

Impact **report**

2023

**Rising above
challenges**

Help  a
CHILD



A place to learn in safety

Eleven-year-old Gibani and her mother live in the hills of Gajapati, India. Gibani loves going to the children's centre in her village and explains why it is so important to her: 'I am usually at home. The child centre is the only place I can go safely. My mother says it is not safe outside the village.' Many girls in this area do not have access to education due to travelling distances. At the Help a Child children's centres, children can find a place to learn in safety. They play together, participate in all kinds of educational activities, learn about their rights, and learn to express their opinion.

Read more about childfriendly spaces on page 25.

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Standing firm

2023 was once more a year of global challenges. An unprecedented number of people worldwide were displaced from their homesteads and had to flee or find shelter elsewhere. At the same time, there is a decrease in official development aid and support for the least developed countries worldwide and a decline in international solidarity.

Despite these challenges, we are grateful that we succeeded in our mission to give more, better, and faster support to children and communities in 2023. Standing firm in turbulent times, we saw growing interest in our way of working for children and engaging communities. Our early childhood development expertise area has attracted more attention internationally, which is very promising. We found that staying focused on what we do well pays off. Recognition of our expertise and value in (child) protection has brought us into collaboration with large INGOs and the US in the DRC. Acknowledgement of our strong knowledge of problems and solutions in early childhood development in Rwanda enabled us to co-develop and design a USD 10 million grant with UNICEF and the Rwandan government on ECD. Our effectiveness is demonstrated in projects like Kids@Risk in the DRC (p. 23). Our projects are well integrated in local governments and society. Also, we have been given the opportunity to certify at the Core Humanitarian Standard after completing an audit performed by Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative (p. 48/49).

Every page in this report shows the results of our determination to help more children, and to do so even better, despite all the challenges. This is made possible with the support of our loyal supporters, for which we are grateful and feel blessed. The need is high. So is our ambition. In turmoil and in times of need, we are thankful that our Lord is in charge of this world. We trust that He will continue to bless our efforts.

Andries Schuttinga
CEO



This is Help a Child

Our mission

Help a Child provides a future for children in need, their family, and their entire community.

Our vision

As a Christian non-profit organization Help a Child wants every child – regardless of their social, political, religious, ethnic or economic background – to have a life in dignity, with love and with a promising future.

Our corporate values

We support children and families in need, because we follow Jesus Christ, who showed us God's love for mankind. The Bible teaches us to pass on God's love, to be merciful, to bring justice, to reconcile and to be good stewards. These Christian principles inspire us to give our best in all circumstances. Our corporate values are:

We value every child

We believe that every child is a unique gift from God, made in His image. We include all children, no matter their background, religion or abilities.

We empower people

We encourage children, youth, and adults to use their God-given abilities. We strengthen community structures and mobilize local resources.

We are faithful

We are trustworthy and accountable to the ones we support and the ones supporting us. We use our resources wisely, effectively, and efficiently.

We embrace partnership

We work with others based on equality and respect. We are loyal and honest and expect the same from our partners.

We learn and adjust

We are open-minded and eager to learn. We appreciate feedback and we learn from our mistakes.



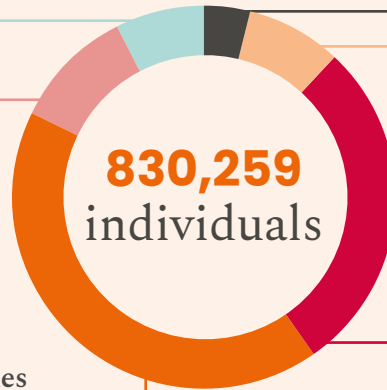
Key statistics 2023

Help a Child supported:

60,275 young children (0-7 years) in development programmes

86,497 children (8-18 years) in development programmes

346,808 children (< 18 years) in disaster response programmes



34,218 youth (19-35 years) in development programmes

65,680 adults (> 35 years) in development programmes

236,781 adults (> 18 years) in disaster response programmes

Help a Child established and/or strengthened:



745

Children Groups



941

Youth and Farmer Groups



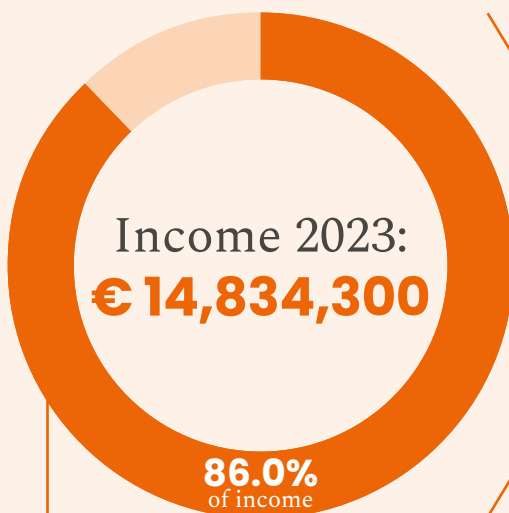
2,032

Self-Help Groups



126

Cluster Level Associations



Income from individuals: **€6,903,800**

Income from businesses:
€590,600

Income from government subsidies:
€5,341,400

Income from related non-profit organizations:
€229,100

Income from other non-profit organizations:
€1,742,800

Other income: **€26,600**

Expenditure on objectives: **€12,756,900**



CHAP. 1



Programmes

Global humanitarian needs were at record levels in 2023. The reasons have not changed: conflicts, environmental threats, scarce resources, and more. This is hitting the most vulnerable hardest. Ordinary communities and especially children are paying an unacceptable price. Meanwhile, in the West, there is diminishing support for development cooperation and less international solidarity. But despite all these setbacks, we were able to grow and to navigate these challenges. In this chapter, we want to share our results for the year 2023.

Achieving more quality and impact

We are continually trying to improve our work to design, implement, and scale programmes with high quality and relevance for our beneficiaries. This chapter first shares some general initiatives to reach that goal. We then provide some concrete examples of what that means in the countries we work in.

Expertise areas and scaling

Help a Child has three main areas of expertise: Early Childhood Development, Child Protection, and Youth & Work. These are sectors in disaster response and development: Help a Child

combines lifesaving humanitarian aid with longer-term resilience and sustainability activities. In these three main areas of expertise, we excel with strong track records, evidence-building, strategic innovation, and expertise staff. Especially in the areas of Parenting and Early Childhood Development Centres, Help a Child invested in 2023 in new scaling pathways outside of our core way of working. For example, in Rwanda we redesigned our strategic ambitions for the coming five years to prepare for more ECD-focused projects, combining different funding sources to create a multiplier effect and thereby impacting more young children and their families. As an organization, we made good progress in building the expertise further and opening new ways of funding and having an impact on children.

Disaster Response

In South Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Help a Child has been active in relieving acute needs and building sustainable change in protracted crises. With funding from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Dutch Relief Alliance, we have been able to bring about longer-term change in DRC, Somalia, and South Sudan, but also to address acute short-term needs after the flooding in Somalia at the end of 2023. With UN funding from UNHCR, WFP, and UNICEF, we have been able to address Food Security, Child Protection, and Emergency Education needs. With private funding from our Dutch constituency, Help a Child continued the Kids@Risk project in DRC, focusing on long-term development of children in a disaster response setting. Disaster

Response is a growing part of the Help a Child portfolio of projects, currently about 55% of our projects being humanitarian. It is our obligation to further address the rising needs in this world and to achieve longer-term solutions in acute and protracted crises as far as possible.

Development

Help a Child is a very experienced organization in the long-term development of communities and children. Our flagship comprises particularly the so-called Child-Centred Community Development (CCCD) projects in India, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda. It focuses on (Early) Childhood Development, Parenting, Community Empowerment (for example through Self-Help Groups), Integrated Farm Planning (PIP), and Youth & Work activities forming a holistic and intertwined approach to enable more child wellbeing. Help a Child continues to research and fine-tune the CCCD approach. Whereas the CCCD projects are funded through the Community Ambassador Model (CAM), with funds from our Dutch private constituency, Help a Child is becoming more successful in diversifying its funding base also in development countries. In 2023 in particular, there was growth in funding from UNICEF.

Skilled and well-supported staff

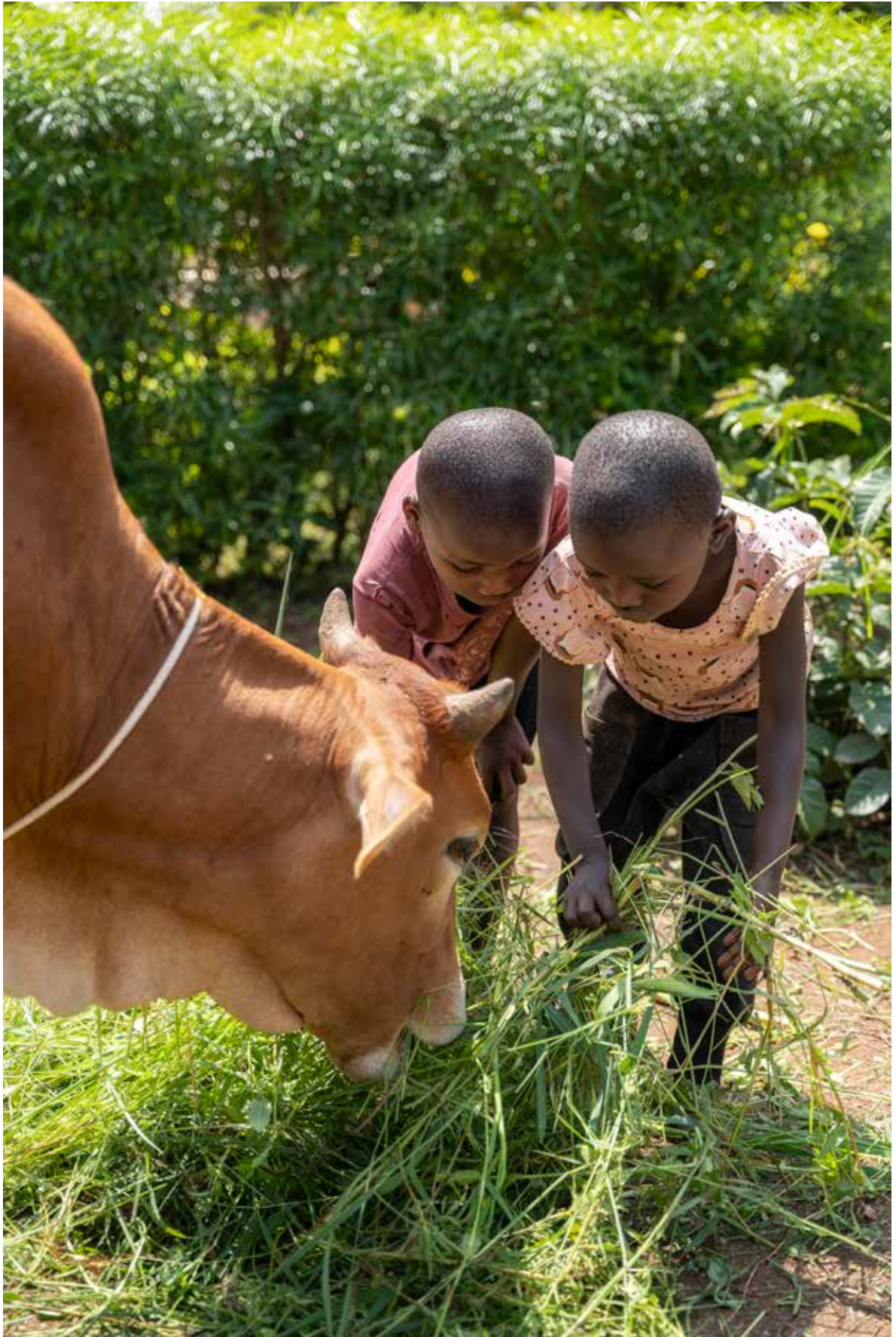
Country offices are building expertise and have started up communities of practice to exchange knowledge on topics of parenting, child development, and child protection. On all strategic topics such as disaster response, development, Child Protection, Early Childhood Development, Monitoring & Evaluations, and Youth & Work, we have created Communities of Practice, consisting of groups of international staff

sharing their learning across the organization. These and other events generate a lot of positive energy and underline our global ambition to deliver quality for children at the highest level.

