



RESULTS REPORT

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION PROGRAMME

“TOWARDS THE FUTURE”

2024

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1. SUMMARY

The Annual Results Report 2024 presents the results, challenges and lessons learned of the third year of Fida's Development Cooperation Programme 2022-2025, "Towards the Future – A Safe Educational Path and Living Environment for Children and Youth". During the reporting period, Fida implemented a range of activities that strengthened the fulfilment of the Right to Education and Right to a Safe Living Environment for children and youth. The Programme also strengthened the capacity of its implementing partners in the areas of organisational management, advocacy and Innovations, Technology and Corporate Collaboration (ITCC). Activities in Finland, meanwhile, focused on raising awareness and increasing engagement regarding the Programme's themes among the Finnish public. This was achieved through work in three key areas, namely Advocacy, Development Communication and Global Education. Three Cross-Cutting Objectives; Gender Equality, Disability Inclusion and Environment and Climate Resilience were mainstreamed throughout the Programme.

A brief overview of the Programme is provided in Section 2 below, while the global-level results are presented in Section 3. Section 4 then provides an overview of the results of each Country Programme. The results of the Advocacy, Global Education and Development Communication activities implemented in Finland are presented in section 5, followed by the Programme Management and Quality Control in Section 6 and Programme Funding in Section 7.

COUNTRY PROGRAMMES		
 BANGLADESH	School child advocacy in Bangladesh – a safe educational path for all	
 BURUNDI	Community, family and youth wellbeing programme in Burundi	
 ETHIOPIA	Ethiopia peacebuilding and women and youth empowerment programme	
 IRAQ	Innovative education and peaceful living environment for children and youth in Iraq	
 KENYA	Tunajali - opportunities for children and youth for quality education and a safer living environment in Kenya	
 DR CONGO	Eliimu haki - education and peace for children and youth in DR Congo	
 MYANMAR	Towards the peaceful and educated life of children and youth in Myanmar	
 NEPAL	Safe and inclusive school pathway for children and youth in Nepal	
 TANZANIA	Tunandoto Tanzania programme – sustainably transformed childhoods	
 UGANDA	Safer and sustainable environment for children and youth in Uganda country programme	
 DOMESTIC PROGRAMME	Finland- building hope and a future around the world	

Figure 1. Fida Country Programmes 2022–2025

During 2024, the Development Cooperation Programme operated in **10 countries in South and South-East Asia, Eastern Africa and the Middle East** (see Figure 1. above). This Annual Results Report has been prepared based on the annual reports of each Country Programme as well as the results of the Development Communication, Global Education and Advocacy work carried out in Finland. The Programme's Result Matrix (Appendix 2) has also been an important tool for analysing the Programme's results.

Fida's **operating environment included countries that were fragile and/or least developed and in which the space for civil society to operate was limited**. The difficult operating environment posed challenges to implementation and necessitated regular analysis as well as updating of the Programme's Risk Management Plan as circumstances changed. More information regarding the operating environment can be found in Section 2.3. The Programme's Risk Management Plan is presented in Section 2.4 and Appendix 3.

During 2024, the **Programme directly impacted the lives of 265 000 people, including 142 000 girls and women and 11 700 persons with disabilities** (see Figure 2. Below). The number of beneficiaries fell compared to 2023 (458 600). Reasons for the drop in beneficiary numbers included a reduction in the amount of thematic areas addressed in some locations, shifting to activities to those focused on creating a deep impact over those aimed at reaching large numbers of people and a sharpening of geographical focus in some countries. **The number of indirect beneficiaries reached was over one million**. Significant steps were taken towards the goal of improving access to quality education and making living environments safer for children and youth. **Education accessibility was strengthened through improvements to infrastructure in 173 schools**, such as installing ramps to ensure that children with disabilities could attend school and improving toilet facilities so that teenage girls could attend school during their periods. The quality of the teaching provided in schools was also strengthened through pre- and in-service training for 1300 teachers. Meanwhile, 21 600 children learned about their rights and had opportunities to demonstrate leadership skills through Kids Clubs and Children's Parliaments.

Important progress was also made in increasing household incomes and strengthening local civil society organisations (CSOs). For instance, **vocational and agricultural training resulted in 4600 households increasing their regular income**, with evidence pointing to this being used to support children's education. Important means of improving living environments included increasing knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and rights, organising psychosocial support to those struggling with mental health issues and working to increase social cohesion and peacebuilding. During the year, 800 local civil society groups actively promoted children's education and over 1000 groups took action to strengthen children's wellbeing and living environments.

The Programme's **traffic light monitoring system indicated strong progress towards objectives** during 2024 with 25/30 outcome-level indicators displaying a green traffic light. This represents a slight improvement compared to 2023 (24/30) and reflects the Programme's adaptive approach, in which targets are regularly reassessed and adjusted as the operating environment changes. Evidence was also recorded during 2024 that points to the continued relevance and logic of the Programme's theory of change, such as families using income generated through the Programme to support their children's education. Please refer to Section 3, below, for a detailed analysis of Programme results and further reflections on the Programme's theory of change.

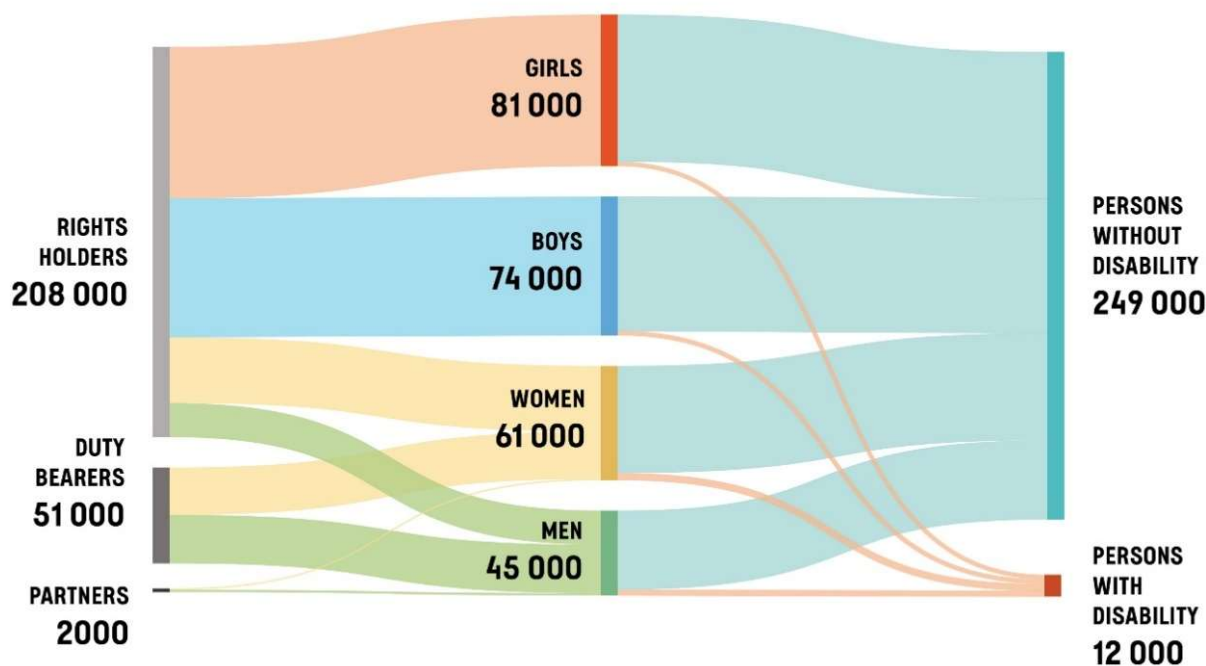


Figure 2. Direct Beneficiaries in 2024

The Programme encountered various challenges during 2024, outlined in Section 3.6. These challenges, including high inflation, insecurity and climate extremes, nevertheless provided opportunities to innovate, pilot new implementation approaches and to learn lessons that will serve the Programme in future. The **Cross-Cutting Objectives of Gender Equality, Disability Inclusion and Environment and Climate Resilience were incorporated into all Programme activities** (see Section 3.4). Learning, meanwhile, was supported through monthly thematic workshops, regional seminars and through sharing evaluation results broadly across the Programme. Two external evaluations conducted in 2024 are described in more detail in Section 6.3.

2. FIDA'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION PROGRAMME 2022–2025

2.1. STRUCTURE AND THEORY OF CHANGE OF THE PROGRAMME

The overall aim (impact) of the Development Cooperation Programme 2022 – 2025 is to bring about improved access to quality education and safer living environments for children and youth in Programme countries. This is achieved through four outcomes, as outlined below.

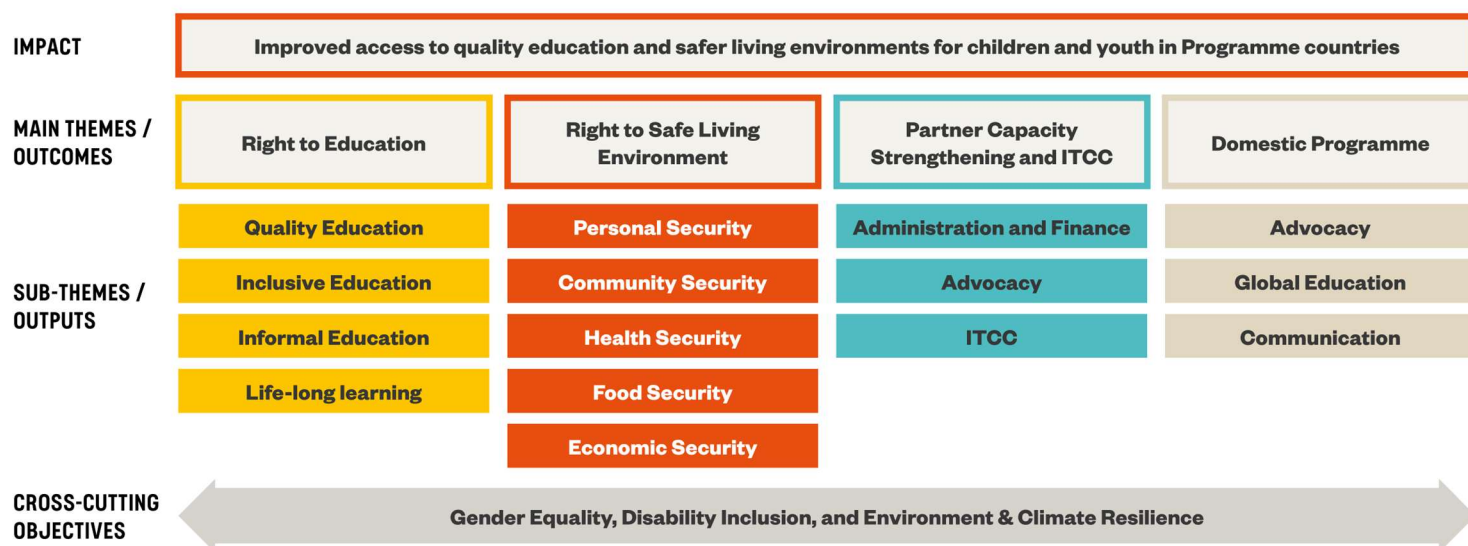


Figure 3. Development Cooperation Programme Structure

The first Programme outcome is **strengthened realisation of the Right to Education for children and youth, especially girls and children with disabilities**. This goal is reached through activities under four sub-themes: improving the quality of education, ensuring that education is inclusive, providing informal education opportunities and strengthening life-long learning. The Programme's second outcome is **strengthened realisation of the Right to a Safe Living Environment, especially for girls and children with disabilities**. Activities in this outcome area focus on ensuring adequate personal security, promoting a sense of safety within communities, strengthening healthcare provision and healthy practices and activities that strengthen food and economic security, such as agriculture and entrepreneurship training. The Programme's third outcome is **improved administrative and financial practices of partner organisations and strengthened commitment to act innovatively to strengthen the realisation of the rights of children and youth, especially girls and children with disabilities**. This goal is achieved through improving the financial, administrative and advocacy capacity of partner organisations and supporting them to collaborate with private sector actors and embrace new innovations. Finally, the Domestic Programme covers activities in Finland and aims for **increased commitment of target groups to promote children's rights to quality education and a safe living environment globally**.

In 2024, the Development Cooperation Programme contained 10 Country Programmes, all of which contributed to outcomes 1-3 of the Programme. The number of sub-themes addressed in each Country Programme varied, however, depending on the local context and capacity gaps identified as well as the expertise and thematic focus of the local implementing partners.

The Programme's **Results Chain** outlines its intervention logic and forms the basis for the Programme's **Results Matrix** (see Appendix 2). Meanwhile, a broader picture of the various factors that contribute to the achievement of the Programme's goals is provided by the **Theory of Change** (see Figure 4 below).

