



ALL IN, ALL LEARNING!

Longitudinal Evaluation

Case Studies

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Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

**COMIC
RELIEF**

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CASE STUDY ONE

GENET, CAVWOC, OXFAM MALAWI

Combating Sexual and
Gender-Based Violence



Who: Oxfam GB

Partners: Girls' Empowerment Network (GENET) and Centre for Alternatives for Victimised Women and Children (CAVWOC)

Grant: July 2016 AIAL grant of **£1,000,000** over 36 months

Country: Malawi – in Balaka, Dowa, Mzimba and Phalombe districts



AIAL area of work: Combatting sexual and other violence in schools

COMBATTING SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Strong evidence: from reports, high quality data, case study sessions and primary research.

The big story:

Against a backdrop of violence against girls, high teenage pregnancy and harmful practices, 19,667 girls and boys in remote hard-to-reach communities now feel safe in schools. 87% of them say they are protected from sexual violence. They have reported 5,704 cases (3,726 by girls) to school authorities. Girls have become confident to speak out, are performing well in exams and teen mothers are returning to school. Child marriage and school dropout rates have gone down. Mothers' groups, fathers' groups, 'human rights defenders', teachers' and girls' clubs are now part of a sustained movement against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), catalysed by OXFAM, GENET and CAVWOC. As a result of their actions, all the project communities have passed byelaws against harmful practices. And they are still taking action four years after the project ended!

The project approach:

The project took a strong community-networking approach, training support structures that protect girls from violence in and around 15 schools. The community network, alongside local chiefs and religious leaders, championed the development of byelaws. They identify, deal with and refer cases to authorities. The partners trained girls' clubs in life skills and in identifying, preventing and reporting SGBV, including who can support them and how the legal justice system works. They organised radio listening clubs so boys and girls could listen to a programme together, discuss the issues and speak out about violence. They built the capacity of School Management Committees, teachers and education officials to detect, respond to and report SGBV. They worked with district education authorities, police and courts to address violence. At national level Oxfam advocated on issues such as poor financing for education and district budget-tracking.

Success factors:

- ❖ Working with community structures and local leaders, activating a social movement.
- ❖ Making safeguarding a priority e.g. using 'happiness' and 'sadness' boxes to report issues.
- ❖ Lobbying for increase in national budget for specific activities against gender violence ***"Oxfam had networks at the higher levels of influence and with policy-makers. This approach really complemented the work of GENET."*** (GENET case study sessions)
- ❖ Mobilising resources through fees for breach of byelaws to cover gaps in implementation.
- ❖ Running positive masculinity initiatives such as with fathers' groups and male champions.
- ❖ Learning and innovating e.g. through sports activities, radio debates, girls' clubs and camps.

CHILDREN'S VOICE

Our safety – I feel free

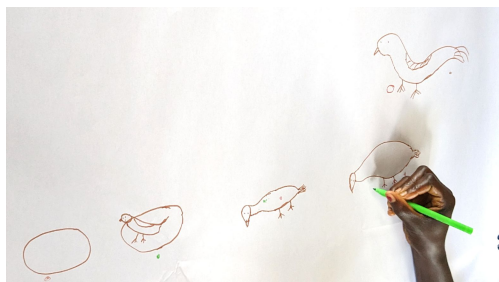


A lot of us young people feel free to talk about issues through the suggestion boxes. The matrons and patrons open the box in their office to learn about what isn't working well in school. (18-year-old boy)

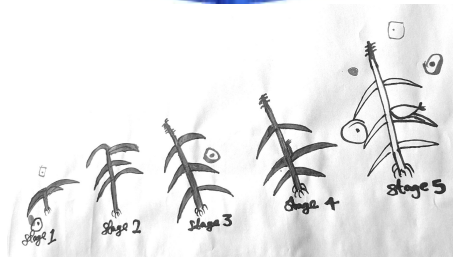
We are freer [to talk about violence] since this programme came. In the past I couldn't speak up against someone who has been violent towards me. But now that we have the suggestion box, it means I can report anonymously. (18-year-old girl)

Some children didn't even know that what was happening was even violence in the first place. (18-year-old boy)

Source : AIAL
evaluation primary
research – focus groups
with children aged
12-18



LASTING CHANGE FOR CHILDREN



CHILDREN IN SCHOOL AND LEARNING

486 girls are back in school after giving birth - and get lots of help from community groups.

Four years after the project end, girls are transitioning to secondary school and acting as **role models for the younger children** – even going back to speak at the clubs in their primary schools.

CHILDREN'S SAFETY AND EMPOWERMENT

Traditional leaders have worked with their communities to end child marriages – and they keep doing it. For example, according to one Human Rights Defender, one community has **nullified 321 child marriages** - up from 73 in the final project report.

3,600 learners (67% girls) gained life skills in sexual and reproductive health, menstrual hygiene and combatting violence through 60 boys' and girls' clubs.

GENET, CAVWOC, OXFAM LASTING LEGACY

Local partners strengthened and recognised

- The Humentum financial management partnership helped GENET improve its systems and secure direct funding from Comic Relief and the Global Fund.
- Girls Not Brides Alliance voted for GENET to coordinate it, in recognition of their work in championing girls' safety from child marriage and other violence.
- CAVWOC and GENET strengthened safeguarding processes – both now have a focal person and consent forms in place. GENET has a toll-free line.
- Both partners have learned from others through their participation in the AIAL network. GENET has a database now to store and track data.
- **“GENET has become a place of mentorship, where staff are supported in their personal development – our inner onion is strong.”** (project staff - case study session)

Community network – “a foundation for sustained prevention and response to SGBV” (GENET staff - case study session)

- **Robust community structures:** The community network, trained by GENET, has upgraded to become a Victim Support Unit – a government structure in the community that acts as a point of contact that can respond to and deal with any sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) cases.
- **Community ownership of the work:** **“This work is in our hands as communities. We knew that one day this organisation would go, and this work would be ours, and surely, we have kept working. We have not stopped.”** (teacher - primary research). Teachers, mothers' groups, chiefs and PTAs are drivers of change on SGBV issues affecting children in the community. 87% of learners feel supported by actions addressing harmful practices.
- **Community collaboration:** **“The GBV prevention networks placed traditional leaders in the forefront to monitor and register cases....making it easier for them to champion this [anti-SGBV movement].”** (project staff - case study session)
- **Positive mindset change:** The network has led to greater engagement with parents about girls' equal rights and particularly to change in men's attitudes – shown in the emergence of male champions and human rights defenders.

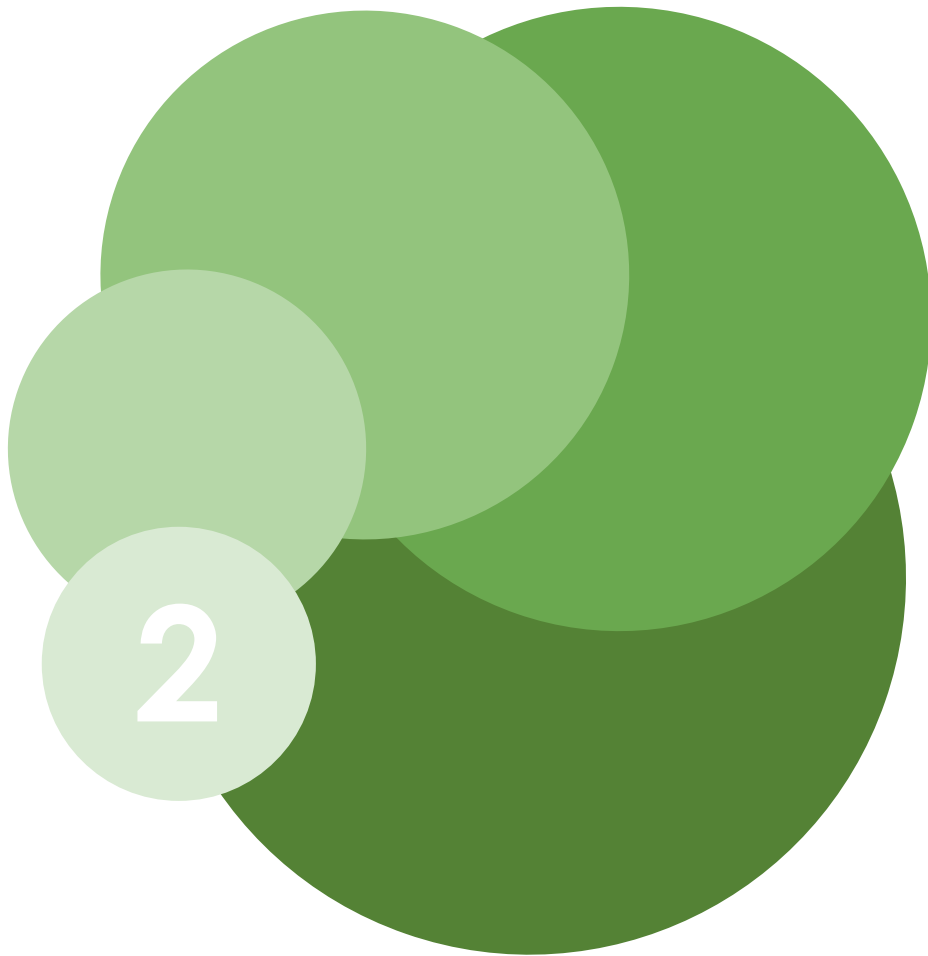
Systemic change

- **Byelaws are still in effect:** 100% of the project communities developed byelaws, leading to tackling cases – **“We as chiefs are in the forefront taking cases forward, since we know that we are chiefs.”** (project final report)
They challenged 16 harmful practices, including the 'gule wamkulu' cult that recruits boys, causing them to miss school and 'bulangeti la fumu' where new chiefs sleep with a virgin girl.
- **Strengthened child protection:** Human rights defenders and suggestion boxes remain in place, enabling reporting, identifying and resolving of cases. 100% of teachers expressed confidence in addressing incidences of violence and abuse in schools.
- **Liaison with government** e.g. police, courts, Social Welfare officials and hospital staff: **“Even Social Welfare are helped with their work, a thing that was not happening in the past. These days, the police are working very well because of this network.”** (Human Rights Defender - primary research)

Multiplier effect leading to wider social change

- The four project districts have come in the top ten of all districts for their pass rates in school e.g. Balaka district's pass rate rose from 60% to 74% during the project period.
- The connection to Oxfam's 'Ending Violence against Girls' campaign and popularisation of key policies and guidelines, such as the teachers' code, has led to Primary Education Advisers and District Education Managers taking action against perpetrating teachers. It has also led to wider community awareness and mobilisation against violence.