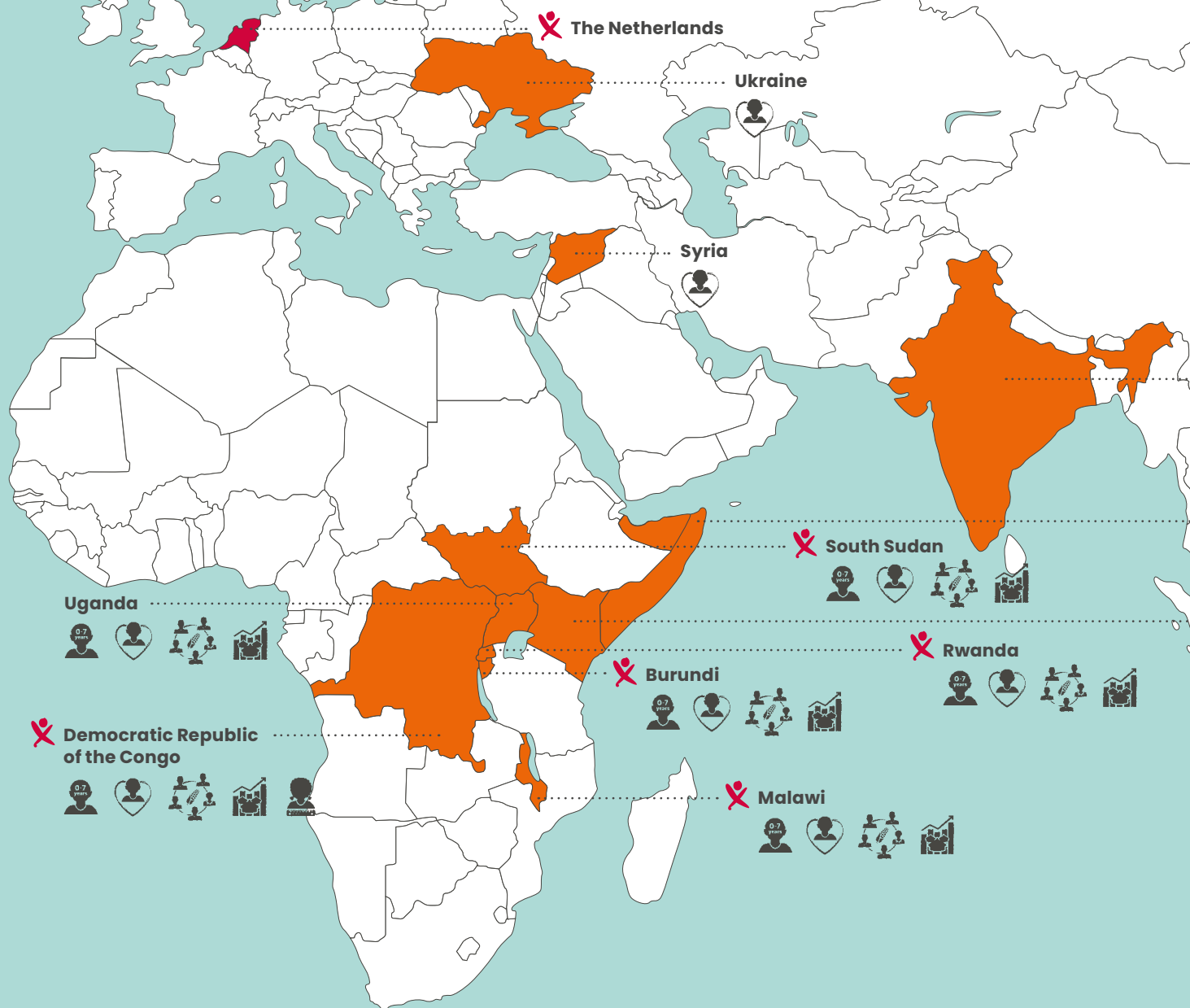
Main results in 2023

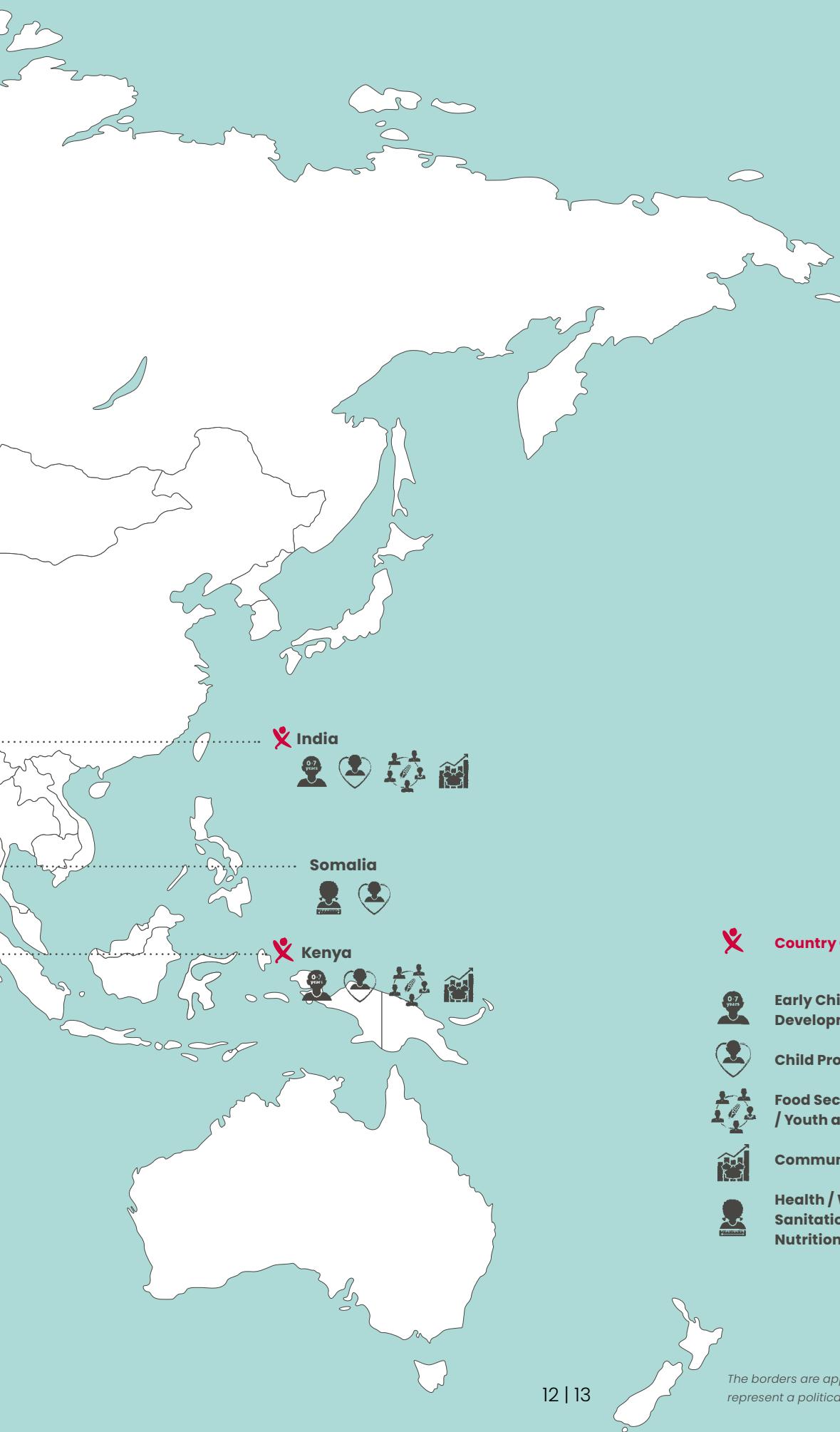
This first chapter gives an overview of the main achievements in 2023 in each area of expertise. In addition to our three main areas of expertise (Early Childhood Development, Child Protection, and Youth & Work), we contribute to Food Security and Livelihood, Community Empowerment, and Health, WASH & Nutrition. Through these programmes and in true partnership with many organizations, Help a Child has contributed to the following Sustainable Development Goals:





Help a Child Worldwide





India



Somalia



Kenya



Country Office



Early Childhood Development



Child Protection



Food Security and Livelihood / Youth and Work



Community Empowerment



Health / WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) / Nutrition

We contribute to:



EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

One of the expertise areas of Help a Child is Early Childhood Development. What happens in the early years of a child's life lays the foundation for future health, education, and economic outcomes.

Although the importance and benefits of investing in Early Childhood Development services is globally acknowledged, nearly half of all deaths in children under five are attributable to undernutrition and around 75% of all three- to six-year-olds in low-income countries are not enrolled in Early Childhood Education (WHO, Unicef). Help a Child therefore continued in 2023 with the establishment and strengthening of Early Childhood Centres in our community development programmes but also put more focus on ECD activities in humanitarian settings. Our parenting programme has become a niche in the early childhood development work of Help a Child. Experience shows that starting with capacity building for parents establishes a good foundation for further interventions. Since more donors and governments are interested in our approach of community-based ECD centres, improvement of our monitoring and evidence collection was an important part of our ECD activities in 2023.



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Key statistics:



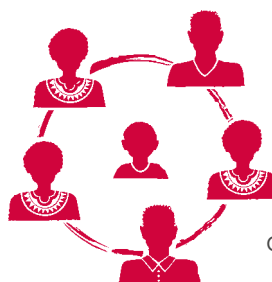
60,275

young children (0-7 years)
in development
programmes supported



456

ECD centres supported



16,623

parents involved
in parenting and
awareness sessions



MALAWI

Building a **future for children**



Help a Child Malawi has been investing in communities that are able to raise their children in the best way possible. This has been done through various community empowerment programmes that include Self-Help Groups, training, and empowering of parents, CBCC (Community-Based Childcare Centres) caregivers (pre-school teachers), CBCC Management Committees, and other community committees.

As a result, the number of community-owned CBCCs increased: Help a Child Malawi constructed three model CBCCs, with funding support from Universitas for two centres and Atos Foundation for one.

These model CBCCs will directly benefit 180 learners, with 60 in Zilakoma and 120 in Mwalweni, while indirectly reaching an additional 900 others from feeder CBCCs that will utilize the model CBCCs for capacity-building and sharing of resources. CBCC management committees (with representatives of parents, early childhood education, primary education, and government) are trained and coached in their process to mobilize and lobby for resources, to create awareness of the importance of ECE (Early Childhood Education), and to monitor the quality to ensure sustainability and access for all children.

ECDs in Malawi in 2023



8 complete ECD centres built with the help of Help a Child

7 ECD centres supported with additional construction to improve physical infrastructure

52 ECD centres supported with training



RWANDA

Growing health and sustainability: avocado seedlings for ECD centres

Over the past fifteen years, there has been a notable reduction in malnutrition among children under the age of five in Rwanda. However, the levels of malnutrition remain high at 33%.

To improve nutrition status at household level and to create awareness of the importance of environmental protection at a young age, partners from Help a Child Rwanda distributed about 850 avocado seedlings via parenting groups to be planted around ECD compounds and on individual farms. The same practice is being promoted among ECD centres with vegetables from kitchen gardens. To

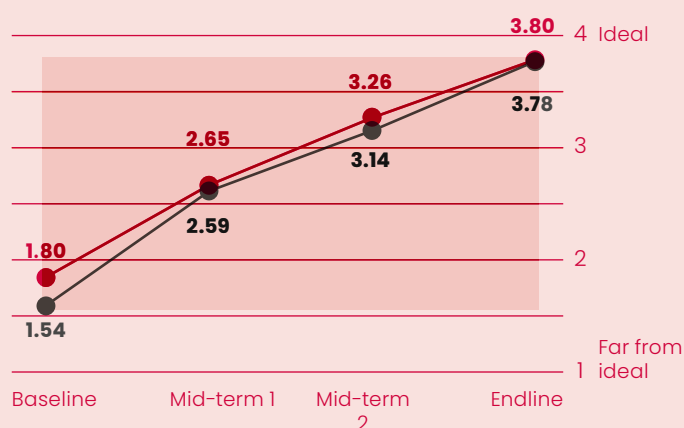
ensure good transition from ECD to primary school ECD centers are often built close to primary schools, the head teacher participates in the ECD management committee and knowledge exchange takes place between ECD teachers and primary school teachers.



Nutrition Rusizi (Child Status Index)

Average score for 'Nutrition' given by project participants in Rusizi, halfway through and at the end of a CCCD project.

● Nutrition
● Food Security



BURUNDI

Innovating Early Childhood Development: a holistic approach

ECD centers as providers of holistic services including education, WASH, child protection, nutrition and health – that is what Help a Child Burundi has been focusing on since 2023. The goal is for every ECD centre to meet minimum standards.

In 2023:

- 10 centres were rehabilitated and equipped with child-friendly materials;
- 52 caregivers were trained on early stimulation, while committee members received training on ECD management and operationalization using the government manual;
- as a result, 422 children had access to services related to stimulation, nutrition, health, protection, and hygiene.

Nutrition community agents provided knowledge on balanced nutrition for parents and supported them in setting up kitchen gardens in collaboration with the project staff. The parents played an active role in the operation of the ECD centres by supervising children, participating in their activities, and providing porridge, as well as by opening their homes for home-based ECD.

The collaboration between Early Childhood Development centres and other structures has been strengthened. Community health workers visited ECD centres once a week to assess children's health and provided vaccinations and other treatment. As part of the collaboration and strategic positioning, Help a Child Burundi organized a workshop to reflect on the development of a module on positive parenting that is harmonized with the Burundian context. A roadmap was drawn up for the subsequent stages.





Red Xeen
KiND



Challenging parents to parent

Raising children is a beautiful but tough responsibility. Like everywhere else in the world, parents in the countries we work in often struggle with parenting, while most of their challenges are very recognizable to other parents. Help a Child provides useful guidance with the set of Parenting Challenge modules. In 2023, Help a Child together with some other NGOs and the University of Utrecht organized an event on the challenges of parenting in the Global South.



The 'Challenging Parents to Parent' event was replicated in Malawi.