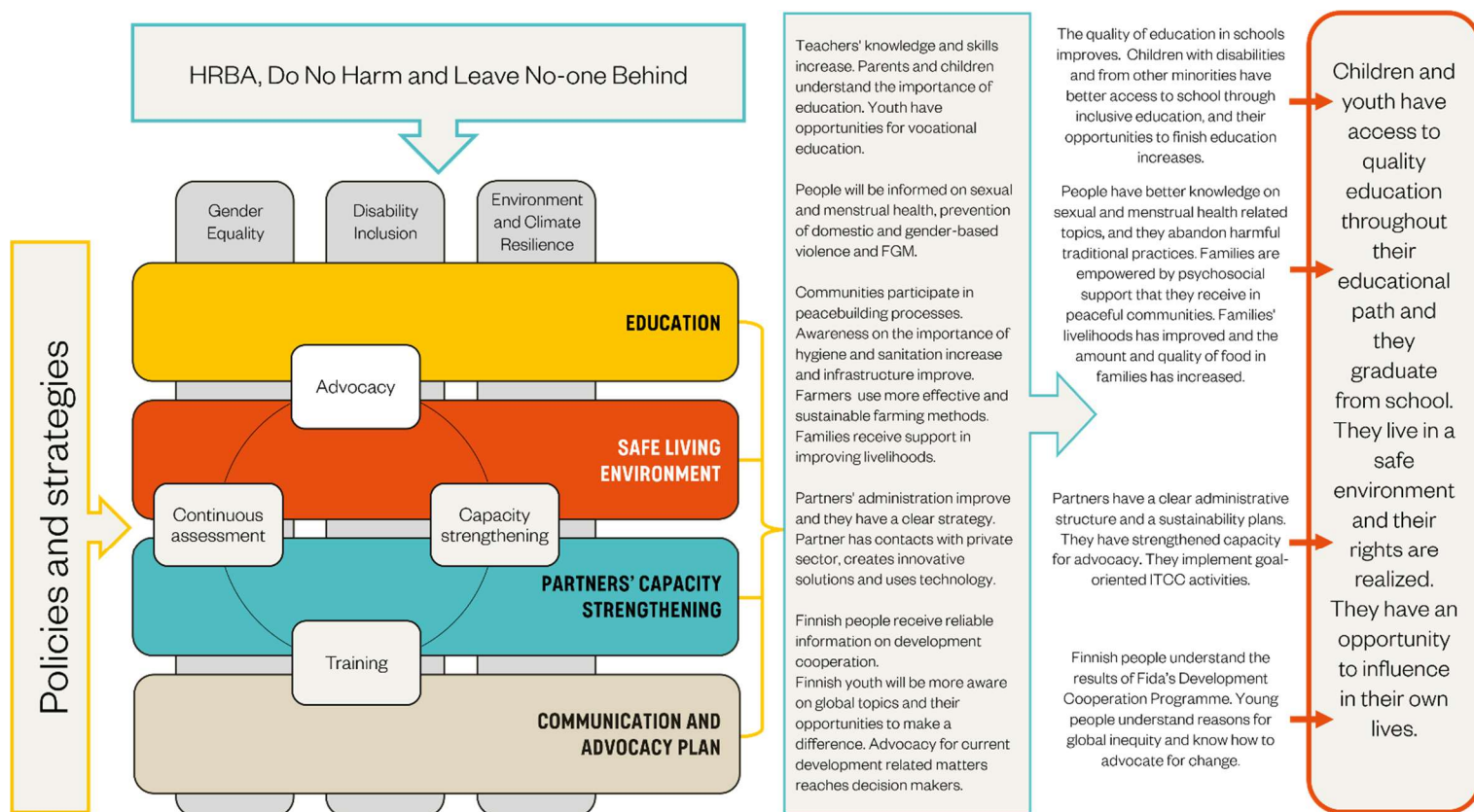


Figure 4. Theory of Change of the Development Cooperation Programme 2022 – 2025

2.2. OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Fida's Development Cooperation Programme operated in 10 countries during 2024, eight of which were classified as Least Developed Countries by OECD DAC, whilst the remaining two were classified as Middle-Income Countries. The Fragile State Index (FSI) classified five countries as being at the "Warning" level, signifying weak political and social institutions and cohesion, whilst a further five countries were at the most serious "Alert" level, which indicates a highly fragile situation and the potential for societal collapse. According to an analysis by CIVICUS, the space for civil society to operate was limited to some degree in all operating countries. All countries faced challenges in terms of fulfilling basic rights, such as the Right to Education and Right to a Safe Living Environment and contained significant segments of the population living in poverty. Figure 5 below provides an overview of the level of development, fragility and civil society space in the operating countries.

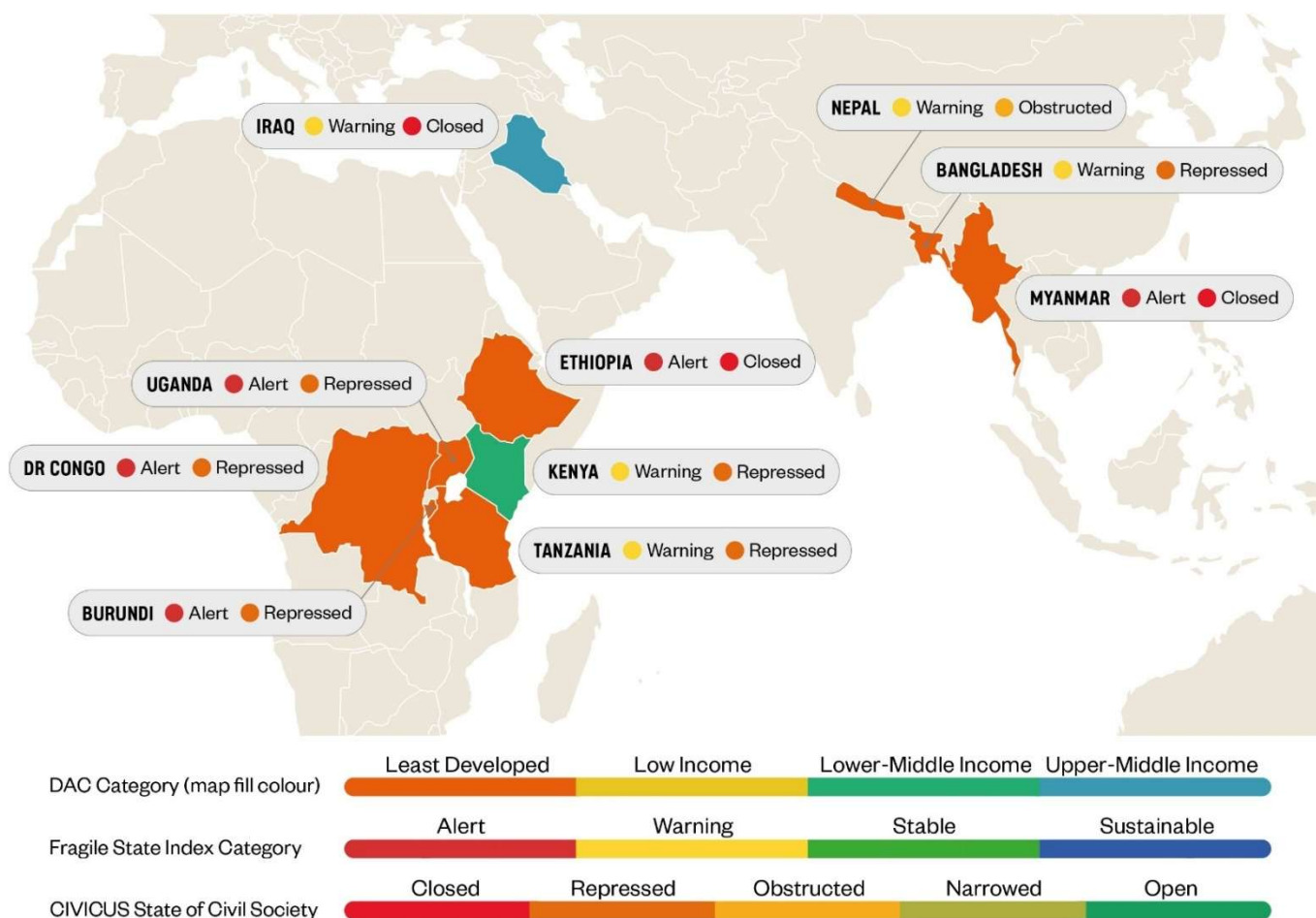


Figure 5. Key Development Indicators for Programme Countries

The **operating environment was insecure in many operating areas**. In January 2024, an Iranian ballistic missile struck northern Iraq, killing four civilians. Furthermore, in Bangladesh, there were widespread political demonstrations during which civilians and members of security forces lost their lives. As a result, a curfew was put in place and travel became more difficult, forcing the postponement of some activities. In DR Congo, fighting continued in the east of the country between rebel groups and the national army, which resulted in the destruction of some camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs). In addition, militia groups from DR Congo occasionally crossed the border into neighbouring Burundi and carried out attacks on communities there.

Inflation also remained high in many countries during 2024. In Burundi, the inflation rate was 23% and the country continued to suffer from a severe shortage of vehicle fuel. High inflation in Kenya also impacted some of the Programme's activities. For instance, the rate of loan defaults among members of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) increased from 3% in 2023 to 9% in 2024.

In Myanmar, the **security situation was challenging throughout the year** due to fighting between the army and resistance groups. Furthermore, a new military conscription law led to many young people fleeing their communities to avoid enlistment. The difficult security situation led to some members of Village Development Committees prioritising their personal and economic security over participation in training provided by the Programme. In addition, in Uganda, increased tensions were observed between refugees and members of host communities driven by competition over resources. Meanwhile, in DR Congo, Iraq and Burundi, teachers' strikes slowed down implementation of activities in schools at various times. Finally, flooding caused delays to

implementation in both DR Congo and Iraq, and there were challenges in securing work permits for Programme staff working in Bangladesh, resulting in them needing to work remotely from Finland.

2.3. RISK MANAGEMENT

The strategic-level Risk Management Plan was reviewed in the autumn of 2024. The plan contains four risk categories, which are strategic, operational, financial and hazard risks. The risk level for each risk was reviewed, focusing on impact and probability. Risk management and responsible parties were also reviewed. Finally, residual risks were checked and re-evaluated.

Some updates were made to clarify the wording of the Risk Management Plan and two new risks were added. Firstly, the risk of issues related to Fida's registrations in Programme countries was added to strategic risks. The risk of misunderstandings between Fida and its partners is reduced by, for example, open communication with partners about registration needs, and the agreement of clear roles and responsibilities between partners and Fida's registrations. Secondly, sanctions and obligations to combat money laundering and terrorism were also included in the Risk Management Plan. This risk is prevented and managed by, among others, taking into account the national AML/CFT (Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism) risk assessments commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior for the organisational sector, internal audits, training of staff and partners and transferring money only to known and trusted operators. Some further minor clarifications were made regarding, for instance, Fida's Ethical Communication Guidelines and staff training was added in relation to reputation risk measures. In general, plans were found to be effective and comprehensive.

The security situation was tense in many Programme areas, as outlined in section 2.2 above. This led to challenges related to logistics, available resources and psychological strain for Programme staff. The Country Programmes affected responded by adapting implementation strategies, for example, more use of online and video-based trainings and, in DR Congo and Myanmar, providing psychosocial support to Programme staff. Programme staff also adhered to security guidelines and did not travel to highly insecure areas. Attention is also given to adjusting plans and alternative methods, as well as preparedness and other proactive measures to minimise the effects of insecurity. All Fida staff members working in/travelling regularly to insecure locations have completed Hostile Environment Awareness Training.

One case of potential misconduct was reported in 2024 (addressed in 2025). Please refer to Section 6.2 below for further information.

3. PROGRESS BY OUTCOME AREAS

The objectives, indicators, and results of Fida's Development Programme are presented in full in the attached Result Matrix (Appendix 2.). This Results Report contains **an analysis and overview of Programme performance** based on the Results Matrix and the Country Programme Annual Reports. Sections 3.1 – 3.3 present the results of outcome areas 1, 2 and 3. The results for outcome area 4 are presented later, in section 5. The results of the Cross-Cutting Objectives are presented in Section 3.4. Meanwhile, reflections on the challenges and lessons learned are discussed in Section 3.5. Overviews of the main achievements in each Country Programme are presented in Section 4.

The Programme used a **traffic light system** to show progress towards annual indicator targets. A green light indicates that the targets were achieved or close to being achieved (> 80% of the annual target). An amber light shows that there was moderate success in reaching the indicator targets (60-80% of annual target) and a red light indicates that the Programme was relatively far from meeting its target (< 60% of annual target), suggesting either that there were implementation challenges or that the original targets were overly ambitious.

3.1. RIGHT TO EDUCATION

The Education outcome of Fida's Development Cooperation Programme contributes to the achievement of the goals of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and supports the achievement of the so-called 4 A's of education: availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability. Programme activities emphasise, in particular, strengthening the educational rights of girls and children with disabilities. In 2024, **Right to Education activities directly impacted 143 200 persons**, among them 47 200 girls, 43 800 boys and 2100 children with disabilities.



