



The child protection committees and child protection volunteers organised the UNCRC day; where Children in Putao township, Kachin state, Myanmar came together to celebrate, educate and raise issues of concern to their rights.

Global Programme Report

2019

1. Introduction

ERIKS Global Programme Report 2019 in this version is a product designed for the Board of Directors of the organisation. It is a way to summarize and highlight the most important results from the organisation's international programmes as well as describe challenges in terms of implementation of the programmes. At the same time the report serves a purpose for staff at different levels of the organisation, helping us to reflect on lessons learnt, risk management and strategic development.

2. Reporting process

ERIKS Development Partner is a child rights organisation presently active in 16 countries, involved in about 100 projects annually. The process of making a global annual report involves a considerable number of people. Of course, a main source of information are the annual reports provided by ERIKS' partner organisations (PO) for each active project. This information and any other input from field visits, communication, evaluations etc. are compiled and processed in relation to the programme country strategies. The process of analysis and report writing is a shared responsibility within ERIKS' regional team consisting of the regionally recruited staff based in the region and the programme coordinator based at the head office in Sweden. Elaboration of country programme reports thus involves financial monitoring officers (FMO), programme monitoring officers (PMO), regional managers (RM) and programme coordinators (PC). The financial reports are also consolidated and reviewed by the organisation's financial controller (FC) at the head office.

A second step in the process is to look at the global and general picture of ERIKS' international programmes during the year in areas like implementation, budget, financial control, monitoring and evaluation etc. This analysis and condensation of country reports is performed by the programme director (PD) and deputy programme director (DPD) and results in the present document; ERIKS – Annual Global Report 2019.

3. Results

Partnership

In 2019, a partnership survey was carried out to measure to what extent ERIKS' partner organisations appreciate working with ERIKS and what they think about ERIKS' contribution to their organisational development in the areas of governance, management, programmes, networking and advocacy. The results from this survey were presented in detail in the Global Programme Report covering 2016-2018. These details will not be repeated in this report, but in general, partners have expressed a high appreciation of collaboration with ERIKS. They feel that they are treated respectfully and that the support that ERIKS is providing is relevant and useful. One area where there is room for improvement is opportunity for mutual learning. Even if 68% of partner organisations think that there is enough time for mutual learning in all or most areas of the partnership, the proportion that do not think that, shows that we need to improve. A second area needing improvement is communication on where and how to raise a complaint against ERIKS. Only 68% say that they know where to go. This is better than the previous survey in 2017 showing that 58% knew how to raise a complaint, but the ambition is that this should be clear to everyone.

When it comes to capacity development of partner organisations, we believe that the ordinary dialogue with partners on email, on skype, in face to face meetings and on field visits is very important. In the daily collaboration, we discuss issues like governance, financial management, child participation, rights-based approach etc. In addition, we organise partner meetings and workshops on specific issues and perform organisational assessments to help identify challenging areas.

In 2019, the Regional Office in East Africa has engaged an external consultant to perform an organisational capacity assessment of all partners in the region. The average scores identified organisational learning as an area in need of improvement. In general our partners are strong in implementation, but do not give enough time and effort to capture and apply learning from their work. Monitoring and evaluation also needs to be strengthened, as well as the area of resource mobilisation. A number of partners are too dependent on funding from ERIKS.

In each region, workshops and trainings on relevant subjects have been organised. In South East Asia, Partners have been trained in Outcome Mapping and harvesting. In West Africa, several trainings have focused on data collection and monitoring. And the Eastern Europe team have been working mainly on issues like rights-based approach and child protection.

Networking and advocacy are important tools for sustainable and structural change. ERIKS is continuously promoting and facilitating participation of our partners in relevant child right networks. In 2019, DEDRAS in Benin has joined RESPED, a network for child protection. CREDO has joined a similar network, GTPE, in Burkina Faso. Partners in Kenya are participating in the network Kenya4Resilience and WPN and Shalom in Myanmar are active members of the Joint Strategy Team for Kachin. CRIC in Moldova is a very respected member of several child rights related networks and in Belarus, Levania has been part of the coalition presenting the alternative report for Belarus on the Convention of the Rights of the Child at UN.

Education

Girls and boys are enjoying their right to and participating actively in promoting quality education. In order to ensure children's right to education ERIKS has throughout 2019 continued to focus on supporting access to education. This has included early learning programmes; as an important component to prepare children for school, support to and throughout primary and secondary education; focusing on re-enrolment and accelerated learning programmes (for those who have dropped out), retention (stay in school) and transition (from one grade to another) as well as vocational training; to equip youth with important skills for future job opportunities. Below examples are to be seen as illustrative examples of results reported during 2019 but for more details please see each individual country programme report.

