CAY groups: This could work in two ways:

- **Expand catch-up classes to more subjects** to better meet the educational needs of children.
- **Transition apprentices with a low literacy level onto an accelerated training** that could improve their effective participation in training so that the training can be tailored to their needs.

Improve the inclusion of youth with disabilities: The Washington set of questions could help the team in finding out about different types of disabilities and enlarging the concept, while also tracking how many CAY with disabilities (including beyond physical disabilities) take part in the project activities. In addition, partnership with a dedicated CSO could be considered.

Continue advocating for the formalization of MCPes: Organise workshops with local authorities (prefects, town halls) to formalize the Communal Child Protection Committees and clarify their role in the national protection system. This will ensure their sustainability beyond the project.

Long-term Recommendations

Review and integrate SOYEE indicators that measure the financial empowerment of young people in terms of income or perception of their quality of life/coverage of their minimum needs.

Undertake advocacy on the status of apprentices and apprenticeship conditions in Benin with employers, state institutions and donors. Invite master craftsmen and trainers to set up an incentive

system such as performance-related bonuses or contributions to cover the transport and meal costs of apprentices.

Collaborate with non-formal education projects to offer continuing literacy courses adapted to young people and strengthen teaching tools with illustrated and simplified materials to facilitate learning.

Identify strategic partnerships to advocate for inclusive access to basic education and expand Community Education Centers (CECs) to ensure adequate preparation of young people with low literacy skills, advocate for the allocation of infrastructure to sustain these structures.

Analyze the barriers (including parental support, additional training costs) for the maintenance of each young person in training and use this information to make adaptations to the activities to increase the number of young people attending and maintaining attendance in classes. Alternatively, consider a budget line in the next project that covers allowances to cover the transportation and meal costs of young people, thereby reducing the financial barriers that prevent them from attending training centers. Another option is to **consider setting up APEs (Aide à la Promotion de l'Emploi) in each CFP or a student association** that can think about options for collectively covering meals at the center level.

Strengthening the capacities of MCPEs in documentation: facilitate the establishment of a system of documentation / data collection on their activities and reporting harmonized with other protection actors in Senegal (to avoid duplication of efforts). In addition, strengthen national and regional coordination and advocacy on MCPEs to strengthen synergies between donors and intervention actors in the field of child protection.

6.6. Niger

Priority Recommendations

Strengthen awareness-raising actions for students and their teachers on the school governance approach. Although efforts are being made to support students on the school governance approach, there is a need to continue capacity-building for young people and their teachers to maximise their ownership of the approach, and in particular to ensure the monitoring of decision-making concerning the implementation of the proposals of the action plan of the members of the school governments. This would work to improve the percentage of schools and learning spaces/centres that meet the national/global standards set for an accessible, safe and protected environment (IQEO4.2.3). Funds could be channeled to support schools to be compliant with environmental and technical standards so that access to school and learning facilities are more acceptable.

Continue community awareness-raising actions on children's rights and set up a mechanism of 'model parents' who champion the protection of children's rights and can inspire other community members to also take steps towards change. Indeed, although there is a good level of knowledge around children and adolescents' rights (including girls), concrete actions towards the operationalisation of this knowledge remain limited. Existing husband schools can also be a good tool to popularise texts on the rights of children and to promote responsible parenting attitudes and behaviors.

Involve CAY from the National Consultative Council for Children and Youth of Niger (CCNEJ) in discussions on the design for the project to improve meaningful participation of CAY in strategic decision-making regarding the project. Whilst CAY are fully participating and taking the lead in activities, their participation in the project's design, planning and evaluation could be further strengthened. This could be done through adopting the model of the consultative youth committees developed in Senegal.

Maximise the effectiveness of the CVPE committees. Although it seems that the village child protection committees of the target villages are playing their roles well, the size of some villages is well beyond

the capacity of the 12 CVPE members, which limits their ability to achieve good results. It is therefore recommended, depending on the size of the villages, to see the possibility of creating CVPE subcommittees in order to be able to cover the entire community. In addition, the volunteer nature of CVPE committee members' roles limits their ability to devote sufficient time and energy to their activities. To improve results related to behavioral changes, the project could increase incentives for CVPE committee members through the establishment of group economic activities. During the previous five-year period of the project, the CVPEs were supported with amounts to develop their IGAs. The current project could also explore how to support them to motivate them to devote more time to activities. However, this will have to be considered after a thorough risk analysis and the development of mitigation measures to ensure rigorous supervision of this support, based on lessons learned from past experiences (such as the Norad project which supported these CVPEs in cash and where in some communities, CVPE members organised meetings only in relation to the management of allocated funds and neglected their protection role at the community level.)