(statistics source: final report and external final evaluation)



CASE STUDY TWO



ADD AND SHIVYAWATA TANZANIA

Systemic Change for Children
'Doing Wonders'



Who: Action on Disability and Development (ADD) International Tanzania office

Partner: Tanzania Federation of Disabled People's Organisations (SHIVYAWATA) - and five member OPDs – Organisations of Persons with Disabilities)

Grant: February 2017 AIAL grant of **£1,200,000** over 48 months

Country: Tanzania – in Kibaha Municipal Council, Kibaha District Council and Mkuranga and Kisarawe districts

AIAL area of work: Children with disabilities aged 3-8 years access pre-school education

SYSTEMIC CHANGE FOR CHILDREN 'DOING WONDERS'

Strong evidence: good reports and external evaluation, peer learning and staff case study sessions, and primary research.

The big story:

1,441 children with disabilities enrolled in pre-primary school and 833 transitioned to primary school. **“We can see our children do wonders in their performance.”** (parent - primary research). Thousands more children continue to benefit. ADD and its partners influenced the whole system, from family up to national government, to provide inclusive pre-primary education for children with disabilities. Thanks to their advocacy, alongside that of other development partners, the national budget for special needs has increased significantly over five years. Government now requires all teacher training to cover inclusive education. It has increased its training budget and committed to make parent-teacher guidelines more inclusive. Local budgeting, partnerships and decision-making have changed: OPDs, district government, School Management Committees and parents work together to identify out-of-school children, plan and budget for inclusive education and improve infrastructure.

ADD's approach:

ADD targeted 252 pre-primary schools. The project carried out effective community OPD-led awareness-raising on the value of inclusive education and to tackle stigma. It linked parents to livelihood schemes and support. It trained teachers to deliver adapted curricula, improvise learning materials, use more inclusive methods and develop Individual Education Plans with children. Teachers cascaded their learning to other teachers. ADD also modelled conducive school environments and distributed assistive devices as needed. Consistent lobbying addressed systemic gaps in policy, funding, capacity, planning and cross-sectoral links. The project ensured School Management Committees included parents of children with disabilities and that OPDs were involved in district planning and budgeting systems. It built the capacity of five OPDs.

Success factors:

- ★ Modelling an inclusive school environment, including local teaching materials, provided real life examples for government to emulate: **“ADD has shown us what to do and put it into practice”** (special needs official - primary research).
- ★ Participatory approaches and awareness-raising, starting with those at the centre of the project, led to ownership, improved attitudes to disability and created a sense of urgency that activated everyone.
- ★ Strong collaboration and links enabled systemic change – across parents, school committees and teachers, Village Executive Officers, strategic CSOs, OPDs and local, regional and national government.
- ★ The OPD-strengthening approach went to the heart of the 'Onion', looking at 'to be' (identity, mission, vision). and 'to relate' (governance, leadership, partnerships, relationships with community), as well as 'to do': **“we try to go deeper to change the attitude and mindsets of those involved.”** (ADD staff - case study session).
- ★ Peer-to-peer teacher-training created impact by providing practical examples and using simple language.

Change for children with disabilities

- 1,441 children with disabilities enrolled in pre-school (41% girls) – and are doing well. ADD's three-year tracer study showed they progressed over five times better in maths, reading and health than children with disabilities in non-project schools.
- 833 children with disabilities (44% girls) transitioned to primary school. Teachers' feedback showed pre-primary had a positive effect on primary level outcomes.
- Schools are more welcoming and accessible now: 93% of parents reported improved infrastructure e.g. toilets and ramps – 123 schools now have ramps.
- Assistive devices helped children socialise, attend classes regularly and do well.
- 96% of parents reported their children could move around home and school confidently, without facing conflict; socialise better; and take part in sports.
- More inclusive teaching: 535 teachers understand needs better, do individual plans and mentor others. 94% use inclusive methods.

Schools and communities collaborating for sustained work

- Relationships between teachers and parents have improved.
- 525 parents are active in management councils/ parents' meetings; 174 take part in advocacy and decision-making, including in School Management Committees; 73% help their children with homework.
- Village Executive Officers support OPDs in identifying and motivating children with disabilities to enrol in pre-primary – and are trusted by parents.
- The District Disability Committee, part of government policy, is set up and active.

OPDs confident and deliver work well

“Now they are confident about their identity, have systems and deliver their work well.”

(ADD staff - case study sessions)

- ‘To be’:** Five OPDs have a stronger sense of identity. Governance and leadership are better; more women are in leadership; and they have developed five-year strategies.
- ‘To relate’:** OPDs developed stronger external partnerships. They are better at working with service providers, e.g. on accessible libraries and wheelchair provision, and work more with government at all levels, including on policy review.
- ‘To do’:** OPDs improved programme delivery and systems e.g. safeguarding. They are better at making and implementing plans, and at supporting people with disabilities to access goods and services e.g. assistive devices and livelihoods activities.

Embedding in government policy and practice

Working with others, including the AIAL network and disability consortium led to:

- Increased national and district budgets:** The national budget for special needs increased significantly. Government began providing Capitation grants for pre-primary schools, making funds available e.g. for infrastructure. District government is including OPDs in agreeing budget allocations.
- Improved policies and guidance:** Government now has a standard model for inclusive pre-primary education in the National Strategy (funded by FCDO), including using Village Ward Officers to identify out-of-school children; better examination guidelines for special needs; inclusive education incorporated in the curriculum of two Teacher Training colleges; a Swahili version of the National Strategy shared; and a sign language dictionary. SHIVYAWATA is helping the Prime Minister's Office review the Disability Policy.
- Included in training and monitoring systems:** Inclusive education is now compulsory in all teacher training; government agreed to issue certificates to project-trained teachers; ADD, OPDs and government developed and use a tool and database to monitor children with disabilities – a district learning group analyses and validates data.

ADD
LASTING
LEGACY

Multiplier effect leading to wider social change...

- Government built **41 new classrooms in 29 schools** in the project area with ramps and access to **81 new accessible pit latrines**.
- Government trained **1,650 teachers in inclusive education**.
- Government is using the **20 teacher Trainer-of-Trainers** to scale up improvisation of teaching materials and use of the project manual.
- ADD has become a centre of learning** – NGOs have sent staff to learn about inclusive education approaches e.g. Children in Crossfire (CIC), Under The Same Sun, Catholic Relief Services, Wekeza Child Generation.
- ADD helped CIC make their education programme in **Dodoma more inclusive, training 168 teachers**. It reviewed their Training Manual and advised them on coaching and delivery methods, and on monitoring.

(statistics source: final report and external evaluation)

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CASE STUDY THREE

CHESHIRE SERVICES UGANDA

Adaptive Learning Creates
Momentum for Change

Who: Cheshire Services Uganda (CSU) – a locally registered organisation, linked to Leonard Cheshire International

Grant: July 2020 AIAL grant of **£498,388** over 36 months + £30,000 OS grant

Country: Northern Uganda – Amolatar district

AIAL area of work: Children with disabilities aged 3-8 years access pre-school education

ADAPTIVE LEARNING AND INNOVATION CREATES MOMENTUM FOR CHANGE

Strong evidence: reports with good data and learning, good external evaluation and staff case study sessions.

The big story:

In 2020, no government provision for early years existed in Amolatar district in Northern Uganda. Now, 73% of schools have Early Childhood Development (ECD) sections that actively include children with disabilities. CSU have grown in their capacity to learn, collaborate and adapt their approach, thus creating a momentum for change. This project worked directly with 300 children with disabilities and their parents/ caregivers and communities. When COVID-19 led to schools closing, CSU set up home-based learning centres instead, learning from Comic Relief partner, LABE. After schools opened, they also worked with 19 mainstream government schools. 20 more non-project schools replicated the approach. CSU has strengthened its policies and governance and created ways to listen and learn from the children.

CSU's approach:

CSU took a two-pronged approach after schools re-opened, continuing home-based learning centres and working with government schools to set up ECD sections. They partnered with district education authorities to recruit 40 voluntary ECD teachers who are paid a stipend. LABE helped them train the ECD teachers. CSU trained parents, caregivers, and School/ Centre Management Committees in more inclusive child-friendly approaches, in safeguarding and how to use local resources to make teaching materials. CSU provided assistive devices and wheelchairs, as needed. They held sessions with other children in the schools to help them better support the children with disabilities. They advocated for all community services to include people with disabilities in decision-making and for schools to budget for inclusion.