During 2019, the country programme in Belarus expanded with one new partner organisation focusing on inclusive education and supporting parents in the process of including their children in the ordinary school system. 70 requests for support were received from parents and 95 % of them ended with children being enrolled in the mainstream education, granted additional resources (tutors), provided with adequate curriculum or were ensured with physical accessibility. In approximately 70 % of these cases additional financial resources were needed from local authorities. Furthermore, an important aspect of ensuring access to education is financial stability and live-



Partner organisation Levania meeting parents of children with disabilities

lihood. Several of the country programmes therefore also include aspects such as scholastics materials, school feeding programme, infrastructural support or school fee support. In eastern Burkina Faso, at the beginning of the school year 2018/2019, the partner organisation ODE recorded 70 % enrolment in primary school compared to 60.3 % the previous school year. One explanation to this increase is the focus on supporting vulnerable households through income-generating activities. According to the partner, these activities allowed 75 % of the households in the project areas to enrol their children in primary and secondary schools as a direct result of increased income at household level. In Bangladesh the partner organisation Friendship has, through a disaster risk reduction project focusing on creating resilient societies, supported public schools to develop plans on how to manage their educational programmes in times of emergencies which is highly relevant in the project area due to reoccurring cyclones and floods.

In addition to aspects of access to education is also the importance of creating forums where children can be actively involved, participating and being able to influence the quality of education. These forums include child clubs, child parliaments or pupil/student councils. These settings provide the opportunity for children to voice their issues with school management in a more structured manner, but it also provides the opportunity to inform about their rights, how to advocate for these rights as well as share important life skills. In Moldova, 265 children in two districts have been trained in monitoring of their own rights. This has been coordinated by civic education teachers who in turn have been trained by the partner organisation CRIC. The problems identified by the children shows an increased awareness of their rights where they during 2019 decided to monitor issues around bullying in school, discrimination and the right to privacy. This could be compared to previous year where selected issues related more to e.g. sport equipment or homework. In addition, through these clubs, children also become active in promoting the right to education and therefore being important agents of change. In Uganda, the partner organisation, LACWADO, supported children to conduct an enrolment campaign that targeted parents, local leaders and other children in the community. As a result, at least 78 girls and 68 boys were enrolled in school. In Myan-

mar, as a result of advocacy activities carried out by 12 students, the school principals and the KIO-ED (Kachin Independent Organisation – Education Department) have committed to build a high school in the areas where it is far from other schools. The school is expected to be built in 2020.

Despite important progress and positive results, setbacks in relation to access to education was also reported during the year. Increased terrorist attacks, intercommunity conflicts or teachers strikes have been particularly highlighted in the programme countries in West Africa. In Burkina Faso, multiple terrorist attacks were conducted forcing 52 school to close and 11 of these were completely destroyed. None of these have been able to reopen. The completion rate of children in primary school in this area was only 12,6 % compared to 63.96% in the southern parts of the country where no security incidents occurred. In Benin a significant increase in primary school dropout were reported, 15 % compared to 11 % in 2018, where early pregnancies have been reported as one possible explanation. Important to note is that for both, coping with teacher strikes and aspects of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) ERIKS has encouraged partner organisations to increase their awareness-raising activities. In Mali, the partner organisations AMPDR and ODES report that the additional support from parents during teachers strikes has helped children to continue their learning at home and the increased awareness-raising activities towards parents have therefore proven successful.

Duty-bearers take appropriate actions to promote and take measures to meet their obligations in providing quality education. A prerequisite to reach sustainable results is to address legal duty-bearers on all levels, including teachers, school management and local school authorities. During 2019 various capacity building activities have therefore been carried out in order to contribute to this outcome, including training teachers and school management in integrating child friendly schools in policies and practices. This is reported for example in Moldova as well as in Cambodia. One teacher in Cambodia reports: "I used to blame, punish with stick and shout at students. After I joined the training on Positive Discipline, I am aware of the effects of using negative punishment. I stopped using it and I tried to use positive discipline and it is successful. My students and I feel happy and confident". In Romania the dialogue with local authorities and school management has at times been less successful and the focus has therefore mainly been on ensuring an ongoing dialogue. However, in 2019, all partners in Romania reported increased interest from teachers and school management concerning integration of Roma children in public schools. The examples are still limited in nature but taken into consideration the setting they are nonetheless very important steps forward. For example, teachers from the public schools have consulted with afterschool clubs, contacting parents and invited Roma children and parents to participate in extra-curricular activities. In some cases, public schools have even facilitated discussions around discrimination. Overall the attitude of teaching staff towards Roma children and their parents has improved.

Awareness-raising activities towards parents is a very important part in ensuring children's right to education. Once the parents understand the importance of education the likelihood of children entering and completing their studies increases. Lakot Cinderella a pupil in primary school in Uganda report: "The children's conferences and edutainment events I attended were very beneficial to me. I had the opportunity to discuss the issues in child headed and single parents' families. My father always leaves me to attend to household chores. As a result, I missed class a lot. However, after that event in which my father was present, he started making alternative arrangements for me and my siblings thereby leaving me free to go to school". Parent – Teachers Association meetings is another important forum that is reported in several country programmes. These forums have enhanced the ownership and increased involvement of school management and parents in the supervision of schools.

