



Final Project Report
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FINAL NARRATIVE PROJECT REPORT

NAME OF IMPLEMENTING PARTNER: FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS (FCR)

PROJECT TITLE: ADDRESSING SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE THROUGH SAA APPROACH

PROJECT DURATION: START DATE (JUNE /2024 - MARCH/2025)

REPORTING PERIOD: ENTIRE PROJECT DURATION

<p>Project Title</p> <p>Project Title: Addressing Sexual and Gender Based Violence through Social Analysis and Action Approach</p>	<p>Priority regions/areas/localities for the project</p> <p>In Mzimba, T/A Kampingo Sibande and Nkhatabay in T/A Zilakoma</p>
<p>Recipient Organization(s)</p> <p>Foundation for Children’s Rights (FCR)</p>	<p>Key Partners</p> <p>Foundation for children’s rights (FCR) in the course of the project implementation partnered with government sectors, civil society organisation and academia institution such as;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Gender office (DGO) • District Community Development office (DCDO) • District police and judiciary • Nyika institute of education • Gender Governance institute (CSO)
<p>Project Cost (US\$)</p> <p>Total Funding: USD \$60,108.85</p>	<p>Project Start and End Dates</p> <p>Start Date: (01.06.2024)</p> <p>End Date [as per last signed agreement]: (30.03.2025)</p> <p>Report Submitted by: Jenipher Mkandawire (Executive Director)</p>

Table of Contents

Contents

Table of Contents 4

Acronym List 5

Executive summary 6

Significant Contextual Shifts and Overall Implementation Status 7

Project Partnerships 10

Results 11

Rights Holders (Project “beneficiaries”) 17

Challenges and Mitigating Measures 18

Lessons Learned and New Opportunities 20

ANNEXES 27

Acronym List

ADC ----- Area Development Committee
CBO -----Community-Based Organization
CDVO ---- Community Development Office
CGTW --- Community Gender Technical Working Group
CPW -----Child Protection Worker
CSO -----Civil Society Organization
CVSU ----Child Victim Support Unit
DCDO----District Community Development Office
DGO -----District Gender Office
DGTW --- District Gender Technical Working Group
FGD -----Focus Group Discussion
FCR -----Foundation for Children’s Rights
GBV -----Gender-Based Violence
GTWG ---Gender Technical Working Group
IEC -----Information, Education, and Communication
SAA -----Social Analysis and Action
SGBV ----Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SRHR ----Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
T/A -----Traditional Authority
TOT -----Trainer of Trainers
UNDP -----United Nations Development Programme
VSLA ----- Village Savings and Loan Association

Executive summary

Foundation for Children’s Rights (FCR), with funding from the Embassy of Iceland and the Royal Norwegian Embassy through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), implemented a six-month project titled “*Addressing Sex and Gender-Based Violence through Social Analysis and Action (SAA)*” in Nkhata Bay and Mzimba Districts. During implementation, the project tackled gender issues identified in the Spotlight Initiative reports for both districts, which were also validated by FCR’s baseline survey conducted prior to project roll-out. These issues included child marriages, all forms of gender-based violence (GBV), harmful cultural norms, economic abuse, as well as marital and interpersonal conflicts driven by masculinity. According to the Government of Malawi (2019), Fraym Report (2021), and UNICEF Malawi (2020), these districts have some of the highest rates of child marriage and GBV in the country. In 2019, 67% of married girls and young women aged 15–24 in Mzimba and 50% in Nkhata Bay entered union before the legal age of 18. Attitudes condoning wife beating remain widespread, placing adolescent girls at increased risk. Additionally, socio-cultural norms hinder young women’s access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, while issues like economic abuse and wife abandonment persist and often go unreported due to fear of reprisals from local leaders. FCR’s 2024 baseline survey reinforced these findings, revealing that 29% of respondents in Mzimba and 31% in Nkhata Bay were married before 18, with most having no education or only primary schooling. Awareness of SGBV was relatively high, yet the majority of cases were reported through informal channels, with limited legal or medical follow-up. In both districts, over 90% of women lived in poverty, and cultural norms continued to place men as primary decision-makers in health, marriage, and finances, restricting women’s agency. While male involvement in GBV prevention was reported, it often reproduced harmful norms through informal mediation rather than justice. To address these challenges, the project applied CARE International’s Social Analysis and Action (SAA) approach—facilitating community dialogues, engaging traditional leaders and gender champions, and strengthening local structures to support reporting and redress of harmful practices. These efforts contributed to shifting social norms and improving protection for vulnerable groups, particularly adolescent girls and rural women.

FCR, in coordination with district partners, facilitated community strengthening activities targeting chiefs, GBV survivors and vulnerable community members, Community Technical Working Groups, Area Development Committees (ADCs), the District Gender Technical Working Group, government district stakeholders, and trainers of trainers. Awareness on GBV and child marriages was also raised through supported radio programs, IEC materials, and social media platforms.

FCR ensured that all activities included participants from diverse groups—women, men, girls, boys, and people with disabilities of all age groups—so that no one was left behind in addressing GBV issues. Within the six-month period, the project registered significant immediate outcomes:

- A total of 25 children were withdrawn from child marriages by community structures actively engaged in the project.
- Community structures were able to leverage other events to disseminate project messages on gender, GBV, child marriages, and women's economic empowerment.
- Chiefs and ADCs developed the capacity to assess harmful community norms and decide which to modify or abandon.
- A total of 10 GBV cases were handled and completed in court.
- Mothers' groups and VSLA groups supported the basic school needs of survivors and vulnerable individuals.
- Male GBV survivors began coming forward and speaking out about their experiences.

The organization implemented the project in close collaboration with both district and community structures to ensure continuity of project initiatives. These included the District Gender Office, Community Development Office, Judiciary and Police, ADCs, Community Gender Technical Working Groups, chiefs' forums, and women's forums. Notably, the project also engaged other government sectors beyond gender-specific departments to promote a multi-sectoral approach to sustainably address gender issues in the districts.

During implementation, FCR learned that GBV-related projects require a multi-sectoral approach. This insight informed the decision to involve various sectors at the district level. Additionally, FCR learned that VSLA groups are critical to breaking the cycle of GBV and child marriages. As a result, during the project period, the organization reached 300 survivors and vulnerable individuals with VSLA and self-help skills in both districts. The project successfully reached its planned direct and indirect beneficiaries, including people with disabilities, who actively participated.

However, the main challenge faced by the organization was the short project implementation period, which limited the ability to evaluate long-term results or impacts, such as reductions in child marriages and GBV cases, or progress in women's economic empowerment.