With this successful event in the Netherlands, Help a Child drew greater attention to the importance of parenting interventions in development work and strengthened collaboration with donors and other NGOs. After an inspiring lecture from Prof. M. J. de Haan of the University of Utrecht on 'Good parenting' in International Development, Roreen Mzembe, ECD expert of HaC Malawi, gave a presentation on the impact of our parenting programme, 'The Parenting Challenge'. Roreen explained why starting with capacity-building for parents establishes a good foundation for the start of an ECD centre. Experiences from both Malawi

and Uganda show that when the parenting groups are set up, awareness-raising for ECD is done within Self-Help Groups, schools, children's groups, and other community groups. This leads to the development of a community plan for the establishment of an ECD centre, resource mobilization and lobbying and advocacy aimed at the local government.

In addition, other project components focused on food security and nutrition are also linked in order to enable parents to provide good nutrition for their children. During the event, several roundtable discussions took place on parenting of children with a

disability, the playhub approach of ICDI (International Child Development Initiatives), including fathers, and addressing the funding gap. The 'Challenging Parents to Parent' event was replicated in Malawi, where a workshop was organized in partnership with the Ministry of Gender.

16,873
parents participated in
The Parenting Challenge

9,216 | 5,728
women | men

183
Parenting Challenge
groups trained



We contribute to:

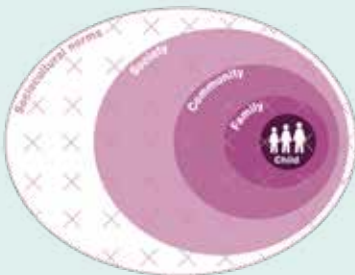


CHILD PROTECTION

Children all over the world are precious, a gift, and it is beautiful to see them growing up. But children are also vulnerable. They need care, love, and support from adults. And they need to be protected from all kinds of harm. Not so much by locking them up in the house, of course, but by preparing them, guiding them, and thus reducing the risk of something bad happening to them.

In our Western world, this is important but quite doable. But what if the children have to grow up under harsh circumstances? In poverty or conflict, in an unsafe home because of conflicts between the parents? Or in a climate which can cause severe droughts or floods? Help a Child is working in those kinds of areas and trying to improve the wellbeing of children. An important element is preventing any abuse of children and, if something does happen, organizing an adequate response. Therefore, we developed guidelines together with our offices and our partner offices. When focusing on child protection, it is important to work on different levels; we call it the rings of responsibility.

Four levels of the child protection socio-ecological model



The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2019

1 NO POVERTY



End poverty in all its forms everywhere

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Key statistics:



745
children groups supported

6,594

children supported through child protection activities



> 10,000
people reached through 'End child marriage' campaigns



UGANDA

Safe at home

Home should be a safe haven. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Therefore, Help a Child started a programme for parents: The Parenting Challenge. The results are very positive.

In Terego West, in north-west Uganda, the situation changed so much that even the leaders of the district noticed the difference! Parents themselves shared that there had been a big change in their homes. Some quotes:

Stress and bad communication between parents lead to unsafe homes. By reducing the stress and improving communication and cooperation, there is harmony in the homes.



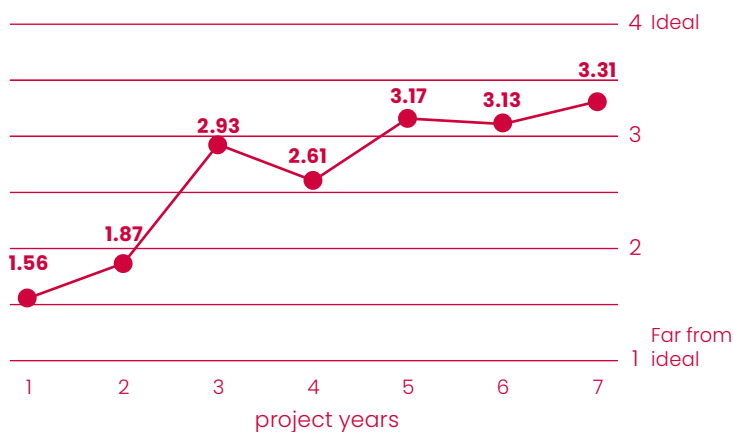
Father: 'I learnt that as a father I also have a responsibility in my family. I used to work in my farm and when I had money from the crops, I went drinking with my friends instead of thinking about my family. Now I support my children and buy things they need for food and for school.'

Father: 'Before, there was a lot of violence in the homes. Now, it is all at peace, no more beatings.'

Mother: 'Another reason for less violence: we all worked for ourselves. I worked here and had a plan with the produce of the farm, but my husband had another idea. That led to a lot of violence. We did not know what to expect from each other, we didn't talk. But now we work together, we plan together, and there is no violence anymore.'

Abim (Empowerment Score Card)

Average score for 'Enabling Safe environment' given by project participants in Abim, Uganda per project year.



1,877

**parents participated
in the Parenting
Challenge in Uganda**

961
women

916
men



UGANDA

The community response

To create a sustainable protection system, the whole community should be involved. In most projects, Child Protection Committees are established and trained and linked to the local government.

In Abim, in north-east Uganda, they even went a step further. Perpetrators of child abuse were known, but nothing would happen with them, because there was no clear system and the court was 100 km away. So another solution was created: a mobile court! The partner organization SAO works closely with the community, the Family and Child Unit of the police, the

Community Development and Probation Department of the district, and with the magistrate of the court in the region. Once a month, the magistrate will come to Abim and hold her

court in the open air under a tree in the community. In this way, justice is done to the victims and perpetrators realize they cannot just do anything to children and get away with it.



The magistrate during a court session.



DRC

A sense of **belonging**

When a child is born it will get a name. If it is born in a hospital, the names will be written in the hospital book. And if it is born at home? Registering a newborn baby sounds like a normal thing to do, but sometimes there are challenges: the registration office is far away, it will cost money (to go there and sometimes also to pay a 'facilitation' fee).

Yet birth registration is very important; it is a human right for a child to know where it comes from and to have its name registered in an official institution. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the registration did happen, but on paper, and papers can get lost, since people are often on the run because of conflict. That was the case for Sophie. Her children were not officially registered. Fortunately, she heard from her neighbour that there was an announcement on local radio that registration was now possible in her community. With the support from of Help a Child and its Kids@Risk programme, computers were now in place,

so connection to the national database was easy. Sophie managed to register both her children, the one aged two and the newborn.



1,548
birth certificates
have been rendered





The voice of the children

To be heard, to be listened to... It sounds so simple, and yet it is very important. Adults all over the world often think they know what is best for children. But children do have their own voice too. That does not mean that we only listen to children and not to adults. You have to listen to everyone and preferably bring people together to listen to each other.

That is what Help a Child in South Sudan has been trying to do, respecting the culture and values of the communities. An example is the risk and safe places exercise 'What's Up People': children, teenagers, adults, and leaders discuss in small groups what the safe places are in their community and what the risky places are. They discuss the causes and come up with solutions. During the final meeting, they all come together to discuss and make a plan of action. In one of the camps, the road was a risky place, because cars used to speed on it. By making humps on the road, cars have to slow down.



Children as changemakers

To hear the voice of children in a more systematic way, South Sudan introduced Child-led Research: children finding out from fellow

children what they think, where things go wrong, and what can be done better. In all communities where Help a Child and its partners work, this system has been set up to give children a means of providing feedback and even making complaints about the activities or staff. Some of the complaints included: why is the child-friendly space only open when it is time for BoruBoru (a national sport for girls)? We want to play other games too. Another complaint was heard about the lack of enough sport materials in one of the communities. And children with a disability complained that they were only asked for comments, instead of being involved in all activities.



BoruBoru

BoruBoru is a game played by girls in South Sudan. It is played by two teams. Two players from one team stand about ten metres away from each other. One member of the other team stands in the middle. The two players have to try to throw a ball to hit the girl in the middle. That girl has to try to dodge the ball. When she is hit, the first team gets a point and the teams have to switch. Besides being a very active and fun game, it is also used to create self-confidence in the girls and an awareness that they are more than 'wedding-material'. During the competitions, girls talk openly to the audience about topics concerning them, like early marriages and the importance of education. One of the girls, Sylvia*, was supposed to get married at a young age. But because of what she heard during the Boruboru trainings, she decided to talk to her parents, explaining she was too young for marriage. Her parents listened to her and agreed to postpone the marriage and support their daughter in school.

Read more about BoruBoru on page 37.



**fictitious name*



We contribute to:



FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOOD/CLIMATE/ YOUTH AND WORK

For children and their families, sufficient and healthy food is key for their development. In 2023, efforts were made in Help a Child programmes to help and assist communities, farmer households, youth clubs, and children's clubs to grow their own healthy food.

In some cases, such as in South Sudan and DRC, food assistance is still needed. Help a Child's approach is to minimize food aid and strive for self-reliant families. Help a Child is using the PIP approach: a Participative Integrated Planning approach that helps farmers and communities by making a family farm plan and coaching them over the season to make their own plans come true. The PIP approach has a proven concept of goal-setting and works at the same time on the foundation principles of resilience-based stewardship, with motivated stakeholders who feel responsible as good stewards of the land and its natural resources, and on investing in the resilience of their landscape.

Within the Youth & Work programme, we have been intensifying access to capital for youth and improving their businesses. From monitoring indicators, we saw that some youth businesses were just pumping money round and not making substantial profit. For the coming year, we plan to intensify our efforts to improve the businesses of youth groups and youth individuals.

Regarding climate, Help a Child started a QuickScan on climate adaptation. Together with our local communities, we are drawing up an inventory of problems caused by climate change and together determining which solutions will be suitable for climate adaptation. The first results are expected in the first quarter of 2024.



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

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

Key statistics:



941
(youth) farmer groups supported

8,237

number of youth supported in youth groups

44% male /56% female



18,461
people received agricultural inputs



UGANDA

Self-reliant and **ready for work**

Initially he was a farmer and grew potatoes, but when the Community-Based Youth Skilling Centre (TWCCCD programme) called for applications for youth skilling, Felix (29 years old, from Abindi Parish in Bileafe Sub-County), applied.

After completing a course of three months, Felix bought a sewing machine and now proudly calls himself a senior tailor with an overwhelming number of clients daily. He is trained in tailoring and clothing cutting. Felix now sews clothes from a trade centre. 'Thanks to my quality work, I have many customers. This allows me to pay the school fees for my children, sew clothes for them, buy food for the family, and I also save some money every week in my savings group,' says Felix with a smile on his face. The personal business strategy has also helped Felix to resume his house-building, which initially stopped at beam level due to a lack of money.

Through the introduction of Community-Based Youth Skilling and Production centres by the TWCCCD programme, three young people were able to acquire their own sewing machines, which helped them to raise daily income for their households. 'I cannot thank AEE Uganda and Help a Child Africa enough for helping us to become better young people who do not sit by the roadside asking for money. Continue the good work and train more young people to stand on their own,' says Felix with gratitude.



21 youth groups supported in Uganda





MALAWI

Growing green: **sustainable change** through youth-led initiative

Young people in Chizuzu have started using a shade net when growing tomatoes. The use of the shade net has increased their enthusiasm for green business.

Francis, one of the young people involved in cultivating under the shade-net, highlights the remarkable difference in quality between the current tomatoes and those from previous years. Despite prior tomato-growing experience, they have never seen such high-quality produce. 'This is not our first time planting tomatoes, but we have never witnessed tomatoes of such high quality. Our interest in green business has increased and we will work hard to benefit our community,' Francis said.

According to Francis, they are anticipating profits of approximately 1.5 million kwacha (€ 780) from the current tomato harvest. Beyond the shade-net initiative, the young people are actively engaged in tree planting

to counteract environmental damage caused by the opening of new farms and timber mining. 'We have also learnt many environmental conservation methods; that is why as young people we have taken a role in restoring the environment so that we can enjoy the life of a rich environment as it used to be in previous years.'



INDIA

Cultivating change through innovative farming

In India, the government of Jharkhand, together with Help a Child India, connected rural women with sustainable sources of livelihood. Under this initiative, women are being motivated to take up modern farming techniques.

Rural women who once cultivated vegetables using traditional farming methods are making good profits by growing fruit with assistance from the government. One of these initiatives is the cultivation of strawberries, which has become a strong pillar of women's empowerment.

Katrina, the mother of one of our community ambassadors, is a farmer in Rania. She previously cultivated vegetables just for the family needs. Her yield was not good and her earnings were low. Thanks to the programme, Katrina was provided with a poly-house nursery, seed bed, mulch, and a micro-drip irrigation system. With the aid of these, she cultivated strawberries and started to earn income from selling them. Katrina is from a poor background and was unable to send her children to school. But due to assistance provided by the government and Help a Child India she is now

able to generate income for her family and provide education for her children. This is a nice example of how we can team up with local government to improve the situation for those in need.



51 persons were trained in farmer groups of which **21** women in Rania





The power of a Self-Help Group

Making savings and giving small loans to its members. That is what Ubumwe, a Self-Help Group (SHG) formed in June 2018 in Rweri, Rwanda, started doing. Before joining the SHG, members were living in poverty and their only source of income was subsistence agriculture and selling their agricultural products. This had a lot of impact on their family's lives: their children were not having basic needs met like nutritious food and school materials.