Engaging the whole communities have also proven particularly important in ensuring children's right to education. In Myanmar the Community Based Organisations (CBOs) were successful in mobilising community resources to support child education. Result of this include Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centres that were officially registered by Education Department and the Community Development Department has provided solar energy system and equipment for four villages to help children with their night study. In Burkina Faso community-based canteens were initiated where parents donate a portion of their harvest to the canteens and this then benefits all children in the schools. In South Sudan, 30 Ambassadors of change were trained with a focus on sensitising communities and mobilising children to go back to school. These ambassadors have emerged as important agents of change within the communities who are ensuring that girls are able to enrol and stay in school.

Health

Girls and boys are enjoying their right to health information, quality health care and good health conditions and participating actively in promoting health. In order to ensure children's right to quality health care and good health conditions ERIKS has throughout 2019 continued to focus on preventative measures including access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health education, nutrition, maternal care, pre-postnatal care, psycho-social support for children, support to children with mental and or physical disabilities and SRHR educa-

tion among others. Below examples are to be seen as illustrative examples of results reported during 2019 but for more details please see each individual country programme report.

An important aspect of ensuring children's health is to provide information and training to children on e.g. hygiene, nutrition, SRHR and substance abuse through various forums such as child clubs or parliaments. In Bangladesh, during 2019 a total of 153 weekly sessions on these topics were provided to approximately 7 500 adolescents in Cox Bazar through the partner organisation CODEC. In Cambodia, providing handwashing facilities and awareness in relation to 10 primary schools in 2 provinces has reached approximately 6 300 children. A girl studying in Primary 5 reports: "I am happy to have hand washing facility. I can clean hand before and after eating as my teacher said we had to live clean, eat clean and drink clean". In Benin, a total of 145 child clubs, including approximately 1 200 adolescents were reached through projects implemented by the partner organisations BUP-DOS and DEDRAS with information on SRHR. In Moldova info-points with information about Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI), HIV/Aids, unwanted pregnancies, substance abuse, nutrition disorders etc. has been produced and provided to 33 schools reaching more than 22 000 children. An interesting aspect of this is also children being role models and engaged as peer educators. One 14 year old girl in Cambodia taking part in a child council report; "I am responsible for supporting other students to develop their good habits, including making their body clean, making the school clean, coming to school in time and avoiding absence from school and doing awareness of child abuse and protection". In Uganda, through Hope Studio, children have been trained in producing songs and use music to raise awareness on HIV/Aids and results from focus groups reveal an increase in children's understanding.

Apart from awareness raising activities, we have partners direct actions to improve children's health. In Kenya the partner organisation Nalala reduced the prevalence of communicable diseases among children through the provision of essential health services. As result a 19 % reduction in the number of upper respiratory tract infections were reported between 2018 and 2019. In Bangladesh, through the partner organisation Friendship, communities were provided with 20 tube-wells during the last flooding in 2019 which gave people access to clean water despite severe flooding and river erosion during the year. In addition, in Belarus the partner organisation WWB has continued its work concerning deinstitutionalisation of children with disabilities living in house-boarding institutions. Following a request from the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection WWB developed a roadmap for deinstitutionalisation during 2019. One institution was selected with the aim of developing family-type care for children and reorganising the institution into a community centre. Through this, the situation of 45 children was analysed. For 15 of the children, a reintegration with their biological family would be possible. For 10 children, foster care families would be prepared and 20 of the children would reach adulthood during the next two years and therefore they would be supported in professional training and independent life. All documents have been finalised and submitted to the authorities but still awaiting an approval from the Ministry.

Duty-bearers take appropriate actions to promote and take measures to meet their obligations in providing quality health care and good health conditions.

A prerequisite to reach sustainable results is to address legal duty-bearers on all levels to ensure that adequate WASH facilities are available, as well as adequate health care. During 2019 various capacity building activities have therefore been carried out in order to contribute to this outcome. In Kenya the partner organisation AICHM has worked through the adakar model (which is a traditional social structure in Turkana which also functions as a channel of communication for a group of families under one leader) and incorporating Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA) through training and advocacy. AICHM report successes in increasing the utilisation of maternal, neonatal and child health. For example, there was a reduction in neonatal deaths by 40 % in the reporting period in the supported health facilities compared to 2018. Delivery referrals from community to the health facilities by Community Health Volunteers (CHV) and TBAs also increased by 5 % and home deliveries reduced by 2 %. Training of health care workers in emergency obstetric care has also been performed.



Mother and child enrolled in maternal and child health care programme run by the partner organisation AICHM

In addition, in Myanmar, the Child Law was updated during 2019 by the Ministry of Health where children's right to health was accentuated. This related to support received from bilateral donors and national organisations, including ERIKS partner organisations. In Cambodia, the Ministry of Health issued a Guiding Circular announcing that all public hospitals must provide services free of charge for medical treatment of all survivors of human trafficking and sexual abuse. This after ERIKS partner organisation Chab Dai advocated to the Ministry on this matter. In Benin, in two municipalities 14,7 % and 5,5 % respectively has been set aside in the budget in relation to building health infrastructures. In one of the municipalities, a department for WASH has been created that will particularly focus on these aspects. In Romania, with the support from the City Hall in providing infrastructure and financial support for utilities in connection to a Sanitary Centre built in a Roma Community started to operate as of mid-2019. This significantly contributed to increased hygiene in the Roma Community.