Success factors:

- ★ Investing in community and parents' mindset change through awareness and training sessions that increased understanding, financial skills and collaboration for referral and safeguarding.
- ★ Getting everyone working together – including education, health, engineering and community services departments of local government, community leaders, children with and without disabilities, their siblings, parents/ caregivers (male and female), teachers, School/ Centre Management Committees, and other NGOs that could provide other support - for example in food production.
- ★ Building on a positive policy environment and on experience from a primary-level project.
- ★ Comic Relief played a very positive role through the helpful Organisational Strengthening, by listening to and supporting changes in CSU's approach with flexibility in the budget, by linking CSU to partners like LABE and through shared learning in the Uganda AIAL network and this evaluation.

CHILDREN'S VOICE

Our learning and performance in ECD/ school

Our safety



I can now sing, count numbers, copy and write.

I love being with my friends without disabilities in the classroom. They help me learn how to draw pictures, read and write.

I didn't know anything before joining school, but now my teacher has helped me learn many things.



I used to be beaten up by other children, but these days no one bothers me.



Feeling accepted and part of school/ community



Learning together with other children without disabilities is good because we sit together in class, sing together and eat porridge together.

I used not to move around the village before I joined the centre but now I can come and go.

Community members tell me I'm smart, give me a lift on their bikes to school and give me food when I play with their children.

CHILDREN'S INFLUENCE

Listening to the children has helped us understand what approaches work.

Listening to children has highlighted the barriers they face that need addressing.

Children are now at the centre of what we do - their feedback can help us design new projects and pick out priority areas.

(CSU staff - case study sessions)

Source: CSU adapted the 'child participation' scale to use with 3-8 year-old children with disabilities at their Home Learning Centre

CSU has grown as an adaptive, learning organisation

- CSU has learned ways to listen to and learn from children, living out their core value of valuing the individual. It has captured children's voices in its final grant report and plans to integrate them from baseline to completion.
- CSU has adapted and innovated during challenging times - and is working towards its identity as **"an advocate for inclusion"** (Tamarind Tree diagnostic report).
- Governance team meets more often and takes a greater role in oversight.
- Staff capacity has improved in financial management, quality assurance, resource mobilisation, gender and social inclusion and joint decision-making, **"fostering collaboration, communication and long-term application of skills"** (CSU final evaluation).
- CSU has reviewed, updated and applied policies in safeguarding, Human Resources, financial management and procurement.

Everyone's working together to sustain the impact

- 17/ 19 project schools have set up ECD sections and eight home learning centres are providing ECD for children with and without disabilities and running feeding programmes for children.
- School and Centre Management Committees are budgeting for inclusion, including stipends for ECD voluntary teachers.
- Schools have made ECD voluntary teachers part of their daily rosters and supervision plans.
- The project steering committee, combining all the key government, school and community groups, continues to monitor and to advocate for people with disabilities to be part of all community decision-making groups.
- 234 teachers are identifying needs of children with and without disabilities and teaching using inclusive methods and materials.
- Parents and community members have changed attitudes and behaviour e.g. contributing to school feeding, building latrines, and cleaning up/ planting trees around the schools.
- Leaders are visiting homes to follow up on attendance and have given land for an ECD resource centre to be built.

(statistics source: CSU final report and external evaluation)

Children are learning, safe, included and empowered

- 290 children with disabilities - including those with complex, severe disabilities - are in school and 94% are attending at least half the learning days. Dropout has gone down to less than 1% – this is only due to children moving away or having died.
- Another 5,413 children with no disabilities are learning in the ECD sections and home learning centres.
- 66% of children with disabilities are literate, up from 19%, and 77% are numerate, up from 18% at baseline.
- 98% of children with disabilities report that they feel included in school activities and 86% take part in community activities.
- Children with disabilities provide feedback about the impact the programme has had on their lives and how they feel about it. They also articulate the barriers and challenges they still face.

CSU LASTING LEGACY

Multiplier effect leading to wider social change

- 20 non-project government schools have replicated the learning and set up ECD sections – so over 9,000 children with and without disabilities are learning.
- The district network for ECD, set up by CSU, is meeting, dealing with safeguarding cases and making referrals – other NGOs are incorporating disability in their work e.g. Facilitation for Peace and Development is involving people with disabilities in their farmers' groups.
- Two INGOs have signed non-financial cooperation agreements with CSU as they want to learn from the work.

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CASE STUDY FOUR

APPCO UGANDA

Creating a Lasting Legacy -
Children at the Centre

CREATING A LASTING LEGACY – CHILDREN AT THE CENTRE

Medium evidence: good reports, staff case study sessions & primary research – final external evaluation pending.



Who: African Partners for Child Poverty (APPCO) – a Ugandan NGO

Partner: APPCO works with Hope for African Disabled Persons and Orphans Organisation, run by people with disabilities

Grant: May 2020 AIAL grant of **£280,000** over 42 months + £30,000 OS grant

Country: Northern Uganda – Lamwo district

AIAL area of work: Access to ECD for children with disabilities and affected by trauma/ conflict (refugee and host families) – focus on their participation and empowerment

The big story:

“When the children speak for themselves, it is more impactful and far-reaching in assessing what is necessary for them to have better educational outcomes” (APPCO staff - peer learning session). APPCO works with very young children and their families who are affected by conflict, close to the border of South Sudan – especially focusing on those with disabilities and trauma. It places children at the heart of its organisation, approach and advocacy. APPCO engages the children through play-based learning and sport. It actively draws out their perceptions and issues through activities like drawing their journey of life. Children speak out in advocacy events about the barriers they face and what needs to change. By working across levels and boundaries, APPCO gets the whole system playing its part, helping parents, communities, ECD committees, CSOs and local government to take up their responsibilities towards children. This helps vulnerable children transition from infancy to ECD to primary - while staying safe and having a voice to influence others.

APPCO's approach:

APPCO's 'lifecycle' approach follows children from birth through to the early stages of primary school, providing a foundation for them to stay in and perform better. APPCO runs psychosocial sessions for children and provides assistive devices, where needed. It works holistically with children in the context of their family and community and across health, education, livelihoods and safety. It strengthens local structures, including Parent Support Groups, ECD Centre Committees, village health teams and education officials. It trains parents/ caregivers on nutrition, kitchen gardens, family health and the protection and care of their children. It links with others in advocacy campaigns, amplifying children's voices. ECD centres are located close to, or within, primary school compounds, making transition easier.

Success factors:

- ★ Adopting participatory play-based approaches and activities that put children at the centre of the work.
- ★ Addressing family needs, including agriculture and income generation through Parent Support Groups.
- ★ Getting parents, teachers, community and local government actively involved through existing groups and structures – and developing really strong relationships between them e.g. parent to teacher.
- ★ Building on previous phases of work and linking to its other gender and village engagement work.
- ★ Strengthening itself as an organisation through active participation in the AIAL network and other networks, by linking up with other NGOs to share learning and through the OS process.

CHILDREN'S VOICE

Accepted and safe in school



I was like a seed before I started school; now I am like a seed that has germinated.

In order to be a big tree, I need to study hard and participate at school, help at home and keep the environment at home and school clean.

I like being at school because children are good and are playing together now – even I have friends now at school!

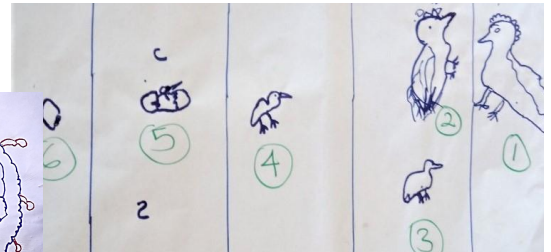
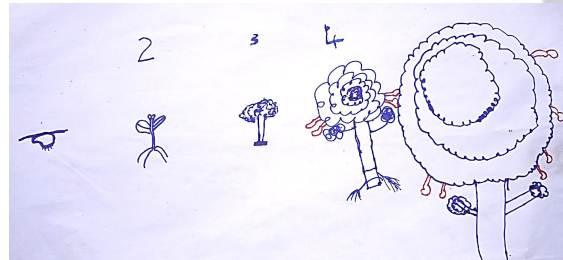
I feel listened to at school, church and home.



I feel included in play time, eating, classwork, taking porridge, and during assembly.

I feel included and safe at school – by my teachers and friends; at home by my parents; and at church, by the church leaders.

Source: Evaluation primary research visit and APPCO's use of the 'child participation' scale with young children with disabilities and trauma.



CHILDREN'S INFLUENCE

(APPCO staff - peer learning and case study sessions)

When the children explain their drawings, it helps them to think critically and increases our understanding of how the children view themselves and helps us understand their level and thinking.

Involving the children helps us understand...and advocate for what is right for them. Children speak for themselves – they bring out issues they believe have held them back and what it takes to have better education outcomes.

School is now a reality for marginalised children

- 3,246 more children are enrolled in ECD centres – 14% of them are with disabilities, up from 3% at the beginning of the project when most children were kept at home.
- Enrolment in ECD went up by 58% in the last year of the project.
- 535 children, including 55 with disabilities, successfully graduated from ECD and transitioned to primary school.

Children are safe and empowered

- ***“The children who have gone through ECD training are bold, compared to the others who are more reserved.”*** (Community Development Officer - primary research)
- 517 children received assistive devices from the project.
- Children have gained life skills e.g. in personal hygiene and caring for the environment.
- 888 children have had help in dealing with trauma through psychosocial sessions.
- 90% of children in the project can express their views and participate better at school and home.

