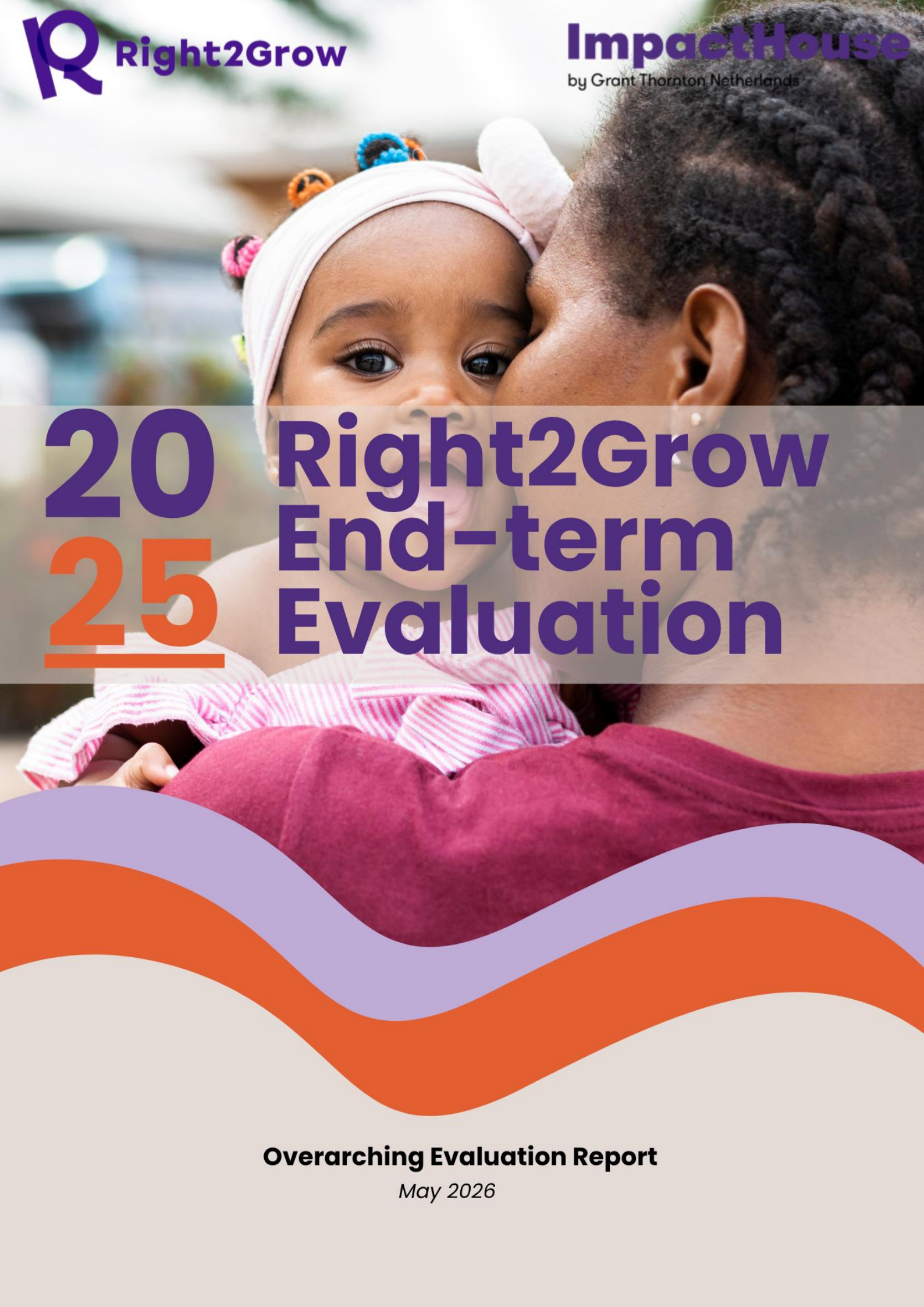
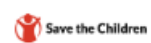




20 **25** **Right2Grow** **End-term** **Evaluation**

Overarching Evaluation Report
May 2026



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Reading guide

This evaluation report presents the findings of the end-term evaluation (ETE) of the Right2Grow programme. It consists of seven chapters and seven annexes. It begins with an executive summary that highlights the key findings and conclusions. The introduction provides background on the Right2Grow partnership and outlines the purpose and objectives of the evaluation. The methodology chapter details the evaluation process, data collection, and analysis methods, and discusses limitations and mitigation strategies. The core findings are presented in the chapters on relevance, effectiveness and impact – structured along four pathways of the Theory of Change - followed by an analysis of sustainability and the coherence of the partnership. The final chapter presents overarching conclusions and actionable recommendations.

This report integrates and synthesises the results of six-country level evaluations, each of which is also available as a standalone report. This synthesis allows for a comprehensive understanding of the programme's global impact while respecting the contextual nuances of each country.