Also, in relation to health, the parents play a key role in ensuring the wellbeing of their children. Awareness raising, support to register for a family doctor, women attending hospitals for regular checks during pregnancies as well as discussions around hygiene and nutrition are recurring activities implemented throughout ERIKS' programme countries. Reports also show parents improving the way they take care of their children – providing nutritious food and basic health care. A 16-year-old girl from Myanmar reports; "2-3 years ago, parents did not care about their children's personal hygiene and cleanliness. Sometimes children attended school without food because parents did not have time to cook as they were busy with their farm. Because of awareness sessions parents started responding differently to children. They started with personal hygiene and cleanliness for their children. They also ensure of nutrition food and safeguard their children even when they are busy at the farms". In Burkina Faso, more children were given a balanced diet as a result of income generating activities during 2019, 60 % in comparison to 50 % in 2018. Furthermore, taboos still hinder many parents from discussing SRHR related issues with their children. To combat this, the partner organisation ODE focuses on encouraging close educational talks with parents in their households. Only in 2019 ODE reached approximately 9 900 women and men in this regard. An increase has been reported in the number of parents now providing this information to their children, from 41 % to 44 % in 2019. In Benin, reports are also given of empowered local communities in combatting malnutrition where 39 early-childhood nutrition support groups raised awareness on the importance of breastfeeding and complementary feeding for pregnant women and mothers of children under five. The activities have been conducted by the community-based groups but with support from the partner organisation DEDRAS.

Protection

Girls and boys are reporting abuse, negligence and exploitation, contributing to reintegration and participating actively in promoting child protection. In order to ensure children's right to protection, rehabilitation and reintegration, ERIKS has throughout 2019 continued to focus on children in conflict with the law, children subjected to trafficking or abuse or children living on the streets as well as encountering negative cultural and religious norms that are harmful for an individual. Below examples are to be seen as illustrative examples of results reported during 2019 but for more details please see each individual country programme report.

Through child clubs, councils and parliaments children have been taught their right to protection from abuse, negligence and exploitation. In South Sudan approximately 2 000 children and youth were empowered with knowledge on their rights and supported to become active participants in promoting children's rights, especially through the 8 intervention schools with connected life skills training groups. In Bangladesh, the partner organisation CODEC reached out to a total of 1 300 children and adolescents in Cox Bazar with child protection-related information. The partner organisation Friendship arranged weekly school classes with children in grade 3 and 4 where children were informed of their rights and trained on how to say no. "Char Theatres" have also proven successful in the dissemination of information to communities. In Burkina Faso, 37 % of the child clubs, that were put in place in schools by the partner organisation ODE, reported cases of child abuse against 27 % in 2018. Even though an increased number of reported cases might not be a positive result, it is important to note that as children become aware of their rights and also know how and where to report this might also lead to an increase in the number of reported cases even though the actual cases might not have increased.

In addition, reintegration and rehabilitation is also an important part of protection. In Cambodia, during 2019, 12 trafficking victims were rescued and repatriated back to Cambodia safely and integrated back in their communities. 85 children in 13 orphanage centres were reintegrated into their biological families, 15 vulnerable children were placed in foster care. 99 children, who left these centres in 2019 have united in a care leaver networks where they can stay updated, connected and support each other in their reintegration process. In Uganda, 155 children who previously lived on the streets were rehabilitated and reintegrated in their communities. In Mali, 35 children were rescued from child labour or economic exploitation through child protection committees established.

Duty-bearers take appropriate actions to promote and take measures to meet their obligations in protecting children from abuse, negligence and exploitation and to rehabilitate and reintegrate victims. A prerequisite to reach sustainable results is to address legal duty-bearers on all levels to ensure adequate child protection structures and mechanisms. During 2019 various capacity building activities have therefore been carried in order to contribute to this outcome. In Burkina Faso, capacity building of prison officers has taken place to safeguard children. The partner organisation LYDIE report that more children are now treated in accordance with principles of child rights as a result of this capacity building. In Cambodia, changes in behaviour and attitude of Ministry of officers and Consulates of Cambodian Embassies have been seen in relation towards case intervention and repatriation. In the cases detected during 2019 they acted immediately and provided adequate emergency assistance to support the victims. The consulates of Cambodia Embassies in Hanoi, Shanghai and Malaysia have also cooperated better. In Belarus, 200 professionals have been enrolled in online courses concerning children in conflict with the law when it comes to case management and individual rehabilitation plans. In Myanmar, 42 teachers have been trained in Kachin independent areas according to the model of "Training of Trainers" where they in turn will train 1 000 teachers. School administration authorities have increased their cooperation and they have started to plan for the establishment of Child Protection Teams in each school.

Establishing formal and informal protection structures at community level has also proven important in the safeguarding of children where parents as well as community and religious leaders are important duty-bearers to address. In several of the country programmes, parents are trained in parental skills and positive discipline programme in order to hinder the use of corporal punishment. Aspects of livelihood also becomes important aspects where partners also work to ensure employability of parents to secure a better and safer environment for children. In Bangladesh, the partner organisation Friendship arrange monthly meetings with parents, teachers and students. Aspects raised in these forums include corporal punishment and child marriages. Through these, parents have started to change their minds regarding physical punishment. Similarly, one village leader in Myanmar report: "parents listen to their children and stopped beating their children. Currently, in my village we are working together with the parents and CBOs (Community Based Organisations) to ensure our children are safe and protected".