ECD is embedded in local roles and systems

- All 15 of the ECD centres are now registered with district government – only nine were registered at the start of the project. Two more centres have been built - with parents contributing 70% of the labour and materials.
- Each has a functioning Centre Management Committee and a system for data collection, linking to the District Education Committee, the Office of the Prime Minister and to UNHCR.
- 668 communities (65%) now have access to ECD services for marginalised children – up from 3% at baseline.
- Parents now take a lead role in helping government health workers with screening to identify children with disabilities and to refer them to the hospital when needed.
- 95% of caregivers support the enrolment of marginalised children in ECD and, together with Centre Committees, follow up with families.
- 1,457 families received training in agricultural practice and formed 48 farmers' groups.
- 1,735 are trained in action planning for their families.

(statistics source: year 3 annual report)

APPCO identity, Organisational Strengthening...

- ***“We are working on the inner part of the onion - we had problems in team coordination but now we relate much better after our team-building activities”*** (APPCO director - case study session). APPCO has developed peer-to-peer support mechanisms instead of having to go only through supervisors. Staff find this helpful.
- Human Resource systems are stronger and in the final stage of upgrading.
- With consultancy support, APPCO has developed a resource mobilisation strategy – it has helped them secure some further funding.
- APPCO has enhanced its capacity ***“to further handle more complex and larger interventions of a similar nature as well as partnerships”*** (year 3 report)

...and collective learning

“Our participation in the AIAL network is proving central in advancing our organisational learning agenda to further strengthen programme development. We are learning from experiences of other partners operating in a similar context.” (APPCO staff - case study session)

APPCO LASTING LEGACY

Multiplier effect – a learning and influencing ECD hub

- APPCO shared its 'Play-Up' model with the national Emergency Working Group, influencing uptake by the UN's Education Cannot Wait fund and INGOs like International Rescue Committee and World Vision. UNHCR and the Office of the Prime Minister have recognised it as the only partner in the district impacting children's lives.
- District government therefore asked APPCO to lead a campaign with two other NGOs that helped 790 girls enrol and stay in school.
- Some communities in the project area built classrooms as a result of APPCO's joint advocacy campaign with LABE.
- OS helped APPCO secure funding for work with adolescents in Gulu.

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CASE STUDY FIVE

CYECE, GMHD AND CHINANSI MALAWI

Communities of Trust
Keep the Work Going



Who: Centre for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education (CYECE)

Partners: Grassroots Movement for Health and Development (GMHD);
Centre for Human Rights and Institute for National Social Initiative (Chinansi Foundation)

Grant: July 2016 AIAL grant of
£800,000 over 54 months

Country: Malawi –
Salima district

AIAL area of work: Marginalised children in primary school and learning. Parents, communities and authorities supporting and monitoring.

COMMUNITIES OF TRUST KEEP THE WORK GOING

Strong evidence: Good reports; final desk-based evaluation; two Comic Relief monitoring visits, case study sessions; primary research.

The big story:

Home visits by school and community members have embedded a monitoring system that is less about policing and more about relationships of trust. Building that rapport has levelled power hierarchies and helped parents and children change attitudes to their school enrolment. 5,725 children with disabilities, street-connected children, orphans and girls are now in school and doing well. **“Our monitoring system didn’t just aim at collecting data but at supporting the children”** (CYECE staff - case study session). Teachers keep attendance registers updated. Back-to-School Committees use smart- phones to capture data and pass it on to district authorities. A District Technical Advisory Committee links government officials with NGOs and another committee for community leaders links them to school and community structures and to teachers.

The project approach:

CYECE and its partners worked with 19 primary schools, helping government and communities make sure primary age children are registered, staying in school and learning. They set up eight community-based transitional centres – night schools which are part of the government complementary education approach for dropouts – so children who missed out on school could catch up on their education and transition to primary. They formed/ revitalised 16 Back-to-School Committees to visit children’s homes and provide counselling, school materials or links to medical help. They trained School Management Committees, Parents’ Associations and teachers in child rights and supporting vulnerable children. Children learned life skills so they could take on leadership roles. Anti-bullying campaigns and reporting boxes helped make schools safer. And partners lobbied for policy changes like abolition of exam fees.

Success factors:

- ★ Developing strong relationships between existing communities, schools, government and local structures to ensure they are responsible for children attending school and learning.
- ★ The night schools have helped children get back into the school system.
- ★ Passing community byelaws to tackle specific barriers to children’s education.
- ★ Creating a safe environment in the schools through the life skills training, reporting boxes etc.
- ★ Coordination through the Technical Advisory Group – with WhatsApp communication.
- ★ Strengthening partner capacity through the Humentum financial management programme and through Comic Relief monitoring visits, which guided them to collate more qualitative information.

CHILDREN'S VOICE

Source: AIAL primary research visit and project final report and evaluation

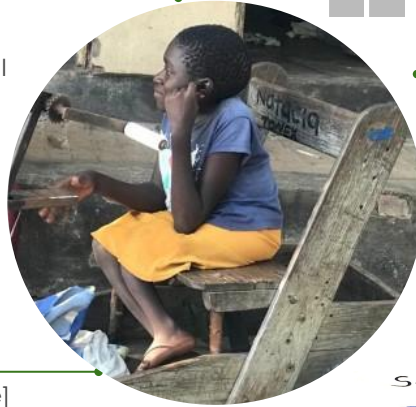
Our safety

Night school – a new chance



I was out of school for a long time ...[because] I was farming. When my mother told me about night school, I eventually agreed to go. I performed well and now I have progressed to Standard 6. (15-year-old boy)

My mother moved to a new place, and I ended up out of school for a year. When I returned, the teacher came to visit me with the Chief, and they encouraged me to enrol...So I started night school. (14-year-old boy)



At our school, we used to experience abuse like beatings and theft... We have a complaints box where we report abuse. Teachers open the box and read all our complaints – all culprits are punished. (primary-age boy)

Most of us would have been married by now [without this project] – we would have been hopeless and uneducated. (primary-age girl)

These days our teachers respond quickly to cases and so we feel motivated to report to them. (primary-age girl)

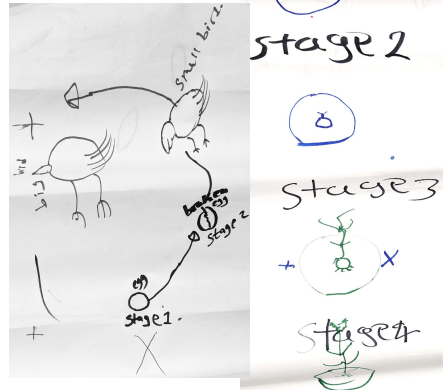
School/ community follow-up



I was a school dropout but they [the school committee] brought me back into school. I started learning about my rights, which is why I am on this [final] stage now. (Form 2 secondary school girl)

I didn't even have everyday needs such as soap, lotion and food, so I dropped out of school. The community committee came for a home visit and asked my mother if I could re-enrol. I agreed, and managed to complete primary school and then made it into secondary school. (12-year-old girl)

I had dropped out of school because of the violence I experienced at home...What really helped was when the community committee came to my house to speak with my parents... and agreed that I needed to get back to school. (15-year-old girl)



CHILDREN'S INFLUENCE

Children have a voice against school violence – there is a new generation with safe schools. They raise issues through a confidential reporting box system. Children form part of the committee who decide how to deal with the cases reported.

4,320 marginalised children (56% girls) reported feeling safe in school.

Sustained community-based ownership and monitoring

- **Community byelaws:** *"We developed 12 byelaws that have helped this area deal with out-of-school children. I was able to end child marriages, and this project helped by linking us to chiefs so that ... byelaws didn't just cover the project's school community, but also the entire Khombeza area"* (Teacher, Salima district - primary research). 653 traditional leaders are using community byelaws to make sure the most marginalised children enrol and stay in school.
- **Back-to-School Committees** use score cards and assessment forms with indicators to identify children with disabilities and other out-of-school children during home visits. They follow up dropouts on the streets, in the market, on their farms and at home. They track policy implementation and galvanise everyone to play their role.
- **Parent, school and community groups** have helped mend school facilities like toilets and class blocks. They have provided materials themselves and also linked families to schemes like the Village Development Fund. School Management Committees, Parent-Teachers' Associations and Village structures also help follow up and counsel children not in school.

"A sense of community ownership improved accountability."

(Teacher, Salima district - primary research)

Impact on the most left-out children

- **In school and learning:** 5,725 children who were not in school are now there and achieving a pass rate of 80% in end-of-year exams.
- **Confident and safe:** those who were left out are now active in school and extra-curricular activities, asking questions, taking on leadership roles and reporting cases of violence (up by 84%). Bullying and corporal punishment have gone down. 3,276 children report feeling safe. Byelaws have protected children from harmful practices such as the Gule Wamkulu cult.

Impact on government officials and systems

- Government structures such as police, courts, District Councils and the Ministry of Labour, together with Traditional Authorities, brought children back to school by ending child marriages and child labour.
 - District officials now develop quarterly workplans for supervision and inspection and monitor policy implementation.
 - Community monitoring is embedded in new guidelines for the School Improvement Grant, so communities can track its implementation.

CYECE,
GMHD,
CHINANSI
LASTING
LEGACY

Sparking a flame:

Training on child rights awareness sparked a flame in Kanjuwi and Chilanga communities' support for marginalised children. Teachers, school and village committees, and leaders changed their attitudes to critical issues such as education of pregnant girls. Children who experienced stigma because of issues like child marriage, cattle-herding and teen motherhood felt they could return to school or enrol for the first time. Dropouts decreased from 63% to 27%.