Increase messaging around gender equality. As the recognition of the value of girls' work is tied to their contribution to household needs and welfare and that participants highlighted that there is still a separation of tasks and rights between women and men in their communities, this highlights the need for continued awareness raising among the stakeholders who can block the achievement of gender equality (including men, parents, community leaders). This may involve, for example, reviewing awareness-raising messages to emphasize, for example, the importance of sharing tasks within households, and the value of gender equality beyond the financial benefits for the household.

Long-term Recommendations

Anticipate and develop mitigation measures against the risk that young girls drop out of school to follow the model of the project participants. Thanks to their economic empowerment, young girls and adolescents who participated in the project now inspire other girls in their community and have become role models. However, this could potentially present the risk that young girls at school who witness the success of project participants perceive the project activities and direct economic empowerment as a preferable alternative to school. Therefore, it is important to continue raising awareness of students on the importance of continued education, so that the DGD programme does not inadvertently contribute to encouraging girls to drop out of school to participate in the project's economic empowerment activities. In addition, economic empowerment activities for girls in schools could be developed. For example, the project could consider establishing a mechanism for social reconstitution of the herd (*reconstitution sociale du cheptel*) for young girls at the end of the primary cycle to encourage them to finish the cycle rather than be tempted to drop out of school to follow the role model of the participants in the AJEC activities. For example, Plan International Niger initiated these types of actions through sponsorship funds.

Anticipate potential barriers to girls' durable engagement in economic activities. Whilst chores did not impact girls' participation in project activities (training) (potentially due to the structured nature of the project activities and the commitments gained from student's families), they could potentially present risks to their economic empowerment and their ability to dedicate sufficient time to their IGAs/professional activities. Continued awareness-raising of girls' parents and partners on the need to alleviate physical and mental workload of girls will be key to ensure that girl's current levels of motivation and engagement to participate in professional activities is not jeopardized by competing priorities. In addition, as some young girls mentioned having implemented strategies to condense the time dedicated to household activities and thus free up time for their economic activity, experience-sharing sessions around this subject could be organized.

Support access to resources for awareness-raising activities for the clubs of future husbands and the schools of husbands. The results of the evaluation showed that the clubs of future husbands and the schools of husbands are key actors of change on which the project can base behavior change

actions. However, the voluntary nature of their activities does not allow their full potential to be used. The project could therefore support economic activities for future husbands' clubs and husbands' schools or provide guidance on how to access resources to conduct awareness-raising activities (for example to purchase of communication credit, purchase of megaphone batteries, payment of motorcycle taxi fees, etc.).

Foster connections between sellers and buyers. The market for the sale of articles and products of young people and adolescents is currently limited to the intervention villages and their surroundings, with low financial capacities. In order to provide a better market opportunity to young people, the project should aim to connect young people and adolescents with potential buyers of their products beyond their villages, including by organising business meetings for example. This could also be the organization of a fair where the products of young people and adolescents will be presented to the population. The project could also support through inviting relevant stakeholders. However, for the success of this activity, it would be key to ensure that products are of an acceptable quality.

Further leverage the expertise of the departmental technical services of vocational training and explore the feasibility of developing a partnership with the Centres de Formation aux Métier. The regional and departmental technical services have specific roles and responsibilities (the latter can provide a specific technical control of the quality of the concrete actions implemented, while the regional technical services are responsible for ensuring the alignment of the project strategy with state policies), which can be further leveraged. The project could explore opportunities to further leverage technical services' expertise to accompany the trades training programme, including to provide close supervision of local tutors. The less expensive alternative of working in partnership with Vocational Training Centers (local centers at the municipal level) could be considered to ensure the supervision and technical supervision of local tutors.