Furthermore, in Mali, the partner organisation AMPDR has seen important results in their project areas in relation to harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and cutting (FGMC) and child marriages. A total of 23 villages have signed conventions to stop FGMC – two of them signed in 2019. Signatories of the conventions include the mayor of the municipality, community leaders, women groups, youth groups and children clubs. 14 villages have also signed conventions against child marriages in 2019. A similar approach has also been used in Benin where the partner organisation DEDRAS, in collaboration with the Department of Social Affairs and the municipality officers, have conducted community dialogues on child marriages in 60 villages. These sessions brought together religious and traditional leaders, community-based child protection committees, women associations and adolescents' groups. Through this, the community and religious leaders made a commitment to check the age and mutual consents of all marriage candidates before authorising the official wedding ceremony. As a result, in one village 3 out of 10 marriages were rejected by the local imam after verification of the candidates' birth certificates. 60 community-based child protection committees have also been set up in 60 villages in 2019. In addition, in Kenya the partner organisation EACHRights mobilised Civil Society organisations under the umbrella of the End Child Marriage Network in making submissions and recommendations on ending child marriage and FGM to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. At county level the organisation worked with the county government (Kajiado) and other stakeholders leading to the completion and launch of Kajiado County Eradication of FGM Policy.



Community dialogues performed by the partner organisation DEDRAS

Ensuring proper coordination is also an important aspect in order to provide adequate protection. In Bangladesh, 250 weekly sessions on trafficking and abuse were held in 2019 with adolescents and their parents as well as majis (community leaders). It is reported that the sessions have influenced local communities in the sense that local government members and teachers are discussing the issues of trafficking in their respective meetings and networks. A legal Information booth has also been set up in every char where people can go with their enquiries for consultation. These are managed by trained community staff i.e. community members trained by Friendship and a way to better connect char community members to legal support and improve access to information. In Myanmar, parents, teachers and child protection committees have continued to strengthen their child protection

mechanism through regular meetings. Furthermore, 50 Child Protection Committees have been established in Northern Kachin, where they have implemented Code of Conduct and Community Feedback Mechanism using suggestion boxes in their respective communities.

Humanitarian Assistance

In 2019, ERIKS had a significantly lower budget for Humanitarian assistance than in previous years. This was due to the financial situation and the general need to reduce programme expenses. In total, ERIKS spent approximately 1,5 million SEK of its own funds and 1,0 million SEK of SMC funds on different humanitarian projects in 2019. Although the volume of funds has been limited, a number of very valuable interventions have been carried out.

The largest intervention was implemented by Friendship Bangladesh as a response to floods affecting the delta areas around the Jamuna River in July. Over 28 000 people received food support, 8300 people received medical care, and for 12 000 households, access to water and sanitation facilities was restored.

EFICOR in India responded to the cyclone Fani hitting the coastal state Odisha in May. In this project, aiming to help 530 poor families get on their feet again, EFICOR applied the method of cash for work. This method is supposed to enhance the beneficiaries' own participation in the activities and at the same time give them the freedom to do their own prioritisation of how the money they receive are spent based on their individual needs.

Another humanitarian intervention was implemented in Kachin, Myanmar due to storm damage. Water and sanitation facilities for hundreds of families living in refugee camps were restored. In Marsabit, northern Kenya, 2000 children and 700 pregnant/lactating mothers were provided with nutrition support and advice following a period of drought in the area.

All the above projects were implemented by ERIKS' own partner organisations, this being the main strategy for ERIKS humanitarian work. However, when major disasters affect countries where ERIKS is not active, we at times decide to support other organisations that we know are doing good work. In March 2019, Mozambique was struck by the cyclone Idai leaving hundreds of thousands of people without shelter, food and access to water and sanitation. In this situation, ERIKS decided to launch a fundraising campaign and the funds raised were channelled to Tearfund UK to contribute to their work in Mozambique. The activities implemented covered areas like food distribution, access to safe drinking water, sanitation facilities and agricultural input to help relaunch farming.

4. Strategic developments

Strategic development is something that is taking place over time, therefore the aspects raised in this annual report are, to a large extent, things that have been highlighted also in earlier reports.

Since 2018, the international programme department has been involved in an organisational review with the aim to promote local ownership, become more effective in its internal processes and increase capacity for fundraising in programme countries. After extensive internal and external consultation, a suggested plan for reorganisation of the international programmes was approved by the Board of Directors in December 2019. The plan implies a gradual transfer of operational mandate and responsibility from head office to regional offices, a structural change of the programme department, and new roles for a number of staff in Sweden. Full implementation of the new organisational structure will start from January 2021.