Significant Contextual Shifts and Overall Implementation Status

The project's implementation occurred within a dynamic environment shaped by various social, political, economic, and cultural factors. Despite these challenges, the Foundation for Children's Rights (FCR) successfully adapted its strategies to achieve project objectives and lay the groundwork for sustainable impact.

Contextual Influences and Adaptive Strategies

Political Context

Political activities occasionally influenced the project's operational timeline. Key community participants, including local leaders, mobilizers, and community members, were sometimes required to attend political meetings or election-related events, leading to potential delays in planned activities such as trainings and community gatherings. To mitigate these disruptions and ensure full participation without compromising project goals, FCR adopted a flexible scheduling approach. This involved maintaining regular communication with community members to anticipate upcoming political events, enabling proactive adjustment of activity dates.

Social and Cultural Context

Persistent cultural norms and traditions posed significant challenges to promoting gender equality and reducing violence against women, men, and girls. For instance, in both project districts, there was a prevalent expectation for men to remain silent about abuse to protect their honor. In Mzimba, specifically, traditional beliefs prevented women or girls from owning land. Such entrenched beliefs hindered open discussions and challenges to harmful behaviors.

FCR addressed these issues by actively engaging traditional leaders and community members in open dialogue. Traditional leaders, respected figures within the community, were invited to participate in discussions, helping to initiate conversations about local customs and leading by example in questioning harmful practices. Community members, both men and women, also participated in dialogue sessions, reflecting on how specific traditions affected the well-being of all genders. This inclusive approach fostered a shift in attitudes, leading to more open reporting of harmful behaviors and increased support for girls' education.

Human Rights Violations and Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Throughout the project's duration, incidents of gender-based violence, child marriage, and economic abuse remained significant concerns. Many women and girls continued to experience violence within their homes and communities, while practices such as early marriage and denying women control over household finances persisted. In response, the project concentrated on promoting human rights education and raising awareness about the detrimental impact of these violations. FCR collaborated with local leaders and women's networks to conduct discussions on human rights, gender equality, and the importance of protecting vulnerable individuals, particularly women and girls. The project also strengthened community-based structures, such as protection committees, to support survivors and facilitate case reporting. These efforts resulted in increased community awareness of women's rights and the harm caused by practices like child marriage. Consequently, several GBV survivors were referred to support services, and more individuals began reporting cases rather than remaining silent.

Project Achievements and Sustainability

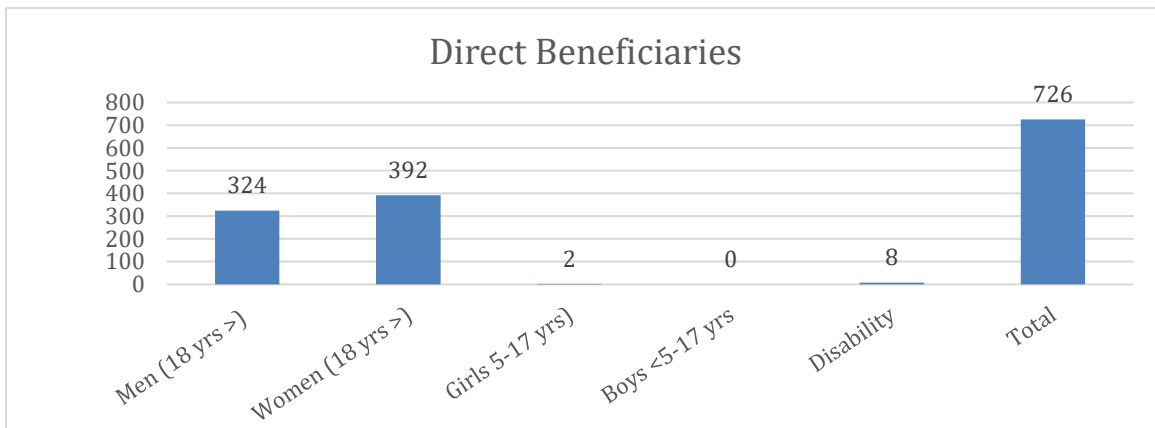
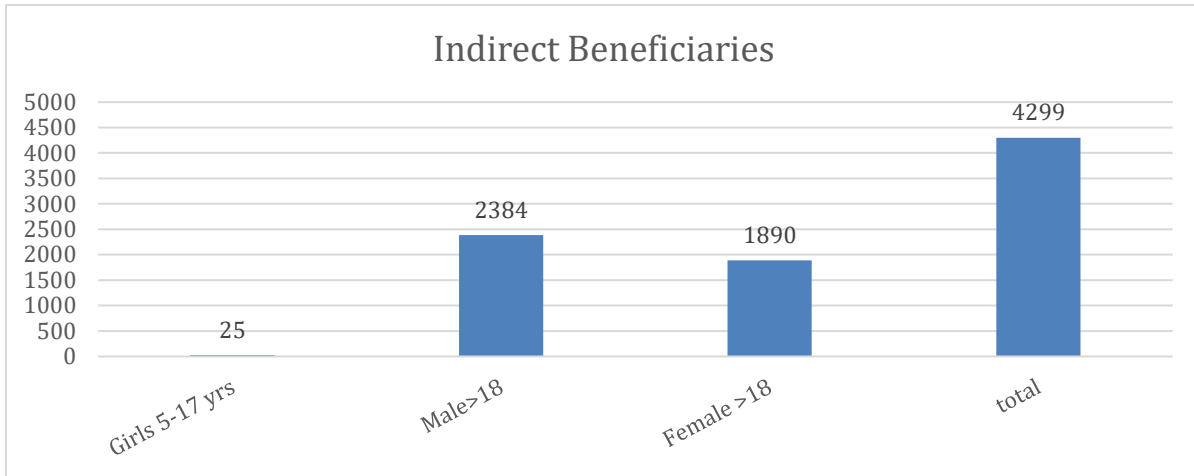
Adaptation and Progress

Despite the contextual challenges, the project successfully achieved its implementation targets. An extension of remaining activities to March 2025 ensured the thorough execution of all planned activities. Strategic partnerships with key stakeholders, including the Gender Office, police, judiciary, community development offices, Area Development Committees (ADCs), and the District Gender Technical Working Group (GTWG), were instrumental in maintaining momentum and achieving 100% of planned outputs.

Sustainability Focus

The project prioritized sustainability by working through and strengthening existing community and district-level governance structures. This included collaboration with Area Development Committees (ADCs), Village Development Committees (VDCs), School Management Committees (SMCs), Chiefs Forums, and the District Gender Technical Working Group (GTWG). These entities, already trusted within their communities and playing crucial roles in decision-making, helped ensure that project goals would continue beyond the implementation period.