DIRECT BENEFICIARIES IN EDUCATION				2024 TRAFFIC LIGHTS
● Rights Holders ● Duty Bearers	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	
Children without disabilities	46 400	42 500	88 900	0
Children with disabilities	900	1300	2 100	
Adults without disabilities	16 900	7 200	24 100	
Adults with disabilities	140	100	240	0
Adults without disabilities	13 200	13 800	27 000	6
Adults with disabilities	250	510	770	
Total	77 700	65 300	143 200	

Table 1. Right to Education Beneficiaries and Outcome-level Traffic Lights

The Programme contains six outcome-level indicators measuring progress towards strengthening children's Right to Education in Programme countries. During 2024, all Programme indicators had a green traffic light (6/6), which indicates solid progress and represents a small improvement compared to the results in 2023 (5/6).

IMPROVED QUALITY OF EDUCATION

During 2024, the quality of education was improved for 60 500 children (girls: 33 300, CWDs: 1300). This result was achieved through, among other measures, strengthening teachers' knowledge of relevant education curricula and providing them with new knowledge and skills related to inclusive and child-centred teaching and assessment. In Nepal and Bangladesh, for instance, teachers reported that in-service training had strengthened their capacity to use interactive teaching methods and create lesson plans in advance. In Bangladesh, 84 teachers in supported schools reported using **new, creative teaching methods that increased pupil engagement**. Previously, lessons involved mostly reading and writing, whereas the new assignments involved, among others, giving presentations, acting, games and group work. In Burundi, 350 pre-school teachers learned about topics including children's psychological and cognitive development and were able to use this knowledge in their teaching. An assessment of pre-school education carried out by the Burundian authorities found that teachers trained by the Country Programme were performing better than their peers in other schools. Meanwhile, following training for 340 teachers on inclusive education in DR Congo, the trained teachers took the initiative to share their knowledge with their peers during weekly teacher meetings.

The **improved quality of teaching led to improved academic performance** in several operating areas. For instance, in Uganda, the pass rate in Primary Leaving Exams increased from 88% to 91%. Improvements in academic achievements were also observed in Kenya and Tanzania. In Tanzania, completion rates for primary education grew year-on-year from 6900 in 2023 to 9800 in 2024. One factor behind the improvements observed in Uganda was the strong learner-teacher approach and academic seminars that prepared pupils for sitting examinations. Meanwhile, in Tanzania, informal education provided through Kids Clubs was identified as an important factor behind improved academic performance.

KIDS CLUBS SUPPORT CHILDREN'S EDUCATION AND WELLBEING

During 2024, the Programme continued to support children's education and personal development through informal education provided in 377 Kids Clubs, Learning Centres and through other informal education platforms. Kids Clubs provided children with opportunities to strengthen their academic knowledge, learn new skills, engage in creative activities and socialise with their peers. Furthermore, lessons on advocacy, debating and public speaking equipped children and young people with the skills and confidence to advocate to decision-makers on behalf of themselves and their peers. **Children also learnt important life skills that will help them to thrive in school and later life**, such as communication skills, critical thinking, decision-making and methods for coping with stress.

In Burundi, 6400 children (g: 3500, CWD: 200) participated in Kid's Club activities with many reporting that they had gained increased self-confidence as a result. In Iraq, school pupils demonstrated increased respect for their peers with disabilities, adopted positive social behaviours, and showed greater environmental awareness, according to parents and teachers. In Ethiopia, meanwhile, children at one school advocated for their inclusion in school decision-making processes in the presence of city officials, with officials subsequently committing to support school leaders in providing participation opportunities for pupils. Drama performances in schools in Ethiopia were also used to advocate for peacebuilding and tolerance. In Kenya, meanwhile, one of the supported Kids Clubs participated in school music festivals and won several awards for its performances.

As mentioned above, pupils in schools in Tanzania that participated in informal education activities were found to perform better at school than their peers- in Mwanza, for instance, there was a 10% increase in academic performance in those schools where informal activities occurred. Similar results were observed in Myanmar where pupils of one Learning Centre significantly outperformed their peers when authorities changed

examination questions to test pupils' ability to think critically rather than memorise information. Indeed 10-15% of the Learning Centre's pupils achieved outstanding results and received awards from their schools.

Kids Club members also took the initiative to carry out advocacy activities on various issues. In Nepal, one of the Kids Clubs cooperated with the local police to prevent a child marriage, resulting in the affected girl being able to continue with her education. In Kenya, meanwhile, girls in Ziواني primary advocated for their rights to sanitary pads, and a visiting NGO subsequently donated sanitary pads for all 75 girls in the school.

IMPROVED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND SUPPORTING STRUCTURES

Access to education was strengthened for 73 900 children (girls: 40 000, CWD: 1955) during 2024. In Nepal, for instance, improvements to physical infrastructure were made in 55 schools. These included improvements to classrooms and drinking water systems and renovations to toilets. At the same time, successes in other areas point to further need to strengthen school infrastructure. For instance, success in advocating for the educational rights of children with disabilities in Iraq highlighted gaps in infrastructure and teacher preparedness, as some schools struggled to accommodate the increased number of children with disabilities.

Significant strengthening of school management structures was also observed. In Kenya, for instance, attendance by parents and caregivers at school meetings increased from an average of 300 to over 400. Meetings were used to make take concrete action such as organising remedial classes during school holidays for children that were falling behind in their studies and measures to improve security. Parents also actively advocated to other actors when they lacked the resources to make improvements themselves. As a result, nine classrooms were constructed at schools participating in the Kenya Country Programme. Refer also to Section 3.3.

In Myanmar, parent-teacher meetings were also productive and resulted in the formation of sustainability plans for the Country Programme's Learning Centres along with concrete fundraising initiatives. Meanwhile, in Tanzania, seven Child Protection Committees were established in schools and local communities were tasked with monitoring and responding to cases of neglect and exploitation. During the reporting period, several at-risk children were identified and referred to social services. In Uganda, the Programme supported the establishment of "Mama and Baba" Clubs made up of 60 parents and caregivers. The role of members is to support schools and their teachers through taking care of the school grounds and planting trees to generate income for the schools. Programme monitoring indicates that since the formation of the clubs both pupil and teacher absenteeism have fallen.

**12 500 CHILDREN
BENEFITED FROM
IMPROVED LEARNING
ENVIRONMENTS**

3.2. RIGHT TO SAFE LIVING ENVIRONMENT



The main goal of the Right to Safe Living Environment outcome is to ensure that all children in target communities are able to grow up in a safe and supportive environment as outlined in Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Programme ensures that children and their parents are aware of their rights to a safe living environment and that parents are equipped with the knowledge and skills to generate income to provide for their families. During 2024, **the Safe Living Environment activities directly impacted the lives of 148 400 beneficiaries, among them 88 600 children and 8500 persons with disabilities.**

DIRECT BENEFICIARIES IN SAFE LIVING ENVIRONMENT				2024 TRAFFIC LIGHTS
● Rights Holders ● Duty Bearers	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	
Children without disabilities	46 600	39 200	85 800	3
Children with disabilities	1500	1200	2800	
Adults without disabilities	21 100	10 700	31 900	2
Adults with disabilities	2200	1600	3800	
Adults without disabilities	10 900	11 200	22 200	12
Adults with disabilities	1200	700	2000	
Total	83 400	64 600	148 400	

Table 2. Right to Safe Living Environment Beneficiaries and Outcome Traffic Lights

Progress towards building a Safe Living Environment for children and youth is measured through 16 indicators. During 2024, 12 (2023: 14) of the indicators showed solid progress towards the targets (green traffic light), while three indicators had a red traffic light signifying limited progress (2023: two). A further two indicators had an amber light. Regarding the red traffic lights, the number of children and youth who felt increased security was significantly less than targeted. The poor security situation in many Country Programmes was a contributing factor, along with government restrictions in Ethiopia, which prevented the Country Programme from collecting results for this indicator. In addition, the number of children with disabilities using assistive devices was lower than planned. Contributing factors included budgetary pressures caused by inflation and the high cost of devices in Burundi and challenges with scaling up production in Tanzania. The final indicator with a red traffic light measured the number of positive environmental changes. Factors behind the poor result include climate extremes (see Section 2.2) and limited resources dedicated to work in this area (see Section 6.3).

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT LEADS TO INCREASED RESILIENCE

The Programme continued to support the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of children and their parents and caregivers, which increased their resilience to cope with everyday challenges. Monitoring of

**7900 CHILDREN
AND 6500
CAREGIVERS
RECEIVED
PSYCHOSOCIAL
SUPPORT**

individuals and groups points to significant impacts on the lives of beneficiaries. In Iraq, discussions with parents and teachers revealed that the provision of psychosocial support to school pupils had resulted in reductions in anxiety, social phobia and depression. Meanwhile, providing psychosocial support to parents was found to have improved their anger management and social skills and led to more supportive home environments for children. Furthermore, social workers reported that incidences of bullying of children with disabilities decreased.

In Myanmar, mental health awareness training was provided for 150 parents and volunteer teachers. Parents who participated stated that the training helped them to understand the significance of psychosocial wellbeing and reduced their negative preconceptions regarding mental health. They reported adjusting their parenting techniques based on what they had learned- for instance, following the training, they tried to avoid getting unnecessarily angry with their children and punishing them for making mistakes. The positive results of psychosocial support are illustrated well by a case of a boy in Burundi who struggled with his mental health and avoided going to school. After his parents participated in PSS training, they learned to understand his

situation better and gained knowledge and tools to support him. With support from his parents and a school counsellor, the boy gained the confidence to return to school.

INCREASED KNOWLEDGE OF SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR)

The Programme continued to strengthen knowledge regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) during 2024. Feedback gathered in Iraq indicated that children were increasingly discussing menstrual health management and related topics that had previously been considered taboo. Measures were also taken to make it easier for girls to attend school during their periods, such as constructing separate toilets for girls and boys and installing sanitary pad disposal facilities in girls' toilets. In Tanzania, for instance, SRHR trainings in 5 villages led to collaborative efforts to build changing rooms and incinerators at three schools. As a result, 760 girls will be able to attend school during menstruation. These measures helped tackle period poverty and prevent girls from falling behind in their studies or dropping out of school altogether.

**23 500 CHILDREN
WITH INCREASED
KNOWLEDGE OF SRHR**

SRHR training for adults also led to positive results. For instance, mothers in Nepal reported an increased readiness to discuss menstrual health with their daughters and to support them to attend school during their periods. Meanwhile, in Uganda, following awareness raising regarding Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), 30 youth in Karamoja sensitised 120 community members (w: 80, m: 40) regarding the dangers of FGM and cattle rustling. This resulted in reductions in both since men had previously rustled for cows to pay the bride price for girls who had undergone FGM. The local health centre indicated that the number of first-time women giving birth who have been mutilated has reduced.

Despite the positive results, SRHR remains a challenging topic in certain areas and for certain societal groups. In Burundi, religious leaders were reluctant to encourage discussion of the topic since they felt that it was likely to increase immoral behaviour. This illustrates the importance of engaging with the local community and religious leaders to make them aware of the type of issues that are covered in SRHR and why they are important.

STRENGTHENED LIVELIHOODS CONTRIBUTE TO INCREASED WELLBEING

The Programme continued to take action to strengthen the livelihoods of parents and caregivers. This work took various forms, including providing financial literacy and business training for unemployed youth, working with local savings groups to ensure the availability of capital and training farmers in the use of conservation agriculture practices. Across the Programme, 4600 households reported increased regular household income, enabling parents and caregivers to take better care of children.

**650 SMALL
BUSINESSES
CREATED**

In Bangladesh, 39 women were supported to establish their own businesses, such as tea stalls, clothing shops, and handicraft enterprises, increasing their ability to support their children's education. The Ethiopia Country Programme, meanwhile, provided vocational training that resulted in the creation of 135 jobs in various sectors. Likewise, in Kenya, 600

households reported increased regular income as a result of income-generating activities. In Tanzania, meanwhile, efforts to alleviate poverty included increasing the incomes of 560 households (6 with PWD members), establishing 65 sustainable enterprises (12 by PWDs), and enhancing savings for 47 households. Also, in Uganda, 36 VSLA groups' savings in Karamoja and Yumbe increased to €25,479 from €14,200 at the beginning of the year. Members borrowed money to cover basic needs such as school fees, business start-ups, and medical costs.

In Tanzania, smallholder cashew farmers in the Mingoyo and Mnazimmoja wards increased cashew production from 7.2 tonnes with a value of €5700 in 2023 to 9.8 tonnes with a value of €11 700 in 2024. Besides the increase in production, farmers received better prices in 2024 owing to the improved quality of cashews (also an outcome of Country Programme trainings). In Uganda, meanwhile, 86 bee hives were colonised, increasing the harvest of honey to 112kg from 47kg at the beginning of the year.

REDUCED CONFLICT AND MORE PEACEFUL COMMUNITIES

During 2024, 58 700 persons, including 10 600 women and 38 700 children, actively participated in social cohesion and peacebuilding initiatives mainly in Burundi, Ethiopia, DR Congo, Iraq, Myanmar and Uganda. Five main themes emerged as outcomes of the work.