A prerequisite for the organisational change process mentioned above is the fact that we have gradually established and built the capacity of our regional offices from 2011 and on. Staffwise, the South East Asia office was reinforced with a second Programme Monitoring Officer and the Eastern Europe office was able to employ a Financial Monitoring Officer in 2019. Both the West Africa Team and East Africa Team were able to move to more appropriate and functional office premises. For the remaining three countries at present monitored by staff at ERIKS head office; Ethiopia, India and Bangladesh, plans have been made for their incorporation in the responsibilities of the existing regional offices. This transition will take place in 2021.

2019 was the last year of the phase out process from Tanzania, as partnership with the organisation YDCP was discontinued. By that, ERIKS has now reduced the number of programme countries to 15, finalising a process of concentration of its work to fewer countries starting many years ago. The strategic decision was driven by an ambition to see more synergies between projects and by that having a more visible impact. A second motive was the need for closer monitoring and communication with partners, which is only possible if projects are more concentrated and closer to the regional offices established.

An important aspect of strategic development is the choice of new partner organisations. In 2019, ERIKS initiated partnership with two organisations. In Belarus, partnership was established with Levania, an organisation working on the right to education for children with disabilities. Levania is working on inclusive education, where children with disabilities are integrated in ordinary schools. Thus Levania provides a complement to the focus of our first partner in Belarus, WWB, who work mainly with children in institutions. In Moldova, ERIKS initiated partnership with Health for Youth Association (HYA) who works with sexual education and youth-oriented health centres. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) have been identified as a priority area in the country strategy for Moldova.

5. Risk management

In this section an outline will be made of major risks and trends identified in the countries where the Global programme is implemented. More details can be found in the individual Country Programme Reports.

Mismanagement of resources and weak internal control systems

ERIKS consider that mismanagement of resources is a risk that need continuous attention and ERIKS is working proactively by providing training to partner organisations to strengthen systems of internal control, to ensure compliance with ERIKS's standards as well as national legislation. Our staff at the regional offices ensures regular monitoring of projects also with the aim that any mismanagement is identified as soon as possible. During 2019, specific trainings were provided to 9 partners in Mali, Benin and Burkina Faso also including legal requirements and obligations related to tax requirements. In addition, in Myanmar there are specific challenges relating to transfer of funds where there is no bank available in Mai Ja Yang where the partner organisation WPN is based. Long-distance travels are therefore required leading to security concerns, also related to the need to manage cash to a higher extent than what is recommended. Discussions are now ongoing to reduce the amount of cash at the office, but alternatives will lead to additional costs due to increased travels.

Increased security concerns due to conflicts or political instability

Unfortunately, the security situation in all three countries in West Africa; Mali, Burkina Faso and Benin, has deteriorated during 2019. In Benin an incident in the northern part of the country has led to the regional staff avoiding travels in that region. There is also a rising trend of religious extremism, especially in the northern region, that might affect the country programme and the possibility to reach expected results, as two of ERIKS' projects are situated in the affected areas. In Mali, the legislative election scheduled for 2019 was postponed and now planned for March 2020. ERIKS will continue to monitor the unfolding of the election and possible implications. In Burkina Faso the situation in the northern and eastern parts of the country as well as the north-central and western parts severely deteriorated during 2019. This has resulted in large numbers of internally displaced people (IDP) and adjustments have been made to project strategies, in collaboration with stakeholders. ERIKS are now looking at partners with the possibilities to implement projects in volatile areas with focus on education in emergencies to further strengthen its capacity to promote children's right to education, even in times of crisis. ERIKS is also attending thematic groups at national level where discussion on education and protection in emergencies for children and IDPs are being discussed.

Also, in other regions including South Sudan, Uganda and Myanmar the security situation somewhat worsened during 2019. Consequently, in South Sudan interventions had to be moved to more secure areas like Juba and refugee camps in Uganda along the Sudan border. On the other hand, influx of refugees in Uganda, mainly from South Sudan, Burundi and DRC, has also led to an increased risk of further tension in the country. In Myanmar the ongoing conflict has put more restrictions on border crossing, but the partner organisations have been able to handle the arising situations without impacting project activities. To mitigate the implications of increased security concerns, the partner organisations have been encouraged to update security protocols and ensure training of staff in relation to Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) and resilience to improve projects and programmes. Peace building has also mainstreamed in particularly in South Sudan. ERIKS is currently working with two partner organisations in Uganda, LACWADO and MADA, to strengthen their capacity in humanitarian assistance. Thorough risk assessments are also made in relation to field visits of ERIKS' staff.

Political interference and shrinking space

The independence of civil society continues to be challenged in certain countries. In Uganda the situation during 2019 was considered relatively stable but reports were still received of, for example, organisations having assets frozen during certain parts of the year. In Cambodia, a network of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) has been formed to gather ideas and strategies to improve articles in the "Law on Associations and NGOs". In response, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) has organised regular Partnership Forum between CSOs and the MoI twice a year, starting from 2019, but no changes in the law has so far taken place. The MoI has also informed CSOs that

providing notification to local authorities before implementing activities is no longer required, nonetheless, this requirement is still valid at sub-national level. The changing of government officials in late 2018 also led to the need of rebuilding relationships and some project activities were delayed due to increased tensions when exiled opposition leader planned to return. Furthermore, NGOs registration in Myanmar remains a challenge because of restrictions from the government. ERIKS' partner WPN received a temporary registration from the government in December 2019. In Bangladesh one partner reported a spill-over effect at the beginning of 2019 from the elections, late 2018. These incidents were reported minor and related to government bodies putting hindrance on arranging different meetings. In general, partner organisations continue to work on their relations with government authorities to ensure as effective implementation as possible.