By actively involving these bodies, the project fostered community ownership and responsibility. For instance, gender issues were integrated into Village Development Plans with the support of ADCs and VDCs, embedding gender equality into local planning and budgeting processes. Chiefs Forums were engaged to support behavioral change at the cultural level, while SMCs helped integrate gender and child protection messages within schools. At the district level, the GTWG coordinated stakeholders and kept gender issues on the agenda of local government structures. Through training, dialogue, and joint planning, these groups took greater ownership of project outcomes and committed to continuing key activities such as awareness raising, case referrals, and monitoring of harmful practices. This approach, utilizing and strengthening existing structures rather than creating parallel systems, laid a strong foundation for lasting change, supported by the very institutions that will continue to serve the communities post-project.



Project Governance and Coordination

Effective governance and coordination structures were critical to the project's success, fostering ownership, sustainability, inclusivity, and strategic partnerships at all levels.

District-Level Structures

The District Gender Technical Working Group (GTWG) provided vital oversight, ensuring that project activities aligned with government priorities while promoting a participatory, rights-based approach. Their engagement strengthened district ownership and contributed to the integration of project objectives into sectoral plans. An example of this integration is the fisheries sector in Nkhata-bay, which adopted the Social Analysis and Action (SAA) approach to address gender issues within its domain.

Community-Level Structures

Community-based structures, including Chiefs' Forums, Women's Forums, Community Gender Dialogue Forums (CGDF), and Area Development Committees (ADCs), were instrumental in empowering local ownership. These forums created spaces for vulnerable and marginalized groups to actively participate in decision-making processes, ensuring that project activities advanced the principle of "leaving no one behind."

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)

Local CSOs and CBOs provided critical grassroots perspectives and expertise. Their involvement included mapping key stakeholders relevant to the project, as well as providing crucial information during baseline assessments and joint monitoring. Their active involvement strengthened the link between civil society, government, and community members, further reinforcing project sustainability.

Overall Contribution

Through these effective governance and coordination mechanisms, the project effectively fostered ownership, promoted inclusive participation, strengthened strategic partnerships, and established a strong foundation for sustainable results.

Project Partnerships

Strong partnerships were central to advancing project objectives and ensuring long-term sustainability. A particularly notable partnership was with the District Gender Office, which enabled the project to build the capacity of community structures in addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and promoting gender equality.

A. Government Partnerships

The project engaged various government departments, primarily at the district level, including the District Gender Office, District Community Development Office (DCDO), judiciary, and police. These partnerships:

- Strengthened capacity to address gender-based violence (GBV) and promote gender equality.
- Fostered district-level ownership and integrated project objectives into sectoral activities.
- Enhanced access to justice for GBV survivors through collaboration with the police and courts.

B. Civil Society and Community-Based Partnerships

The project also worked closely with community-based organizations (CBOs) and grassroots structures such as Community Gender Dialogue Forums and Chiefs' Forums. These partnerships:

- Extended the project's reach to hard-to-reach and vulnerable communities.
- Enabled community-led responses to GBV and child marriage.
- Strengthened participatory monitoring, evaluation, and advocacy efforts.

Impact of Partnerships

Through these strategic partnerships, the project fostered stronger district and community ownership, built sustainable platforms for advocacy, and established mechanisms that will continue to address GBV and human rights violations beyond the project's closure.

Challenges and Mitigation

Some challenges emerged during the partnership process, notably political influences that threatened to derail stakeholder consensus, as well as resistance from certain traditional leaders concerned about perceived threats to cultural norms and authority structures. One notable challenge occurred in Nkhata Bay, where a local chief insisted that the project team seek his approval before conducting any activities, despite formal project entry procedures having been completed beforehand.

This requirement caused a delays; however, the project team managed the situation constructively and continued to make progress. These challenges were addressed through sustained dialogue and engagement sessions tailored to each group's concerns. For example, consultative meetings were held with traditional leaders to ensure their voices were heard and their roles respected within the implementation framework. Political influence was managed by clearly defining the actual roles and limits of each stakeholder in the project.

Despite these obstacles, the project contributed meaningfully to advocacy, engagement, and awareness efforts targeting key and vulnerable populations, working towards fostering a more equitable community. A key lesson learned from this experience was the importance of early and continuous stakeholder engagement, particularly with groups holding informal power, as well as the value of flexibility in responding to evolving dynamics.

Results

A. Capturing Broader Transformations Across Outcomes Broader Social Transformations and Project Impact

Throughout its implementation, the project significantly contributed to broader social transformations that extended beyond individual outcomes. These transformations are captured under key thematic areas as follows:

Elevating Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Human Rights on the Political Agenda

The project successfully elevated issues of GBV and human rights violations within district-level political and development spaces. Through strategic collaboration with key stakeholders such as the District Gender Technical Working Group, Chiefs' Forums, and Area Development Committees (ADCs), the project fostered greater political commitment to addressing harmful cultural norms, child marriages, and gender inequality. These partnerships enabled the integration of GBV and human rights concerns into district planning and community development agendas, ensuring sustained attention beyond the project timeline.

This strategic positioning amplified conversations on GBV, child marriages, and economic abuse at the district level, encouraging local government representatives to mainstream these concerns into formal planning processes. Moreover, the alignment of the project within district forums strengthened coordination between community-based structures and district authorities, creating a more inclusive environment for gender issues to be addressed within government policy agendas. As a result, GBV, child marriages, and harmful norms became regular topics in district development meetings, leading to more effective collaboration and resource allocation.

Promoting Inclusive Participation and “Leaving No One Behind”

Inclusivity was a guiding principle throughout the project's design and implementation. FCR deliberately involved a diverse range of community members—including women, men, girls, boys, and persons with disabilities—in all interventions. While participation of persons with disabilities was relatively low due to the project's focus on community structures such as ADCs and Village Savings and Loan (VSL) groups, the inclusive approach achieved significant outcomes:

- **Empowerment of Marginalized Groups:** The active involvement of women, girls, and other marginalized groups empowered them to advocate for change. Their participation notably influenced traditional leaders to reconsider and modify community events that previously accelerated child marriages and teen pregnancies. For example, in T/A Kampingo Sibande, it is now prohibited for girls and boys to spend nights at community events.
- **Strengthened Community Ownership:** This inclusivity fostered greater community cohesion and ownership, which in turn enhanced the sustainability of project results.