(statistics source: final and other reports and external evaluation)

Sustaining and extending the impact

- Over two years after the project ended, children are still in school and safe because of community-led byelaws, night schools, reporting boxes and anti-bullying work.
- Community leaders, structures, school groups and teachers formed a local learning network that organised exchange visits among traditional leaders to share learning about using byelaws.
- Partners set up the District Advisory Committee to bring government and NGOs together, strengthening district government coordination.
- CYECE's work also led to forming a network of organisations supporting people with disabilities.
- District government abolished exam processing fees in the project area after advocacy as it was contributing to drop-out – thus benefiting marginalised children in the future.



6

CASE STUDY SIX

HAKIELIMU TANZANIA

Linking and Learning for Lasting Legacy



Who: HakiElimu –

a Tanzanian research, advocacy and campaigning NGO

Partners:

HakiElimu works through its volunteer 'Friends of Education' movement

Grant: May 2017 AIAL grant of **£500,000** over 36 months – instead of funding a project, 'core funding' contributes to their total organisational strategy and budget

In February 2020, this was extended by **£300,000** over 24 months

Country: Tanzania – 22 districts

AIAL area of work: systems change in all areas, with more focus on safety in Phase 2; influencing education policy and practice for inclusive education – in both primary and secondary schools.

LINKING AND LEARNING FOR LASTING LEGACY – THE EDUCATION WE WANT

Strong evidence: reliable, high-quality reports, external evaluation, staff case study sessions and primary research.

The big story:

HakiElimu has forged connections across society to promote learning, amplify voices in advocacy and sustain community initiatives. As a result, girls are staying in school and learning, and child protection has improved across 127 schools in 22 districts. HakiElimu's **Friends of Education** movement of over 45,000 community members links children's voices with parents, school authorities, district government and national structures, HakiElimu has created **"a culture of shared learning and collaboration in advocacy"** (HakiElimu final evaluation), hosting the AIAL Tanzania network, working with strategic CSOs and producing a study on ECD in Tanzania, as well as published research on **'The Education We Want'**. Joining all these voices enabled them to influence the National Inclusive Education Strategy, a review of the Education and Training Policy, the adoption of the readmission policy for teen mothers and guidelines on how to set up child protection and gender desks in schools. So the whole systems works better to include and protect children with disabilities and girls.

The approach:

"You have to be part of the schools, work with the community, listen to what they tell you." (staff - case study session)

Friends of Education mentors and supports 127 primary and secondary schools. They monitor performance and expenditure; run dialogues on child violence, inclusion, planning and teaching; mobilise communities into action; and feed data into surveys and social media. HakiElimu amplifies voices through research, working with the media to do investigative journalism, tracking educational expenditure and running campaigns. It has hosted AIAL Tanzania network meetings and overseen the network studies in Malawi and Uganda, as well as taking part in the regional network RELI. It has trained partners in evidence-based advocacy that links everyone up. It builds capacity of those they work with, including Friends of Education, parents, champions' clubs, local government officials and MPs.

Success factors:

- ★ Rooted in the community and linking their experience to national advocacy.
- ★ A collaborative culture through networks and other partnerships that amplifies voices further.
- ★ A strong relationship with government, adapting the advocacy strategy from criticising to consulting.
- ★ Adaptive and relevant to country policies and programmes and aligned to children and family needs e.g. champion clubs in schools and supporting women's entrepreneurship.
- ★ Comic Relief's core funding has enabled HakiElimu to grow stronger as an organisation and adapt their strategy to the changing context – **but means achievements are only partly attributable to AIAL.**

CHILDREN'S VOICE

Our safety and influence – I can stand up and speak



We use the 'Sauti Yangu' box (My Voice) to share challenges and suggestions with the teachers - for example, we shared about some students being cruel and violent - and they dealt with it so bullying and violence in school has gone down. (girl)

Through the 'Sauti Yangu' box, we expressed concern about punishments in class time which made us miss lessons - and this was changed. (boy)

It improved my confidence and made me strong. I can now stand up and speak about what affects me and my friends. (girl)

Boys have been trained to understand our challenges and how to work through them so they now give us better support. (girl)

Being a club member has built my self-confidence and enabled me to share knowledge with my peers. (boy)

LASTING CHANGE FOR CHILDREN



Source: AIAL evaluation primary research – focus groups with children aged 12-18 and duty-bearers; and statistics from final evaluation and report

CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

7,637 learners (52% girls) stayed in school and are doing better in class because of improved school infrastructure.

More children with disabilities go to school as parents', teachers', and peers' attitudes to them have changed - 84% of children are positive about interacting with them.

4,291 girls who were missing lessons due to lack of sanitary pads now have reusable ones made by girls and boys.

393 girls now have new hostel rooms at their secondary school, saving them walking 15km a day.

CHILDREN INFLUENCING CHANGE

Children, especially girls, have gained confidence, participate actively in discussions in and out of school and have developed skills in problem-solving.

Children's voices are amplified as they report bullying and violence in school and influence school policy. 1,980 child gender champions advocate on issues like child marriage and poor parenting.

Collective learning

- AIAL Tanzania network in collaboration with other CSOs led to the President's Office inviting partners to review the National Inclusive Education Strategy and action plan.
 - Two studies led by HakiElimu documented the evidence that AIAL partners are using to influence national policy: **'The Education We Want'** and **'Access to Inclusive Pre-Primary Education for Children with Disabilities'**.

A learning organisation

- HakiElimu helped other AIAL network members link to national and regional education coalitions.
- HakiElimu helped strengthen the Tanzania Education Network, improving CSO participation in education dialogues.
- It developed new policies including whistle-blowing and protection of the environment.
- It completed a participatory Gender audit to assess gaps in gender policy and practice.
- It strengthened financial, programming and MEL systems, including mobile technology for real-time community reporting: **"Flexibility of core funding mean we could allocate funds to strengthen systems and sustain staff longer."** (HakiElimu staff - case study session)

**HAKIELIMU
LASTING LEGACY**
(multi-donor funded)

Local government, schools and other actors invest in inclusion

- Local government has contributed resources to improve schools, for example, Tabora district gave over £3,000 to support construction of pit latrines at a secondary school hostel; others helped construct classrooms.
- Private Savings and Cooperatives in Mbeya supported inclusive education by contributing desks to a local school.
- Government has taken on some project schools and is improving the environment for those with special needs.

Education system is more inclusive

HakiElimu's advocacy contributed to :

- The launch of the National Inclusive Education Strategy.
- The introduction of the readmission policy for school dropouts, especially teen moms.
- The government's decision to review the National Education and Training Policy.
- The government's guidelines on how to set up child protection and gender desks in primary and secondary schools and guidelines for formation and coordination of Children's Councils.

Communities actively sustain children's education and safety

- 45,395 volunteers in Friends of Education are more deeply engaged, raising awareness on quality inclusive education, organising and facilitating dialogues and promoting school and community action. They help link everyone up as they send data on mobile phones to local government, who invite them to key meetings. **"I love what I do. I have become an activist for education. I have passion and I pass on the knowledge I've received. I will continue in this role..."** (volunteer, primary research)
- 40 villages prepared action plans to support the national Action to End Violence Against Women and Children, including sustaining child protection committees.
- Community perceptions of children with disabilities have improved, resulting in reduced stigma and violence against them and improved identification and support. HakiElimu's campaign focused on evidence-based communication to prevent sexual and gender-based violence in school, calling for action from communities.

(statistics source: annual report 2020 and evaluation)

Multiplier effect leading to wider social change.

"...most of the project interventions have inbuilt sustainability mechanisms that guarantee continued benefits beyond its implementation time." (HakiElimu final evaluation). While achievements are only partly attributable to AIAL, **"the nature of the (core) funding enabled us to be focused and implement our strategy, making adjustments when needed"** (HakiElimu staff - case study session). It enhanced sustainability and spill-over impact, supporting Friends of Education as an ongoing movement. School clubs, suggestion boxes, capacity of school and community structures and policy change mean that the work continues to have an impact. Success of the project led to securing funding from the Canadian government to continue with the activities.

7



CASE STUDY SEVEN

REFUGEE LAW PROJECT UGANDA

Tackling Displacement and Disability



REFUGEE LAW PROJECT

Who: Refugee Law Project (RLP), Uganda
www.refugeelawproject.org
School of Law, Makerere University

July 2020 AIAL grant of **£337,130**
over 36 months

Country: Uganda
Nakivale refugee settlement,
Isingiro District and Kampala

AIAL area of work: disability and
marginalisation

TACKLING DISPLACEMENT AND DISABILITY

Medium evidence: Good annual reports, final report, peer learning sessions. Final external evaluation pending.

The big story:

Targeting the gaps: Over 500 refugee children with disabilities have enrolled in school. Retention rates are high as schools have become more positive and vigilant in identifying and supporting children with special needs. The voices of refugee children are now being heard in more spaces, including national dialogues. The project has looked at the unique needs of refugee children with disabilities and their caregivers. It shows the critical need to begin with each child's home circumstances and understand why they end up hidden and missing out on their education: **"Children with disabilities are often backstopped from accessing school, stemming from low expectations for success placed on such children and the fear and shame that comes with having a child with disabilities"** (RLP staff - case study interview).