Firstly, there is **a clear shift from separation to inclusion and cohesion**. In DR Congo's Tanganyika province, Twa children who initially resisted sharing schools with Bantu children now attend the same schools, after peace club engagement. In Fizi, the Fuleru and Bembe ethnic groups now collaborate in VSLAs, despite earlier being unwilling to associate with one another. In Ethiopia, peace dialogues among religious and traditional leaders reduced interfaith barriers. For instance, Muslims and Orthodox Christians now commonly attend events on Protestant church grounds. Finally, in Myanmar, the reluctance of non-Christian families to have their children participate in the activities of a Learning Centre located at a church premises has fallen and now over half its students are from non-Christian families.

Secondly, **peace manuals have been developed**. The Ethiopia Country Programme developed a Peace Structure Manual, approved by the Ministry of Peace, that was distributed to four universities and resulted in the formation of peace committees and a peace council comprising major religious groups. In DR Congo, meanwhile, a manual for peacebuilding was created with the participation of community volunteers providing structured sessions for education about peace. Thirdly, **reconciliation and healing processes were recorded**. This is vital as it is the first step as people move from conflict or dispute towards development and transformation. In Ethiopia, church leaders and workers took decisive steps toward reconciliation and healing. Their commitment to fostering peace and unity resulted in a significant breakthrough: previously estranged youth who had distanced themselves from the church due to conflicts with the leaders were reconciled.

Fourthly, **growing knowledge and initiatives for peace continue to bring good results**. In Ethiopia, the Country Programme has actively involved women in community-based peacebuilding initiatives. This approach has not only empowered women but also strengthened their confidence and leadership skills. Meanwhile, in Myanmar, pre- and post-test assessments showed notable improvements, with knowledge of social cohesion rising from 6% to 90% after the first module of the training. Finally, **conflict resolution has brought outcomes** in Uganda. The Programme activities resulted in the settling of 22 community-related violence cases, increasing the number of cases settled to 27 from 5 at the start of the year. Additionally, a training for 20 peace champions led to an important peace meeting between the Pokot and Karamoja communities, transforming a disputed grazing area into a shared marketplace.

3.3. COOPERATION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND STATE ACTORS

Work continued to **strengthen civil society actors** in the Programme's operating areas. The capacity of civil society groups, such as Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and mothers groups, was strengthened and the groups carried out various initiatives to support children's education and wellbeing. In Nepal, for instance, local communities provided significant in-kind contributions to support school renovations, such as stones, wood and labour. The value of the contributions was €11 600, and the improvements made

**CAPACITY OF 1100
CIVIL SOCIETY
GROUPS WAS
STRENGTHENED**

benefited over 12 000 local schoolchildren. School Management Committees in Nepal were also observed to be operating more professionally than in the past and participated in the development of 86 School Improvement Plans. In addition, one Nepalese school successfully applied for €49 300 in funding from the Embassy of India to construct new facilities. In Kenya, meanwhile, local civil society groups supported by the Programme took action to rescue two local girls from child marriages. After noticing the girls' situation, they informed the local administration, which rescued the girls. The groups then mobilised funds to support the girls' return to school.

In Bangladesh, where the Programme previously had difficulty finding suitable civil society partners, the Programme has now supported the establishment of 18 small CSOs that supported children's education in various ways. The Uganda Country Programme, meanwhile, supported the registration of a refugee-led CSO and provided it with technical advice to apply for funding from the United Nations Commission for Human Rights to support its peacebuilding activities. In Tanzania, the Country Programme has increasingly collaborated with local civil society organisations to increase the reach and effectiveness of its activities. For instance, collaboration with local Organisations of Persons with Disabilities has enabled the Country Programme to better reach persons with disabilities.

COOPERATION WITH GOVERNING AUTHORITIES

The Programme continued to cooperate closely with governing authorities in all countries except for Myanmar, where such collaboration was not possible. In Burundi, cooperation with the national authorities supported the achievement of the government's plan for pre-primary education. In DR Congo, it had previously been observed that Ministry of Education staff and teachers lacked commitment to providing inclusive education in all schools. However, following training organised by the Programme, education authorities began to move towards more inclusive teaching methods and education authorities organised quarterly monitoring visits to schools to check on progress.

At the local level, government officials often participate in the Programme's sensitisation work. In Tanga, in Tanzania, when 75 youth with disabilities received disability inclusive SRHR trainings, the District Medical Officer (DMO) was part of the audience. Youth were able to communicate about the barriers they face in government facilities, including unfavourable infrastructure, lack of sign language interpreters, and poor service availability. In this instance, the DMO, together with social welfare officers and the Tanzania Police Gender desk, committed to enforcing accessibility in clinics in the Tanga region and implementing measures to prevent sexual abuse of young people with disabilities.

Government experts are also used in trainings provided by the Programme. For instance, in DR Congo, the Ministry of Education staff provided in-service training for teachers with the support of the Country Programme. Meanwhile, in Tanzania, the Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute conducted workshops for Programme staff on value chains, standardisation, packaging, and marketing of agricultural produce. The Country Programme was able to subsequently collaborate with the Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO) to support beneficiaries in producing certified products, such as honey and sunflower oil, which can be legally sold in supermarkets and incorporated into the food processing industry, thus connecting them with value chains.

Local authorities value the work of Fida's Programme and, for instance, in Nepal, governing authorities provided €23 762 in match funding to support the work of the Country Programme. As described above, the support was used to make infrastructure improvements to schools. In Ethiopia, meanwhile, local employment offices have pledged to provide workspace for graduates of vocational training organised in the country.

The Programme also worked with local authorities to register civil society groups created through the Programme. In the Kigoma region in Tanzania, for instance, all 207 Self-Help Groups have formal registrations and constitutions developed with the assistance of local Community Development Officers. In addition, in Uganda, seven new VSLAs were registered, enabling them to receive funding from the government and microfinance organisations, and 70 members of groups from Karamoja benefited from government household loans acquired through the Parish Development Model, where each member received €270.

REFLECTIONS ON PROGRAMME'S THEORY OF CHANGE

As described above (Section 2.1) and in the Programme plan, the Programme aims to achieve both improved access to quality education and safer living environments for children and youth, with the two goals considered mutually reinforcing. Several results during 2024 point to the relevance of the theory of change. For instance, monitoring of 51 families that established businesses in Tanzania shows that they used income from their enterprises to purchase school materials and uniforms, and to pay for transport to school. In addition, when 215 families in Nepal were able to increase their income as a result of training provided by the Programme, a significant number of them used the money to support their children's education.

In addition, 41 children with disabilities enrolled in school in Tanzania after they received assistive devices through the Programme, while a further 142 children with disabilities returned to school after receiving regular therapy or rehabilitation. Similar results were recorded in Iraq and Uganda (see Section 3.8). Furthermore, three schools began growing crops with the harvest used to provide school meals for the youngest pupils on the initiative of local Kids Clubs. Meanwhile, evidence has been gathered in various locations of local government and civil society actors taking responsibility for the structures and organisations established through the Programme. In Myanmar, for instance, a local Village Development Committee (VDC) allocated a portion of the interest earned from its community savings and loan group to their Learning Centre. Finally, in Uganda, one nursery school was established by the members of lifelong learning classes after understanding the importance of education and the good foundation for early child development. The school currently teaches 150 learners (girls: 80). A more detailed analysis of the success of the theory of change will be conducted during 2025.

3.4. STRENGTHENING PARTNERS' CAPACITY



The goal of the Strengthening Partners' Capacity outcome area is to equip the 18 local implementing partners with the necessary knowledge and skills to operate effectively both during and after the current programme period. Activities enhance the administrative and financial capacity of the local partners and provide them with new tools to strengthen their advocacy work and to pursue new innovations, technology and corporate collaboration (ITCC).

Progress is measured through seven outcome indicators. All indicators had a green traffic light during 2024, indicating good progress towards the Programme's targets (2023: 5/7 green traffic lights). **The Partner Capacity Strengthening outcome reached a total of 2 400 direct beneficiaries, among them 800 women and 110 persons with disabilities.**

DIRECT BENEFICIARIES IN PARTNER CAPACITY STRENGTHENING				2024 TRAFFIC LIGHTS
	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	
Adults without disabilities	800	1400	2300	0
Adults with disabilities	70	40	110	0
Total	800	1400	2400	7

Table 3. Strengthening Partners' Capacity Beneficiaries and Outcome Traffic Lights

STRENGTHENING ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

During 2024, Organisational Capacity Self-Assessments were carried out by partner organisations. The assessments were used to evaluate capacity across several metrics and to identify capacity gaps for follow-up. During the reporting period, activities and training focused on themes including ethics and leadership, strategic financial management and financial sustainability, managing core costs and preventing fraud and corruption.

Improvements in the following areas of financial and administrative management were observed:

- **Finance staff have increased ability to communicate important financial information** to other staff members in an easily understandable manner (8 local partners).
- **Development of systems and structures to improve performance.** Includes having user-friendly financial systems & developing internal policies. (8 local partners).
- **Partners working on the development of financing plans** (9 Local Partners).

At the same time, further capacity strengthening is needed in several areas including:

- **Strengthened knowledge of financial management in Management Committees** of partner organisations and inclusion of a finance professional as committee member (8 local partners).
- **Greater emphasis on financial management and financial literacy of key staff by Leadership Teams** (11 local partners).
- **Increased understanding of the importance of managing key external relationships** (management of donor relations, relations with other partners and local communities) (11 local partners).

Please refer to figure 6 below for a more detailed overview of progress in strengthening the capacity of partner organisations during the current 2022 – 2025 programme period.

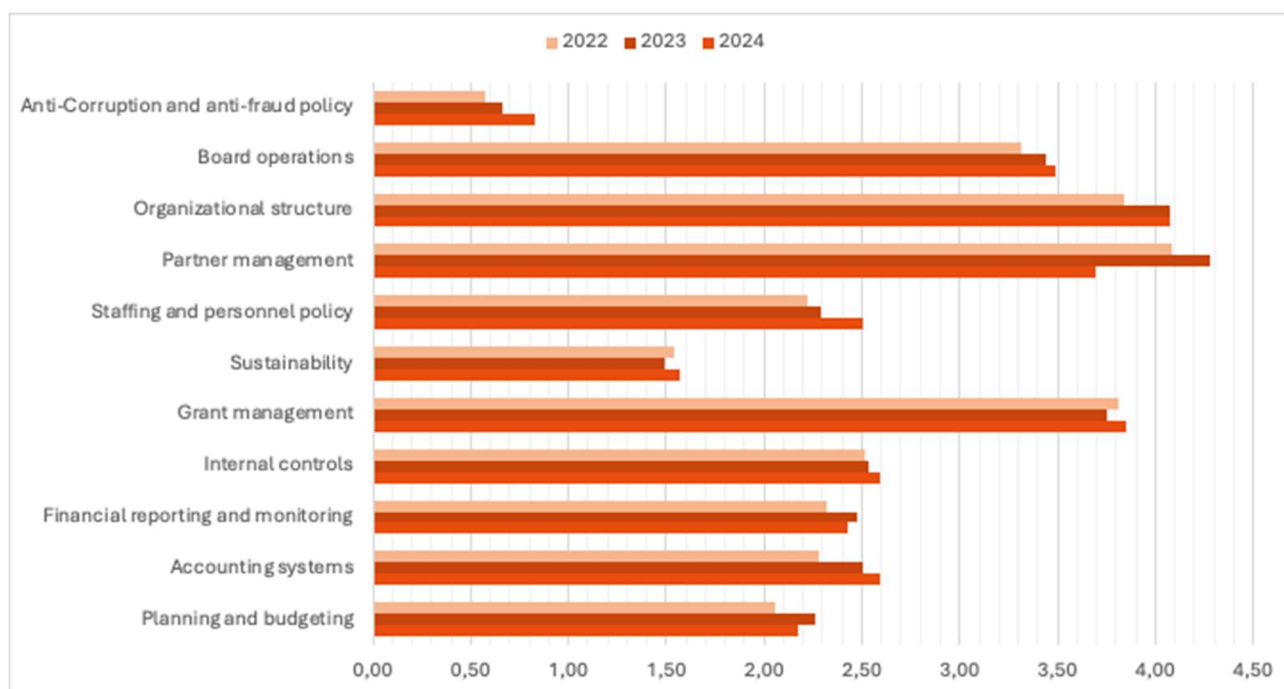


Figure 6. Results of Partner Capacity Health Checks 2022 – 2024

Figure 6 shows a year-on-year comparison of Capacity Health Check scores of partner organisations for the years 2022, 2023, and 2024. In 2022, the average score stood at 2.6, which rose to 2.7 in 2023 - marking a 4% increase over the previous year. In 2024, the average score remained consistent at 2.7. While overall progress was positive, a few areas showed slight regression and will require further attention in 2025.

ADVOCACY INITIATIVES AND CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

During 2024, partner organisations started or supported 39 new advocacy initiatives, of which over half (25) led to positive results. Many initiatives involved local civil society groups whose advocacy efforts led to, among others, improved school infrastructure and WASH facilities, safer playgrounds, securing free sanitary pads for teenage girls, the hiring of qualified teachers and the prevention of child marriage.

In many Country Programmes, advocacy is linked to raising awareness of the rights of children and youth to education and safe living environments, which forms a foundation for higher levels of policy advocacy. In Nepal, for instance, advocacy efforts have brought about a mindset change and motivated local government authorities to become more engaged with education-related questions and the improvement of school infrastructure. Collaboration with local governments has also resulted in obtaining remarkable match-funding to improve the school infrastructure as described above.