Seven annexes are included in the report. Annex 1 provides an overview of all indicator data that can be aggregated on the global level. Annex 2 provides the links to all country survey reports. Annex 3 provides additional details on coherence and the partnership survey. Annex 4 presents the short country-level reports. Annex 5 contains the full evaluation methodology. Annex 6 includes the Right2Grow programme Theory of Change, and Annex 7 contains the evaluation matrix.

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List of acronyms

ACF	Action Contre la Faim (Action Against Hunger)
B4V	Bridge4Voices
BESEYA	Beyond Scaling Up Nutrition Youth Alliance (Platform)
BMET	Budget Monitoring and Expenditure Tracking
BNNC	Bangladesh National Nutrition Council
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CCRDA	Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Associations (Ethiopia)
CEGAA	Centre for Economic Governance and Accountability in Africa
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CU5	Children Under 5 years old
CVA	Citizen Voice and Action
DDPs	District Development Plans
DNAPs	District Nutrition Action Plans
DNCC	District Nutrition Coordination Committees
ECSC-SUN	Ethiopian Civil Society Coalition for Scaling Up Nutrition
EGM	Evidence Gap Map
ETE	End-term Evaluation
FGD	Focus group discussion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCC	Global Consortium Corporation
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
JDP	Joint Development Plan
KII	Key Informant Interviews
L&A	Lobby & Advocacy
LE	Local Entrepreneur
L&L	Linking & Learning
LGI	Local Government Institutions
MCD	Mutual Capacity Development
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning
MFA	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene and Management
MtMSG	Mother-to-Mother Support Groups
MTR	Mid-term Review
N4G	Nutrition for Growth
NFP	Netherlands Food Partnership
NPAN-3	National Plan of Action for Nutrition III
NWP	Netherlands Water Partnership
ODF	Open Defecation Free
PDLCS	Nutrition Needs into Local Development Plans
PNEA	National Water and Sanitation Policy
PNN	National Nutrition Policy
RBM	Results-Based Management
SATO pan	Type of toilets with plastic slabs
SBCC	Social and Behaviour Change Communication
SCS	Strengthening Civil Society
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition (Movement)
SWA	Sanitation and Water for All
ToC	Theory of Change
UP	Union Parishad
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

1. Executive summary

Right2Grow programme and partnership

The *Right2Grow* (R2G) programme, implemented from 2021 to 2025 across Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali, South Sudan, and Uganda, provides evidence suggesting that sustainable progress in nutrition and WASH governance is closely associated with community empowerment, inclusive governance, and multi-sectoral collaboration. Despite vastly different political, economic, and environmental contexts, the programme adapted in context-specific ways to local realities while aligning its activities around a common vision: ensuring that every child can grow up healthy in a clean, safe, and nourishing environment. Right2Grow was supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the Power of Voices framework.

The partnership - led by The Hunger Project (THP) with Action Against Hunger (ACF), the Centre for Economic Governance and Accountability in Africa (CEGAA), Max Foundation, Save the Children and World Vision - worked with forty-seven national and local CSOs and more than a thousand community based and grassroots organisations across the six programme countries: *Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali, South Sudan and Uganda*.

The programme aimed to ensure that children under five are well-nourished and that no one is left without access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. Its strategy focused on strengthening community voice and accountability, civil society capacity, and multisectoral governance from local to national and global levels.

The programme's Theory of Change (ToC) articulated four pathways to change: 1) empowered communities adopting and demanding nutrition and WASH; 2) representative and capacitated CSOs navigating civic space to influence governance; 3) national and decentralised authorities adopting integrated, evidence-based policies and budgets; and 4) donors and international actors coordinating across the humanitarian–development nexus. Over the implementation period, country contexts in several settings became markedly more fragile due to coups, conflict, and political volatility. These challenges increased the salience of locally led, adaptive approaches and shaped the range of results observed, influencing both opportunities and constraints for change.

Evaluation purpose, scope and questions

The evaluation assessed the **relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, and coherence** of the Right2Grow programme across six countries, examining the fit and quality of its Theories of Change, responsiveness to community needs, and contribution to policy and systems change. It also reviewed partnership added value, adaptive management, localisation and 'shift the power' outcomes at country and global levels.

The evaluation's purpose was threefold: 1) to enable learning on achievements and challenges across country and global levels; 2) to generate strategic and programmatic recommendations for Right2Grow partners and the Ministry; and 3) to meet accountability requirements by documenting results at outcome and contribution levels.

Its scope encompasses all six programme countries, including Dutch and global advocacy. It covers the full period from 2021–2025, with primary data collection concentrated in July–September 2025. This will be completed by the integration of available programme monitoring data up to 2024, supplemented by country level outcome harvesting and survey evidence. Although some country activities continued into late 2025, the evaluation is based on the evidence available at the time of analysis. Any monitoring data collected later in 2025 is added as an annex.