Shifts in Attitudes and Social Norms

The project catalyzed significant shifts in attitudes among traditional leaders, district stakeholders, and community members. Initial resistance—especially regarding discussions on cultural norms and men's reluctance to disclose experiences of GBV—gradually gave way to active advocacy. Chiefs and community leaders became vocal supporters of abandoning harmful practices such as child marriage and GBV. Notably, male survivors of GBV began breaking their silence, openly challenging entrenched gender norms related to masculinity and vulnerability.

Strengthening Local Structures and Ensuring Sustainability

Through capacity strengthening and strategic engagement, the project empowered existing local structures—including Chiefs' Forums, Community Gender Dialogue Forums, and VSL groups—in areas of gender, GBV, human rights advocacy, and the Social Analysis and Action (SAA) approach. These

groups are now better equipped to advocate for gender equality, prevent GBV, and promote human rights within their communities, ensuring that efforts continue beyond the project's conclusion.

The strengthening of Community Technical Working Groups (CTWGs) further empowered local communities to take ownership of the project's objectives. These groups actively cascaded messages on GBV, child marriages, and women's economic empowerment during community events, reinforcing long-term sustainability.

Comprehensive, Cross-Cutting Impact through Economic Empowerment

A key component of the project's success was the integration of economic empowerment activities—particularly through Village Savings and Loan (VSL) groups and Self-Help groups—with GBV prevention efforts. Participants were trained in saving, lending, and income-generating skills, which enhanced financial independence among women and reduced their economic dependence on abusive partners, thereby lowering their vulnerability to GBV.

Regular VSL group meetings also created safe spaces for dialogue on gender roles and power dynamics, challenging harmful norms such as the acceptance of male dominance in household decision-making. This holistic approach demonstrated that addressing economic, social, and cultural factors simultaneously leads to deeper, more sustainable change.

Holistic Approach to Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG)

The project's comprehensive strategy—combining economic empowerment, social analysis, and community engagement—proved highly effective in achieving transformative impact. Empowering survivors with financial independence provided a platform to escape cycles of abuse and contribute positively to their communities. The Social Analysis and Action (SAA) methodology addressed harmful cultural norms and child marriages, creating a positive feedback loop where empowerment, education, and social change reinforced one another.

This holistic approach underscored that tackling multiple dimensions of gender inequality in tandem is far more effective than focusing on a single issue, resulting in profound and sustainable community transformation.

Ensuring Sustainability through Strategic Partnerships

To ensure sustainability, FCR worked closely with key district stakeholders—including the District Gender Office, Community Development Office, judiciary, and police. These partnerships ensured that project results were embedded within ongoing district development planning rather than being isolated or temporary.

Capacity-building efforts, such as training of trainers (ToTs) and empowering community-based structures, further guaranteed that gender issues would continue to be addressed after project closure. The VSL groups, in particular, are expected to continue supporting the financial needs of survivors and vulnerable populations while serving as ongoing forums for discussing GBV prevention.

The advocacy efforts and heightened awareness around harmful cultural norms are anticipated to lead to long-term societal shifts, ultimately reducing GBV and child marriages across the region.

Reporting on the implementation of Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (P-MER)

FCR adopted a comprehensive participatory framework to embed P-MER throughout the project cycle, focusing on community ownership and responsiveness:

- **Community Feedback Mechanisms:** The project utilized focus group discussions (FGDs), community feedback meetings during and after activities, mid-project monitoring, and joint end-of-project monitoring exercises. These platforms facilitated direct input from survivors of GBV, community members, traditional leaders, and project beneficiaries, ensuring continuous dialogue and adaptive management.
- **Social Analysis and Action (SAA) Approach:** Central to the project, SAA empowered stakeholders to critically analyze harmful social norms and traditions perpetuating SGBV. Training sessions equipped Community Gender Dialogue Forum (CGDF) members and traditional leaders with tools such as problem tree analysis and gender boxing, enabling them to identify root causes of issues like child marriage and economic vulnerabilities linked to GBV.
- **Participatory Assessments:** Beneficiaries actively evaluated the effectiveness of activities, providing real-time feedback on awareness campaigns, training programs, and community bylaws enforcement. This approach ensured that interventions were locally relevant and culturally sensitive.
- **Community-Driven Action Plans:** After each activity, beneficiaries, in collaboration with local leaders, developed concrete action plans to address identified issues. These plans were shared with local authorities, fostering stronger links between grassroots initiatives and formal governance structures.
- **Inclusion of Diverse Stakeholders:** The project engaged men, women, children, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups to ensure broad-based participation and representation in monitoring and evaluation processes.
- **Monitoring Visits and Data Collection:** In both Districts, a two-day monitoring exercise involved semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with key stakeholders from four Group Village Head areas. Data collection was facilitated by FCR personnel and district government officers, who adhered to a structured monitoring tool that assessed knowledge retention, the application of SAA principles, and community impact.

Main Results Achieved Through Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

- **Enhanced Community Ownership and Engagement:** Stakeholders, including CGDF members and traditional leaders, demonstrated a strong understanding and application of SAA principles. This led to increased community responsibility for project outcomes and proactive enforcement of bylaws banning harmful practices such as *unamwali*—a tradition disrupting girls’ education and exposing them to harassment.
- **Normative and Behavioral Changes:** The project catalyzed significant shifts in community attitudes toward gender roles and harmful traditions. For example, in GVH Mganga, stakeholders actively challenged *chipongo*, a wedding-related ceremony linked to irresponsible youth behaviour and school absenteeism. CGDF members used problem tree analysis to educate parents on the negative consequences of child marriage and promoted alternative income-generating activities to reduce economic incentives for early marriage.

- **Improved Reporting and Support Systems:** The establishment and strengthening of Community Victim Support Units (CVSU) facilitated more timely responses to GBV cases. However, challenges such as a lack of transport and financial resources for victim support were noted.
- **Increased Awareness of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights:** Communities became more open to discussing sensitive topics, linking economic activities like prostitution to SGBV, and promoting contraceptive use among youth.
- **Gender Equity Promotion:** Use of gender boxing tools helped communities understand and redistribute traditional gender roles, fostering equal access to opportunities and reducing SGBV risks.
- **Sustainability of Efforts:** Local structures such as Chiefs' Forums and Area Development Committees were empowered to continue addressing gender issues beyond the project duration, supported by community-driven action plans.