6.7. Senegal

Priority Recommendations

Continue efforts and review their effectiveness to engage more boys and young men in activities that would ensure positive behaviour change and gender norm change: It was highlighted as part of the quantitative mid-term study and the Bridge Workshop that the project is struggling to engage boys and young men. This would address the underachievement for boys and men regarding outcome indicators LDI 1 and 2. Continuing this trajectory means that the project will not reach its objectives by 2026. To strengthen the participation of boys and young men, the project could consider the following examples which are elaborated on in the Action Plan:

1. **Strengthening the participation of boys and men:**
 - Create **specific dialogue spaces** for boys, inspired by husband schools, where they can discuss themes related to gender equality, positive masculinity, and their role in the community.
 - Train more **male champions** and involve them in community activities to raise awareness among their peers and encourage egalitarian behaviors.
2. **Skills building and mobilization:**
 - Provide **social media training** so young men can use platforms like TikTok and X (formally Twitter) to promote messages about gender equality and positive masculinities.
 - Develop interactive digital media (videos, infographics) adapted to cultural and religious contexts to facilitate awareness-raising.
3. **Integration into existing activities:**

- Encourage boys to join existing clubs, such as **Sports and Cultural Associations (ASC)**, to participate in events combining sports activities and awareness-raising on gender-based violence.
 - Collaborate with **male relays at school and community level** to lead talks and dialogues on themes such as the role of men in the fight against sexual violence and discrimination.
4. **Advocacy and community awareness:**
- Strengthen **community conversations on positive masculinities**, involving local leaders, to change social norms and perceptions related to gender roles.
 - Integrate **references to law and religion** into awareness-raising to reach a wider audience and reduce reluctance.
5. **Educational approach:**
- Involve men in **creating educational materials**, such as posters and videos, to encourage their ownership of the messages.
6. **Monitoring and evaluation:**
- Establish a mechanism to monitor **boys' engagement** in the project, identifying barriers to their participation and ways to overcome them.
 - Carry out a **mapping of the activities carried out by the boys** and evaluate their impact to adjust the approaches.

Furthermore, a mechanism should be established to track progress on this recommendation to ensure progress is made and the project team and partners are held accountable.

Reactivate and strengthen the CCPEs: Provide resources and training for better management of cases of violence and focus on ensuring that reporting mechanisms are CAY friendly. This could involve greater engagement from the CCPE with CAY to build their confidence in reporting protection issues. This would contribute to bringing the project back on track to achieve results indicators PROO1.1.1 and PROO1.4.1. Other actions could include: creating a reporting registry to institutionalise the documentation and tracking of cases and improve coordination between actors through a regular monitoring meeting.

Strengthen the SOYEE offer for young people: Several issues were identified during this study and in collaboration with the project team and partners. A review of the SOYEE activities should take place to prioritise adaptations to create an improved learning environment for young people and thus increase the impact of the project for young people in Senegal. Recommendations for adaptations are further elaborated on in the action plans and include:

- **Accelerate the financing of collective projects:** Prioritize young people waiting for funds after the micro-training in March 2024.
- **Offer financial support to identified projects** that are in line with the market and local demand.
- **Initiate the formalization of groups into GIE** (Economic Interest Groups) status in order to strengthen their sustainability.
- **Offer opportunities for participation in savings and credit groups** (like AJEC) to strengthen the retention of young people in training.
- **Post-training monitoring:** Set up, with ANPEJ, a system for monitoring young people after their training to assess their integration into the labor market and make adjustments if necessary.

Review the project objectives: Target a reduced number of beneficiaries to increase the individual impact. In addition, specifically revise SOYEE indicators to replace them with realistic measures, such as increasing young people's income or their ability to provide for their needs.

Create a systematised feedback log and tracker: This log would systematically document all feedback received, why it has been received and from which project participant group. The feedback should be tracked, documenting what actions are taken to address the feedback. After feedback has been addressed this should be communicated to the participant group to close the feedback loop. This is an essential part of stakeholder engagement, participant-centered design and feminist project delivery.