This end-term evaluation has been conducted using a mixed-method approach utilising a combination of a partnership survey, focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs), in addition to reflection and validation sessions at the country coalition level, and is based on a realist-informed and contribution analysis design. It did not seek to establish causal attribution but instead assessed the plausibility of the programme's contribution to observed changes, acknowledging the influence of contextual and external factors.

To deepen analysis within the breadth of a multi country programme, the team used "hotspots" within the Theory of Change (causal links of high interest or limited prior evidence) to conduct contribution analysis in selected contexts. Ethical standards guided all methods, including informed consent, gender-sensitive facilitation, and safeguarding. The findings should be interpreted with awareness of certain methodological and contextual limitations, which are described in the full report.

Key Findings

Relevance of the programme to local, national and global priorities

Right2Grow's design and implementation were well aligned with local needs and national agendas on nutrition, WASH, and inclusive governance, with theories of change adapted to shifting contexts. In fragile settings like South Sudan and Burkina Faso, the programme shifted from private-sector assumptions toward community-based mechanisms and traditional leadership engagement. In Ethiopia and Uganda, it effectively bridged community priorities with institutional reforms through citizen evidence and joint planning. Overall, the programme reached 822,684 people directly and 9,575,610 people indirectly, demonstrating its broad relevance and scale across six countries. Alignment with national strategies supported coordinated action, though the evaluation notes that risk analysis and assumptions on sustainability and inclusion must be strengthened to ensure lasting impact amid political, fiscal, and climate pressures.

Effectiveness of strategies in achieving intended outcomes

Right2Grow was associated with the translation of awareness into collective action and institutional change across its four pathways.

- **Pathway 1:** Community mobilisation through peer learning and social accountability tools was associated with improved hygiene, sanitation, child feeding practices, maintenance of local WASH infrastructure, and in some cases, reported reductions in stunting and underweight during the programme period, to which the Right2Grow programme plausibly contributed alongside other factors). Communities formulated 1,311 actions to demand improved WASH and nutrition services, and 675 barriers were successfully addressed through joint efforts of communities, governments and private sector actors. In addition, private-sector actors were engaged to improve access to WASH and nutrition products and services.
- **Pathway 2:** CSO capacity development and coalition-building contributed to structured, evidence-based advocacy on plans and budgets, increased transparency, and more representative participation, though initial visibility sometimes created tensions. In total, 47 CSOs enhanced their advocacy capacity and engaged in over 600 initiatives (203 national, 403 sub-national).
- **Pathway 3:** The programme supported steps to institutionalise multisectoral governance by embedding citizen-generated data and joint planning into policies and budgets, with notable advances in Ethiopia, Mali, Bangladesh, Uganda, and South Sudan despite challenges of turnover and limited fiscal space. This contributed to 19 policies being better implemented and 5 policies adopted or improved.
- **Pathway 4:** Results under this programme were more mixed. Programme advocacy was linked to increased attention to the WASH-nutrition nexus in global and Dutch policy spaces. Early advocacy in the programme lacked focus, and political shifts in 2023 constrained momentum, though partners continued promoting civic space and multisectoral nutrition, with adaptive management and a stronger national focus appearing to have enhanced coherence, impact and ownership of advocacy outcomes.

Efforts to address cross-cutting themes (gender, youth, and climate) were visible throughout the programme. Women's and youth participation increased, and climate considerations were introduced in several interventions. However, these themes were not always fully embedded in programme logic or implementation and stayed somewhat superficial. Structural barriers, such as women's unpaid care burden and limited youth leadership opportunities, remained largely unaddressed. As a result, the programme's contribution to transformative change in these areas was modest.

Sustainability of achieved changes

Right2Grow contributed to progress across its four pathways, but each also revealed important challenges that affected pace, depth, and consistency of change. Under **Pathway 1**, community mobilisation was effective, yet sustaining behaviour change proved difficult in contexts with recurrent shocks, weak infrastructure maintenance systems, and limited private-sector reach. In fragile settings such as South Sudan, floods and displacement repeatedly disrupted gains, while in Burkina Faso insecurity constrained community gatherings and follow-up support. Interventions under **Pathway 2** contributed to CSO capacity development and coalition-building, but increased visibility sometimes generated resistance from authorities unaccustomed to public scrutiny, and restrictive civic environments, particularly in Mali, Burkina Faso, and South Sudan, limited advocacy reach and safety. CSOs also faced high turnover, uneven technical capacity, and dependency on external funding. **Pathway 3** supported steps to institutionalise multisectoral governance, yet institutionalisation was hindered by limited fiscal space, inconsistent decentralisation, staff rotations, and competing coordination platforms that diluted focus. In

some countries, citizen-generated data was acknowledged but not fully integrated into formal planning or budget allocations. **Pathway 4** faced the greatest constraints: early advocacy lacked strategic direction and clear measurement, and Dutch political shifts and budget reductions in 2023 weakened momentum for global and regional influence. Localisation ambitions stalled, and engagement across donor platforms was uneven. Despite these challenges, partners-maintained commitment to civic space, evidence use, and multisectoral nutrition, though systemic barriers continued to limit scale and long-term impact.