Lessons Learned in Implementing P-MER

- **Time and Continuous Engagement Are Crucial:** The relatively short six-month project period limited the ability to conduct comprehensive long-term evaluations. Sustained engagement is necessary to observe deeper societal attitude shifts and reductions in GBV cases.
- **Cultural Resistance Persists:** While some harmful practices like *unamwali* have been successfully banned and enforced through bylaws, others such as *chipongo* and early marriages remain deeply rooted and require ongoing sensitization and alternative solutions.
- **Gender Bias in GBV Reporting:** Male victims of GBV face stigma and ridicule, discouraging them from reporting incidents. For instance, a case in GVH Mtowole highlighted perceived unfairness in how male victim cases are handled, underscoring the need for more inclusive support mechanisms.
- **Logistical Barriers to Justice:** Distance to police stations (e.g., 50 km to Chintheche) and lack of localized referral systems reduce victims' access to justice and support services.
- **Need for Capacity Building and Regular Monitoring:** Continuous training, resource provision, and monitoring are essential to consolidate gains and adapt interventions to emerging challenges.

Innovative, Promising, or Good Practices Related to P-MER

- **Community-Driven Action Plans:** After each activity, beneficiaries and local leaders co-created actionable strategies addressing GBV and child marriage, which were then communicated to local authorities. This practice strengthened accountability and local government responsiveness.
- **Use of Participatory Tools:** The problem tree and gender boxing tools empowered communities to analyze root causes and gender roles critically, facilitating informed dialogue and behavior change.

- **Empowerment of CGDF Members:** Training CGDF members in SAA principles enabled them to become local champions in curbing child marriages and promoting gender equity, including encouraging alternative livelihoods to reduce economic pressures leading to harmful practices.
- **Integration of Diverse Voices:** The project’s emphasis on including men, women, children, and persons with disabilities in monitoring and evaluation enhanced the inclusiveness and relevance of interventions.
- **Linking Grassroots and Formal Structures:** The creation of stronger ties between community forums and government authorities improved enforcement of bylaws and sustainability of interventions.

Quotes from Communities and Beneficiaries

- Mzimba Area Development Committee (ADC) Chair:

“The participatory approach has opened our eyes to the importance of involving everyone—men, women, children, and even those with disabilities—in discussions about gender and violence. It’s not just about talking; it’s about changing minds and behaviors. We feel empowered to take action in our own communities.”

- CGDF Member from Nkhatabay:

“Since the training, we have been able to use the problem tree to explain to parents why child marriage is harmful and to explore alternative ways to generate income instead of marrying off children.”

- Community Member from GVH Dambanjoka:

“The banning of unamwali has ensured girls can continue their education uninterrupted, which is a major achievement for our community.”

The project’s participatory monitoring, evaluation, and reporting framework has been instrumental in fostering community ownership, enhancing accountability, and driving normative change in addressing SGBV through the SAA approach. The combination of participatory tools, inclusive stakeholder engagement, and community-driven action plans contributed to measurable impacts such as the banning of harmful traditions, increased gender equity awareness, and improved victim support structures.

Nonetheless, the project faced challenges related to resource limitations, cultural resistance, and logistical barriers that constrained the full realization of long-term outcomes. Addressing these through sustained engagement, resource mobilization, translation of materials, and inclusive support mechanisms will be critical for deepening impact and ensuring sustainability.

The innovative practices pioneered, particularly the community-driven action planning and empowerment of CGDF members, offer promising models for replication and scaling in similar contexts.

B. Capturing Change at Outcome Level

For the six-month project, FCR is reporting on immediate outcomes that provide a clear indication of progress toward realizing results:

Outcome 1: Withdrawal of Children from Child Marriages and Reintegration into Schools

One of the most tangible signs of progress during the six-month period was the withdrawal of 25 children from child marriages, directly facilitated by the active involvement of community structures. This achievement marks the beginning of a significant shift in how child marriages are perceived and addressed within the communities. Chiefs, community leaders, and members of local Area Development Committees (ADCs) played a crucial role in identifying and intervening in child marriage cases.

While this immediate outcome is promising, it is important to acknowledge that the long-term impact depends on sustained engagement from these community structures and their ability to foster lasting changes in social norms surrounding child marriage.

Outcome 2: Strengthening of Community Structures for Gender Advocacy and GBV Awareness

The project made significant strides in strengthening community structures to advocate for gender equality, GBV prevention, and the protection of children's rights. Notably, community structures have become increasingly capable of utilizing other community events and platforms—such as local festivals, market days, and gatherings—to cascade key project messages on GBV, child marriages, and women's economic empowerment.

This expansion beyond formal workshops demonstrates a growing capacity among community structures to independently carry forward the project's messages, ensuring they are not limited to direct project activities. As chiefs, ADCs, and community gender technical working groups gain confidence in advocating for gender equality, the likelihood of sustained community-led action increases.

However, the full scale of impact will depend on continued engagement by these local leaders in integrating gender issues into their routine activities and decision-making processes.

Outcome 3: Improved Response to GBV Cases and Legal Accountability

A key achievement of the project was the successful handling and completion of 10 GBV cases in court, marking a critical step toward ensuring legal accountability and justice for survivors. This outcome reflects improved responsiveness from local judicial systems and law enforcement agencies in addressing gender-based violence.

While these cases are an encouraging early sign of the project's impact, systemic barriers such as legal delays, cultural biases, and insufficient resources still hamper survivors' consistent access to timely and effective legal support.

The completion of these cases indicates that local authorities and community leaders are increasingly willing to take action on GBV. However, sustaining this outcome will require continuous training, capacity-building, and advocacy to maintain accessible and responsive legal mechanisms for all survivors, including marginalized groups.

Outcome 5: Increased Engagement of Male Survivors in Addressing GBV

One of the most notable and unexpected results was the increased participation of male survivors of GBV in project activities. Men—who traditionally have been less likely to speak out about their experiences—are now coming forward to share their stories.

This shift is significant, as it challenges prevailing gender norms and encourages greater openness around men's experiences with violence. It suggests that the project created an inclusive and safe environment where male survivors feel comfortable discussing their experiences and seeking support.

Sustainability of Outcomes

To ensure the sustainability of these immediate outcomes, the project focused on strengthening local structures such as chiefs' forums, district gender offices, and community-based Village Savings and Loan (VSL) groups. These structures are now better equipped to continue addressing GBV, child marriage, and economic empowerment without ongoing external intervention.

By training local leaders and community representatives to take ownership, the project laid a foundation for continued advocacy and action.

Furthermore, partnerships with local authorities and government bodies have been cultivated to keep gender issues prioritized within local policy agendas and to strengthen legal frameworks for addressing GBV over time.

As community structures become increasingly embedded within governance processes, the hope is that these early results will translate into long-term impact, with local leadership championing these issues in the years ahead.

Reporting on SRHR:

Please share 3-4 key results in advancing SRHR over the course of your project.