Implement action points to improve adolescents and young people, especially adolescent girls and young women's ability to identify and address school-related violence and GBV including on the different types of violence (including emotional, economic and neglect):

- Develop **targeted communication**, strengthening the capacity of young people to denounce violence, particularly against girls.
- Introduce artistic activities (theatre, productions) to encourage discussions **on violence** among young people.
- Offer training on **active citizenship**, as an entry point, to encourage young people, especially girls, to get involved as volunteers in School Governments.
- Strengthen the role of **Bajenu Gox** as role models for girls to guide them in their decision-making.
- Increase awareness-raising on sexual and reproductive health and rights amongst young people.

Long-term recommendations

Consider a short and medium-term strategy for better community anchoring of implementing partners (YMCA) to improve the effective implementation and monitoring of activities. This could also include **increasing the visibility of the project by** adopting a distinctive name (Wolof) and developing a local identity to differentiate the project activities from other initiatives to improve local ownership. Building upon this, the project could increase its advocacy efforts to update agreements with the DGFPT to reduce tuition fees and include material support for exams, as this is much needed by students.

Create greater synergy between project axes: Strengthen the connection between the activities of the protection package and SOYEE to ensure holistic support. Currently the activities do not reinforce each other. With greater synergy between activities, they would have a reinforcing and amplification effect improving participation and satisfaction of young people.

Consider changing the training offer proposed, in line with international best practices. This could include offering certified and long/mid-long training to strengthen employability. By strengthening the technical support provided to the project, this component could be aligned to regional/international best practices (e.g. World Bank, GIZ good practices in the field of TVET).

6.8. Tanzania

Priority recommendations

Address the logistical and financial constraints that matrons and teachers face when responding to and addressing cases of violence. Participants reported that teachers must cover the costs to support survivors of violence to seek medical assistance, report the cases to the police and in some cases find them alternative safe accommodation. These expenses should not be borne by teachers and can act as a deterrent to effective response to cases of violence.

Review the behaviour change approach used for community awareness and sensitisation activities that promote gender equality and inclusion of boys and girls in social and economic

activities. Most of the milestones gained by the project, particularly relating to economic inclusion of boys and girls and definition of gender roles at household level, are likely to be lost due to traditional and retrogressive gender roles and norms. The project should put in resources to review the behaviour change approach used to create awareness, sensitisation and change the attitudes and practices of parents and guardians regarding positive parenting practices, gender equality and inclusion to ensure they adopt positive parenting practices.

Teachers should adopt safe and non-violent measures to discipline students in school. Teachers were identified as causes of violence in their schools, which may lead to children being physically harmed or trauma. The project through the Ward Education Development Officer should engage teachers on finding safer ways to reinforce positive behaviour among students, which do not involve inflicting pain. While patrons, matrons and headteachers are involved in project activities, the rest of the teaching staff are not and this could be an area to be explored further by the project to protect children from physical and psychological harm, especially in schools where they should be feeling safe.

Identify and include people with disabilities in the project. The project needs the services of a disability and inclusion expert to map the different disabilities that exist in the community and how these persons can be integrated into project activities. Similarly, targeted campaigns to parents/caregivers of people with disabilities should be conducted to destigmatise them against the notion that people with disabilities cannot take part in any activity but will end up being a bother to the rest of participants. Lastly, the project through its own internal resources or exploring partnerships with other stakeholders should explore ways of supporting people with disabilities to get the equipment they need to fully take part in the project.

Communication on outcomes or progress of reported cases of violence should be enhanced to encourage more reporting and deter those who are likely to commit acts of violence to CAY. Participants of discussions reported that part of the reason the community is still sceptical about the effectiveness of the reporting system is because they do not get updates on what happens after cases are reported. Some perpetrators are also seen back in the community days after being arrested, without a clear explanation on what is going on. The project should improve on communicating about the cases being reported and the outcomes of those cases to ensure community members understand that acts of violence indeed have repercussions, even if they are committed through traditional or cultural guidelines. Those affected by violence will also feel encouraged to report, seeing as action is being taken.

The project should initiate community handover processes in advance to assure sustainability of the interventions when the project ends. The project engaged different partners and stakeholders on varied tasks, some of which could be taken up by various community support structures. To ensure there is sufficient time to handover these functions, the project should begin rolling out its sustainability measures and capacitate relevant stakeholders to take over project support functions. This will ensure smooth running of activities even when the project scales down operations and eventually winds down.