Successful national-level advocacy results were also achieved. In DR Congo, the partner organisation's advocacy team aided negotiations between authorities and teachers during strikes. After the successful facilitation of discussions, the strikes were lifted. Furthermore, as a result of persistent advocacy work and network collaboration, a National Secretariat for People Living with Disabilities was created for the first time in DR Congo, following awareness-raising and advocacy for the inclusion of people living with disabilities.

Similar strong results on disability inclusion have been collected in Iraq, where a local partner organisation engaged with over 150 CSO representatives through workshops, conferences, and advocacy activities. Key events, such as the "Inclusive Advocacy Unites" workshop, enabled CSOs to identify barriers faced by marginalised groups, persons with disabilities, women, and youth and propose actionable solutions. These

efforts culminated in a comprehensive advocacy plan addressing education, infrastructure accessibility, and policy recommendations. Notably, persons with disabilities were central to these efforts, leading discussions and advocating for their rights.

INNOVATIONS, NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING (ITCC)

Fida continued to work to diversify the funding base of its Country Programmes by seeking new sources of institutional funding and collaborating with other organisations and the private sector. During 2024, 23 new partnerships were established that strengthened the overall impact and funding base of the Programme. These include new partnerships with the private sector, as well as partnerships with educational institutions and other actors.

Innovations and Digitisation

The Kenya Country Programme, in collaboration with the Dagoretti Area Advisory Council (AAC), introduced an innovative, safer and more convenient reporting mechanism/system on gender-based violence. Ten schools were identified, two teachers trained from each school and suggestion boxes were placed in strategic locations within the school where children could write and leave notes about cases of mistreatment. Teachers then collected the notes and went through them with teams established for this purpose. In this way, 609 cases were reported and 132 cases resolved.

The Kenya Country Programme also collaborated with Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences (JAMK) and Jomo Kenyatta University to introduce a mobile application for digital community-based rehabilitation for children with disabilities. Meanwhile, in Ethiopia, an innovative financial inclusion partnership was formed with the Cooperative Bank of Oromia. This enabled nine Self-Help Groups to access loans through Michu, a digital financial platform designed to streamline lending processes. In Iraq, meanwhile, the Fida local partner Together created and produced a sustainable education game. The games were a big success, and over 1000 sets were sold to the Baghdad municipality.

Consortia and network building

Fida is a member of the EU-CORD network and has been active in EU-CORD Country Forums in Kenya, DR Congo, Nepal, Ukraine, Uganda, Bangladesh and Ethiopia. The forums foster collaboration and open up partnership opportunities in the respective countries. In Ethiopia, Fida has investigated the possibility of joining the Ethiopian Humanitarian International NGO Forum (HINGO). Through this, Fida could gain access to good security analyses and strengthen its triple nexus approach. The Ethiopia Country Programme has also networked with Joint Initiatives for Strategic Religious Actions (JISRA), Consortium of Christian Relief & Development Association (CCRDA), Basic Education Network (BEN), TVET institutions and local banks. Also, in Kenya, the partner is in the process of talking with Humber Polytechnic about collaboration around technical and vocational education.

Collaboration with the private sector

The Burundi Country Programme started piloting the use of CashTel for providing mobile cash transfers. The pilot was successful, and a formal agreement will be made in 2025. In Ethiopia, four partnerships were formed with companies and public educational institutions focusing on skills development and job placements. There was additional collaboration with a local private website producer named BitCom Technology P.L.C, to modernise one of the local partner's websites and to update the technological skills of the employees. In Iraq, Fida collaborated with the North European Business Association (NEBA) to provide youth entrepreneurship training. The participants created business plans and subsequently established small businesses.

The Kenya Country Programme collaborated with FairGro, a private company promoting chilli farming. The company provided seeds, training and markets for the participating farmers who then grew chilli and sold it to the company. The model should over time increase income for local farmers. In Nepal, meanwhile, local partners collaborated with companies on Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives and applied for small grants. They received €6500 from Ncell Foundation, €6000 from the Australian Embassy, and €8000 from UNPD Nepal. Finally, in Tanzania, the Country Programme continued its partnerships with commercial banks in microfinance and the CRDB Bank gave favourable low interest loans to Fida's VSLA groups as part of a corporate social responsibility initiative.

Diversified funding base

The Fida Country programmes raised a total of €107 200 through in-kind contributions by local partners or local income generation. A total of € 49 100 was raised through local government match funding or support from other local organisations. In Myanmar, Fida collaborated with Eriks Development Partner from Sweden, who contributed €60 000 to expanding the reach of the Fida Country Programme. Fida also explored opportunities for joint funding applications with companies. Several applications were submitted to the Macarthur foundation and other potential donors.

3.5. CROSS-CUTTING OBJECTIVES

GENDER EQUALITY



Fida worked to ensure that all persons, regardless of gender, had equal access to its Programme and could influence activities and decisions that impacted their own lives and communities. The Programme worked to raise awareness of important gender-related topics such as Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The Programme engaged with girls, women, boys, and men to promote open discussion regarding gender roles, norms, rights, and expectations. During 2024, the Programme **strengthened the rights of 115 800 female rights holders**, while 25 900 female duty bearers and partner organisation representatives participated in the Programme in various ways. The proportion of female beneficiaries in the Programme was 53% (2023: 52%).

During the reporting period, 34 700 adults and children (g: 11 500, w: 7400) reported **increased knowledge of gender equality and related topics** as a result of awareness raising work carried out through the Programme. Feedback collected in Bangladesh pointed to concrete changes following the trainings, such as increased participation of women in household decision-making and increased acceptance of women pursuing employment opportunities. Meanwhile, teenage girls reported feeling empowered to make decisions about their own bodies, openly discussing menstrual health management with their mothers and making decisions to delay marriage until, at least, the age of 18. In Nepal, meanwhile, girls' leadership was promoted, and currently 43 of the Country Programme's 91 Kids Clubs are led by girls.

Training on gender equality also covered **sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)**, its prevention and avenues of support for victims/survivors. Feedback collected in Burundi pointed to reductions in cases of SGBV and the successful reconciliation of 90 households in which violence had previously occurred. Meanwhile, staff at a police hospital in DR Congo were trained to recognise and respond to cases of SGBV. The hospital now provides improved support to victims/survivors, including psychosocial support. In addition, the trained staff have begun to train other police officers in how to treat SGBV cases. The DR Congo Country Programme also provided psychosocial support and mentoring to 20 survivors of SGBV who were suffering from severe psychological distress. The support helped them come to terms with their situation and aided their

reintegration into their communities. SGBV prevention and reporting systems were also strengthened in various countries (see Section 3.2).

The Programme also **successfully promoted women's economic empowerment** through Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs). For instance, in Kenya, 59 VSLAs were supported, with close to 80% of members being women and all groups led by a woman. Likewise, in Burundi, around 70% of VSLA members were women. The VSLAs were important in strengthening the economic security of local women with, for instance, groups in Kenya earning €9600 in interest for their members during 2024. Meanwhile, women in Bangladesh were supported to establish their own businesses and were able to provide, on average, 20%-30% of total family income and also contribute to providing food, shelter and education for their children. Also, in Kenya, a community-based organisation comprising several VSLAs and almost 470 women mobilised an impressive €80 000 in savings that will be used to strengthen women's access to capital. Indeed, 80% of the small enterprises established in Kenya were run by women. This shows that attitudes have changed since, in the past, it was difficult for women to own productive assets.

Despite the successes of the Programme in advancing gender equality, **challenges remain**. For instance, in Ethiopia, while 45% of the staff members of a local partner organisations were women, it was, nevertheless, still uncommon for women to hold leadership positions. Similar glass ceilings exist in many other operating countries. In Iraq, it was reported that there was a lack of interest in engaging with the topic of gender equality among male teachers. A further worrying development in Iraq was the preparation of legislation that would allow Shia Muslim religious leaders to make decisions regarding the marriage of children.

DISABILITY INCLUSION



The Programme promoted the equal participation of persons with disabilities in education and community life, supporting the idea of “nothing without us”, i.e. that no decisions related to persons with disabilities should be taken without consulting them first. Persons with disabilities often face discrimination due to prejudiced attitudes and, therefore, the Programme educated local people and duty bearers regarding the rights of persons with disabilities and worked to change attitudes. In 2024, **11 700 persons with disabilities benefited directly from the Programme. This represents 4.4% of all direct beneficiaries** (2023: 5.1%). Country Programmes estimated that, on average, 11.8% of their budgets were spent on promoting the fulfilment of the rights of persons with disabilities. This figure fell compared to 2023 (18%) due to more precise data collection.

During the reporting period, the Country Programme **increased the knowledge of over 1300 teachers regarding inclusive education**. Ensuring accessibility to education continued to be a strong focus with 173 schools improving the accessibility of their facilities. For instance, in Kenya, 15 schools improved accessibility for children with disabilities through making modifications to toilets, installing ramps and ensuring that desks were fully accessible. Similar measures were taken in Burundi in 18 schools and in Nepal in 55 schools. Education material was also provided to children with disabilities in Nepal.

Important **steps were also taken in ensuring that persons with disabilities were included equally in education and community life**. In Burundi, the Country Programme conducted a community mapping to identify children with disabilities of school age who were outside of education. Following sensitisation carried out with the children's parents, 470 children with disabilities were enrolled in school. Children with disabilities were also re-enrolled in school in Iraq (13, girls: 8) and Uganda (22, girls: 12). The inclusion of children with hearing disabilities was a strong focus in Burundi, where 770 children (g: 380, CWD: 46) were taught Sign Language, enabling children with and without hearing disabilities to communicate with one another. In Ethiopia, the participation of children with disabilities in sports activities was promoted through organising a paralympic

competition as part of an annual sports festival. Meanwhile, a highlight in the Tanzania Country Programme was the development, together with other actors, of the “Tumeweza” Compendium for Disability Inclusive SRHR and SGBV services which, among others, provided a roadmap towards disability inclusive service provision. Finally, in Uganda, the Country Programme collaborated with local authorities to secure an adjustable delivery bed, enabling expectant women with disabilities to give birth in a dignified manner.

The Programme also took action to strengthen the participation and agency of persons with disabilities and their Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs). For instance, four Self-Help Groups in Burundi were supported that were led by persons with disabilities. In Iraq, a local association of OPDs, Sheyaw, successfully advocated for the inclusion of suggestions from OPDs in the development of a national strategy for persons with disabilities. Finally, the Kenya Country Programme piloted the use of a home rehabilitation app for children with disabilities and their families. Early signs are encouraging with parents expressing appreciation for the easily accessible information and two children with disabilities having been able to significantly improve their mobility.

Despite the positive results, challenges remain in target communities. These include poor accessibility in many public buildings and social and cultural barriers to disability inclusion. In Nepal, Iraq and many other operating countries, persons with disabilities continue to be neglected due to deeply rooted stigma and ignorance and families may hide their children with disabilities, making it difficult for the Programme to provide them with support. Meanwhile, the Uganda Country Programme highlighted the challenge of securing suitable learning materials for children with disabilities.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE



The Cross-Cutting Objective of Environmental Sustainability and Climate Resilience equipped local people to take action to protect their immediate environments and to mitigate and adapt to the negative effects of climate change. Through the Programme, children learned about the importance of protecting the environment, farmers gained new skills in conservation agriculture and land regeneration and local communities increased their knowledge of disaster risk reduction. All Country Programmes also took care to minimise the environmental impact of their activities.

During 2024, work **continued to raise awareness of the importance of using environmental resources sustainably and of measures that can be taken to adapt to the changing climate**. 53 800 children (girls: 28 300, CWDs: 380) gained increased knowledge of topics related to environmental sustainability. Many Country Programmes organised activities around World Environment Day and International Earth Day and supported beneficiaries to take concrete action to improve their local environments. In Bangladesh, 660 Kids Club members (girls: 400) held rallies, organised clean-up programmes and planted trees. In Uganda, learners and teachers trained on environmental management planted trees and created dustbins in school compounds, benefiting 2440 children. Regular clean-up campaigns were also organised in schools in Nepal. Meanwhile, the Ethiopia Country Programme supported the country's Green Legacy Campaign by planting 132 600 trees. In Iraq, local implementing partner, Together's, awareness raising efforts, meanwhile, reached a broader audience than planned when decision-makers requested training on environmental sustainability for Ministry of Youth employees and further awareness sessions for 750 youth. In addition, a “Sustainability in Education” package, recognised by national authorities in 2023 was incorporated into the Iraqi national curriculum.

In addition, local community members gained **new knowledge of climate change mitigation and adaptation and sustainable agriculture techniques**. In Kenya, 62 hectares of land were placed under sustainable land management, including measures such as composting, mulching, agroforestry, soil, and water conservation.

A further 146 hectares, including 110 hectares of protected forest, were managed using sustainable practices in Tanzania. Meanwhile, 1376 Kenyan households began to adopt sustainable farming techniques, including little disturbance of the soil when planting, covering the soil through mulching, and covering crops as well as the use of zai pits for water retention in the soil. The farmers were also taught about drought-tolerant crops such as cassava and cowpeas and the rearing of small animals and birds such as goats and poultry, instead of big animals, such as cattle. In Uganda, meanwhile, improved biodiversity was reported around apiary sites, such as increased vegetation and insect population, providing forage for the bees which should result in increased honey production in future. Finally, measures were taken to reduce the environmental footprint of partner organisations, with one partner in Iraq transitioning to 100% solar energy.