Coherence of the partnership internally and externally

Internally, the partnership matured from a collection of actors into a more coherent learning and advocacy ecosystem. Linking & Learning structures (e.g. interpretation sessions, cross-country exchanges, learning briefs, national focal points and an annual learning week) helped turn tacit knowledge into collective practice.

Contribution analyses conducted during the evaluation revealed a growing shared understanding of mechanisms and context contingencies around ToC hotspots. The partnership survey and validation sessions point to improved collaboration, clearer roles and stronger joint ownership over time, although youth and Tier3 (local, non-contracted) CSOs were underrepresented in some feedback loops. Externally, coherence improved where Right2Grow aligned with existing coordination bodies and government planning cycles and where advocacy coalitions bridged CSOs, media and parliamentary actors. In restrictive contexts, nonconfrontational evidence framing, mentoring and alliance building preserved civic space and nurtured constructive relations with officials. Global and Dutch advocacy coherence increased after the midterm review as the consortium refocused on enabling country-led voice and on concrete, trackable commitments.

Summary of key findings and conclusions

The programme was relevant to local, national and global priorities, addressing structural drivers of undernutrition and WASH gaps through approaches that were adapted to shifting political and climatic realities. Right2Grow was able to support converting increased community awareness into practice and demand, strengthening CSO capacity development and legitimacy for evidence-based advocacy, and catalysing institutional use of data for multisectoral planning and budgeting. In addition to national advocacy, the programme elevated the WASH–nutrition nexus on global policy agendas through international lobbying, strengthening visibility and influence beyond country level. Sustainability prospects are strongest where community ownership is coupled with institutionalised participation and budgetary practice; in fragile settings, sustainability will require continued accompaniment, simplification of coordination demands and resourcing for routine functions. Internal partnership coherence improved through structured learning and more focused advocacy strategies; external coherence was strongest where Right2Grow worked through established governance platforms and collaborative coalitions, and weaker where civic space was volatile or where coordination ambitions outpaced realistic pathways.

Implications of the findings

The findings suggest that future programmes will benefit most from mechanisms that consistently drove outcomes across contexts: informal and peer-to-peer learning that translates knowledge into practice; structured citizen–state interfaces that convert practice into shared accountability; evidence generation that legitimises civil society and depoliticises advocacy; and the institutionalisation of participatory planning and budget oversight that anchors accountability in routine government processes. They also indicate the need to calibrate ambition to context: in highly fragile settings, trusted intermediaries, simplified tools and protective coalitions tend to be most effective, while in semi-open systems, embedding data, multisectoral planning and fiscal norms within institutions is key. Sustainability appears to hinge on resolving systemic bottlenecks, such as parallel coordination demands, staff turnover and thin fiscal space, and on equitable burden sharing, particularly for women whose leadership can be increased without reproducing unpaid workload. Finally, global and donor-facing advocacy seems most impactful when it amplifies verified country evidence, channels clear, timebound asks, and tracks commitment to implementation pathways rather than focusing primarily on convening.

Recommendations

To sustain and scale the achievements of Right2Grow, future initiatives must move beyond project delivery and invest in long-term systemic change. The recommendations below directly follow from the evaluation's conclusions on relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and coherence, and are intended for implementation in contexts where external funding is ending. This requires stronger localisation, institutionalised accountability, and climate-resilient governance across all levels.

Key priorities include stronger localisation, institutionalised accountability, and climate-resilient governance.

Top 3 system-level recommendations

Localisation should be measurable and time-bound, with clear targets on localisation to national and community-based organisations, particularly regarding shifting leadership, decision-making, and resources. This should be supported by capacity development and transparent reporting. Adaptive management and structured Linking & Learning must become standard, alongside mainstreaming proven advocacy and accountability tools. Civil society needs continued support for resource mobilisation, coalition-building, and leadership; especially for women and youth.

Government ownership is critical for long-term sustainability. Bangladesh can serve as an evidence base to inform national guidelines and inter-ministerial coordination.

Donors should link policy influence to service improvements, require commitments to localisation and civic space, and adopt longer funding horizons to enable scaling and handover of proven models. Flexible financing and public–private partnerships are critical for resilience and sustainability. Private sector engagement must expand through incentives for affordable products, adopting shared indicators and data systems, and supportive policies for local entrepreneurs. Cross-cutting priorities include multi-actor coordination platforms, shared indicators, gender-transformative approaches, and investments in knowledge partnerships and South–South learning.