Support the government to conduct stakeholder identification and mapping to reduce duplication of efforts and variations in content disseminated to the community. Multiple study participants reported that there are several organisations implementing similar activities as the VEMA project in the Mwanza region. These organisations have different curricula that advocate for different practices which are not standardised according to the government guidelines. Such may influence participant beliefs and practices in any given community, if two or more organisations are sending out different messaging this will likely affect the effectiveness of PIT's interventions. The successful multi-sectoral engagement of different partners in the VEMA project provides evidence that PIT possesses the skills and expertise to engage with and build the capacity of government institutions to support its work within communities.

Long-term recommendations

Similar projects should conduct partner mapping in advance to avoid delays with project implementation, preferably during the project design or inception phase. Delays with the TVET training have led to youth being discouraged and reporting that PIT only needed their details for reporting purposes. To avoid such delays and attrition of participants, planning ahead of time and onboarding partners beyond time should be considered.

Work with the government to provide seed funding for CAY businesses. Getting financing to expand CAY businesses is a challenge, especially for the CAY who typically have no assets to offer as collateral. This limits the growth of these businesses and further denies more opportunities for meaningful employment and income sources. As a sustainability measure, the project should partner with government agencies in charge of CAY and social development to build their capacity to negotiate for more favourable terms to access financing from banks and microfinance institutions. Participants noted that while government staff may not have the skills and expertise to develop and lobby for such framework agreements, their vested interest lies in economic engagement of the youth and prosperity of local economies, which translate to more revenue in taxes. The project through its expertise could initiate such agreements and hand them over to the government social welfare departments to act as the link between the youth and the financial institutions to ensure sustainability of such an intervention.

6.9. Vietnam

Priority recommendations

Review the indicator targets to ensure they are realistically challenging for the second half of the project: especially those which have been exceeded, so ensure they are realistically stretching and provide meaningful data for future project adaptations. For example, indicator SOYO1.1.1 was exceeded yet only one training was delivered by the project. Because the indicator measures increased confidence after the training regardless of the number of people trained, however, the indicator shows as exceeded. This measure of achievement could be improved by having three parts: 1, a target on the number of training sessions delivered; 2, the level of increased confidence; and 3, how this improved confidence and skills are used.

Create a systematised feedback log and tracker: This log would systematically document all feedback received, why it has been received and from which project participant group. The feedback should be tracked, documenting what actions are taken to address the feedback. After feedback has been addressed this should be communicated to the participant group to close the feedback loop. This is an essential part of stakeholder engagement, participant-centered design and feminist project delivery.

Provide training for teachers, and a joint session for teachers and CAY in the feedback process: The evaluation found that teachers would benefit from training on how to receive feedback from students. In addition, increased trust and awareness created through joint feedback giving and receiving role play sessions may improve understanding on the type of feedback that would be helpful for the project team to adjust activities.

Long-term recommendations

Provide training to teachers engaged in the School Counseling Room to attract student participation: Currently participation is low, increased training and regular awareness sessions for students covering the type of topics that could be discussed in the room may help to encourage students to take advantage of the service provided.

Review the vocational training to include a set of criteria to evaluate gender accountability:

Rather than including standalone gender equality content in the training, the focus should be on reviewing the training materials, methods, and processes to effectively integrate gender considerations. This includes refining visuals, language, and narratives to avoid gender stereotypes in vocational orientation and training. These changes would ensure the project activities are rated as “fully gender responsive”.

Produce and disseminate parent/caregiver and CAY information kits on GBV: These kits should share information on the relevant GBV protection laws and regulations, and support and referral services available. Consideration should be given to the format of these kits as many parents are illiterate. These kits will give parents/caregivers a reliable source of information and should support them to provide comprehensive information to their children and in turn support their own learning journey.

7. Annexes

7.1. [Evaluation Terms of Reference](#)

7.2. [Country Theories of Change](#)

7.3. [Evaluation Matrix](#)

7.4. [Data Collection Tools](#)

7.5. [Debrief Meeting Notes](#)

7.6. [Consent Forms](#)

7.7. [Cleaned Data](#)

7.8. [Workshop Action Plans](#)

7.9. [Documents Consulted](#)

7.10. [Project Logframes](#)

7.11. [Project Overview](#)