After mobilization of our partner EPR/CCDP to form a Self-Help Group, the mindset journey changed and development started from that moment.

1

The group started with weekly savings of 200 Rwandan Francs per week and now they have improved to 500 Rwandan Francs.

2

After being trained on creating IGAs (Income Generating Activities) together as a group, they decided to lease one hectare of land to cultivate maize.

3

Consequently, in 2022 they made a profit of 400,000 Rwandan Francs from two tons of maize sold.

4

In addition, in 2023 they took a loan of 1,500,000 Rwandan Francs from revolving funds to invest in agriculture activities at household level and they managed to pay the loan back on time.



Members of the Ubumwe SHG are proud of the decision to unite and form an SHG. Francoise, leader of the Ubumwe SHG: 'Since joining the Ubumwe SHG, it is no longer hard to pay school fees and get food for our children. Plus, we have a dream of buying our own piece of land near water, so that we can adapt to climate change, which is a primary challenge to our agricultural activities.'



We contribute to:



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

How can we give ownership to the community members of the projects of Help a Child? How can we guarantee that voices are heard from even the most marginalized? How can we work in such a way that results are lasting and continue even after the projects have been phased out? These questions are crucial to us.

Community Empowerment is therefore a core principle in our work. We strongly believe that development is about enabling people to regain control of their own lives. This is not an easy or a quick-fix solution; it often takes time and there are setbacks. But we see the results in the lives of children: if the community and parents are strong enough to take care of the children themselves, it will benefit the children in a sustainable way.

Through the Child-Centred Community Development projects, we work towards this community empowerment. People are involved in the design and monitoring of the projects, and even children are involved. Community dialogues with all involved people in the community (men, women, youth, children, people with disabilities, and community leaders) are the pathway to change.



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

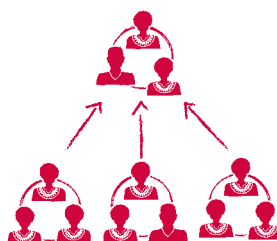


Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Key statistics:

2,032

Self-help groups supported



126

Cluster Level Associations supported

Topics of community dialogues

facilitated by Help a Child in 2023 included:

child rights child marriage

peacebuilding conflict

personal safety resolution

inclusion of people with a disability sexual and gender based violence

girls **healthy environment**

rights child protection

positive parenting



KENYA

From playground to solutions: child-led research

As a child-focused organization, we consider the participation of children to be essential. Who else knows what they need better than children themselves? Therefore, Help a Child conducted a pilot on child-led research in 2023 in Kitui, Bomet, and Busia in Kenya.

In these three projects, children were trained in data collection and reporting. By engaging children as active participants, these projects seek to tap into their creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. The child-led research project places children at the centre, encouraging



Children entering manually collected data into the computers.

them to investigate and identify challenges within their respective communities. By actively involving children, they become catalysts for positive change, offering valuable insights and proposing practical solutions to community challenges.

Number of children involved

Busia:	45 children
Bomet:	40 children
Kitui:	20 children





MALAWI

The value of saving

James is an active member of a self-help group (SHG) and is a well-known face in Zilakoma, Malawi, as an ironsmith. He explains what his main insight has been since the community development programme started in Zilakoma nearly seven years ago: the value of saving.

'I make knives for harvesting cassava. People from all over Zilakoma come to buy my knives. The self-help group is very useful to me. What have I learnt? The value of saving! I used to spend my money right away and live day by day. Now I know how to look ahead. Even now that the village programme is being completed, we will certainly continue, with government support.'

James is also a member of a support group for people with disabilities: 'I have a hand bike myself because I cannot walk properly. In Zilakoma there are many children with disabilities who need help. Think of wheelchairs, medicines, glasses. I visit these



36 SHG's in Zilakoma supported

including **535 members** of which **5 persons** with a disability



children and talk to the parents. Together we look at the possibilities for better care and make contact with service providers.'



James making knives by slowly heating iron on a fire and then shaping it with a hammer

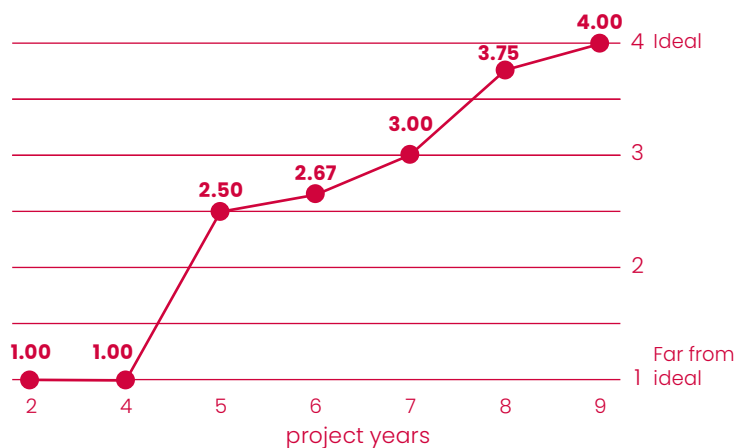
INDIAFrom risks to **resilience**

Development efforts over many years can be destroyed in seconds when disaster strikes. By embedding disaster risk reduction elements, the CCCD programme aims to boost the resilience of communities and make them disaster-smart and risk-informed. With disaster risk reduction, we aim to prevent new risks, to reduce existing disaster risks and to manage risks.

In Rania, India, for example, disaster mitigation training was given to communities on the risks of flooding and fire accidents, but also of elephant corridors. Elephants are a serious threat to the safety of the community. The community developed an early warning system and is now using powerful torches as flashlights to keep the community safe from wild elephants.

**Kolkata (Empowerment Score Card)**

Average score of 'Resilience' given by project participants in Kolkata, India in the various project years.





KENYA

Empowering youth with disabilities

Kenya has a population of 47,564,296, with 918,270 (2.2%) of the population listed as having various forms of disabilities. For too long, children and youth with disability have been forgotten, hidden and systematically left behind. Help a Child Africa and Light for the World, together with our local implementing partners NCKK, ADS, and AICCAD, and target communities in Kitui, Bomet, and Busia counties, have partnered to implement 'children and youth with disability-led advocacy for disability awareness and stigma reduction'.

In 2023, several activities were undertaken, including disability Self-Help Groups that established savings and loan schemes and set up various income-generating activities such as basket-making,

poultry-keeping, and farming. There were also awareness campaigns and access to health and education services was provided for people living with a disability.



SOUTH SUDAN

Creative ways to end child marriage

In 2023, as part of the South Sudan Joint Response project (SSJR), Help a Child organized a child-led campaign in Tonj North, Warrap State. Led by children and using the sport of Boruboru, the campaign's objectives were to combat child marriage and foster social togetherness.

Boruboru is a traditional girls' dodgeball that was revived in South Sudan and is being used by Help a Child to empower children, particularly girls, to establish community-driven platforms for advocating against harmful community practices like child marriage. Additionally, it aims to promote community engagement, mend broken intercommunity relationships, and reinforce social

cohesion. Over 10,000 people were reached through this extensive child-led campaign in Tonj North. Additionally, this initiative aimed to decrease the occurrence of underage marriage, reduce violence, and increase community-free interactions. The campaign received considerable appreciation from parents, community leaders, local government officials, and NGO representatives.

> 10,000 people
reached
through 'End child marriage' campaigns



The same campaign was conducted in Wau.



A letter from Burundi

2023 marks the last year of the CCCD project in Kirundo, Burundi. Jean Pierre, Project Manager, wrote a letter to the supporters of this project and reflected on the results of the programme:

Dear supporter,

Greetings from the community programme in Kirundo, Burundi. It is a big and heartfelt joy to let you know that your support has greatly contributed to improving the well-being of children and families in the Kirundo communities all these years. Now, the programme is being phased out and the community is well prepared for this. In fact, various strong community structures were established and strengthened by the programme, which means it can keep running after phase-out.

Through the programme, children enjoyed the company of other children in our children's groups, where they are given opportunities to discuss different topics. In the groups, children also play, sing, dance, and learn different crafts such as making baskets and toys. They were supported in developing their entrepreneurial skills like beekeeping or breeding small livestock such as rabbits and chickens. Being in the programme encouraged children to stay in school. In their families and communities, they participated in making farming plans for their families, in planting trees and in watering vegetable kitchen gardens and plants. Through the support of the programme, a large number of self-help groups were established. Then, parents got loans and started businesses, bought plot of lands and they are breeding some large and small cattle to produce meat, milk, manure, and income.

In addition, farmers were trained in modern farming skills that enabled families to produce enough food for themselves and for sale. Now, parents are able to provide and cover their children's needs. The programme joined forces with the communities to build classrooms and early childhood development (ECD) centres to deliver quality services such as nutrition, care, playing, learning, protection, and health care to children. Today, they do not have to walk long distances to school. Cluster level associations (CLAs), as community structures, strengthened their collaboration with local government and communities. They own sustainable initiatives, which enable them to ensure the continuation of the programme achievements. Beyond that, they are networking with other community structures such as Child Protection Committees, ECD centre management committees, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), and local administration to sustain the programme achievements. The programme is being phased out to move to another area. For this reason, all ambassadors including your beloved sponsored child will be leaving.

We are very grateful for your support and prayers for your sponsored child all these years. We humbly request that you continue your support for Red een Kind so that other children of other communities may live with the hope of a bright future in dignity. We sincerely pray that the Lord of all grace may abundantly bless you, your family, and your children.

Thanking you with best regards,

Jean Pierre Masumbuko
Programme Manager FECABU



We contribute to:



HEALTH, WASH AND NUTRITION

Basic needs, such as clean water, health care, food, and sanitary services, are important preconditions for sustainable development and resilience of vulnerable children and their families.

In 2023, Help a Child implemented Health, WASH, and Nutrition programmes in DRC and Somalia. In our holistic Child-Centred Community Development programme, Health, WASH, and Nutrition are integrated aspects, involving, for example, the strengthening of community structures, awareness campaigns, and lobbying and advocacy activities. Early Childhood Development Centres are also taking up their role, especially in detecting and defeating malnutrition.

In the protracted crisis in DRC, we constructed WASH facilities such as toilets, showers, and water points in schools to enable a safe learning environment for vulnerable children. In Somalia, together with our partner Medair and four local partners, we implemented an integrated Health, WASH, and Nutrition programme to provide lifesaving support to malnourished children, improve their health through a community-based health awareness programme and ensure access to clean water to prevent waterborne diseases. Help a Child also supported Medair to set up Child Friendly Spaces and extra attention was devoted to the identification and treatment of victims of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence.



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



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Key statistics:

 **43,001**
people supported through clean water supply

Soap distributed to
42,374 people 

 **109,886**
people have been reached with hygiene promotion messages

17,937
young children received treatment for malnutrition 



SOMALIA

MEDAIR

each life matters

The Care Group model: a pillar in community health

In Somalia, the Care Group model, facilitated by dedicated volunteers like Asha Said*, has become a pillar in community health. Despite initial challenges of scepticism and resistance due to traditional beliefs, Asha and her team persisted, educating households on hygiene, nutrition, and disease prevention.

Through house-to-house visits and persistent follow-ups, they fostered behaviour change, leading to a reduction in malnutrition and communicable diseases. Asha's role extends beyond education; she trains fellow volunteers and coordinates screenings for malnutrition, ensuring prompt referrals for treatment. Across

south-central Somalia, Care Group volunteers have screened over 263,872 children for malnutrition and reached nearly 50,000 individuals with hygiene messages, showcasing the programme's significant impact on community health and empowerment.

* Fictitious name



17,937

children received treatment for malnutrition



149,632

children screened for malnutrition



Care Group volunteer during a home visit.



DRC

Sanitation success: from open defecation to community toilets

In fifteen villages of the health zones of Masisi and in seven villages of Fizi, community members helped each other with the voluntary construction of family toilets. The toilets were built after the introduction of the CLTS approach (Community-Led Total Sanitation).

This participatory approach contributes to a change in behaviour of the local population regarding hygiene by promoting the voluntary construction of family toilets, emphasizing the importance of handwashing at key times, and the elimination of household waste in the health areas of

Loashi and Bukombo. The CLTS approach enabled communities to conduct their own analysis of open defecation and take their own measures to curb it. Help a Child supported the implementation of these activities in different ways, for example by facilitating trainings, financial support, and supporting stakeholders in implementing the approach.



Supported by their local leaders, the health zone, and the local environmental service, community members succeeded in building 5,068 family toilets with local materials in three health areas usually exposed to cholera. Remarkably, during the whole of 2023, the epidemic did not affect the villages involved in the CLTS approach.





Programmes: other results

CCCD programme

The ultimate goal of Help a Child's Child-Centred Community Development (CCCD) programme is to contribute to the sustainable improvement of child well-being within the communities served. The programmes are mainly supported through private funding and implemented by local partners in India, Kenya, Burundi, Malawi, Rwanda, and Uganda.

In 2023, new CCCD projects started in Burundi (Murwi, Butaganzwa, Kibago) and a new partner was selected (RCBIF). Also in Malawi (Mwansambo) a new CCCD project was launched by the partner LISAP.