The following table outlines the links between key findings, the conclusions drawn, and the recommendations proposed:

Table 1: Links between key findings, conclusions and recommendations

Pathway	Key Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
1	Community mobilisation and peer learning contributed to improved household practices and collective action.	Locally driven behaviour change mechanisms contributed to sustained outcomes.	Strengthen peer learning structures; allocate predictable resourcing.
2	CSO coalitions gained legitimacy and influenced policy through evidence-based advocacy.	Inclusive civil society engagement is essential for governance improvements.	Invest in CSO capacity, policy literacy, and coalition-building with dedicated budgets.
3	Participatory planning and budget tools increased government responsiveness in several countries.	Institutionalising citizen–state interfaces contributes to durable governance outcomes.	Embed scorecards, audits, and planning tools in national and sub-national government systems.
4	Global/donor advocacy showed evidence of effectiveness when grounded in country evidence but inconsistent early on.	Clear asks and evidence-based engagement support influence and coherence.	Require time-bound commitments, joint reviews, and longer programme cycles for system change.
	Private sector engagement supported WASH and nutrition uptake where markets allowed.	Local enterprises seem to reinforce service continuity and affordability.	Strengthen incentives, co-financing, and enabling policies for local entrepreneurs.

Concluding note

This end-term evaluation found clear evidence that Right2Grow has made meaningful contributions to addressing undernutrition and WASH gaps through locally led, evidence-based approaches. Across six countries, the programme strengthened community voice, civil society capacity, and multi-sectoral governance, while navigating fragile contexts and shifting global priorities. The findings underscore that sustainable impact depends on embedding accountability and learning into systems, fostering inclusive coalitions, and aligning ambition with context. These lessons offer actionable insights not only for Right2Grow partners and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also for future programmes seeking to advance equity, resilience, and systemic change.

2. Introduction

2.1. Background

The Right2Grow programme was implemented between 2021 and 2025 as part of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Power of Voices framework, which aimed to strengthen civil society and promote inclusive governance. Right2Grow responded to persistent global challenges in child undernutrition and inadequate access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). While most selected countries were relatively stable at the proposal development phase, the context changed during implementation. Almost all programme countries became increasingly fragile during the implementation period, facing political instability and insecurity that posed major challenges for delivery. This included coups in *Burkina Faso and Mali*, violent conflict in *Ethiopia*, political demonstrations and shifts in power in Bangladesh, and insecurity in *South Sudan* compounded by a high influx of refugees from neighbouring Sudan. Navigating these dynamics required adaptive strategies, flexible planning, and strong local partnerships to maintain progress despite disruptions.

2.2. Right2Grow partnership

The Right2Grow partnership was a collaboration between Action Against Hunger (ACF), the Centre for Economic Governance and Accountability in Africa (CEGAA), Max Foundation, Save the Children, The Hunger Project (THP) as lead organisation, and World Vision. The strategic partnership has run from 2021 to 2025, with financial support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs under Power of Voices Partnership policy framework. The programme collaborated with over 47 national and local civil society organisations, as well as more than 1,000 community-based and grassroots organisations in *Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali, South Sudan, and Uganda*, to ensure that decision-makers jointly and effectively address undernutrition in a multi-sectoral, gender-sensitive, and inclusive manner. The long-term goal of the partnership was to work towards all children under five years of age being well nourished and no one is left without access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. The programme Theory of Change (Annex 6) shows how this change was intended to be achieved. In short, the programme is pursuing four pathways for change:

1. **Communities** demand and invest in basic social services and adopt good nutrition and WASH practices, jointly addressing barriers with private sector partners
2. Representative and empowered **civil society organisations** effectively navigate the civic space to advocate for leadership and good governance to prevent undernutrition
3. **National government and decentralised entities** adopt and mainstream an integrated, multisectoral approach to undernutrition in policies, action plans and budget allocations
4. **Donors and international development actors** coordinate and collaborate along the humanitarian-development nexus to address the underlying determinants of undernutrition

2.3. Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

The Right2Grow partnership commissioned Impact House and Results in Health to conduct an external end-term Evaluation (ETE) to enable the partnership to learn about the programme's successes, overall achievements, challenges, and lessons learned at both country and global levels.

The purpose of the evaluation was to gather evidence on the results of the programme after five years of implementation and to learn about what worked well and what did not go as planned (knowledge objectives), so these lessons can inform future work (action objectives). Therefore, the ETE addressed three main objectives, as defined by the Right2Grow partnership and programme partners:

- Enable the Right2Grow partnership to learn about its successes, overall programme achievements, challenges and lessons learned at the country and global level;
- Provide strategic and programmatic recommendations for the Right2Grow consortium, and Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for future programming;
- Meet the accountability requirements of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

The end-term evaluation assessed programme implementation at both the country level (involving communities, CSOs, and national/decentralised government) and the global (advocacy) level, including the Netherlands. Additionally, the evaluation examined processes, including collaboration, partnership structure, governance, localisation efforts, and power balance, at both the country and consortium levels, as well as the interlinkages between these levels.