The project approach:

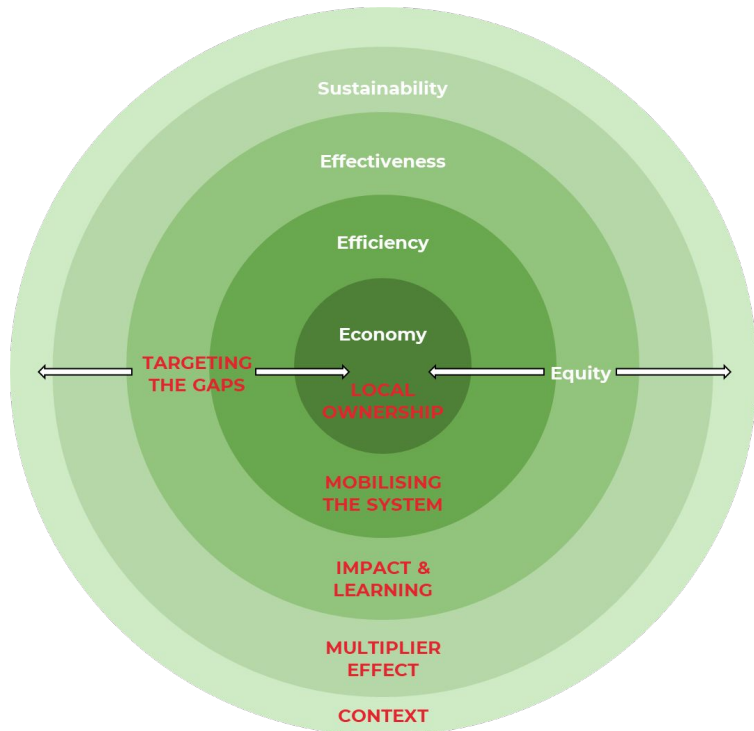
The project carried out a comprehensive assessment and profiling of children with disabilities and trauma. It set up child-friendly spaces for children to interact and to voice issues such as **'I am not heard at home'**. It created a support system for parents and caregivers, including group therapy, parenting sessions, home visits and peer-to-peer interaction. Teachers, village health teams and other school-linked groups were trained to understand refugee children's traumatic journeys, needs and rights. RLP also facilitated dialogues and actively networked with other partners to disseminate learning, refer and advocate to improve services offered to refugee children with disabilities.

Success factors:

- ★ RLP's experience of working with refugee populations since 2012, established relationships and complementary work on mental health, psychosocial wellbeing and access to justice have allowed beneficiaries to access services for different dimensions of their situation.
- ★ Project works with refugee children and hosts to break stigma and increase social cohesion.
- ★ Holistic approach that includes psychosocial support to address trauma and works with caregivers to empower them to tackle root causes of why children are not accessing school.
- ★ Teacher training focus on refugees' journey and how that affects a child's learning – teachers have more empathy and understanding of forced migration, and how trauma affects children.

CATALYSING LONG-TERM SOCIAL CHANGE FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

RPL's approach is a great example of...



Local ownership - enabling a problem-solving mindset

Prioritising the voice and experiences of refugee children with disabilities and caregivers through child friendly spaces. **Children lead** on designing inclusive messages and speaking about issues that affect them, including successes and changes in their lives (at home, school, community and national spaces).

Mobilising the system and getting everyone playing their part

The project targeted all relevant groups: children, caregivers, School Management Committees, local leaders, Refugee Welfare Council, school teachers and administrators (including bursars), refugee support groups, higher level education officials, Kampala Capital City authorities and the Ministries of Education and Gender. All have a stake to play including for referral pathways. The project trained child protection structures in the community.

Impact and learning: see next slide for lasting legacy. Two key learnings:

- When a refugee family has a child with disabilities, all other children in that family are vulnerable and require support, for example, because of staying at home to look after their sibling - a fact that is often ignored or not recognised.
- The need to incorporate psychological support for caregivers, as well as children.

Unleashing the multiplier effect

- Headteachers and SMCs are now spearheading changes in practice at school.
- Established support groups led by caregivers will continue to be a source of peer-to-peer support and survivor-led advocacy.
- RPL created guidance on inclusive education in the context of forced migration, to help people understand how to work more effectively with refugee children with disabilities.
- RPL is now in a better position to take advantage of both community and national platforms to keep advocating for inclusive education for refugees

REFUGEE LAW PROJECT LASTING LEGACY

More **refugee children with disabilities** are enrolling and staying in ECD and primary education (retention 80%) and are more confident, knowledgeable and interested in learning. They enjoy positive interactions with peers and teachers and are less aggressive.

Children are supportive of their peers, able to articulate their rights and lead in developing messaging. Three children take part in the national advocacy Reference Group formed by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and UNICEF. Previously the voice of refugee children was unheard and children with disabilities were not visible.



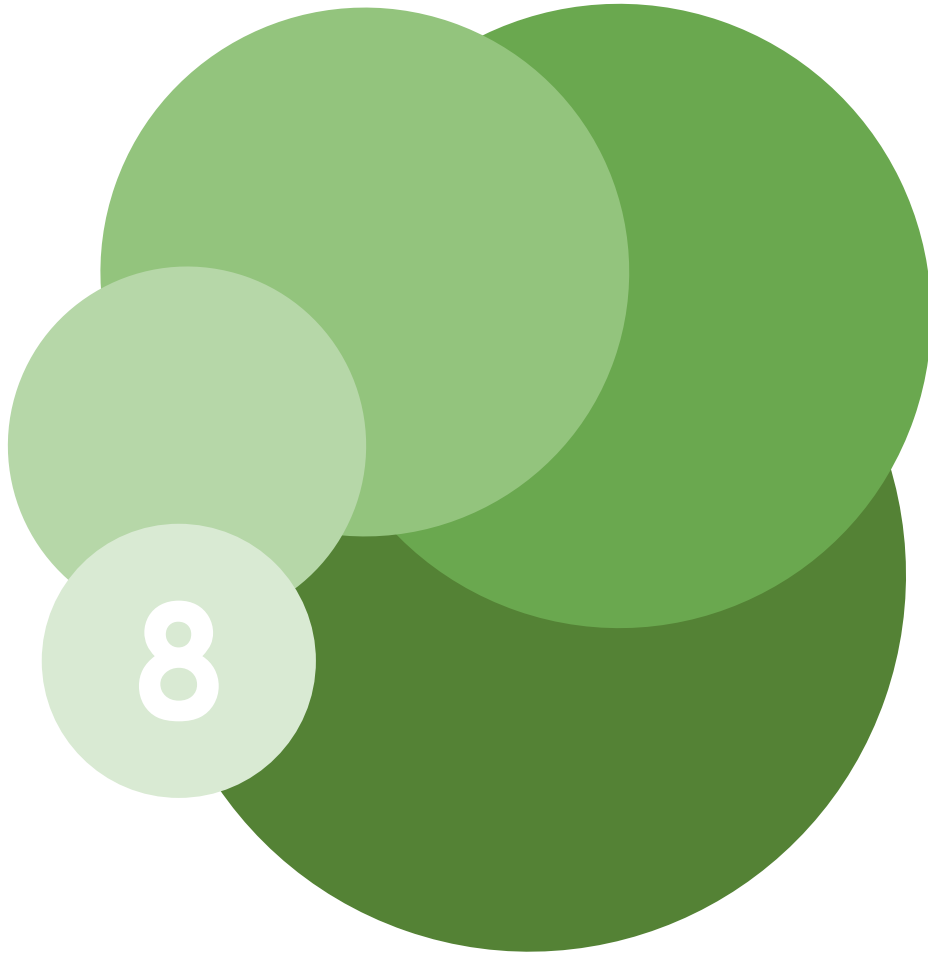
Bringing refugee children's voices to national dialogues

Caregivers now recognise the ability of children with disabilities to interact, participate and learn like other children. This has catalysed their perceptions that their own child has potential and encouraged them to send their child to school – thus also freeing up siblings who were missing school to care for them.

Teachers are more aware and intentional in better handling refugee children and those with disabilities. All four schools now have a focal point for children with disabilities. Schools are beginning to capture data about children. As a result, as well as enrolling new learners, they identified and supported 222 at-risk children in school – showing the impact of training them in inclusive knowledge and practices. Two headteachers allowed refugee children to attend school and another to sit end-of-year exams without paying fees.

Stakeholders are becoming receptive to inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools, rather than special schools - a discussion which was initially hard to engage in effectively. Referral pathways have been created to support refugee children and their caregivers. National dialogues with government and other providers have improved services offered to refugee children with disabilities, for example by tackling harmful practices and by agreeing the different roles each has in promoting inclusion for all children.

The AIAL project stemmed from \$10,000 seed funding from the Fund for Human Rights. **Refugee Law Project** has been able to expand its work with children and increasingly take part in national discussions on inclusion, presenting the unique needs of refugee children and those with disabilities.



CASE STUDY EIGHT



FIRELIGHT FOUNDATION

Devolved Funding Model
Catalyses Community ECD



Who: Firelight Foundation - a US-registered public charity

Partners: 21 community organisations

Grant: January 2018 AIAL grant of **£1,654,000** over 24 months (extended to Dec 2020)

This was a contribution to a long-term programme which ran to early 2021 co-funded by Conrad N. Hilton Foundation (from 2011) and Bainum Family Foundation (2015-2019)

Countries: Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia

AIAL area of work: Good quality ECD - grounding community organisations in local and international knowledge on ECD; providing operations grants, MEL support and other capacity building

DEVOLVED FUNDING MODEL CATALYSES COMMUNITY ECD

Strong evidence: Detailed annual reports; final evaluation, case study and peer learning sessions, wider Firelight ECD Follow-up Study.