- The project led to the withdrawal of 25 children from child marriages in addition to addressing cases of defilement, helping to protect children from early and forced sexual relations and ensuring their rights to safety and education.
- The project has created safe platforms, through community meetings that encouraged open conversations on sexuality and SRHR among communities, helping to reduce stigma and misinformation surrounding Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV).
- By raising awareness, strengthening community reporting structures, and involving law enforcement, the project has contributed to the prevention of rape and sexual violence, especially among women and girls, as well as promoting early intervention and response mechanisms.

Rights Holders (Project “beneficiaries”)

Please share an estimated number of rights holders (“beneficiaries”) reached **over the entire duration of your project.**

Indicative numbers	Direct	Indirect	Comments / Explanations
Women (18 yrs. and above)	398	1890	The Direct women are those participated in project trainings and orientation meeting while indirect are those reached through cascading model in the project. These were all above 18 years.
Girls (5-17)	2	25	These were 25 children withdrawn from child marriages by the community structures and 2 directly participated in economic strengthening training facilitated by FCR, GDO and CDV.

Men (18 yrs. and above)	326	2384	The Direct men are those participated in project trainings and orientation meeting while indirect are those reached through cascading model in the project.
Boys (5-17 yrs.)	0	0	No boy Child participated in the trainings.
TOTAL			

Challenges and Mitigating Measures

In addition to the challenges mentioned in earlier sections, the Foundation for Children’s Rights (FCR) encountered several other barriers throughout project implementation. Nonetheless, through adaptive planning and stakeholder collaboration, the project team developed creative and practical solutions to minimize the impact of these challenges and sustain progress toward its objectives.

1. Cultural Barriers to Inclusive Participation

The project’s commitment to the principle of “*leaving no one behind*” exposed structural and cultural norms that restricted the participation of certain gender groups—particularly women and girls—in Mzimba District. Deep-rooted gender stereotypes and patriarchal traditions limited their involvement in community engagements and decision-making spaces.

Mitigation Strategy:

FCR took a proactive and inclusive approach to community mobilization, ensuring that project activities were intentionally designed to engage participants across gender, age, and ability lines. Specific strategies included:

- Creating safe spaces for women and youth to speak up.
- Scheduling meetings at times that accommodated the availability of women and girls with domestic responsibilities.
- Ensuring physical accessibility for persons with disabilities. These efforts helped foster more equitable participation and greater community ownership.

2. Resistance from Traditional Leaders

Some traditional leaders were initially reluctant to engage in project dialogues, particularly when discussions touched on challenging long-held customs or addressing harmful cultural norms such as child marriage or GBV. In some cases, chiefs perceived these discussions as confrontational or threatening to their authority.

Mitigation Strategy:

FCR adopted a respectful, dialogue-based approach to engage traditional authorities:

- Regular chief forum meetings were held as safe and collaborative platforms to introduce sensitive topics.
- FCR used storytelling, peer testimonies from other chiefs, and participatory reflections to encourage gradual mindset shifts.
- Chiefs who showed early support were empowered to champion the message to their peers.

Over time, this approach eased resistance, fostered mutual respect, and facilitated the gradual integration of positive gender norms into traditional governance structures.

3. Coordination Constraints among Stakeholders

The project experienced coordination difficulties at the district level, largely due to competing priorities and scheduling conflicts among key stakeholders, including government departments and community-based structures. This delayed the timely execution of some activities and limited multi-sectoral synergy.

Mitigation Strategy:

FCR responded by:

- Organizing multi-sectoral coordination meetings to improve alignment.
- Realigning project timelines and adjusting activity schedules to accommodate availability.
- Prioritizing joint planning sessions to ensure stakeholder buy-in and reduce fragmentation. These efforts strengthened collaboration and ensured that the project retained momentum despite logistical constraints.

4. Challenges Reaching Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups

In some remote areas, marginalized groups—including adolescent girls, young mothers, persons with disabilities, and male survivors of GBV—faced barriers to access project interventions due to stigma, social exclusion, or limited mobility.

Mitigation Strategy:

FCR partnered with local CBOs and community focal points to:

- Identify and map vulnerable groups within the communities.
- Conduct targeted outreach and provide tailored support, such as transport facilitation or privacy-assured counseling for survivors.
- Promote inclusive messaging to destigmatize participation among less visible or often-excluded populations.

This ensured wider reach and reinforced the project’s equity goals.

5. Sustainability of Project Gains Post-Closure

Ensuring the long-term sustainability of project results beyond the six-month period emerged as a key concern, particularly in the absence of continuous external support.

Mitigation Strategy:

To address this, FCR:

- Focused on capacity building of local structures, including chiefs’ forums, community gender technical working groups, VSL groups, and district gender offices.
- Institutionalized practices such as community-led advocacy, reporting mechanisms, and dialogue forums to embed them into routine governance and community operations.
- Strengthened partnerships with local government bodies to ensure continuity of gender and child protection initiatives within existing policy frameworks and budgets.

These sustainability measures aimed to secure continued action and leadership from within the communities.

6. Contextual Shifts and Operational Constraints

The project also faced external contextual challenges, such as competing development priorities and shifting district-level planning cycles, which impacted coordination and engagement.

Mitigation Strategy:

(As detailed in the Contextual Shifts section), FCR adapted through flexible planning, maintained open communication with stakeholders, and introduced buffer periods to accommodate unforeseen disruptions.

Overall, while the project encountered several challenges, the ability to adapt quickly, remain community-centered, and build resilient local systems allowed FCR to maintain progress, reach vulnerable groups, and position the results for sustained impact.

Lessons Learned and New Opportunities

a) Lessons Learned

The project provided valuable insights into effective strategies for addressing gender-based violence (GBV), advancing gender equality, and sustaining impact through community-driven and multi-sectoral interventions. FCR actively documented learning through reflection meetings, monitoring visits, stakeholder feedback sessions, and community insights—allowing for real-time adaptation and strategic refinement.

Programmatic and Operational Lessons

Multisectoral Collaboration Is Essential

One of the richest lessons was that no single actor can tackle GBV or child marriage alone. Effective prevention and response required coordinated action among the District Gender Office, Police, Community Development Office, Judiciary, Traditional Authorities, Area Development Committees (ADCs), and civil society actors. FCR broadened its stakeholder engagement mid-project to embed GBV response into multiple sectoral plans, ensuring shared ownership and accountability at both district and community levels.

Inclusive Participation Strengthens Impact

Engaging men, women, boys, girls, and persons with disabilities enhanced community ownership and ensured no one was left behind. The inclusion of male GBV survivors—previously marginalized—was particularly impactful. FCR increased the use of inclusive tools such as translating IEC materials into Chitumbuka and Chitonga, utilizing community radio, and tailoring outreach to diverse groups, which significantly improved participation and dismantled stigma.