There was also time for exchanges and learning: during an exchange visit, staff from the various countries were hosted by the partner AEE in Uganda to learn more about the best practices of the CCCD programme.

countries like Kenya and India, we have paid more attention to disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness to ensure that the disaster risks for communities we work with are minimized and that they are properly prepared to deal with future disasters and crises. In 2023, Help a Child completed the certification process for the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) and became officially registered as a certified member of the CHS alliance in January 2024. This shows our strong commitment to delivering quality programmes that are accountable to the people we serve, both in disaster response and developments contexts.

Lobbying and advocacy

Local and national governments and other decision-makers are vital to support and sustain the impact of our programmes for the well-

being of children and communities. Government agencies and large NGOs also play a crucial role in the scaling of concepts. Through lobbying, advocacy, and maintaining good relationships, we aim to ensure that barriers are addressed, and that systems and structures are of good quality and accessible. Among other initiatives, the following activities took place in our programme countries in 2023:

- Help a Child Malawi participated in a visibility event on International Youth Day, where they showcased different climate-smart interventions and were able to welcome Malawi's Vice-President as a guest of honour.
- Country Directors from Rwanda, Kenya, and Malawi made a visit to The Hague. They spoke to policy makers and parliamentarians to provide them with an African NGO perspective on Dutch development policy.

Disaster response and Nexus

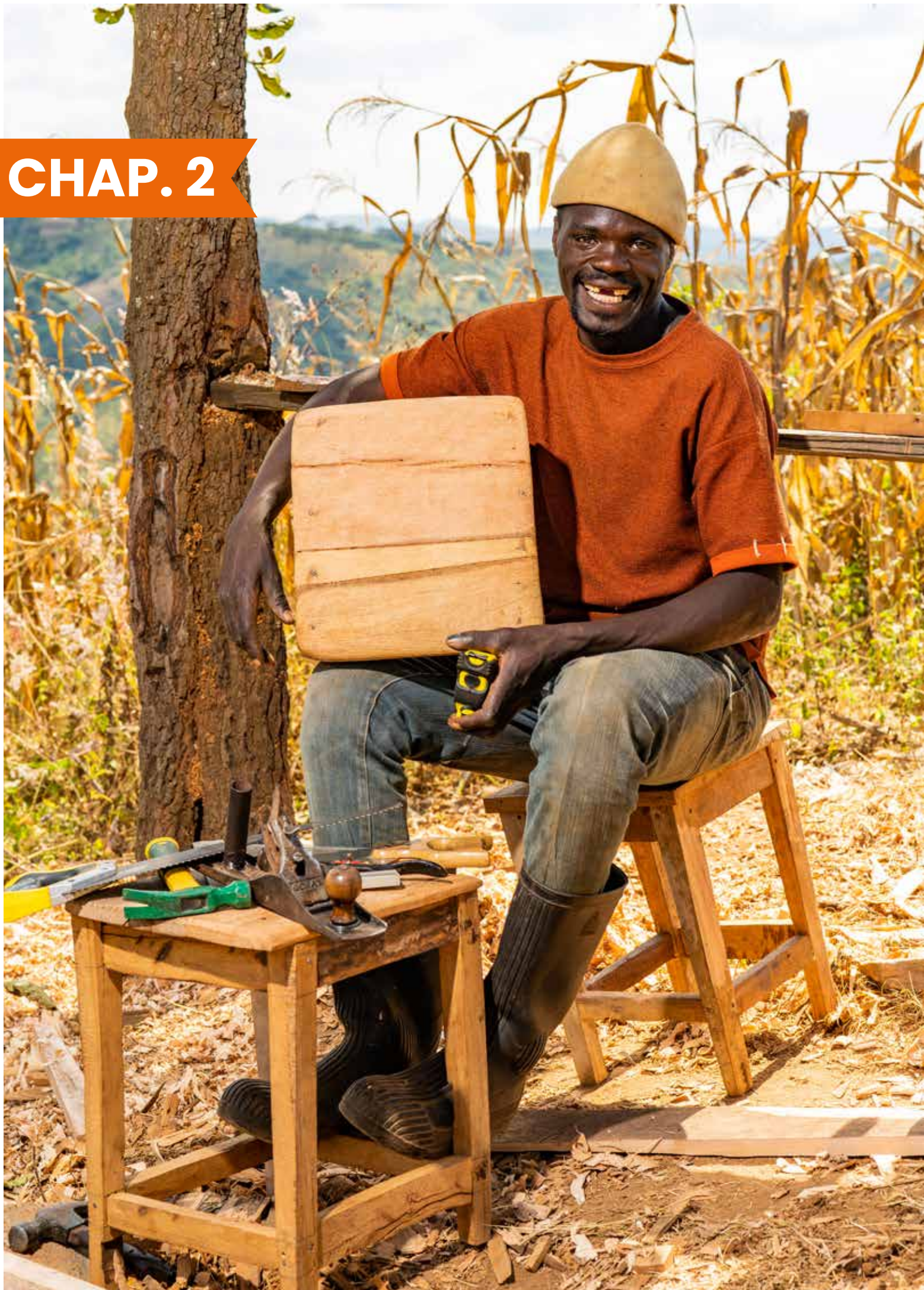
In 2023, fragility and protracted crisis continued to be present in many Help a Child programme countries, including South Sudan, DRC, Somalia, Burundi, and Malawi. Help a Child therefore combines lifesaving humanitarian aid with longer-term resilience and sustainability activities. We believe that it is critical to support children in crisis and their families with basic needs such as food, water, health care, and psychosocial support. Besides that, our aim is to equip children and their families with skills and resources that enable them to take care of themselves when the crisis is over or build sufficient resilience to deal with the fragile context they continue to live in. In more stable



Country Directors from Rwanda, Kenya and Malawi made a visit to The Hague.



CHAP. 2



Organization

To develop and implement quality programmes, we need a strong organization. In this chapter we illustrate how we have structured ourselves to deliver impactful outcomes through our programmes.

Governance

Management

In 2023, the Board of Directors of Help a Child consisted solely of the CEO, Andries Schuttinga. He manages the organization in accordance with a set of regulations covering matters such as avoiding conflicts of interest and the adequate separation of duties. The Board of Directors is responsible for the organization's policy and its implementation. The policy is formulated and monitored by the Board of Directors, in conjunction with the departmental managers. They jointly make up the management team (MT), which in principle meets once every two weeks. Input from country

directors is provided at strategic consultation meetings with the MT, held three times a year. The Board of Directors ensures that the Supervisory Board is furnished promptly with all necessary information for the effective fulfilment of its stewardship role.

Supervisory Board

The Supervisory Board consisted of seven members in 2023. They, too, work in compliance with a set of regulations. These outline their relationship with the Board of Directors, whilst also containing provisions to avoid conflicts of interest and ensure the separation of duties. The Supervisory Board meets regularly four times a year with the Board of Directors and

has one study day each year during which a self-evaluation is always carried out. Various advisory committees provide the Supervisory Board with information on specific policy areas, such as fundraising, programmes, and finance. In 2023, as Board of Directors and Supervisory Board, we visited our country programme in Rwanda. This visit coincided with the celebration of fifteen years of Help a Child in Rwanda. Project visits, attending the celebration, and meeting partner organizations helped the Supervisory Board to gain a better understanding of the practice of the work of Help a Child and helped build relationships in this renewed team.



In memoriam

In our reflection on 2023, we also want to take a moment to remember the passing of our dear colleague Jean Marie Vianney in a tragic accident. Jean Marie had been the Finance Manager at Help a Child Rwanda since April 2018. He contributed significantly to the maturity of the country office, liaising with local and Zwolle-based staff to establish strong financial systems enabling transparency and accountability to donors and stakeholders. His flexibility, willingness to help, and ability to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds made him a staff member loved by partners, local colleagues, and international counterparts/visitors. He was not only a staff member but also a good friend to many of us. We are grateful for his years of dedication to children in poverty, and we will continue to miss him.

Human Resource Management

The competitive labour market in the Netherlands has also impacted us. Several employees left our organization. Nevertheless, we successfully recruited 11 new staff members in the Netherlands. One of the vacancies was the position of HR manager, which we were able to fulfil by August 2023. As our international organization is growing, we decided to expand the capacity in HR and opened a position of HR assistant. The HR manager and HR assistant support the country offices and the global office in all HR-related matters. We were also able to fill the vacancy for the Country Director of Help a Child Burundi by January 1st, 2024.

At the end of 2022, we decided to arrange the management of our programmes in India in a different way. Our partner relationship with Help a Child of India was terminated. The programmes in India are now being managed by two other partner organizations that took on the field staff working at Help a Child of India. We took the first steps to establish a separate legal entity (country office) in India. In the course of 2023, we recruited a new team for the country office headquarters in India. The new staff members visited the Netherlands for further introduction and training.

As a relatively small international NGO, we have to look for opportunities where we can cooperate with other NGOs in order to create scale. As a first step, we started a cooperation on IT with Dorcas. In the spring of 2023, we established a shared helpdesk, supporting all Dorcas offices and

all Help a Child offices. Our IT staff became part of the joint IT team.

In the spring of 2023, we investigated possible rental locations for our global office, which would require a small amount of investment and offer better workplaces. The new office location should be located closer to the railway station of Zwolle. This will allow us to reduce the commuting footprint. We selected a rental office at Koggelaan 21 in Zwolle. After investments in desks, meeting facilities, and IT facilities, we moved into the new office in early November. Together with the relocation, we implemented a green travel policy. The employees' first experiences have been very positive. They like the open space, which supports cooperation and information-sharing across departments. The old location has been sold and will be handed over to the new owner by the end of January 2024.

Security

Apart from the ongoing tension in North Kivu, the DRC, 2023 was a calm year for Help a Child in terms of safety and security. Staff training continued for DRC and Kenya, and for traveling staff in the Netherlands. The Crisis Management Team in the Netherlands conducted a one-day training based on a real-time scenario, involving live personnel from the training company to make the training as real as possible. Towards the end of 2023, we started updating some of our policies to make them future-proof. Help a Child also participated in the Dutch Security Network, where we are able to share and learn new safety and security methodologies for keeping staff safe.

Quality Management

Quality Management System

Help a Child has a Quality Management System (QMS) which describes the procedures, responsibilities and templates used in the entire international organization of Help a Child. In the second half of 2023, Help a Child established a Quality policy which outlines the purpose and scope of our QMS. We also set up a database of points for improvement which we identify through, for example, external and internal audits, or internal consultations. This database is regularly updated and provides reports on outstanding points for improvement.

Our QMS is aligned with both ISO9001:2015 and Partos 9001:2015 norms. Help a Child performed internal audits in 2023 and the management team reviewed the QMS to evaluate the design and execution of this system. An external auditor also assessed our QMS; in December 2023, this resulted in a new certificate confirming that our QMS complies with ISO9001:2015 and Partos 9001:2015.

Core Humanitarian Standard

In 2019, Help a Child conducted its first self-assessment to the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS). In 2020-2022, many improvements were made as a result, and in January 2022 Help a Child became a full member of the CHS Alliance and conducted another self-assessment. In 2023, an external audit by HQAI (Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative) was conducted, with positive results. Help a Child was officially

registered as a certified member of the CHS Alliance in January 2024.

The external audit has highlighted that Help a Child demonstrates several strengths in its implementation of the CHS, including our participatory approach, good monitoring mechanisms, the effectiveness of our approach, timely decision-making, strong coordination, and work with external stakeholders. Our staff are also supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably.

The external audit also resulted in good points for further improvement on issues such as complaint and feedback mechanisms, avoiding unintended negative effects, managing risks, environment, and information-sharing with communities.



Integrity & Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH)

Very crucial for ensuring good-quality support for the children and communities we serve is the Help a Child Integrity & PSEAH policy. As part of the CHS, this policy has been assessed both on paper and in practice. Other donors such as UNICEF demand the highest standards for Integrity & PSEAH. Our policy was updated in 2023 and finalized in 2024. Help a Child actively discusses the Integrity & PSEAH policy with all its staff, doing our utmost to ensure our staff adhere in all respects to our Code of Conduct and that all regulations and tools are in place for child safeguarding, community feedback mechanisms,

whistleblowing, confidential counselling, and anti-fraud & corruption.

Child Safeguarding

Help a Child is committed to protecting children from harm and abuse. Our Child Safeguarding Policy, which is part of our Integrity Policy, describes our procedures to minimize risks and how to respond to child protection concerns within our organization. In the Netherlands office, four child safeguarding trainings took place in total for 22 new staff, including two from India. Each training consisted of games and a quiz, to make it interactive. Child safeguarding is something to internalize; it is good to discuss how to relate to children and how to prevent, for instance, unintended situations which people may perceive as possible abuse. Since 2021, Help a Child has been a full member of the Keeping Children Safe (KCS) network and we adhere to the internationally recognized child safeguarding standards it has set out. Keeping Children Safe held its annual summit. The senior Child Protection Advisor, who is also responsible for child safeguarding, attended several sessions online.