Natural disasters

Floods, waterlogging and river erosions caused project disruption and damage to school buildings and materials in Bangladesh during 2019. Although these disasters are common in the implementation areas, the floods during 2019 were particularly severe. Despite difficult circumstances, Friendship report that they have achieved their goals for 2019 by making relevant adjustments. In addition, river erosion also led to one of the chars, where Friendship has a long history, was submerged resulting in a massive loss for the organisation given that the Adult Groups' and Civil Society Groups' members were dispersed and six years of impact on a community were washed away. This also affected the organisations expansion plans. Friendship report lessons learned that strategies must be better planned so that even if a char cease to exist geographically the learnings and positive impact from interventions are preserved in some manner and the beneficiaries can be relocated and reached by new interventions. Flood and typhoons also affected Myanmar and Cambodia at different times in 2019. Since ERIKS' partner organisation WPN was able to perform a rapid assessment ERIKS was able to provide support for a humanitarian response.

In East Africa, both in Kenya and Uganda, seasonal droughts and unreliable spring and summer rains affected the countries. Through the partner organisation FH Kenya emergency health care services in 11 remote areas in Marsabit county were provided for a period of 4 months. In general, ERIKS and its partners is exploring the possibility of promoting modern farming practices to address challenges of poverty and climate change to further strengthen projects and programmes.

Emerging pandemic threats

At the end of 2019, the threats of the COVID-19 virus emerged and is now affecting every continent. A spread of a virus in an environment and setting where the health system is weak and living conditions are poor could have severe consequences. ERIKS, together with partner organisations, is now looking at the current situation and possible adjustments to be made in already ongoing collaborations as some activities is now more or less at a standstill throughout all regions as a consequence of schools closing and restrictions on large gatherings affect the possibility to continue with various project activities. These type of risk needs to be included to a greater extent in further project and programme planning and lesson learned are now gathered to make sure that ERIKS and partner organisations are better prepared for similar occurrences in the future.

6. Learning

During 2019 many different learnings have been identified and documented from project level to country programme level. Learning is key in order to ensure as relevant and efficient programmes as possible. We need to constantly learn from the context where we and our partners operate to make sure that the strategies and activities developed are relevant and that the needed actors are involved to make sure that the implementation is as efficient as possible. The contexts where our partners are implementing projects are constantly changing, hence the need to regularly gather learnings and document them. Below sections attempts to outline the main learnings from the last year, 2019, and will mainly focus on learnings that have been identified in more than one country programme. For more details please see each individual country programme report.

The need to work with **resilience** and ensuring that communities and individuals grow more resilient, to both sudden as well as slow-onset disasters, is an important lesson learned during 2019. Although aspects of climate change can be seen throughout all countries in the world, its effects are uneven making already vulnerable groups even more vulnerable. Children is a particularly vulnerable group where climate change is a further hindrance in the realisation of children's rights. Therefore, as a child rights organisation this needs to be addressed throughout our country programmes. We need to ensure that these increased risks are taken into consideration when planning and implementing a project in order to ensure long-term sustainable development outcomes. To be resilient, and to live in a resilient community, is a prerequisite for children to realise their dreams. A boy or a girl who enjoys his or her rights fully is a more resilient child. Similarly, by ensuring that communities grow more resilient the likelihood of children being able to continue their education, maintain good health and feel

safe increases. The essence of resilience is not new to ERIKS but explicitly integrating a resilience thinking into our work, with the purpose of enhancing sustainable development of local communities, is a refined perspective. These aspects also need to be taken into consideration in the planning of capacity development of partner organisation. In countries such as Kenya and Bangladesh these aspects have been particularly noted. For example, in Kenya the need for risk informed development has been highlighted as one of the main lessons learned during 2019. By the end of the year, ERIKS also developed its own position paper on resilience and this will be an important guiding document in the continued process of strengthening these aspects in our country programmes.

Connected to aspects of resilience is also the need for a **comprehensive and a holistic approach** when working with children's rights. The rights to education, health and protection are interconnected and therefore needs to be addressed in a similar manner. This becomes even more apparent when working with target groups with a long history of vulnerabilities. This can be seen highlighted in the Romanian country report, where Roma communities have multiple vulnerabilities and hence it is not possible to work with one right in isolation. In South Sudan it is noted that there is a correlation between weak child protection structures and limited educational outcomes. This shows that increased enrolment of children is not effective without strengthening child protection structures, which are helpful for sustaining retention of e.g. girls in school. Similar learnings are also reported in Uganda and Moldova. A holistic approach and continuity have shown its efficiency but long-term investments are needed. Similarly, is also the need to work with duty bearers on all levels including local, district and national level. To achieve sustainable results, community dialogue, sensitisation and mobilisation is key as well as ensuring that legal duty-bearers provide their support. Furthermore, the importance of ensuring interaction and cooperation between the different actors is also highlighted for example both in Belarus and Burkina Faso. In Burkina Faso, financing micro-projects developed by communities have proven successful in this regard. Through this, municipalities have established partnership agreements with community structures and state technical services in the sectors of education, health and protection. Not only did this give the communities the opportunity to find solutions themselves but it also facilitated the interaction of people at grassroot levels with duty bearers.