Key Technical Lessons

Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) as Prevention Tools

Economic dependency was a key driver of GBV and child marriage. VSLAs empowered over 300 survivors and economically vulnerable individuals, especially women and girls, by enhancing their financial independence and peer support. These groups evolved into platforms for sustained dialogue on SRHR and gender equality, reinforcing social cohesion and community resilience.

Community-Led Norm Shifting Is Effective and Sustainable

Empowering community leadership to lead norm change proved pivotal. Chiefs and ADCs—initially sensitized—were trained and actively involved in identifying and addressing harmful cultural norms such as “*magroweres*” which are unsupervised youth gatherings and gendered inheritance practices. Their public advocacy against toxic masculinity and child marriage drove broader community compliance and led to actions like girls being withdrawn from marriages and empowered women leading anti-GBV efforts.

b) Emerging Opportunities

Male Engagement as GBV Advocates

Male survivors began speaking out, challenging deep-seated cultural taboos around masculinity and vulnerability. Three male survivors were supported through psychosocial counselling by Community Gender Technical Working Groups (CGTWGs), then linked to VSLAs and trained as local champions. Their testimonies encouraged more balanced community dialogues and reduced stigma.

Digital and Social Media for Youth Outreach

Social media, especially Facebook and WhatsApp, proved highly effective for reaching rural youth. FCR produced localized content to complement community-level dialogues, increasing awareness and participation. Posts highlighting project activities often received comments advocating for replication in other communities, showing organic demand for scale-up.

Sustainability and Moving Forward

FCR embedded sustainability into every layer of implementation by working closely with local systems, structures, and leadership to ensure continuation of impact.

1. Institutionalization Through Local Government

Project goals were aligned with mandates of district departments. GBV and SRHR issues were integrated into Village Development Plans, and sectoral offices (e.g., gender, community development, police) committed internal resources for continued implementation.

2. Community Ownership and Leadership

Local structures such as Chiefs’ Forums, Gender Dialogue Forums, and ADCs have taken full ownership, developed post-project action plans and embedded GBV priorities into local governance. Chiefs now routinely speak out against GBV and oversee implementation of action plans.

3. Economic Empowerment for Resilience

Survivors were linked to functional VSLAs. Those not previously in groups were connected during community meetings, and role models were used to inspire participation. VSLAs now double as financial lifelines and ongoing platforms for gender and SRHR dialogue.

4. **Capacity Building and Peer Multiplication**

FCR trained local facilitators from existing structures (CGTWG, ADCs, Chiefs) in the SAA methodology. These trained leaders now facilitate awareness, monitor progress, and support replication of community-driven initiatives.

5. **Sectoral Uptake Beyond Gender-Specific Actors**

Inspired by the project's success, sectors such as fisheries and agriculture began applying SAA in their programming, mainstreaming gender equality beyond traditional actors.

6. **Donor Engagement and Continuity Planning**

Relationships built with UNDP, judiciary, and district-level government created a strong foundation for future programming. FCR plans to scale and replicate the SAA model through continued advocacy and targeted fundraising.

Innovative, Promising, and Good Practices

A. Programmatic Innovation

Traditional Leaders as Drivers of Norm Change (Promising Practice)

FCR went beyond sensitizing chiefs to positioning them as active norm changers. Chiefs and ADCs led cultural reviews and community declarations against child marriage and harmful beliefs (e.g., inheritance discrimination). Their legitimacy boosted compliance and social acceptance of reform.

Result: Traditional leaders became outspoken champions for gender equality, leading to increased GBV reporting, women's participation in local governance, and the abandonment of long-held harmful practices.

B. Technical Innovations

Safe Spaces for Male Survivors (Innovative Practice)

Creating inclusive spaces for male GBV survivors broke cultural silence and shifted perceptions of vulnerability.

Result: More men began reporting GBV, participating in awareness efforts, and supporting prevention messages—broadening the GBV discourse.

Economic Empowerment Through VSLAs (Good Practice)

By linking survivors to VSLAs, the project tackled the root economic causes of GBV.

Result: Financial independence improved survivors' agency, reduced dependency on abusive relationships, and strengthened community solidarity.

Conclusion

The project not only delivered measurable impact in GBV prevention and norm transformation but also unlocked sustainable pathways through community-led change, local system integration, and inclusive participation. These lessons and opportunities will shape FCR's future programming in advancing gender justice, child protection, and inclusive development.

Communications and Visibility

a) Overview

Topline Communication Results (Duration: 6 months):

- **Radio Engagement:** 1 live radio panel discussion aired on *Chilundu Community Radio* in NkhataBay, reaching approximately **2,000 listeners**.
- **Social Media Outreach:** 6 awareness-raising Facebook posts reached an estimated **57,050 viewers**.
- **IEC Material Distribution:** 50 posters and flyers disseminated in public offices, trading centers, and community gathering places.

- **SAA Manual:** Translation of CARE International manual from English to Chitumbuka and Chitonga
- **Media Articles:** 4 articles published in national newspapers (print and online).

Key Indicators Achieved:

- Number of people reached through mass media: **~59,000**
- Number of visibility materials distributed: **50**
- Number of media engagements/articles: **4**
- Number of radio programs aired: **1**
- Number of social media posts published: **6**

b) Messages

Audience	Key Messages	Why/Effectiveness
Community Members	“Child marriage is a form of violence—let’s protect our children.”	Resonated with chiefs and ADCs, resulting in the withdrawal of 25 girls from early marriages.
Women and Girls	“Your voice matters—report violence, claim your rights.”	Led to increased reporting and survivor engagement with VSLAs.
District Partners and Community Structures	“Together we can mainstream GBV response in every sector.”	Fostered institutional collaboration, securing district-level buy-in and intersectoral integration.

c) Media and Visibility Events (Selected Highlights)

1. **16 Days of Activism Radio Program (Nkhata Bay):**
A live panel discussion hosted on *Chilundu Community Radio* featured local government officials discussing GBV and child marriage. The interactive session encouraged live listener feedback and community engagement.
2. **District Dialogue with Chiefs and ADCs (Mzimba):**
FCR organized a community leadership dialogue to discuss harmful norms and project integration. Chiefs committed to amplifying GBV prevention messages in their areas.
3. **Project Launch Briefing (Mzimba):**
The project’s presence was formally introduced to key district stakeholders, media houses, and civil society, laying a foundation for cooperation and visibility.
4. **IEC Material Launch & Distribution Campaign:**
FCR launched branded posters and flyers across key community spots, coinciding with community dialogues and market days for maximum visibility.
5. **Survivor-Led Testimonial Event:**
Male and female survivors shared personal stories during a public forum, marking a cultural turning point in normalizing vulnerability and encouraging reporting.

d) Campaigns

16 Days of Activism Campaign – Mzimba (Supported and Participated):

FCR actively supported and participated in the 16 Days of Activism campaign, focusing on ending GBV and child marriage.