3.6. CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The operating environment for many Country Programmes was challenging, as outlined in Section 2.3 above. The success of the Country Programmes in achieving their planned results, therefore, often depended on their ability to learn and adapt. Some of the key challenges and lessons learned during the reporting year are detailed below. Lessons learned were recorded and will be used to strengthen the Programme in future.

As mentioned above (Section 2.2), the **economic situation in several countries posed challenges**. Inflation remained high in many countries and additional challenges were caused by fuel shortages in Burundi and a cost-of-living crisis in Kenya. Meanwhile, the civil war in Myanmar impacted people's incomes and resulted in many duty bearers prioritising basic survival over participation in Programme activities. The reduction of food rations in refugee camps in Uganda (since 2023) also resulted in beneficiaries prioritising securing food over saving through VSLAs. In Ethiopia high inflation was mitigated to some extent through using government meeting halls and church premises for activities and the use of local resources. Meanwhile, in Burundi, one successful measure to limit costs was requiring training participants to travel to training centres daily rather than accommodating them in hotels.

Additional **challenges were posed by conflict and insecurity**. In Myanmar, the weak security situation, combined with economic challenges, led to some pupils dropping out of school to support their families and necessitated the complete closure of four Learning Centres. Meanwhile, militia attacks in Burundi by rebel groups from DR Congo slowed down implementation in certain areas. The impact was largely mitigated, however, through budget adjustments, limiting travel to the affected areas and making use of volunteers and local Civil Society Organisations to implement activities. Finally, political instability in Ethiopia resulted in travel restrictions and problems with communication, which were addressed through shifting operations to relatively safer areas and using early warning information when scheduling training.

Climate extremes also, once again, posed challenges. For instance, limited rains in Kenya led to poor agricultural yields and resulted in beneficiaries choosing to purchase food rather than invest their limited income in enterprises. Meanwhile, in Uganda, floods eroded crops in some areas, resulting in low harvests and food shortages. The Country Programme responded by providing training on early-maturing and drought-resistant crops. Finally, Cyclone Hidaya impacted blue economy activities, such as seaweed cultivation, in Tanzania, as farms and related tools were washed away. The Country Programme's blue economy focus—which includes harvesting, drying, storage, and value addition linkages—were thus, temporarily, disrupted.

Some additional challenges **were experienced when cooperating with schools**. There were, for instance, teacher strikes in DR Congo and Iraq which temporarily halted or slowed down activities. Meanwhile, the military conscription law in Myanmar (see Section 2.2) resulted in young, male teachers fleeing to avoid being forcibly recruited into the military. As a result, new teachers needed to be recruited and trained to replace them. In Uganda, meanwhile, there were challenges with teacher retention as trained teachers chose to leave to take

up government employment. The Uganda Country Programme responded by organising regular meetings and a mentorship programme for the teachers and encouraging them to make long-term commitments.

In addition, **the Programme was able to learn several useful lessons during the year** that will be used to further strengthen it in future. One key learning, which was also backed up by both evaluations carried out during 2024, is that several Country Programmes would be more impactful if they were more focused, both geographically and thematically. The DR Congo Country Programme, meanwhile, highlighted the **significance of psychosocial support in strengthening community cohesion** and building resilience in insecure circumstances. Meanwhile, the Ethiopia Country Programme found that harnessing pre-existing social and cultural institutions to support peacebuilding is effective and enables greater community buy-in.

The Iraq Country Programme highlighted the importance of **providing teacher training over a long period** (several years) as being essential for bringing about lasting change in the education sector. Furthermore, it was found that regular follow-up and mentorship were crucial in sustaining the results. The Myanmar Country Programme found that empowering local communities to manage Learning Centres independently has proven to be an effective strategy for ensuring sustainability, particularly in areas with limited access. The Nepal Country Programme pointed to the importance of advocacy training for teachers, School Management Committees and Parent Teachers Associations as a means of empowering them to advocate for increased funding for education. The effectiveness of such training was emphasised when one supported school successfully applied for funding from the Embassy of India. They furthermore found that **securing CSR funding requires time and effort to first build relationships**. Finally, the Tanzania Country Programme highlighted the fact that some large partner organisations may have solid policies in place, but they may not be adequately disseminated throughout the organisation. It was, therefore, suggested that training for partners should also cover the means of disseminating policies effectively.

4. COUNTRY PROGRAMME RESULTS

ETHIOPIA: PEACEBUILDING AND WOMEN AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

Partners	Ethiopian Guenet Church Development and Welfare organisation (EGCDWO) Ethiopian Mulu Wongel Amagnoch Church Development Commission (EMWACDC)
Direct beneficiaries	65 477 (f: 33 022, m: 32 322, PWD: 3 219)
Expenses	€ 625 008

Fida works with the Ethiopian Guenet Church Development and Welfare organisation and the Ethiopian Mulu Wongel Amagnoch Church Development Commission to address two key challenges. Firstly, conflict and insecurity are tackled through bringing together religious leaders, young people and women to work on concrete measures to strengthen peace and community cohesion. Secondly, unemployment among women and youth is tackled through the provision of vocational training and support in acquiring entrepreneurial skills. The Country Programme operates in nine areas: Addis Ababa, Adama, Bahir Dar, Dessie, Hawassa, Nekemte, Shashamane, Wolmera and Wolayta Sodo.

During 2024, the operating environment remained challenging due to continuing insecurity and high inflation. Nevertheless, the Country Programme reached 65 500 direct beneficiaries. Children's educational rights were strengthened through Kids Clubs attended by 21 600 children (g: 11 300, CWD: 300). Various topics were addressed in the clubs including peacebuilding and the media. Meanwhile, 219 youths enrolled in market-driven vocational training, of whom 188 graduated and 44 secured employments. An additional 91 members of SHGs established their own businesses with the support of seed money provided by the Country Programme.

More than 54 000 individuals (w: 27 900, PWD: 2600) gained new skills related to peacebuilding and social cohesion and the work of four school peace clubs was supported. A further significant result was the publishing of a Peace Structure Manual that was approved for use by the Ministry of Peace and shared with four national universities. Peacebuilding initiatives continued to bring together members of different faith groups, including Ethiopian Orthodox, Catholic and Evangelical Christians and members of the Muslim community. In the area of economic empowerment, the Country Programme established 53 new Self-Help Groups (SHGs). The Country Programme now includes 191 SHGs with 3500 members and collective capital exceeding €19 000. The groups supported 1070 households and were organised into Cluster Level Associations to promote long-term sustainability and cooperation.

BANGLADESH: SCHOOL CHILD ADVOCACY – A SAFE EDUCATIONAL PATH FOR ALL

Partner	Bangladesh Assemblies of God / Ashirbad NGO
Direct beneficiaries	9 969 (f: 7 746, m: 2 223, PWD: 8)
Expenses	€ 227 295

In Bangladesh, Fida partners with Bangladesh Assemblies of God Church and its development NGO, Ashirbad. The Country Programme currently cooperates with 22 of the partner's 40 schools and organises lessons and workshops on children's rights, focusing particularly on the rights of girls and children with disabilities. In addition, teachers are provided with in-service training on counselling, psychosocial support,

and inclusive education and cooperatives are established to offer livelihood possibilities for local women. The Country Programme also promotes open discourse on taboo topics, such as sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The operating environment was challenging, at times, in 2024 due to large-scale political protests and transport restrictions. Despite these challenges, the Country Programme was able to expand its education activities to seven new schools and provided in-service training to 84 teachers. Based on gathered feedback, the training was useful and teachers were able to use it to improve their teaching. All 22 schools supported by the Country Programme now provide individual support to children facing learning, behavioural, or social challenges. As part of the support provided, teachers conducted one-on-one sessions and made regular home visits, ensuring that students received the personalised attention they needed to learn and develop. The Country Programme also provided literacy training for 660 women who reported that their improved literacy had a transformative effect on their lives: previously, many struggled with managing their children's education or even basic tasks such as daily shopping but after the training they reported that they could run their households smoothly and had gained increased confidence.

Vocational and business training for women living in poverty, meanwhile, enabled 39 women to establish small businesses such as tea stalls, and clothing and agricultural enterprises. The Country Programme also continued to increase awareness of sexual and reproductive health and rights with 550 children (g: 440) learning about nutrition needs during menstruation, menstrual health management and child marriage. According to collected feedback, mothers and daughters now discuss menstruation more openly and girls and women feel empowered to make decisions about their own bodies and futures.

BURUNDI: COMMUNITY, FAMILY AND YOUTH WELLBEING PROGRAMME

Partners	Community of Pentecostal Churches of Burundi (CEPBU) Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research
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Direct beneficiaries	29 687 (f: 14 661, m: 12 185, PWD: 1 616)
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Expenses	€ 279 177
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Fida's Country Programme in Burundi partners with the Community of Pentecostal Churches of Burundi (CEPBU). The Country Programme trains kindergarten and pre-school teachers on the national pre-primary curriculum and early childhood development. Work under the Safe Living Environment outcome, meanwhile, provides vocational and entrepreneurship training to unemployed youth. Work is implemented in the Bubanza, Cibitoke and Ngozi provinces.

During 2024, inflation and fuel shortages continued to pose challenges for the Burundi Country Programme. Additional challenges were caused by incursions into the country by rebel groups from neighbouring DR Congo. Despite the challenging operating environment, the Country Programme was able to strengthen the educational rights of 17 850 children (girls: 9300, CWDs: 660) through measures such as training 350 pre-school teachers and supporting 6400 children's informal education through Kids Clubs. Feedback on the Country Programme was positive with local authorities reporting that children in schools with Programme-supported Kid's Clubs performed better at school than their peers in other schools.

Children's wellbeing and resilience were supported through psychosocial support and by increasing their knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Feedback collected from community leaders indicates that cases of sexual and gender-based violence have declined during 2024 and that girls are increasingly attending school during their periods. In addition, livelihoods were supported through the establishment of 80

new small businesses and 1200 households were able to increase their income during the year. The Country Programme also successfully strengthened the capacity of 12 local organisations to apply for small grants for their work.

IRAQ: INNOVATIVE EDUCATION AND PEACEFUL LIVING ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Partners	Together to Protect Human and Environment, Halabja Disabled Organisation, Yes We Can – Network, Assemblies of God Kurdistan
Direct beneficiaries	19 719 (f: 11 139, m: 8 580, PWD: 488)
Expenses	€ 393 261

Fida partners with several local organisations in Iraq, including Together to Protect Human and Environment Association (“Together”), Halabja Disabled Organisation (“HDO”), the Yes We Can Network and Assemblies of God Church in Kurdistan. The Country Programme is implemented in four locations: Erbil, Halabja, Ninewa and Kirkuk. The Country Programme trains teachers on inclusive education and child-led teaching methods and supports the education of children with disabilities. The Country Programme also promotes a Sustainability teaching module, which addresses environmental issues and climate change.

During 2024, there were increased security risks as a result of the Israel–Gaza conflict and a teachers’ strike forced schools to close temporarily. Nevertheless, Country Programme implementation progressed relatively smoothly, and the number of beneficiaries increased compared to previous years. Overall, the Country Programme strengthened the rights of 9000 children (girls: 5800, CWDs: 360). A highlight of the year was the results achieved in informal education with 3100 children (girls: 1800, CWDs: 44) participating in Kids Clubs during the year. Feedback from parents and teachers pointed to children demonstrating increased respect for their peers with disabilities, adopting positive social behaviours and showing greater environmental awareness. The Country Programme continued to support the rights of children with disabilities and contributed to 13 children with disabilities returning to school after previously having dropped out.

During the year, 1700 parents, caregivers, and children received psychosocial support through the Country Programme. According to feedback, of those supported, 810 parents, caregivers, social workers, and children improved their overall resilience, leading to improved family dynamics and stronger student support. This support resulted in remarkable improvements, including reductions in social phobia, anxiety, depression, and stuttering. Parents also improved their anger management and social skills, fostering more supportive home environments. Meanwhile, awareness raising on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) reached 1300 children (girls: 1200: CWDs: 50) with participants subsequently reporting increased willingness to discuss topics like menstrual health management.

KENYA: TUNAJALI - OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH FOR QUALITY EDUCATION AND A SAFER LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Partner	Full Gospel Churches of Kenya (FGCK)
Direct beneficiaries	11 894 (f: 6 951, m: 4 943, PWD: 321)
Expenses	€ 291 091

In Kenya, Fida partners with the Full Gospel Churches of Kenya (FGCK) to strengthen access to quality education and support safer living environments for children and youth. The Country Programme provides in-

service training to teachers on modern teaching methods and inclusive education. Livelihood opportunities and food security are strengthened through literacy classes, vocational training and teaching on sustainable farming. The Country Programme operates in five locations: Kakamega, Loita, Marsabit, Pwani, Dagoretti and Mathare.