2.4. Evaluation questions

The evaluation answers the evaluation questions as finalised in the inception report (based on the questions formulated in the Terms of Reference), looking at the relevance of the programme's Theory of Change and strategies, the effectiveness and impact of the programme, the perceived sustainability of the programme's achievements and the coherence of the partnership and with other key stakeholders. The chapters in the findings section of the report (chapters 4 to 7) are structured to respond to each evaluation questions and its sub-questions. The full list of questions can be found in Annex 7 – Evaluation Matrix.

2.5. Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation covered the six programme countries: *Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali, South Sudan and Uganda*. The evaluation also included lobby and advocacy efforts conducted in the Netherlands, as well as Right2Grow advocacy initiatives at the global level. The evaluation encompasses the entire programme period from 2021 to 2025, and data collection took place in July-September 2025, primarily because staff and key stakeholders were available during this period, ensuring timely access to information and minimizing scheduling conflicts. We acknowledged potential biases such as recall limitations or incomplete implementation of end-line activities. To mitigate these risks, we triangulated data sources, validated findings with multiple stakeholders, and incorporated programme documentation to ensure a balanced and accurate assessment. All programme monitoring data that was available at that stage was included in the evaluation. As data collection occurred before the official end of the programme, some final activities and results, particularly those implemented after September 2025 may not be fully captured. The programme is encouraged to add programmatic monitoring data collected and outcomes harvested in 2025 as an annex to the evaluation report.

When reviewing the coherence, partnership and collaboration aspects, the evaluation considered all partner organisations that have been involved in the Right2Grow partnership at the global and country level, using the approaches described in the methodology section (e.g., document review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys). For questions of relevance, the programme's Theory of Change, as well as the country-specific Theories of Change, were considered to assess their relevance for the specific contexts (key issues and local needs) in which the programme operated. For questions on effectiveness, impact and sustainability, the evaluation opted for a specified scope for some sub-questions to allow for deeper and more profound assessment, making it easier to dive deep and fully illustrate the contribution of the programme to the changes achieved. The sub-questions on the achievement of targets and their perceived sustainability included the full breadth of the programme. Where sub-questions were narrowed, this was based on learning priorities, feasibility, and data availability, as outlined in the methodology section.

For questions regarding specific programmatic strategies, the scope was specified using the hotspots techniques of the contribution analysis method to facilitate deeper understanding (see chapter 3). The selected hotspots were:

- **Outcome 1:** If communities are aware of small doable actions and put them into practice (informed by mobilisation around better nutrition and WASH), then communities demand and invest in basic social services and apply good nutrition and WASH practices
- **Outcome 2:** If CSOs regularly engage in programming and financial planning and have the legitimacy and capacity to voice the concerns of the marginalised and disempowered (supported by capacity building of technical skills and efforts to improve reach and widen constituencies), then CSOs effectively navigate the civic space to advocate for leadership and good governance to prevent undernutrition.
- **Outcome 3:** If national governments and decentralised entities have evidence on local needs and realities and policy/budget gaps (supported by evidence to prevent undernutrition, and collected data and experiences on the quality of nutrition and WASH service delivery) then national governments and decentralised entities, in collaboration with NGOs and CSOs, adopt and mainstream and integrated multi-sectoral approach to undernutrition in policies, action plans and budget allocations.

3. Methodology

Annex 5 outlines the full methodology used in the end-term evaluation of the Right2Grow partnership. It elaborates the methodological design, including what methods are used and how each data collection method was used to answer the evaluation questions. This chapter summarises the methodology used and elaborates on the data collection sampling. It provides details on exactly who has been included in the evaluation process and whether that represents a representative sample. Lastly, it includes some reflections on encountered limitations and how the evaluation has dealt with potential biases.

3.1 Overview of the evaluation approach

The evaluation applied a participatory, mixed-method approach integrating realist evaluation and contribution analysis, to understand not only what changed, but how, why and under which conditions. This design explored what worked, for whom, how, and under what conditions, linking evidence to the programme Theory of Change (ToC).

The process was structured in four phases: inception, data collection, analysis and validation, and reporting and use. Each phase ensured systematic triangulation across data sources and inclusion of stakeholder perspectives. Inception involved developing the methodology, contracting national evaluation consultants, and finalising tools. Data collection combined document reviews, surveys and in-country and global data collection. During the analysis phase, different data streams were triangulated to interpret findings across the evaluation questions. Validation and reporting synthesised country and global insights and fed lessons back to partners.