Objective: To raise awareness, mobilize local leaders, and promote survivor-centered support systems.

Significance: Reinforced national and global GBV prevention messages at the local level and created renewed momentum around inclusive, rights-based advocacy.

e) Human Interest Stories

Title: From Silence to Strength (The Journey of Mr. Faison Mdolozzi, GBV Survivor in Nkhata Bay)

“For many years, Mr. Faison Mdolozzi Chirwa suffered in silence. In his own home in Nkhata Bay, T/A Zilakoma, he endured emotional and physical abuse at the hands of his wife. Without a steady source of income, he was often denied food, subjected to beatings, and made to feel worthless. Like many men, Faison felt ashamed to speak out; trapped by the societal belief that men should not show vulnerability or report gender-based violence.

Everything changed the day he attended a community awareness meeting on gender issues and reporting systems. The session was organized by community Gender Technical Working Groups, trained by FCR and District Gender Officer in using the SAA (Social Analysis and Action) approach in addressing Gender and GBV. It was there that Faison realized he was not alone and that help was available.

Empowered by the information he received, he made the courageous decision to report his case to the Community Victim Support Unit (CVSU). Upon reviewing the severity of the situation and the lack of commitment from his partner to change, the CVSU referred the case to the court. Ultimately, the marriage was dissolved.

Today, Mr. Modolozzi is happily remarried and living a peaceful life. He is grateful to the project for opening his eyes and helping him reclaim his dignity.

- *Photo: Survivor speaking during men’s forum with back blurred to maintain privacy.*

2. “A Second Chance (How VSLA and mother groups members Helped Eness Sibande Return to School”)

Eness Sibande, a girl from Robema Sibande Village, was married off at the young age of 17. Her dream of continuing education seemed to have ended until a powerful network of women stepped in to change her story.

Through the Eswazini Primary School’s Mother Group, which had been trained by FCR and District Gender officer , news of Eness’s early marriage reached the group. Concerned about her wellbeing and future, the women quickly took action. They visited her home, offered counseling, and encouraged her to return to school. Knowing she felt shy and uncertain, they accompanied her on her first day back to give her strength and support.

To make sure she stayed in school, the Mother Group and Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) also provided Eness with essential school supplies and personal needs.

Today, Eness is back in class, focused on her education and building a brighter future thanks to the project and community that believes every girl deserves a second chance

- *Photo: Chikondi receiving school supplies funded by VSLA group*

f) Testimonials

*“For the first time, I feel heard. The project helped me speak out about abuse I faced in my marriage.”
Male GBV survivor, Nkhata-bay*

*“We chiefs are now gatekeepers of change. We will not tolerate child marriage anymore.”
T/A Zilakoma Nkhata-bay*

*“This project helped us realize that addressing GBV is not for few sectors but it need involvement of all stakeholder”.
District Gender Officer, Nkhata Bay*

*“The VSLA group/Mother Groups helped me with school basic needs so that I can go again to school”.
GBV survivor in Mzimba*

g) Photos with Captions

1.



“A Chief in Nkhata Bay proposing cultural norms to be assessed during the chiefs meeting.”

2.



“Government Sectors representative attended SAA training in Nkhata-bay and Identified Gender Issues in their sectors to be addressed through SAA”



3.

“GBV survivors and vulnerable people trained in VSL and self-help group approach.”

***THIS REPORT SHOULD NOT EXCEED 20 PAGES
(excluding annexes, see next page)***

ANNEXES

Annex B

SUMMARY REPORTING FORMAT

THE NARRATIVE AND THE FINANCIAL REPORT TO be prepared by the Recipient Institution.

Recipient Institution: Foundation For Childrens Rights (FCR)

Year 2024/25

Period covering this report:

- This report must be completed by the Recipient Institution and accepted by UNDP
- The Recipient Institution must attach any relevant evidence to support the activities reported
- The information provided below must correspond to the information that appears in the financial report
- Attach the accepted grant proposal to this report

Performance:

1- Workplan Performance (cumulative, including the current period)

COMPLETED ACTIVITIES	Timeline ²				Planned Budget for the Activity (in grant currency) ³	Funds Delivered for the Activity (in grant currency)
	T1	T2	T3	T4		
Activity 1. Entry Meetings	x			x	\$3,271.36	\$3,271.36
Activity 2. Baseline for GBV barrier analysis and validation	x				\$9,591.41	\$9,591.41
Activity 3. Building capacity of local structures in SAA		x	x	x	\$29,991.98	\$29,991.98
Activity 4. Community and stakeholder engagement meetings		x	x	x	\$9,044.20	\$9,044.20
Activity 5. Project Monitoring		x	x	x	\$4,028.28	\$4,028.28
Activity 6. Project overhead costs	x	x	x	x	\$4,181.61	\$4,181.61
Total					\$60,108.85	\$60,108.85

2- Performance Targets

INDICATOR(S)	Data Source	Baseline	Reporting Period Milestone/Target	Reporting Period Actual Performance Against the Target
1.1 Number of government personnel trained in SAA approach	<i>ACTIVITY REPORTS , ATTENDANCE SHEETS</i>	0	80	70
1.2 Establishment / Strengthening of Community Gender Dialogue Fora (CGDF)	<i>Activity report , attendance sheet</i>	0	84	87
1.3 Number of grassroots SAA discussion groups formed/strengthened	<i>Activity report /attendance sheets</i>	0	6	6
1.4 Number of vulnerable GBV survivors supported through economic empowerment activities	<i>Activity report/ attendance sheets</i>	0	300	300

Financial Reporting:

**Note: Financial reporting can be in local currency but cannot exceed the grant value in USD.*

General Category of Expenditures	Budgeted Amount (MK)	Actual Expense (MK)
Personnel	5,200,000.00	5,200,000.00
Transportation	11,110,203.20	11,150,853.20
Premises	1,200,000.00	1,200,000.00
Training, Workshops, etc.	86,818,400.00	86,669,126.80
Contracts (e.g., Audit)		
Equipment/Furniture (Specify)		
Other: 1. Vehicle Maintenance	200,000.00	200,000.00
2. Administrative Costs	642,000.00	751,095.00
Miscellaneous		
Total	105,250,603.20	105,251,075.00