In previous reports the importance of including **religious and traditional leaders** has been highlighted as particularly important when working towards cultural bias and misinformation, in particularly in relation to harmful practices such as FGMC and child marriages. In 2019 this is also noted for example in Mali and in relation to traditional birth attendants and beliefs around antenatal consultations, medication and caesarean assistance. Also, the need to work with and through community committees to reach specific community leaders is noted for example in the Benin. However, an important lesson learned was the need to work with extensive capacity building of such structures where they were found too weak and where threats and intimidation had limited the efficiency of these committees. Adding on is also the need to work with and through **local role models** in communities to be able to show the possibilities for change. Showing good examples has been found to be a triggering factor for other community members to become more active in their development. In both Romania and South Sudan this could be noted.

In relation to all aspects included above is also the need to work with **gender mainstreaming** in all our programmes. Aspects of gender is highlighted in relation to strengthening the role and autonomy of women. For example, in Burkina Faso where women were provided with small ruminants (animals) to strengthen their economic autonomy. This has proven important in relation to investing in children where women have been able to contribute to the care, feeding and education of their children. The importance of female staff members in order to address these aspects during project implementation is also noted in several country reports. In contrast, in South Sudan it is noted that many organisations and interventions have particularly targeted girls whereas this has led to boys being ignored. As a result, our partner, SF, has dedicated 30 % of its intervention on boys to address this imbalance and meet the need of all who are vulnerable. For ERIKS there is a need to further improve these aspects not only in planning and implementation but also in the monitoring of projects and programmes.

A final learning from 2019 is also aspects of **visibility**. For example, in Belarus it has been found that as partners are more active in various networks and national monitoring processes their reputation has also grown and in turn this has led to increased collaboration and improved relations with authorities. In Burkina Faso participation in thematic networks at national level has also proven very important in relation to humanitarian crises. ERIKS have been more involved in national consultation frameworks on child protection and education and this in turn has enabled the regional office to support partners to adapt project strategies to e.g. volatile security contexts. Aspects of visibility is also an important part of the reorganisation, with its full implementation as of January 2021, and therefore this is of particular interest in order to further outline ERIKS role in various networks and forums in relation to partners.

7. Children's voices

Below are some examples and stories of how children have benefitted in various way through the different projects being implemented during 2019. The examples are additional to the results presented in section 3 and the stories included are focusing on children expressing their own views on project activities.

C. Ramziath is a peer educator in a project implemented by the partner organisation DEDRAS in Benin: "I'm 15 years old. I'm in the 4th grade in High School. I am a peer educator at Sonsoro High School in Kandi. I am very happy with the way DEDRAS is working with us. After we have been set up in the High School, we received training on leadership, life skills and on peer education. These trainings increased our knowledge how to be role models for success in our studies, the consequences of sexual behaviours and the importance of sensitizing our peers to be role models. We sensitize our peers on Sexually Transmitted Infections, the consequences of early marriages and unwanted pregnancies in school. Since the intervention of DEDRAS we have not yet registered any cases of unwanted pregnancies in Sonsoro High School as compared to previous years".

A group of 4 children (3 boys and 1 girl) aged 14-15 years old part of a Youth Action Group (YAG) in Myanmar says; "We have never heard about child rights/protection before. For parents/adults they didn't understand about children's issues and they never find out what are our concerns. Some of their practices even cause risks and harmful to us as children". After the inception of the child protection project, there were significant change for parents/adults' care toward children. Through the awareness sessions on risk identification and community risk mapping – parents/adults and village leaders understood and identified the risks for children. The YAG members always gather together to have meeting on a monthly basis. This is a good opportunity for us to raise up of our concerns/issues to the YAG and they can also bring this issue to seek of more support from the CPC (Child Protection Committees).

Nastya, 14 years old and has a systemic disease of the musculoskeletal system. She is part of a deinstitutionalisation project in Belarus. She has been living in a house-boarding institution for 9 years: "I really enjoyed participating in the project. It changes my life. I have got a hope to return to my family. At least I began to see my mum and I like to spend time with her."

Sanihan K is a member of a child protection committee and a spokesperson for girls in a project implemented by the partner organisation ODES in Mali; "After the committee was set up, ODES invited us to Tominian for training. There were many children like me who took part in this training. This training allowed me to understand many things about children's rights and the mistreatment that children have often been subjected to. When we returned from the training we reported back to the village chief and his counsellors. Now we do awareness raising in the village so parents understand how to respect children's rights and how to protect them. We are also doing sensitization at school to make our fellow students understand what they need to do to participate in their own protection".

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