Community-Based Complaints and Feedback Mechanism

Part of our quality focus within the Core Humanitarian Standard assessment is to strengthen participation and ownership of project participants. A special focus for Help a Child was the creation of accessible channels that allow community members to share feedback and complaints. This has resulted in a Community-Based Complaints and Feedback Mechanism (CBCFM) Guide to help implementing partners set up or improve their feedback

mechanisms. Help a Child maintains a global database for all feedback in one place for learning and analyses at global, country, and project level. At this stage, the database has been rolled out and is in use in eight countries. In 2023, we registered 1,069 complaints and feedback cases, ranging from positive feedback and requests for information to major programmatic complaints. For more information, we refer to page 17 of the Annual report 2023.

Monitoring and auditing

In 2022, Help a Child developed a new, integrated audit tool that allows us to audit implementing partners on all quality criteria at once, including those for the CHS and Keeping Children Safe. These monitoring and audit tools were applied in 2023 and have resulted in lessons learnt that are helping us to further improve the processes and tools in 2024. Lessons from individual monitoring and audits are followed up by country offices and implementing partners.

Innovation

In 2022, Help a Child launched an Innovation Challenge for all country offices and partner organizations. The aim was to stimulate an innovative environment and culture in the entire organization. Everyone was invited and stimulated to think of a problem that could be tackled by a possible solution or an innovative idea. The winners of the Innovation Challenge (six in total) started to pilot and test their innovative ideas from January 2023 onwards. A community of innovators was born. In the course of 2023, we learnt a lot about rolling out an innovation trajectory, as well as trial and error during the process of finding the right solution for the identified problems. The following ideas were tested:

1. Mobile village bank (Uganda): testing and finding out how Self-Help Groups and farmers can digitally save their money and be better able to maintain their financial administration.
2. Child-led research (Kenya): testing and piloting how children can be involved in planning, monitoring, and evaluating our projects in the best way.
3. Gamification of parenting (Kenya): Seeking a solution via games, dance, and visuals to support young parents in talking, sharing feelings, and showing (appropriate) behaviour concerning sexuality, gender roles, and gender views among peers.
4. Digital data collection (Burundi): testing whether digital collection of monitoring and evaluation data is more time-effective and less error-prone than paper questionnaires.

Innovation is learning! As Help a Child we learnt over 2023 that:

1. Innovation needs to be guided and coached in order to fail fast and cheap, and to ask the right questions of the testing teams. It did not help either that the position of innovation coordinator was vacant over 2023.
2. Colleagues in our branches are used to project management, which hinders creative thinking (out of the box). Time, coaching, and training of the teams was needed to understand the concept of ideation and testing of concepts. Testing of the child-led research trajectory showed that adults' acceptance of the involvement of children was quite an obstacle that needed to be overcome. After several sessions with community members, it became clear to them that the involvement of children and taking their opinion into account is beneficial for the wellbeing of the whole community.

Scale-up

The scale-up of our core interventions is vital in achieving our main goal for the 2021-2024 strategic period: 'more impact for more children'. As we approach the last year of this strategic cycle, we have increased our efforts in scaling up 'The Parenting Challenge', 'Community-based ECD centres' and 'PIP'. By developing tools, strategies, evidence, and more, we are now better prepared to scale up these concepts, both internally and externally. This has resulted in the first concrete scaling plans, which are scheduled to start in 2024. We are eager to start these projects and extend our scope further to impact the lives of more children.

Co-creation

Help a Child continued the journey of co-creation with donors and international NGOs in 2023. For example, we started some new long-term development projects in Burundi with ZOA, for which the intervention area was jointly selected and the programme was jointly developed. In Rwanda, our current long-term development

has reached the final stage. We invited donors and international NGOs to envision the next steps together. This resulted in a new long-term development programme focusing on early childhood development, the implementation of which will start in 2024. Since the countries' development programmes are at different stages of their long-term duration, we will embrace co-creation when opportunities arise. So far, it has helped us to reflect on our added value and our willingness to achieve impact together.

Knowledge management and learning

In 2023, we further invested in better coordination of training and induction of country office staff and implementing partners. We expanded and updated our e-learning platform and are now in a better position to follow the progress of each individual staff member through regular progress reports. Several Communities of Practice have been set up to



discuss learnings, and training or exchange visits took place to equip our international experts in Early Childhood Development, Child Protection, Youth & Work, Disaster Response, Monitoring & Evaluation, Community Empowerment, Communications, and other topics.

Corporate social responsibility

Environmental

In 2023, Help a Child in the Netherlands made two important decisions that benefited our organizational CO2 footprint. First, we moved our office to a location close to the railway station of Zwolle. This encourages our employees to travel by public transport, but this office also has an A energy label and is much more energy-efficient, which helps us to reduce carbon emissions. Secondly, we introduced a new travel policy for our staff in the Netherlands which provides additional benefits to staff travelling by public transport. The location of the new office close to the railway station in combination with this new travel policy had a very positive effect on our commuting travel behaviour.

A recent survey amongst our staff shows that 81% of our staff commute by public transport, bicycle, or on foot. 56% stated that they hardly used public transport before but are now using it; 20% said they increased their use of public transport. And 80% stated that they were influenced in their decision by the new travel policy and/or the move to the new building. We will use our CO2 emissions in 2023 as a baseline and monitor our progress in the coming years using this baseline as the benchmark.

Also in our CHS audit in 2023, a lot of attention was paid to environmental issues. To quote from the report: 'Climate-smart agriculture has been mainstreamed in food security and livelihood activities. However, Help a Child does not systematically consider the environmental impact of its programme activities and little progress has been made in reducing the impact of offices, travel, and operations.' To have a more systematic approach to environmental issues, we have commissioned an environmental impact report for all our project locations, which will result in follow-up actions in 2024.

Social

This whole impact report is a testimony of our drive to improve the social circumstances of the children and families we support. The fact that we had a vacancy for half a year for the HR manager position did not help us in the area of staff care. Fortunately, we were able to recruit an HR manager in August and we decided to strengthen this position by adding an HR officer. We reviewed all non-Dutch salary levels by benchmarking them against the Birches report, a benchmark of many other NGOs working in the same country. In this way, we want to ensure that we have good compensation packages for our staff.

We strive for a modest but adequate compensation system for our staff, as we are very much aware that our salaries are mostly paid by contributions of private individuals in our constituency. Specifically, this means that our CEO is compensated on the basis of 80% of our sector guidelines. Our salary scales in the project countries are based on the Birches benchmark average minus 10%.

Staff representatives in the Netherlands were professionally trained in 2023 and this has resulted in even better discussions with the CEO. The aforementioned office move resulted generally in a better working environment, as 82% of staff concurred with the following statement: 'The new office is really an improvement, I don't want to go back to the old office.'

Governance

We strive to be transparent in our dealings and to learn from our mistakes. We encourage this in many evaluations which are built into our PDCA cycle. In addition to the global office, all our country offices are audited externally each year. We also perform internal audits at our implementing partners ourselves. In 2023, our partners in Malawi, Rwanda, and South Sudan were audited by our auditing teams.

We also invest in feedback mechanisms. Again, to quote the CHS auditor: 'Help a Child has established a culture in which complaints are welcomed and, when made, they are taken seriously and addressed according to established policies and processes. Systems and processes for reporting breaches in the Integrity Policy are well known by staff and partners.' We invest a lot of effort in our Community-Based Complaints and Feedback Mechanism for our beneficiaries, but we do realize we are not there yet and will continue to improve our mechanism in 2024.

CHAP. 3



Funding and Finance

In 2023, we continued exploring ways to better align and complement funds from different origins with the aim of implementing stronger programmes with more impact on children. Among other things, we identified the sectors in which we want to demonstrate our added value, we optimized and aligned our workflows to work more efficiently, developed a new model of sponsoring in Rwanda (to be launched in the summer of 2024), expanded our Emergency Fund to South Sudan for our Kids@Risk programme, and opened new charity shops. This chapter will close with an account of the income and expenses in 2023.

Institutional relations

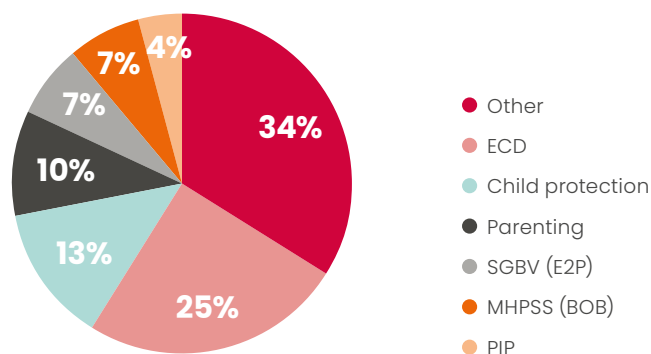
In a changing world it is always challenging to stay relevant as a more or less 'traditional' NGO. However, we have found that reflection on what makes us extraordinary and persistence and perseverance in what we do best pays off. This section reflects on the thematic relevance and success of Help a Child in its work with institutional partners.

Help a Child has identified early childhood development, (child) protection, and parenting as sectors in which we primarily aim to demonstrate our added value. In 2023, we saw an increase in opportunities for these core themes. Of all proposals submitted,

we managed to have 48% of them based on these core themes. This is a significant increase compared to recent years and it shows that, together with our institutional partners, we have been able to demonstrate both the relevance of and our quality in these areas.

We managed to ensure that over half of our approved development proposals included (elements of) early childhood development programming. A quarter also included parenting as a core theme. In disaster response, the topics were more diverse, with

Themes and sectors of proposals



significant funding for food security & livelihood and health, washing and nutrition. Importantly, however, 41% of our projects were on (child) protection, including protection against gender-based violence. This is a major accomplishment that will help us to expand, learn, and grow in the areas of child protection in disaster response.

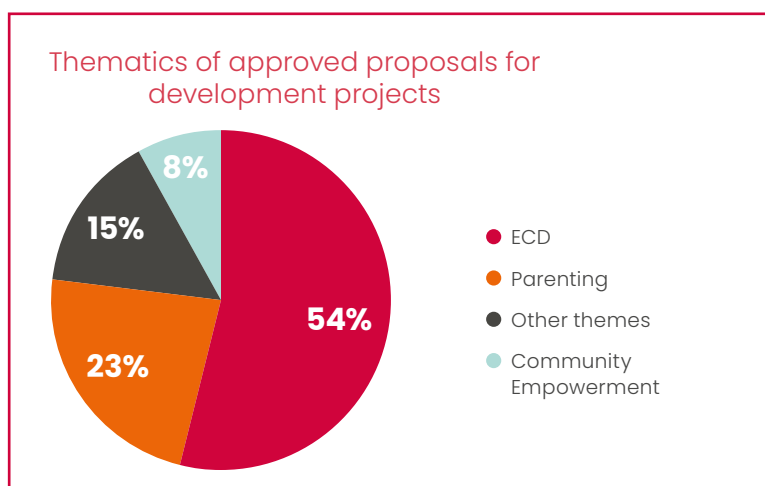
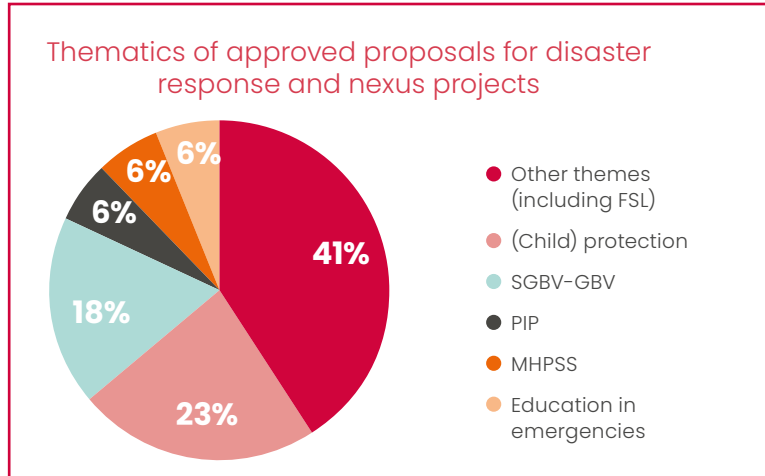
Dutch constituency

Child sponsorship

Child sponsorship is our principal and most secure source of income. Our work could not be done without the generosity of our donors and sponsors. We see that child sponsorship has a great impact, not only on the sponsored children and communities but also on the private sponsors. In 2023, sponsors received correspondence from our projects in general and the children they support in particular. Through interviews with families who support our work, we learnt that the sustainable approach of our Child-Centred Community Development programme is an important reason for people to choose to support Help a Child.

Through two lead campaigns, several (social) media campaigns, radio and television interviews, and our own magazine OmArmen, we reached new sponsors and informed the Dutch public. We also called for justice for children in need by sharing their stories through blogs and videos.

With new procedures we were able to work more efficiently with our local offices and partner organizations, resulting in an efficient workflow. For example, 97% of our sponsors received the Christmas greetings from the projects in the week before



Christmas; not an easy task with almost 10,000 cards coming from very remote areas around the world. In 2023, we also saw sponsors leave, as several projects came to an end.

Developing a new sponsor model

At the same time, more questions are being raised in Dutch society about the sponsor model and its sustainability. Because of this, Help a Child started working on alternatives. In 2023, we started to develop a new model of sponsoring in Rwanda, which will be launched in the summer of 2024.