The big story:

21 community organisations in Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia are now running stronger quality and more impactful ECD interventions in their communities. Comic Relief partnered with an intermediary, Firelight Foundation, to give small, catalytic grants to those wanting to reach more vulnerable children effectively. Funding and support helped community organisations learn new and more participatory play-based approaches; link to local community and government resources, services and partners; and plan for sustainability. As a result, ECD has come closer to home and is helping a large number of marginalised children receive better care and be ready for school. These small community organisations have continued to design and implement solutions for issues affecting children beyond project funding.

The approach (capacity building, mentorship, peer learning and grants)

- Piloted and tested different models in Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia with ages 0-3 and 3-6; collected data to improve quality of learning and care; shared approaches and learning; accessed local and regional ECD networks (including the AIAL network).
- Variety of interventions responding to early school readiness, early infant child health and development, parental knowledge and skills, development of learning through play in a variety of community settings.
- Some capacity strengthening for community organisations outside of ECD e.g. safeguarding and protection, MEL and financial management.
- Delivery of capacity building was through Lead Partners, consultants and regionally-based Firelight staff - learning from that model led to a shift to a multi-form mentoring model which Firelight currently uses.

Success factors

- ★ Identification and selection of community organisations there for the long-term.
- ★ An intentional geographic cluster approach builds networks and communities of practice for learning and sharing in context, and for collective advocacy and action.
- ★ Communities co-drive and design solutions so capacity remains, even when the CBOs lack funding.
- ★ Linking community organisations with networks and government at district and national level.
- ★ Long-term investment: grants and capacity support (programmatically and organisationally); peer mentoring.
- ★ Well-considered plan for graduating community organisations from Firelight support so they have capacity to: 1) test models to empower parents/ caregivers; 2) implement play-based ECD methods; 3) use data to improve the quality of learning and care; 4) access emerging ECD networks for learning and advocacy.
- ★ Continuous high quality documentation of learning and willingness to re-examine and change approach.

Empowered communities

- Increased community awareness of ECD and child development and the critical importance of the first 1000 days.
- Increased demand for services and programmes for young children.
- Positive care and development practices.
- Communities demand accountability from government regarding ECD policies, budget etc.

Wider influence

- In Zambia, the Ministry of Education deploys teachers in ECD centres, supported by Firelight partners.
- TAHEA in Tanzania influences guidelines on construction of community ECD centres.
- In Malawi, CBOs participate in the district government ECD Technical Working Group and one CBO in the national ECD Technical Working Group.

Changes for children

14,690 children aged 0-3, 17,237 aged 4-5 and 26,300 aged 6-12 indirectly benefitted from improved school readiness, safe environments and nutrition.

Note - tracking change for children was not part of AIAL outcomes which were all focused on CBOs, but was reported by CBOs and included in case studies.

Well-documented learning

Follow up study (see right) has generated valuable learning from partners about:

- a) sustainability (prepare for end of funding early and the need to leverage community assets);
- b) communities of practice are more likely to survive if owned (organised, hosted, funded and practiced) by the partner CBOs.

FIRELIGHT LASTING LEGACY

Stronger, resilient community organisations with commitment to and capacity in ECD

21 local grassroots community organisations (11 in Tanzania, five in Zambia and five in Malawi) have become stronger, more resilient, and more professional; can identify and respond to community priority needs; mobilise communities on ECD issues; have a holistic understanding of what a child needs to develop well; and apply global and local ECD knowledge and best practice in their work and use this to inform decision-making and practice.

"CBOs are catalytic in engaging and mobilising community action for ECD. With tools, resources and skills, CBOs can create measurable changes in the practices of parents and ECD centre caregivers." (Firelight

Learnings and Impact p15)

Sustainability

Two years after the end of the project (in 2022) Firelight commissioned a **follow-up study** on the transitioned CBOs to look at ongoing impact and sustainability, with good evidence of a multiplier effect:

- Parents are taking ownership of ECD activities and running ECD centres through the formation of Centre Committees.
- The model was adopted by others: e.g. the Government of Tanzania adopted the after-school programme and is scaling it to other wards; and CBOs are adopting communal gardens to support ECD feeding programmes.
- Assessments by CBOs found the performance of children who pass through ECD is sustained beyond grade 1, showing ECD activities have a long-lasting impact beyond the early years.

(statistics source: annual reports and external final evaluation)

9



CASE STUDY NINE

USDC AND ABLE CHILD AFRICA UGANDA

Moving Monitoring from Organisation
to Community



Uganda
Society for
Disabled
Children



MOVING MONITORING FROM ORGANISATION TO COMMUNITY

Medium evidence: strong reports, external mid-term review, peer learning and staff case study sessions, and primary research visit – but pending final evaluation for Phase 2 project.

The big story:

USDC strengthened their MEL, firstly at organisational level but now in the community too. Children contribute their views in bi-annual focus group discussions. Parent champions visit homes, especially to follow up families who are not supporting their children's education. Teachers carry out monthly home visits to all the learners with disabilities. They fill in home visit forms, tracking numbers and analysing data by age and gender. Their reports on challenges inform training provided by Kyambogo University's teacher education programme. Centre Coordinators also monitor and support the teachers in child-to-child approaches. District government education officials visit the centres too: **"MEL has created the biggest impact of the project. It brought visibility to USDC in the district. When the Education department needs technical advice and support on issues for children with disabilities, they come to USDC."** (USDC staff – primary research). But there is still more to do: USDC wants to learn how to amplify the voices of children to influence government and others.

USDC's child-to-child approach supports all children to understand, discuss and take action on issues that impact their lives and to protect themselves. USDC trains teachers, headteachers and Master Trainers who then pass on their learning to others. They set up Parents Support Groups as Village Savings and Loans Associations that carry out small businesses and advocate for inclusive education, working with schools to leverage extra funds from government. USDC trains health workers to identify children with disabilities (CwD) and refer them for medical assessments, hospital appointments and assistive devices. In Phase 1, USDC worked with 27 Primary schools. In Phase 2, they linked up with AIAL partner LABE to learn how to set up community-based ECD learning centres and to help LABE strengthen their reach to those with disabilities.

Success factors:

- ★ USDC's **"child-to-child training is at the heart of the success"** (project MTR) for children with disabilities. Individualised learning plans helped to strengthen learning outcomes.
- ★ Strong collaboration with government, children, parents, teachers and communities has increased ownership and sustainability – getting everyone to play their part.
- ★ Forming Parent Support Groups that are also Savings and Loans Associations enables the parents to generate income and meet their children's needs, while needs-based training helps them change their attitudes and behaviours to disability.
- ★ Partnership with LABE has helped USDC develop an ECD curriculum and learn from LABE's model.
- ★ Comic Relief's flexibility and responsiveness to the changing context combined with direct OS support in Phase 2 and Able Child Africa's accompaniment has enabled USDC to strengthen and embed MEL.

Who: Able Child Africa – a UK-registered NGO

Partner: Uganda Society for Disabled Children (USDC)

Grant: April 2016 AIAL grant of **£530,989** over 60 months
In February 2020, this was extended by **£299,978** over 36 months + **£30,000** OS grant

Country: Northern Uganda – 3 districts: Nebbi, Adjumani and Lira, focusing on the first two only in Phase 2

AIAL area of work: Phase 1 - children with disabilities in primary school – extended in Phase 2 to develop community-based ECD model

VOICES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Source: AIAL primary research children's focus group discussions. Statistics from final report and MTR.

We are learning well – a better environment

“ Teachers visit us to find out how we are doing. Even at school, the teachers follow up on us to make sure we are learning well.

For those of us with visual impairment, the programme has really made learning easier – we are strategically placed in areas of the room where we can see the blackboard and we've been given glasses, which have really helped.

Whenever we need any help or assistance, we go to our teachers – especially those trained by USDC to support children with disabilities.

USDC also constructed a pit latrine that is accessible for those of us who can't use the normal latrines.

We are integrating well in our community

“ The teachers have been supportive in teaching us how to live with other children in the school and community - we've learned how to relate to others and how to react when we are mistreated.



CHANGE FOR CHILDREN (PHASE 1)

2,603 CwD (49% girls) enrolled in 27 primary schools and 81% show improved learning. Project schools improved accessibility for CwD and provided 158 assistive devices. Children without disabilities take a lead role in supporting CwD in school. 75% CwD improved their inclusion in community groups.

CHANGE FOR CHILDREN (PHASE 2)

1,099 children are enrolled in 18 inclusive ECD centres – 308 are CwDs (50% girls). 75% of CwD report improved inclusion in play and other activities – they interact with other children and are developing their speech and mobility. CwD are referred to hospitals for medical assessments, appointments and to receive assistive devices.

Parents, communities and government support inclusion

Phase 1:

- Parents of children with disabilities support them more – lobbying school and community groups and district government – and buying learning materials. 2,939 are in Support Groups and run profitable businesses.
- 457 teachers are trained, including 54 Master Trainers. More teachers are doing monthly home visits. 93% are embedding child-to-child approaches.
- District government provided classroom blocks and access roads; improved monitoring of inclusive education e.g. enrolment records; allocated new teachers to schools to help enrol children with disabilities; funded assistive devices and medical support for children with disabilities, and study leave for teachers.