Data collection consisted of different data streams:

- Document review examined programme documents, monitoring data, and harvested outcomes to create Evidence Gap Maps linking outcomes to the Theory of Change.
- The partnership survey captured staff perceptions on collaboration and sustainability.
- The Mutual Capacity Development and Linking and Learning surveys conducted by the programme provided further insight into staff perceptions on effectiveness and sustainability of the programme on the level of participating CSOs and the programme's collaboration.
- Reflection sessions generated collective insights from staff members of partner organisations on programme relevance, effectiveness and contribution, sustainability and coherence.
- Focus group discussions with community members provided insight into the changes the programme contributed to at the level of the communities and their perceived sustainability.
- Key informant interviews with internal and external stakeholders explored coherence, policy influence, and sustainability dimensions.
- Site observations complemented focus groups discussions by verifying conditions of WASH infrastructure and practices.

The evaluation provides answers to evaluation questions regarding relevance, effectiveness & impact, sustainability and coherence, in line with the OECD/DAC criteria. The evaluation responds to each evaluation question using different data sources for triangulation of findings. The table below summarises the data sources used per question category. The Evaluation Matrix in Annex 7 details how the specific sub-questions are answered and how this is reflected in the data collection tools. The methodology in Annex 5 describes in detail how the different data streams were analysed and combined to provide answers to the evaluation questions.

Table 1: Data sources per evaluation question

Category of evaluation questions	Data sources
Relevance	Reviews of relevant documentation and context and reflections from internal and external programme stakeholders
Effectiveness & Impact	Review of monitoring data and relevant documentation, collected data from focus group discussions and key informant interviews, observation of change, reflection sessions with staff of partner organisations and results from the Mutual Capacity Development and Linking and Learning surveys
Sustainability	Reflections from internal and external programme stakeholders, observation of changes, reflection sessions with staff of partner organisations and results from the partnership survey and the Mutual Capacity Development and Linking and Learning surveys

Coherence

Review of relevant documentation, results from the partnership survey and the Mutual Capacity Development and Linking and Learning surveys, reflection sessions with staff of partner organisations and interviews with internal and external stakeholders

The evaluation aims to uphold the IOB evaluation criteria¹. The evaluation deviates from criterion 10a on the plausibility of the causal claim. This criterion outlines five steps to substantiate causal claims about effectiveness. The evaluation formulated the cause-effect contribution question (step 1) and constructed the intervention theory (step 2), in the form of the programme and country Theories of Change. The evaluation selected three hotspots to further unpack the cause-effect contribution question at three places in the programme Theory of Change (tracing contribution from interventions, to outputs, to outcomes). The cause-effect contribution questions were formulated for the hotspots during the Inception phase (see section 2.5). The intervention theory was constructed during the reflection sessions with partner organisation staff (also based on the conducted review of documentation and monitoring data), which led to the construction of contribution stories, including potential alternative explanations. In terms of formulating alternative theories and explanations for the observed changes (step 3), context and document review provided information on potential contributing external factors ahead of data collection. No full alternative theories were formulated prior to data collection. Instead, data collection focused on collecting data on the result areas (step 4), as well as alternative explanations for the observed changes. In each country, the contribution stories per hotspot included the context in which the cause-effect contribution question took place and the interventions conducted by the programme, followed by a deep dive into the outcomes that were achieved and the particular mechanisms of change at play to achieve these outcomes (using a CIMO approach in line with realist evaluation). Alternative explanations were discussed in the creation of these contribution stories, and the stories were discussed and validated with external stakeholders during the key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Lastly, the contribution stories from the different countries were compared to each other to draw insights. The different data sources enabled a step-by-step verification of the causal chains of the intervention theory (step 5).

The methodology used for this evaluation was in line with the methodology requested by the Right2Grow team in the Terms of Reference. The Terms of Reference favoured more real-time data collection over a theoretical assessment within the scope of this evaluation. In the evaluation, this was translated into explicitly considering alternative explanations emerging from external factors and stakeholder perspectives when analysing findings and testing the contribution stories, rather than testing alternative theories of change. This approach follows a theory-based, contribution-oriented evaluation design, where the objective is to assess whether the programme's contribution to observed changes is plausible and sufficiently supported by triangulated evidence.

Evaluating multi-country, multi-year programmes that focus on different stakeholders and interventions can result in broad findings with limited depth. To enable deep learning and reflection within the scope of the evaluation, selected hotspots were used to narrow the focus. The selection of hotspots² is used within Contribution Analysis to enable key points of attention to dive deeper. This allowed for a more profound analysis of how the programme contributed to the changes (tracing contribution from activities, through outputs and outcomes), and for whom, why and in which circumstances the strategies worked and what alternative theories for the observed changes are. A 'hotspot' is a causal link (arrow) in the Theory of Change with one or some of the following characteristics: a lack of or limited evidence, a contested causal link, the key focus of interventions, particular value for future programming and/or stakeholders, and/or of key interest to the programme team.