During 2024, the operating environment was relatively stable although drought and a cost-of-living crisis had some impact on Programme activities. The Country Programme strengthened the educational rights of 3100 children (girls: 1400, CWD: 160) through various measures. For instance, 24 teachers were trained on inclusive teaching methods. Feedback collected from School Administrators pointed to subsequent changes in teacher practices, such as, moving away from corporal punishment as a means of maintaining discipline. Parents, meanwhile, took action to support the education of their children such as fundraising for the construction of a new classrooms, advocating for improved toilet facilities and making improvements to school infrastructure themselves. Improvements were also observed in children's academic performance, which teachers attributed to training provided by the Country Programme.

The Country Programme also contributed to improving the living environment for 7400 people (women and girls: 4600, PWDs: 160). During the year, 1400 adults (w: 1200, PWD: 50) gained new skills for strengthening their livelihoods and 600 households reported increased regular household income. In addition, 65 small businesses were created or supported, including grocery shops and poultry and tailoring enterprises, of which 48 were owned by women and 3 by persons with disabilities. Preventive healthcare awareness raising was also effective, with reductions in cases of diarrhoea in children from 1520 to 810 and cases of malaria falling by 84% in Loita. Finally, the partner started the process of registering its development wing as a public benefit organisation.

DR CONGO: ELIMU HAKI - EDUCATION AND PEACE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Partner	Communauté des Eglises de Pentecôte en Afrique Centrale (8th CEPAC)
Direct beneficiaries	13 325 (f: 7 210, m: 6 115, PWD: 2 871)
Expenses	€ 474 050

Fida's partner organisation in DR Congo is the CEPAC Pentecostal Church. Activities are implemented in North Kivu, South Kivu, and Tanganyika provinces. The Country Programme works to strengthen educational rights, particularly those of children with disabilities. In addition, children, young people, and women learn about sexual and reproductive health and rights and the prevention of gender-based violence. The Country Programme also supports various local-level peacebuilding initiatives, such as peace clubs for young people.

During 2024, the security situation remained challenging, as described above (Section 2.2). Additional challenges were caused by teachers strikes and flooding. Despite these challenges, the Country Programme was able to improve access to education for 11 100 children (girls: 6700, CWDs: 1100) during the reporting period. Action was also taken to improve the quality of education with 340 teachers being trained on inclusive education. The trained teachers subsequently shared their knowledge with other educators during regular teacher meetings, thereby increasing the overall impact of the training. Monitoring also points to improvements in academic performance with the proportion of pupils passing secondary examinations increasing from 54% to 75% in supported schools. The Country Programme also strengthened school governance by involving teachers, parents and students in the management of educational resources.

Psychosocial support was provided to school children and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence through 99 support groups. Feedback indicates that survivors of sexual violence have been able to regain their

self-confidence and resilience. Meanwhile, 830 children (g: 420, CWD: 340) reporting feeling safer and more secure in their immediate environments, despite the challenging security situation. The Country Programme also continued to support peacebuilding efforts through 80 Peace Clubs in local schools with children showing a strong commitment to strengthening inter-ethnic ties.

MYANMAR: TOWARDS THE PEACEFUL AND EDUCATED LIFE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Partners	Assemblies of God Myanmar (AoGMM) Myanmar Evangelical Christian Association (MECA)
Direct beneficiaries	907 (f: 521, m: 386, PWD: 16)
Expenses	€ 438 824

Fida's partners in Myanmar are the Assemblies of God Church of Myanmar (AoGMM) and the Myanmar Evangelical Christian Alliance (MECA). Activities are centred on Yangon, Kachin State and Rakhine State. The Country Programme promotes the right to education for marginalised children and youth through Learning Centres, which are designed to supplement children's formal education. The Country Programme also promotes conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

The Country Programme's operating environment remained very challenging during 2024. As described above (Section 2.2), fighting between the national army and rebel forces continued and additional challenges were posed by a new army conscription law, poor internet connections and travel restrictions. Unreliable internet connectivity and inconsistent electricity made it difficult to effectively use tablet computers and digital resources in the Country Programme's Learning Centres and also negatively impacted training for volunteer teachers. In total, 13 learning centres (out of 17) remained operational, with the remaining four having to cease operations due to the difficult security situation. Despite the challenging circumstances, the Country Programme made a positive impact in the lives of almost 1000 people though the number reached was below the corresponding figure for 2023 (5300).

In total, the Country Programme strengthened the educational rights of 550 children (girls: 290, CWDs: 4) and Learning Centre pupils recorded some impressive results in school exams as described above (Section 3.1). In addition, 220 community members (w:120) participated in conflict resolution and peacebuilding training. Post-training questionnaires showed that participants adopted non-violent conflict resolution methods and improved communication in their families and communities. Finally, approximately 150 parents participated in awareness sessions on mental health, after which many shared that they had not previously understood the significance of mental health and had even considered it unimportant.

NEPAL: SAFE AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOL PATHWAY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Partners	Rescue Nepal, Relative Nepal, New Life Service Association, Transformation Nepal
Direct beneficiaries	42 507 (f: 24 327, m: 18 180, PWD: 461)
Expenses	€ 603 971

Fida's Country Programme in Nepal seeks to address the twin challenges of poor fulfilment of educational rights and poor living environments for children and youth. Fida's implementation partners are Rescue Nepal, Relative Nepal, New Life Service Association and Transformation Nepal. The Country Programme provides

in-service training to teachers as well as career guidance to youth to facilitate their transition to working life. In addition, entrepreneurship training is provided to support the livelihoods of families and unemployed youth. The Country Programme operates in Khijidemba, Bateshwar, Ishworpur and Kailari.

During 2024, the operating environment remained largely stable. The Country Programme strengthened the educational rights of 30 600 children (girls: 16 000, CWDs: 130) through various measures. Work to increase the knowledge and skills of teachers continued, with 180 gaining new skills and knowledge on various topics. Focus group discussions with English and Maths teachers point to an increased ability to effectively plan lessons and the use of more interactive teaching methods. Parents also showed strong motivation to support the education of their children. This was seen in practice through their active participation in 530 civil society groups that support children's education and also through them contributing time, materials and labour to improve school facilities. During the reporting period, 86 schools developed School Improvement Plans.

The Country Programme also took action to promote safe living environments for children and youth. Awareness raising on sexual and reproductive health and rights reached 6400 children (girls: 3300, CWDs: 54). Monitoring data points to a subsequent increase in the number of girls attending school during their periods and increased openness to discuss menstrual health management. In addition, 800 children and parents participated in health camps, leading to improvements in pupils' personal hygiene practices, according to headteachers. Action to improve the wellbeing of children also included the provision of vocational training for adult household members. During 2024, 215 families were able to increase their income, of whom several reported using their increased income to support their children's education.

TANZANIA: TUNANDOTO PROGRAMME – SUSTAINABLY TRANSFORMED CHILDHOODS

Partners Free Pentecostal Church of Tanzania (FPCT)

Direct beneficiaries 30 223 (f: 15 737, m: 13 551, PWD: 1 738)

Expenses € 761 782

The Tanzania Country Programme is implemented in collaboration with the Free Pentecostal Church of Tanzania (FPCT). The Country Programme supports children's learning through Kids' Club activities and pre- and in-service training for teachers. A special emphasis is placed on ensuring that children with disabilities are able to access schools and fully participate in education. Meanwhile, adults' livelihoods are supported through entrepreneurship training and savings groups.

During 2024, the operating environment was relatively stable, however, inflation posed some challenges. The Country Programme noted encouraging signs of progress towards outcome-level objectives. School enrolment increased up to 25% relative to baseline levels and improvements in academic performance were also observed. Likewise, completion rates for primary education grew year-on-year (2023-24) from 6850 to 9750 students. In total, the right to education of 10 400 children (girls: 5800, CWDs: 580) was strengthened during the reporting period. 18 schools improved accessibility for children with disabilities.

The wellbeing of children was strengthened through providing livelihood earning opportunities to adult household members. During 2024, the Country Programme equipped 2100 individuals (w: 1400, PWDs: 50) with new skills to improve their livelihoods. As a result, the income of 560 households (6 with PWD members) was increased. The increases were linked to, among others, the establishment of 65 sustainable small enterprises and the provision of knowledge and skills to enable 47 households to increase their savings. An important step towards localisation and the sustainability of the Country Programme was taken when the local

partner established its own development NGO to implement development cooperation activities and pursue related funding opportunities.

UGANDA: SAFER AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Partners	Pentecostal Churches of Uganda
Direct beneficiaries	41 227 (f: 20 416, m: 20 881, PWD: 945)
Expenses	€ 382 587

The Uganda Country Programme partners with the Pentecostal Churches of Uganda (PCU). The Country Programme raises awareness of children's rights in local communities and improves school environments through training teachers on modern, inclusive teaching methods and counselling skills. Children also learn about their rights through Kids Clubs. Training on business skills and Village Savings and Loans Associations is given to promote saving and to improve access to capital. The work is implemented in Yumbe, Karamoja and Masindi districts.

During 2024, there were some operating environment challenges, such as tensions between refugee and host communities and flooding. Also, cuts to UNHCR rations in refugee settlements (2023) reduced beneficiaries' capacity to save money. Nevertheless, implementation proceeded smoothly and the rights of 13 800 children (girls: 6800, CWDs: 70) were strengthened. Furthermore, enrolment increased in 10/13 supported schools. During the year, 63 teachers were trained in exam management and mentored learners to prepare them for examinations. In total, 760 learners (g: 240, w: 60) out of 810 candidates in the schools of operation transitioned to the next level of education.

The Country Programme also supported household livelihoods through financial literacy training and other initiatives. As a result, 28/30 people who started businesses during the reporting period were found to be keeping basic financial records. Furthermore, 36 VSLA groups' savings increased substantially to a combined total of €25 479 from €14 200 at the beginning of the year. Members borrowed money to cover basic needs such as school fees, for business start-up costs, and to cover medical expenses. Meanwhile, psychosocial support reached 2230 people (g: 500, w: 580, PWDs: 180). Feedback collected from participants pointed to improved self-esteem and resilience and reduced anxiety. Agricultural and entrepreneurship training also led to concrete results with yields of maize increasing significantly from 400kg to 1000kg. Finally, long-term sustainability was supported through the registration of seven VSLAs, making them eligible for government funding and low-interest loans.

5. DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION, GLOBAL EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

5.1. DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

Fida's Development Communication aims for three outcomes: 1) the Finnish public's attitudes towards development cooperation remain positive, 2) the awareness and perception of Fida's work improves during the programme period, and 3) the public's support for Fida's development goals increases. The progress is measured by the increase in the nationwide visibility of Fida, the amount of material produced for Fida's own channels and their reach as well as the level of media cooperation and communication campaigns organised.

The Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs' survey on Finns' attitudes towards development cooperation in 2024 revealed that the Finnish public's positive attitude towards development cooperation had once again slightly decreased since the previous year. In 2024, 62% of Finns thought that development cooperation is fairly or very important, whereas in 2023 this number was 63%, and in 2022 66%. The continued decrease in the positive attitudes is a challenge that Fida's communication and advocacy aims to turn around.

The communication team reached most of the annual targets by publishing content on Fida's channels, organising campaigns and acquiring media coverage. New target audiences were reached by continuing journalist and media cooperation. A press trip to Burundi in 2023 still paid dividends in 2024, and an article about Fida's work in Burundi was published in a popular women's magazine (MeNaiset). Cooperation with a freelance journalist, who was invited to visit Fida's projects in Kenya, resulted in publications in multiple Finnish newspapers and magazines. Overall, there were 75 hits in Finnish media related to Fida's development cooperation work, which resulted in a total potential reach of 15.2 million reads. The annual target is at 500 000 people.

A total of 25 articles and blogs covering Fida's development cooperation were published on Fida's website, reaching 3577 reads. Fida participated actively in Fingo's social media campaigning ahead of the EU parliamentary elections as well as the Finnish government's budget framework sessions. Fida's "Food for Life" campaign brought attention to Fida's development cooperation and women's rights in DR Congo. A concert tour related to the campaign was organised in six cities. The concerts also highlighted the 50th anniversary of Fida's state-supported development cooperation. In addition, the anniversary year was covered in Fida's own communication channels (magazine, radio, podcast, website, social media), highlighting the achievements and results of the past five decades.

Material collection trips were arranged to Nepal, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. Several articles were produced from all the destinations. In total, 14 radio programmes and podcasts were broadcast, which exceeded the annual target. In 2024, Fida published a new website, with the development communication team contributing to both its planning and content creation.

5.2. GLOBAL EDUCATION

School visits continued in 2024 in cooperation with Fida's partner, Suomen Helluntaikirkon Koulupalvelu (SHK). Fida's global education reached 6218 students, 94 percent of them for the first time, and 534 teachers in 118 schools. 56 percent of the schools were new connections. Altogether 320 lessons were held which is above the target of 250-300 lessons per year. The number of school visits rose by 35 percent compared to the previous year, even though the annual goal of 10 000 participating students was not met.