Phase 2:

- 100% of 324 parents/ caregivers demonstrate improved attitudes to disability. 95% support children with disabilities better at home. Over 700 are part of savings groups. Parents pay fees towards caregiver stipends, contribute food, firewood, materials and land, and help improve infrastructure, working together with Centre Management Committees.
- 83% of village health officials identify children with disabilities in their early years and refer them for medical support and assistive devices.
- 100% of district and national government officials involved with the project show better understanding of how to include children with disabilities in ECD. District officials made 39 monitoring visits and national government officials made three visits.

Redefining relationships, leadership and culture

- Able Child Africa supported USDC in carrying out a safeguarding audit, based on the first disability-inclusive safeguarding guidelines that Able Child Africa developed with Save the Children International, funded by FCDO and in consultation with USDC.
- MEL capacity has improved, as well as the MEL culture amongst the board and staff.
- Direct OS support has helped USDC rethink where they are, and intend to be. They have reflected on relationships with Parent Support Groups – **“we had to leave our titles”** (staff - peer learning). USDC have also improved financial management systems.

Systems are becoming more inclusive

- 36 Primary Teaching Colleges embedded inclusive education in their training – **“A noticeable change in policy and practice”** (project MTR).
- USDC plays a leading role in the Inclusive Education Technical Group – the Ministry of Education consults them on national policy issues, enabling them to influence the COVID-19 reopening school policy and, together with AIAL network partners, the Inclusive Education policy.
- USDC’s child-to-child teacher guide was approved by government for use in project schools.
- The Ministry of Education approved and is planning to adopt USDC’s Individualised Learning Plan and guide, and their Learning Needs Identification tool and guide.

**USDC/ ACA
LASTING
LEGACY**

Multiplier effect

Phase 1

- 33 informal community learning groups were set up by parents and teachers, so children with disabilities receive more educational support.
- Parent Support Group members take on leadership roles in local councils, PTAs and district disability associations. They also access district government agricultural services.

Phase 2

- District and national government officials are helping all 18 ECD centres register so they can access government support.
- USDC, together with the AIAL network, is influencing the new National Inclusive Education policy so that it covers previously excluded groups, such as children with disabilities and refugees.

(statistics source: P1 and 2 final report; P1 mid-term review; P2 monitoring visit report)

10



CASE STUDY TEN

LABE UGANDA

Low-Cost ECD Takes Off



LOW-COST COMMUNITY ECD TAKES OFF

Strong evidence: High-quality reports, external evaluation, peer learning and case study sessions and primary research.

Who: Literacy and Adult Basic Education (LBE)

Grant: September 2017 AIAL grant of **£806,453** over 36 months

In May 2020 the grant was extended by **£349,423** for 24 months

In July 2020, LBE was awarded an additional grant of **£494,814** for 36 months to deepen learning in child-to-child work + **£25,662** OS grant

Country: Uganda – West Nile (Koboko and Obongi districts) and Northern region (Gulu and Nwoya districts)

AIAL area of work: Providing and advocating for good quality ECD for disadvantaged children

The big story:

24,116 disadvantaged children aged three to five, once hidden in remote, rural, post-conflict villages, are now in 68 home-based ECD learning centres in four districts – and transitioning on time to primary school. Older child facilitators play a vital role in identifying children most at risk of missing out, helping them enrol, stay in school and perform well – and in influencing caregivers, teachers and others. LBE's innovative, adaptive, low-cost approach is so effective that the Ministry of Education has integrated its Home Learning Centre (HLC) model into policy and is pushing to scale it up. LBE is a great example of the 'multiplier effect'. Its learning influenced organisations including Save the Children, UNICEF, USAID, the Cotton On Foundation and other AIAL partners. At the same time, LBE keeps strengthening its own work as a learning organisation. It has also deepened its learning on disability and children's empowerment and linked with universities in Uganda, Malawi and Ethiopia for action research to scale up the child-to-child approach.

LBE's approach:

LBE takes a 'whole family' approach, promoting learning across all ages and generations at HLCs – safe, informal areas around family homes. The HLCs are '**theatres of learning**' (LBE final report): children aged three to five years do not have to travel long distances but learn in their own language through games, role-plays, stories and songs, facilitated by in-school primary-aged children. LBE has reactivated and trained school clubs to increase children's leadership skills and confidence. Caregivers gain parenting and livelihood training linked to Village Savings and Loans groups. They contribute savings that cover costs like Parent Educator stipends, feeding, seedlings for the centre food garden and repairs. HLC Management Committees supervise activities. LBE works closely with government education and health departments and with the National Curriculum Development Centre to develop frameworks and tool-kits for home-based ECD.

Success factors:

- ★ LBE's exceptional commitment to learning from others and sharing its own learning; it constantly makes significant shifts in its organisation and model, always looking to see how it can do and be better.
- ★ Quality, deep, mutual relationships with children, families, community, peer organisations and government.
- ★ Effective MEL, combined with continuous advocacy and strengthened communications to influence others.
- ★ Effective relationship and capacity building to help everyone play their part (parents, educators, management committees) and especially evolving the child-to-child approach with young facilitators.
- ★ Phases of flexible funding from Comic Relief, enhanced by informal and formal linkages to other partners and an effective Organisational Strengthening process.

CHILDREN'S VOICE

Source: LABE and evaluation primary research - young facilitators aged 14-15 drew scales to show their progression in education and their voice/ influence. Statistics - LABE final report and evaluation.

Our learning and performance in ECD/ school



Now I have the boldness to stand before people to speak. My level of reading and understanding in class have improved – and my leadership skills.

My skills and knowledge resulted in children joining Primary 1.

My academic performance and leadership skills have greatly improved and that makes me so happy.



CHILDREN'S INFLUENCE

I look at myself as a role model who supports other children in the community.

I can now engage with parents, HLCs and primary schools in decision-making.

The way the young facilitators work has challenged teachers and parent facilitators who borrow skills and activities from them.

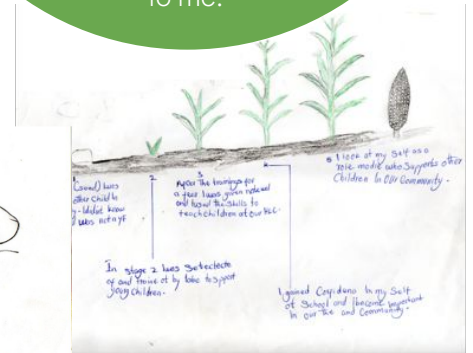
When I explained about school fees, my parents listened to me.

Feeling accepted and part of school/ community



Before, my discipline and behaviour were bad. As a result of the change in me, I was voted to be head-girl of the school.

Before, I could not socialise with others... I now have the skills to lead others and to relate to them.



Pre-school children learn and transition to primary school

- 3,233 pre-school children (53% girls) accessed quality ECD at 40 new HLCs – when only two existed at the start of the project. 1,200 5-6-year-olds became proficient in literacy, numeracy and motor skills.
- Children with disabilities are now in ECD and access assistive devices as needed: **"When I see how happy he is at the HLC, I'm encouraged to keep bringing him again and again. My fear of my child being laughed at is no more."** (mother of a child with disabilities - LABE [Stories of Change](#))
- 688 pre-school children graduated, transitioned to primary school and perform well: **"Those who come from the HLCs have an open mind and know how to socialise, manage hygiene and handle reading and writing materials."** (teacher - primary research)

Rural communities run home-based ECD

- Key community resources for facilitating ECD, were developed for continued use beyond the project, e.g. the ECD tool-kit and Young Facilitators' guides.
- 94 primary school teachers, 171 Young Facilitators and 80 Parent Educators were trained to implement the Home-Based ECD model.
- Management committees, parents and communities have worked together to create a good environment for ECD: 38/40 HLCs have shelters; 37 provide snacks; all have sanitation facilities and outdoor play areas.

Looking into ourselves

- **"The OS process was long-visioning – looking into ourselves...We have stronger teamwork. Staff are more focused and committed and this defines our culture."** (staff - peer learning session) – LABE holds regular organisational reflective meetings, so it can respond quickly to emerging issues. Staff are more aware of organisational values and how to live them out. It has also looked into succession planning.
- LABE has strengthened children's voice, using and adapting the evaluation participation scale. It has built it into its MEL system and is now working with clubs to strengthen children's influence and tackle gender issues.
- It has addressed gaps in its systems and policies, including safeguarding, financial management and human resources, and trained staff in resource mobilisation.

Young leaders

- Young Facilitators demonstrate improved education performance and leadership in delivering child-to-child sessions at HLCs.
- 19 schools manage child-to-child clubs for the facilitators and other learners.
- Children are now writing their own books, which LABE illustrates and adds to the HLC libraries.
- Young Facilitators act as role models: identifying young children to enrol in school, facilitating their learning and influencing teachers and parents.

Embedding HLC into government and community systems

- The National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) and LABE developed a Complementary Learning Framework for home-based ECD.
 - LABE has a signed Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education recognising the HLC Home-Based ECD model, thus enabling ongoing support of government and other agencies.
 - LABE took part in the Education policy review commission, advocating for ECD provision and hosting a visit from Commissioners.
 - HLC's register with government who monitor 55 HLCs quarterly.
 - 38 HLCs have set up Savings groups that contribute to costs.

LABE LASTING LEGACY

Multiplier effect – catalysing wider social change

- Six organisations in Western and Northern Uganda adopted the complete LABE home based ECD model. Two others in Central and Eastern Uganda, including a university, adopted components of the model.
- Two sub-counties in Gulu replicated the model: one of them (Lukele) set up a primary school based on the model to enable children to transition easily.
- Village Savings and Loans groups enable parents and communities to help finance HLCs, while also linking to government development mechanisms.
- LABE secured additional funding to extend their model from four to six districts.