Emergency Fund

We further developed the Emergency Fund and funding was

provided for projects in DRC. In December 2023, we launched a media campaign and added South Sudan to our Emergency Fund with our Kids@Risk programme. With the Emergency Fund, we add a model focused on major needs in unstable crisis areas, where it is very hard and sometimes impossible to realize long-term projects. Our support is focused on providing food, protection, trauma assistance, and education, or in short: providing some stability in an unstable and unsafe environment. We are grateful that in this way we can serve those children who need our attention the most.

Churches, schools, and businesses

In 2023, Help a Child received

Overview of type of donors and the amount of their average donation in 2023 compared to 2022

	2023		2022	
	Donors	Average donation	Donors	Average donation
Individuals	21,658	291	22,147	276
Churches	525	1,328	547	1,058
Schools	83	739	104	1,125
Companies	223	2,617	250	2,877
Charitable foundations	62	17,086	58	27,021
Bequestors	24	22,565	21	23,758
	22,575	410	23,127	415

a great deal of support from churches, schools, and businesses, which makes us very grateful. Through various campaigns, an event, reporting and newsletters, we reached out to our donors and informed them about the results of their support. A group of sixteen deacons joined us on a church trip to Rwanda and a group of twelve businesspeople visited our project in Kenya through our Grow Partners project. We now have 55 Grow Partners. We are grateful for their support and the various ways in which they make our work possible. Our school campaign was also successful: 39 schools joined the school campaign organized in cooperation with BCB during the Month of the Christian Book, raising more than € 81,500 for our community projects.

government officials. We share our practical knowledge and expertise so that Dutch development and humanitarian policy is as effective and child-friendly as it can be. We also lobby on other important topics such as mental health and psychosocial support, youth employment, and humanitarian aid. This is done in collaboration with many other organizations and as part of broader networks.

In 2023, we organized expert meetings with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with members of parliament from various political parties. The lobbying efforts were partly shaped by the 2023 elections in the Netherlands. We also raised awareness of issues related to children's rights and development in print and online media.

Charity shops



We are incredibly thankful for the success of our charity shops. In 2023, both of our charity shops in Zwolle benefited from their renovations and had a very successful year. More and more customers know where to find us. We also opened our fifth store in Hardenberg and moved and renovated our store in Groningen: a huge task, with a great result. Our store in Amersfoort had to deal with a break-in at the end of 2023 after a very successful year – a sad event that greatly affected our volunteers. Their perseverance is something we are proud of, because despite the break-in the charity shop in Amersfoort also achieved great results. In addition, we received the key to our premises in Kampen and by the time you read this the doors of this store will have opened. Thanks to our charity shops, more than 478,000 products were given second lives in 2023. A big thank you goes to our more than four hundred volunteers who tell the Help a Child story in words and actions.

Lobby and awareness raising in the Netherlands

In order to ensure that children remain on the agenda and continue to be a target group in development cooperation, Help a Child invests in maintaining relations with Dutch politicians and



In the run-up to the 2023 general elections in the Netherlands we helped to organize a debate about foreign policy with prospective members of parliament.

Finance

Balance sheet as at December 31, 2023

In 2023, the value of our fixed assets increased, mainly as a result of an additional loan granted to the charity shops to set up new shops in 2023 and subsequent years. The increase of more than € 60,000 in tangible fixed assets was caused by the replacement of most of the IT equipment at our country offices and new equipment for our office in the Netherlands as we moved to a new location.

Cash decreased by almost € 1 million. In addition to increased tangible and financial fixed assets, the growing number of contracts with institutional donors makes our cash position more reliant on the disbursement schedules of these donors. Due to late disbursements, we had to prefinance some projects in the course of 2023. This also explains the increase of more than € 700,000 in receivables and accrued items.

Reserves and funds remained relatively stable at € 3.9 million. The continuity reserve increased mainly because we decided to move the balance of the special purpose reserve for exchange rate risks to the continuity reserve. The designated funds increased by € 154,000 in 2023. Due to weak local currencies, some programmes spent less than budgeted, which left earmarked income for these programmes available for disbursement in the next financial year.

Statement of income and expenditures 2023

In 2023, our income was almost equal to that of 2022. We budgeted for an increase, which was not achieved for a number of reasons. First of all, we planned to increase the sponsorship contribution in early 2023, but due to a number of vacancies in our office in the Netherlands we had to postpone this increase to the third quarter of 2023, resulting in lower income from sponsorship. We also budgeted

for an increase in income from foundations in 2023. We submitted a number of proposals, which have been approved by foundations for funding. However, these approvals were received in early 2024, which led to a relatively low amount of income from non-profit organizations in 2023.

Sales at our charity shops grew significantly in 2023. Since significant investments were made in new locations, the net income from charity shops was lower than budgeted and lower compared to 2022. This resulted in lower income from non-profit organizations.

Income from government subsidies increased compared to 2022 and was also higher than budgeted. The portfolio of subsidies was also diversified in 2023. A significant amount of government subsidies was still received from the Dutch Relief Alliance (€ 4.2 million), but we also received funding from several bodies of the United Nations, the European Union, and USAID.

Balance sheet as at December 31, 2023

(amounts in € 1,000)	December 31, 2023	December 31, 2022	December 31, 2021	December 31, 2020	December 31, 2019
ASSETS					
Intangible fixed assets	109	103	75	70	76
Tangible fixed assets	723	656	651	644	708
Financial fixed assets	587	319	228	507	533
Receivables and accrued items	1,843	1,133	1,680	1,722	2,102
Cash and cash equivalents	2,460	3,439	3,715	3,969	4,451
Total assets	5,722	5,650	6,349	6,912	7,870
LIABILITIES					
Continuity reserve	2,025	1,787	1,991	2,416	2,572
Special purpose reserves	150	510	611	358	370
Special purpose funds	1,731	1,577	1,625	1,257	873
Total reserves and funds	3,906	3,875	4,227	4,031	3,815
Long-term liabilities	-	4	8	285	226
Short-term liabilities	1,816	1,771	2,114	2,596	3,829
Total liabilities	5,722	5,650	6,349	6,912	7,870

2023 was a year in which our country offices were challenged by relatively high inflation. However, the local currencies in most of the programme countries weakened during 2023, which led to savings of up to 40% in countries such as Burundi and Malawi. This dampened the effect of inflation in most countries and led to lower programme expenditures in 2023. Combined with the fact that we raised less income, total programme expenditures were € 0.8 million lower compared to the budget in 2023.

The expenditure on objectives as a percentage of our total income was 86.0% in 2023 (2023 budget: 88.8%; 2022 actuals: 87.8%); as a percentage of our total expenses, the expenditure on objectives was 86.1% in 2023 (2023 budget: 85.0%; 2022 actuals: 86.2%).

During 2023, we faced challenges in filling our vacancies in the Netherlands, which resulted in underspending on staff costs in 2023. As a result, our costs of both raising income and management and administration were significantly lower than budgeted in 2023.

The costs of raising income as a percentage of raised income were 9.4% in 2023 (2023 budget: 10.4%; 2022 actuals: 9.1%).

Costs of management and administration as a percentage of total expenditure were 4.5% in 2023 (2023 budget: 5.0%; 2022 actuals: 4.9%).

In 2024, we expect to budget for a moderate increase in income from individuals and businesses. The increase will be achieved partly

by an adjustment of the monthly sponsorship contribution which we implemented in mid-2023.

For subsidies from governments, we expect income to increase significantly to € 11.5 million in 2024. In 2023, we were elected as the lead for the South Sudan Joint Response 2024–2026, funded by the Dutch Relief Alliance. As the lead, we will receive funding from the DRA for all members of the alliance in South Sudan. We also expect that our portfolio of other institutional donors will grow in 2024, as we identified and responded to a significant number of promising leads.

Statement of income and expenditures 2023

(amounts in € 1,000)	2023	budget 2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
INCOME						
Income from individuals	6,904	7,145	6,736	6,557	6,551	5,952
Income from businesses	591	694	719	605	556	425
Income from government subsidies	5,341	5,000	5,205	5,821	6,416	4,062
Income from non-profit organizations	1,972	2,446	2,146	1,642	1,327	1,305
Other income	26	5	35	-3	6	10
Total income	14,834	15,290	14,841	14,622	14,856	11,754
EXPENDITURE						
Expenditure on objectives	12,757	13,572	13,034	12,511	12,885	9,795
Costs of raising income	1,392	1,594	1,346	1,319	1,114	1,006
Management and administration costs	664	795	745	638	573	507
Total expenditure	14,813	15,961	15,125	14,468	14,572	11,308
Balance	21	-671	-284	154	284	446
Net financial income and expenditure	47	-	-9	9	32	-20
Net income and expenses	68	-671	-293	163	316	426

ANNEXES



Our Theory of Change

How Help a Child makes a difference



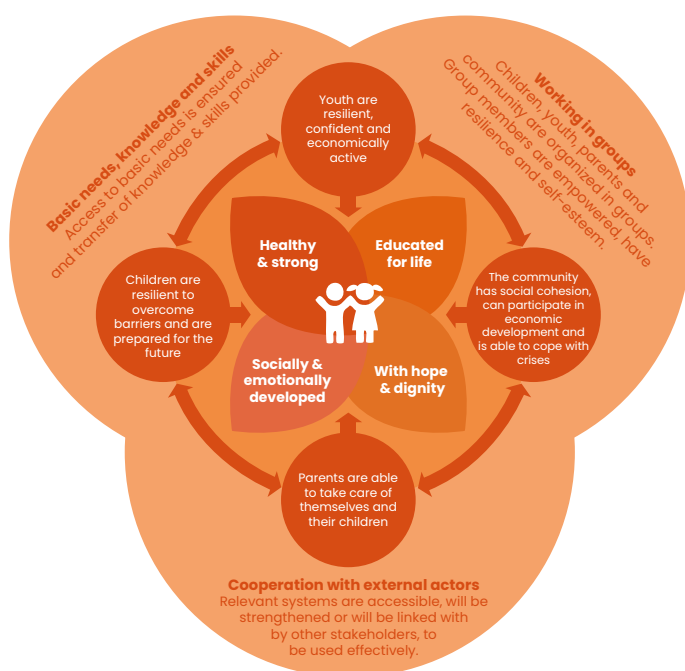
Step 1: overall objective

Central to our Theory of Change is our overall objective: to improve the well-being of children in need so that they can live their lives in dignity and to the fullest.



Step 2: holistic child development

Holistic child development is the core principle in our Theory of Change. It means that we consider all four dimensions of a child's wellbeing: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.



Step 4: our main strategies

Help a Child uses three main strategies to achieve the impact we envision: we set up and facilitate groups, we arrange access to basic needs together with the transfer of knowledge and skills and we partner with external actors as much as possible.