The feedback received from teachers and students continued to be excellent: the overall rating by teachers was 3,86/4 and by students 3,56/4, which is above the target (teachers 3,5/4; students 3/4). Children and youth's understanding of global challenges and children's rights improved, and they reported having learnt about new global perspectives, the importance of children's rights and equality. Teachers reported that the school visits aligned with the national curriculum in several ways (e.g. learning communication skills, empathy) and supported the contents of different school subjects (e.g. ethics, religion, environmental studies, Finnish as a first/second language and visual arts). School visits were described as child-friendly, activating and versatile. A new material package was piloted and introduced to the school visitors in September, and the Injustice Game board game was translated into English and made available on the web page of Fida. A webinar was organised for schools in the autumn, and 36 high school students were involved in creating material for the webinar.

In addition to the school visits, teachers and educators were contacted at the Educa fair, which led to new school visit requests. Fida's global education also participated in other events where materials and school visits were promoted (e.g. World Village Festival).

Fida's global education website was visited 240 times (target 800 visits/year). However, there were changes in materials on the website, and a new website was launched in November. Therefore, the numbers might not be as comparable to the numbers of previous years. It is also possible that the smaller number of school visits during the past couple of years has impacted downloads and visits on the website. Additionally, the focus has been on creating new materials for school visitors and volunteers. The Injustice Game orders (1330 pieces) increased by 36 % compared to 2023, being almost three times the annual target number of sent games (500 games/year).

Church volunteers were trained at three local events in Uusimaa and Keski-Pohjanmaa. Almost 30 participants participated in these events. The school visitors of SHK were offered two trainings in 2024.

5.3. ADVOCACY IN FINLAND

Fida's advocacy work aimed to enhance dialogue and cooperation with Finnish decision-makers on development cooperation themes, particularly on children's right to quality education. This goal was pursued through active engagement: meetings, email communication, and collaboration in the annual Fida Advocacy Seminar.

Throughout the year, Fida provided information and recommendations on ongoing political processes and offered support, in the form of new information, to decision-makers, especially during the preparation of the government reports on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy and International Economic Relations and Development. As a result of the joint efforts of NGO networks, decision-makers took into account recommendations to recognise CSOs as significant contributors to development. Additionally, Fida and other organisations' advocacy efforts contributed to the inclusion of education as a key priority in the Report on International Economic Relations and Development Cooperation. Furthermore, by the end of 2024, no budget cuts had been imposed on government funding for development organisations.

Collaboration with authorities and decision-makers, including the Minister of Education, officials from the MFA, and a Member of Parliament, at the annual Advocacy Seminar strengthened dialogue on Fida's core themes: quality education, inclusion, and the empowerment of civil society. The inclusive preparation process with stakeholders laid a promising foundation for deeper cooperation between civil society organisations and government actors in the education sector. This indicates success in Fida's Domestic Programme.

At the international level, Fida engaged in EU-level advocacy with **EU-CORD**, a network of European Christian development organisations. Prior to the EU elections in 2024, network members prepared advocacy messages for candidates, and Fida sent briefing materials to approximately 150 Finnish candidates, emphasising the importance of EU values and human rights-based development policies. Additionally, the network produced a policy recommendation paper on disability inclusion. As a result of EU-level cooperation, advocacy partnerships were strengthened, and a mechanism for regular information exchange and collaboration among development actors was established.

Due to staff changes in advocacy in early 2024, implementation of the annual activities was delayed, resulting in a drop in the number of duty-bearer meetings and advocacy communication publications. However, active engagement with MEP candidates during the EU elections fuelled advocacy work, and the 2024 targets were achieved.

6. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY CONTROL

6.1. MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION

The highest decision-making body within Fida was the Annual General Meeting. The association was represented by the board, which oversaw Fida's operations. The Leadership Team was responsible for the day-to-day operations of the organisation. It was led by the Executive Director and members included the Directors of the domestic units and three Regional Directors. Three Regional Programme Managers worked under the Regional Directors in the Development Cooperation Programme and were responsible for Country Programmes in Eastern Africa, Asia and nexus countries respectively. Each Country Programme was managed by a Country Programme Manager who reported to one of the Regional Programme Managers. The regional management was also supported by Thematic and Technical Advisors. Regional and HQ Programme Managers with the Regional Directors formed Management Team to support the work of Leadership Team.

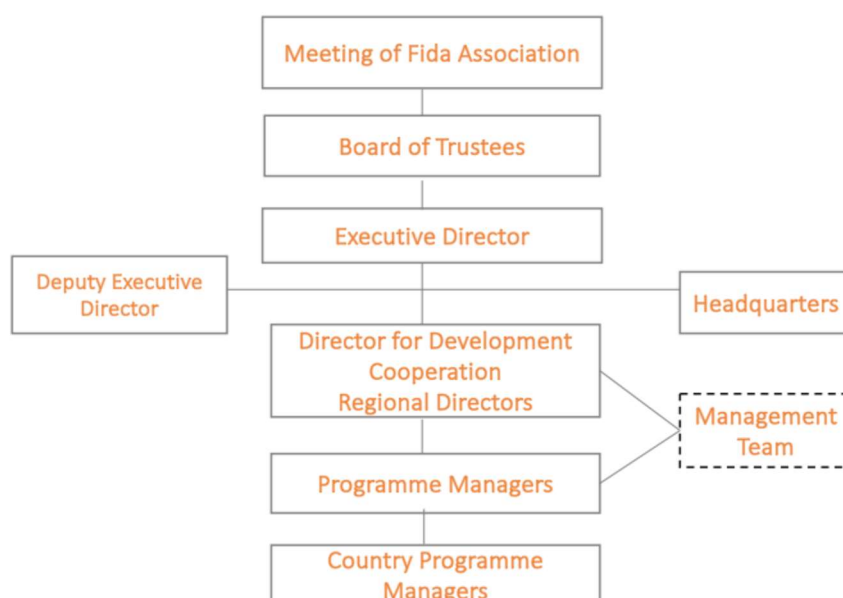


Figure 7. Fida Development Cooperation Management Chart

Programme oversight required financial, personnel, ICT (Information and Communications Technology) and administrative management. The role of Fida's Head Office and its Development Cooperation Unit was mainly to provide PMEL (Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning) and PCM (Programme Cycle Management) support to the Country Programmes. Development Cooperation Programme management in Finland included communication with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, planning, monitoring, reporting and the development of tools to support these processes. The Domestic Programme (Communications, Advocacy and Global Education in Finland) was also implemented and managed from Finland.

In 2024, there were together 43 Programme employees hired in (11) and from (32) Finland, as well as 242 locally hired employees. Three interns also worked in the Programme.

6.2. PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND QUALITY CONTROL

The implementation, monitoring and quality control of Fida's Global Development Programme is carried out in the target countries by Country Programme Managers and Coordinators.

The **quality assurance system includes the following elements**. Firstly, strategic management ensures that staff members throughout the Programme work actively towards the same strategic goals. Secondly, implementation at the Country Programme level is in alignment with the overall Programme goals and is monitored regularly using key performance indicators. Thirdly, all processes relevant to Programme Cycle Management (PCM) are described in Fida's Programme Manual, which all Programme staff are familiar with. The Manual is updated when necessary. Sound financial management is ensured through adherence to the Fida's financial management guidelines. Finally, staff competence and motivation are ensured through recruiting qualified and motivated staff, providing detailed staff orientation, and emphasising continuous learning through Global Thematic Teams and regular training on programme themes.

Monitoring took place in a participatory manner in Country Programme teams. Based on the internal monitoring, **evidence of progress was collected in tri-annual narrative reports**, which were used in monitoring progress towards the achievement of the annual targets. Annual results and broader reflections on progress were collected in the annual reports of the Country Programmes. Meanwhile, Country Programme finances were monitored through tri-annual and annual finance reports.

Fida has a **zero-tolerance policy regarding corruption**. The Country Programmes followed the financial guidelines in Fida's Programme Manual and Country Programme funding requests were checked by Regional Programme Managers and Financial Controllers and approved, according to Fida's Finance Policy. **External auditing was part of the financial management process**, and the audit recommendations were used to improve financial management as part of ongoing learning and development. Internal financial audits were carried out of the Country Programmes in DR Congo, Myanmar and Uganda.

One case of potential misconduct was reported in 2024 (addressed in 2025). The case was related to the Bangladesh Country Programme and involved two uses of Programme funding that did not adhere to the Programme's financial guidelines. An investigation was started immediately and will be reported in 2025.

6.3. PROGRAMME EVALUATIONS

During 2024, two external evaluations were carried out. Firstly, an evaluation of the nexus Country Programmes (Myanmar, DR Congo, Ethiopia) focused on both the results achieved during the current programme period and the extent to which the three Country Programmes have been able to adopt a triple nexus approach. Secondly, a Mid-Term Evaluation of the Programme was carried out which aimed to analyse the main results of the Programme, its strengths and weaknesses and lessons learned. The evaluation covered all Country Programmes with additional in-depth analysis carried out of the Country Programmes in Burundi, Iraq and Nepal.

The evaluation of nexus Country Programmes found that the evaluated Country Programmes were impacting their target communities in meaningful ways despite operating in challenging contexts. Committed teams and flexible approaches were found to be key success factors. Nevertheless, a need was identified to create improved linkages to other actors that can supplement the activities of the three Country Programmes by, for example, providing assistive devices to persons with disabilities and providing support to children that complete secondary education. The evaluation found that a triple nexus approach had been partially implemented with DR Congo and Myanmar furthest ahead, in this regard.

Among the recommendations made by the evaluation were the following: the Country Programmes should reduce their geographical scope and thematic areas in order to make the best use of their resources; humanitarian assistance and development cooperation should be combined into one triple nexus programme with peacebuilding as a cross-cutting theme and greater consideration given to creating pathways from the former to the latter; a need exists for increased networking with other organisations in order to fill capacity and resource gaps within the Country Programmes and; structures for collecting most significant change stories to provide qualitative evidence of change should be further developed.

The Mid-Term Evaluation found that the theory of change and results framework of the Programme were logical and coherent. However, it was felt that the Programme had an excessive number of thematic focus areas. Results highlighted included the strengthened skills and knowledge of duty bearers related to educational rights, greater overall wellbeing of children and youth and women's economic empowerment. Cooperation with civil society actors was also found to be strong, however, it was felt that there was room for improvement in the area of private sector cooperation. Finally, it was found that there was scope for improvement in areas such as the participation of rights holders in Programme implementation and shifting towards more theory of change-based monitoring.

The evaluation made several recommendations covering both the current programme period and the upcoming 2026 – 2029 programme period. Firstly, it was recommended that attention be given to strengthening the participation of rights holders in implementation. Secondly, it was suggested that the scope for Country Programmes to have their own context-specific focus within the framework of the global programme and its theory of change be increased. A third recommendation was that the thematic and geographic focus of the Global Programme and Country Programmes be strengthened. The evaluation also suggested expanding the training of trainer approaches currently used in psychosocial support and SRHR work and increasing their linkages to existing government structures.

Several smaller-scale assessments were also carried out, including a study of Fida's activities aimed at promoting gender equality, a meta study of previous evaluations and capacity assessments of partner organisations. The findings and recommendations of all evaluations were disseminated widely within Fida in order that Programme staff at all levels and in all regions could learn from them. Follow-up Plans were compiled for each evaluation. The reports and a summary of the follow-up plans can be found in Appendices 4a-4d.

7. PROGRAMME FUNDING

During 2024, Fida received 5 million Euros (previous operational year 5.5 million Euros) of Development Cooperation funding from the Government of Finland. 620 000 Euros of Government funding was rolled over to 2024 from the 2023 budget, and 350 000 Euros of Finnish government funding will be rolled over to the 2025 budget from 2024. The Programme's total expenses during 2024 were 6.2 million Euros (prev. op. year 6.23 mil. Euros). The self-funding portion was 933 546 Euros (prev. op. year 950 400 Euros). The self-funding portion was 15.05 % of the Programme funding (prev. op. year 15.25 %). The Programme's Financial Report can be found in Appendix 5.

The self-funding for the Programme accumulated from sponsorship pledges, donations and support from international NGOs and foundations. The Auditor's Report for the Development Cooperation Programme and the Summary Memorandum can be found in Appendix 6. The main recommendations or comments, and the resulting follow-up procedures of the local audits implemented in the Country Programmes are listed separately.

Two funding reallocations were approved by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs during 2024 covering the Country Programmes in Tanzania and Myanmar. In Tanzania, support to livelihood groups in the Arusha area was phased out resulting in savings of €45 000 that were subsequently used to support activities in other areas of the Country Programme. In Myanmar, meanwhile, scaling back of activities resulted in €42 500 in savings. The savings were used to purchase tablet computers for use in the Country Programme's Learning Centres.

EXPENDITURE 2024	Budget €	Actualization €
A. Project activities	5 291 00	5 023 294
B. Planning, monitoring and evaluation	236 000	246 457
C. Development communication, global education, and advocacy	333 000	313 441
D. Administration	651 000 (10 %)	620 354 (10 %)
Programme total costs	6 711 000	6 203 546
FUNDING SOURCES 2024	Budget €	Actualization €
Government funding	5 620 000	5 270 000
Self-funding from Finland	1 091 000	933 546

Table 4. Programme Expenditure and Funding 2024.