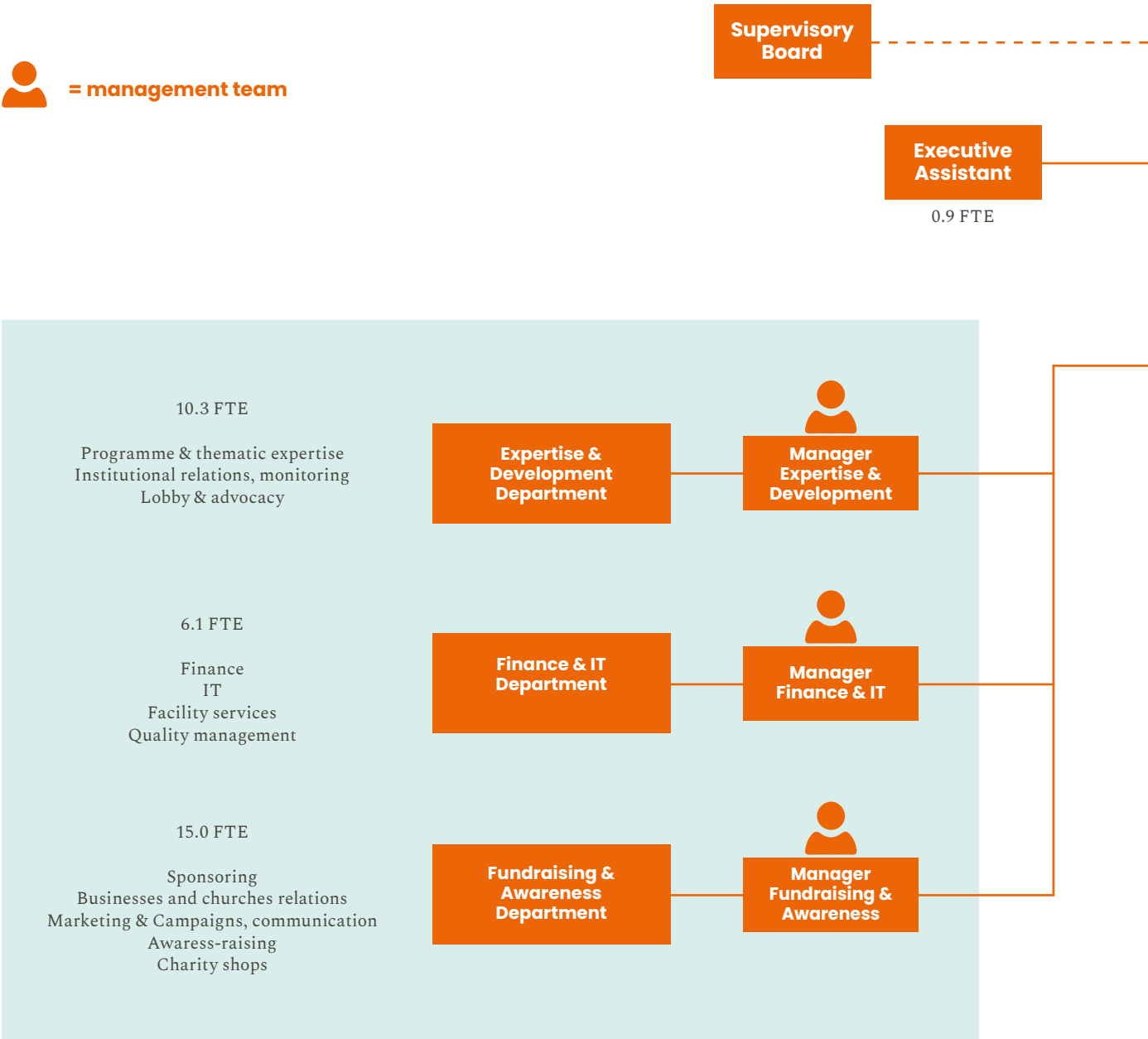
Step 3: intended results

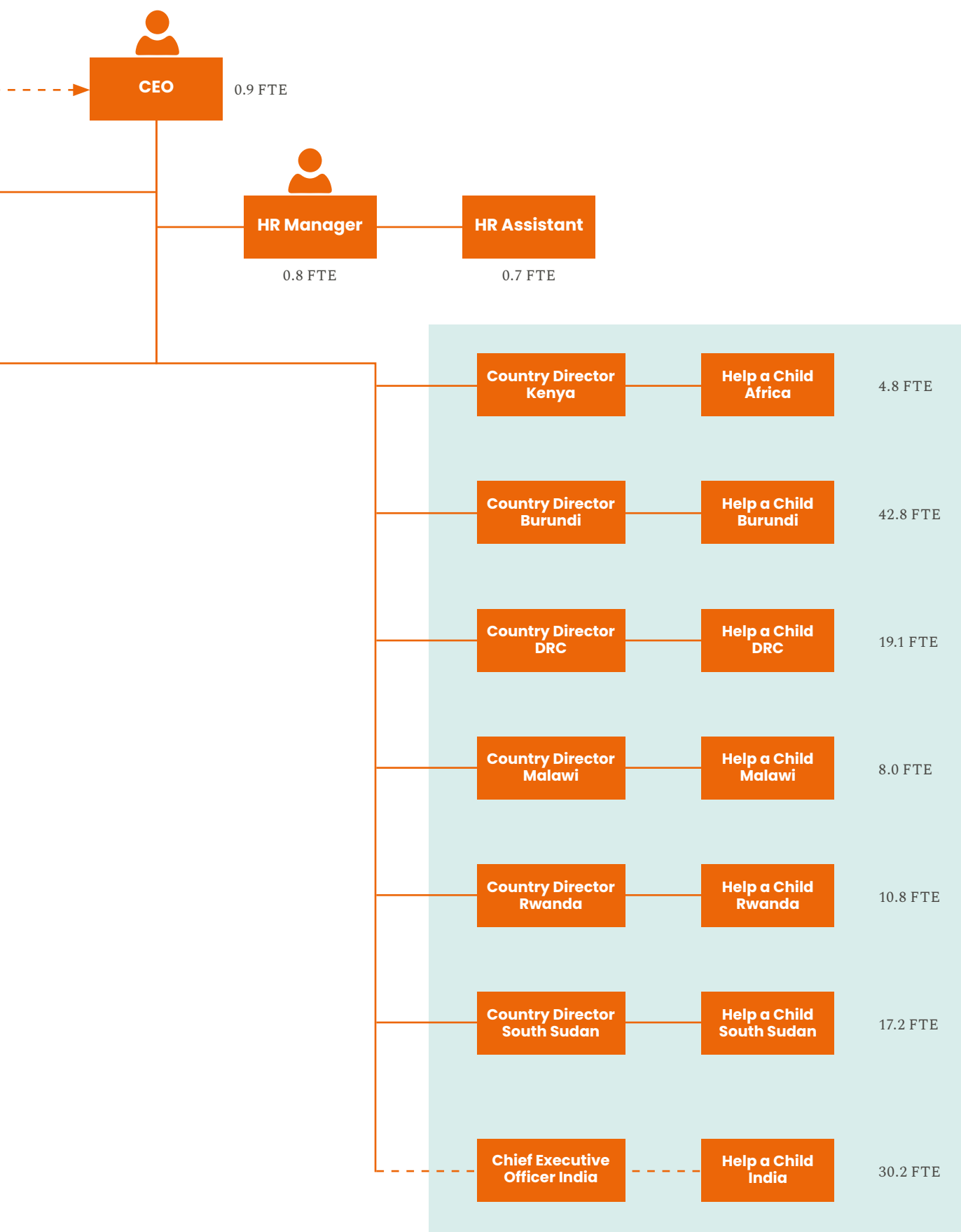
Specific results in four areas contribute towards holistic child development: children themselves, youth, parents and the wider community.

Organizational chart

(average fte in 2023)

 = management team





Our partners

BURUNDI

Implementing partners:

- FECABU (Fraternité Évangélistique du Christ en Afrique au Burundi)
- Help Channel Burundi
- RCBIF (Réseau des Confessions Religieuses pour la Promotion de la Santé et le Bien Etre Intégral de la Famille)
- SAD (Social Action for Development)

Donors:

- Stichting Universitas
- UNHCR
- WFP (World Food Programme)

DRC

Implementing partners:

- ADED (Appui au Développement de l'Enfant en Détresse)
- BEATIL / ALT (Bureau d'Etudes et Appui Technique aux Initiatives Locales / Action for Living together)
- Help Channel Congo

Donors:

- Dutch ministry of Foreign Affairs – Dutch Relief Alliance
- Impaction
- Stichting Onésimus
- USAID-BHA with Medair
- UNICEF
- Other foundations and businesses

INDIA

Implementing partners:

- Cuttack Humanity Trust
- Gramodaya
- Help a Child and Woman of India
- RPC NEI (Reformed Presbyterian Church North East India)

Donors:

- Enza zaden
- Verre Naasten
- Other foundations and businesses

KENYA

Implementing partners:

- ADS (Anglican Development Services)
- AICCAD (Africa Inland Church Child and Community Development)
- NCCCK (National Council of Churches of Kenya)
- Light for the World

Donors:

- Growth Partners
- Other foundation and businesses

MALAWI

Implementing partners:

- LISAP (Livingstonia Synod Aids Programme; Church of Central Africa Presbyterian)
- WACRAD (Word Alive Commission for Relief and Development)

Revolving fund partner:

- Solinica

Donors:

- Atos Foundation
- Comic Relief
- EO Metterdaad
- KYOS
- Stichting Universitas
- Other foundation and businesses

RWANDA

Implementing partners:

- AEE (African Evangelistic Enterprise)
- EPR (Église Presbytérienne au Rwanda)

Revolving fund partner:

- Sangwa Sacco

Donors:

- EO Metterdaad
- Ready 4 Schools Rwanda
- Rijk Zwaan
- Stichting Pharus
- UNICEF
- UNWOMEN
- World Servants
- Other foundations and businesses

SOMALIA

Implementing partners:

- Medair

Donors:

- Dutch ministry of Foreign Affairs – Dutch Relief Alliance

SOUTH SUDAN

Implementing partners:

- Across

Donors:

- Dutch ministry of Foreign Affairs – Dutch Relief Alliance
- EO Metterdaad
- EU
- Stichting Onésimus
- UNICEF
- UMCOR
- Woord en Daad (PIP Nexus)

SYRIA

Implementing partner:

- Dorcas Aid International

Donor:

- Stichting Universitas

UGANDA

Implementing partners:

- AEE (African Evangelistic Enterprise)
- SAO (Share an Opportunity)

Revolving fund partner:

- Postbank

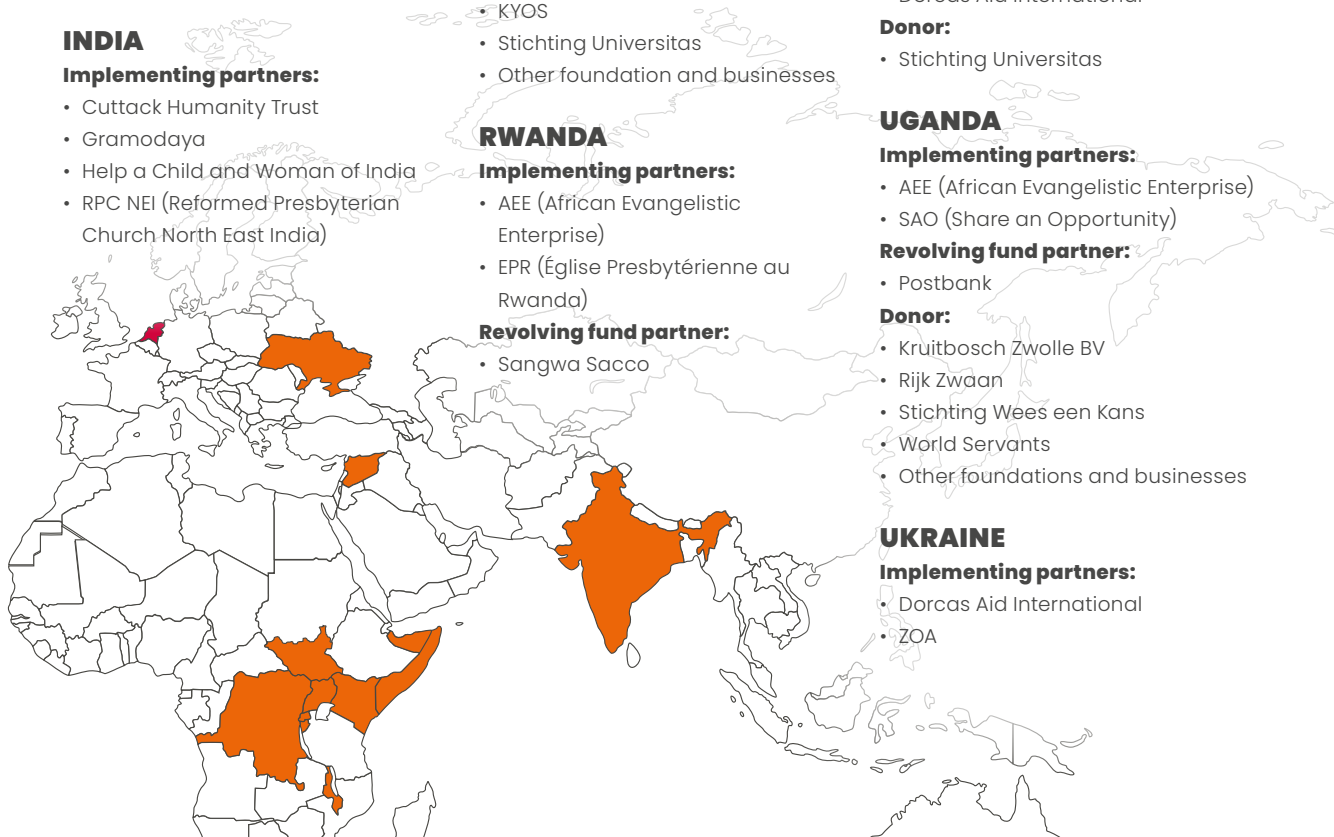
Donor:

- Kruitbosch Zwolle BV
- Rijk Zwaan
- Stichting Wees een Kans
- World Servants
- Other foundations and businesses

UKRAINE

Implementing partners:

- Dorcas Aid International
- ZOA



A big 'thank you' to all private donors in the Netherlands and other countries!

Other partners and networks

- Better Care Network Nederland
- Care Nederland
- Cordaid
- Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Alliance
- Dorcas Aid International
- Dutch Relief Alliance
- EO Metterdaad
- EU Cord
- Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative (HQA)
- Forth Global
- Global Campaign for Education Nederland
- Global initiative to support parents: call to action (ECDAN)
- Invi
- Keeping Children Safe
- Light for the World
- Medair
- Micha Nederland
- Oxfam Novib
- Partos
- Plan International
- Prisma
- Save the Children
- SOS Kinderdorpen
- Stichting KLIMREK
- Stichting Vluchteling
- Tearfund
- Terre des Hommes
- UNHCR
- University of Utrecht (UU)
- University of Malawi
- Hogeschool VIAA
- Wageningen University & Research (WUR)
- War Child
- Woord en Daad
- World Servants
- World Vision
- ZOA

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Help a Child is certified according to the ISO 9001:2015 standard. The certificate number is K-0214907/1

The final and approved version of this impact report, together with the financial statements and auditor's report, can be found here:

**www.helpachild.org/
annual-report**





'Help a Child' is the international name for Red een Kind, an NGO registered in the Netherlands with affiliates in Africa and India.

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