During the inception phase, the evaluation team worked with country teams and the global teams to identify and prioritise hotspots for each context. Hotspots were deliberately selected based on preferences indicated by the programme, to maximise learning in areas where evidence was limited, contested, or highly relevant for future programming, with the programme choosing to focus only on the first three outcomes. As most programme interventions on the country level focused on pathways 1 to 3, this meant that those pathways were of particular interest to partner organisations in country. It was considered to include a hotspot for the fourth pathway on the international level but, upon discussion with the Right2Grow team, this idea was discarded as it would have limited comparative analysis across contexts, as the hotspot was only selected only the international level, and not on any country level. Additionally, the activities under this pathway were intended to support the outcomes in other pathways across contexts, which meant that it was considered that these activities would already be included in the

¹ See here for more information on IOB evaluation quality criteria: <https://english.iob-evaluatie.nl/about-iob/evaluation-quality-criteria>

² See here for more information on hotspots in Contribution Analysis: <https://www.ids.ac.uk/opinions/finding-and-using-causal-hotspots-a-practice-in-the-making/>

reconstruction of the intervention theories under pathways 1 to 3. The specific process of hotspot selection is detailed in the inception report.

3.2. Data collection and sampling

Data were collected at global and country levels through different methods: document and context review, surveys, reflection sessions, FGDs, and KIIs. The first table below provides an overview of the total participants included in the end-term evaluation per data stream across the different contexts and their target as defined in the inception phase. During the inception phase, targets were selected based on feasibility, representativeness and prior experience indicating that beyond a certain number of responses data tends to become repetitive rather than adding new perspectives. The second table shows the different participants per country and at global level.

Table 3: Short overview of total participants included in the end-term evaluation and their target as defined in the inception phase

	Total interactions	Target
Partnership Survey - Staff of partner organisations	92 respondents to the survey	Minimum of 93 respondents to the survey
Reflection sessions	120 participants	Maximum of 84 participants
Focus group discussions	304 participants	60 - 192 participants
Key informant interviews	129 interviews (of which 83 external) with 134 participants	Minimum of 94 participants (of which 57 external)

Table 4: Participants per country and at global level

Country	Survey	Reflection session	Focus Group Discussion	Key informant interviews
Bangladesh	21 respondents	17 participants	9 Focus group discussions with 64 participants (20 men, 44 women)	23 interviews with 23 participants (7 external, 16 internal)
Burkina Faso	12 respondents	19 participants	6 focus group discussions with 48 participants (35 men, 13 women)	13 interviews with 13 participants (9 external, 4 internal)
Ethiopia	13 respondents	10 participants	5 focus group discussions with 45 participants in total (26 men, 19 women)	13 interviews with 21 participants (7 external, 6 internal)
Mali	13 respondents	18 participants	5 focus group discussions with 44 participants (19 men, 25 women)	13 interviews with 13 participants (7 external, 6 internal)
South Sudan	10 respondents	9 participants	8 focus group discussions with 49 participants (12 men, 37 women).	19 interviews with 19 participants (6 internal, 13 external)
Uganda	10 respondents	47 participants	12 focus group discussions with 54 participants (20 men, 34 women)	36 interviews with 36 participants (36 external)
Global	13 respondents	-	-	12 (joint) interviews with 24 participant (3 external, 9 internal)

For each of the data collection methods, the total sample, sampling strategy and reflections on the achievement of targets and representativeness is discussed below. General principles were that sampling strategies should ensure diversity, representation, and gender balance.

Data collection adhered to ethical standards and safeguarding protocols provided by Grant Thornton, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and gender-sensitive facilitation.

Documentation review

Documentation review included a review of relevant documentation and monitoring data. The review was done at the country and global level to fully understand the programme and inform the evaluation. At each country level, a context review was conducted by assessing internal and external documents, including annual reports, baseline studies, and midterm review, to understand the context in which the programme operates and prepare for data collection. A review of the monitoring data collected by the programme (in the form of indicator overviews, annual reports and harvested outcomes) led to the updated indicator overview that can be found in Annex 1 and the creation of Evidence Gap Maps. An Evidence Gap Map (EGM) is a visual representation of the available evidence of a programme, and were used as the starting point of the evaluation, to identify the pathways in the Theory of Change that were underrepresented in the monitoring data and for which data was lacking, and the EGMs were used as the input for the selection of hotspots: the causal links that would be further elaborated on through an analysis of contribution stories collected as part of the ETE.³ Eight EGMs were created for this evaluation: one for each country, one on the global level and one overarching map. The maps were plotted onto the country or programme Theories of Change to indicate progress. They include the harvested outcomes from 2021 to 2024 (excluding the outcomes of 2025). Dark green colour indicates that more than 20 outcomes have been harvested on this element of the Theory of Change, medium green colour indicates that between 11 and 20 outcomes have been harvested, and the light green colour indicates that 1 to 10 outcomes have been harvested for this element. Below (Figure 1), the overall Evidence Gap Map is shown, including all countries and the global level outcomes.

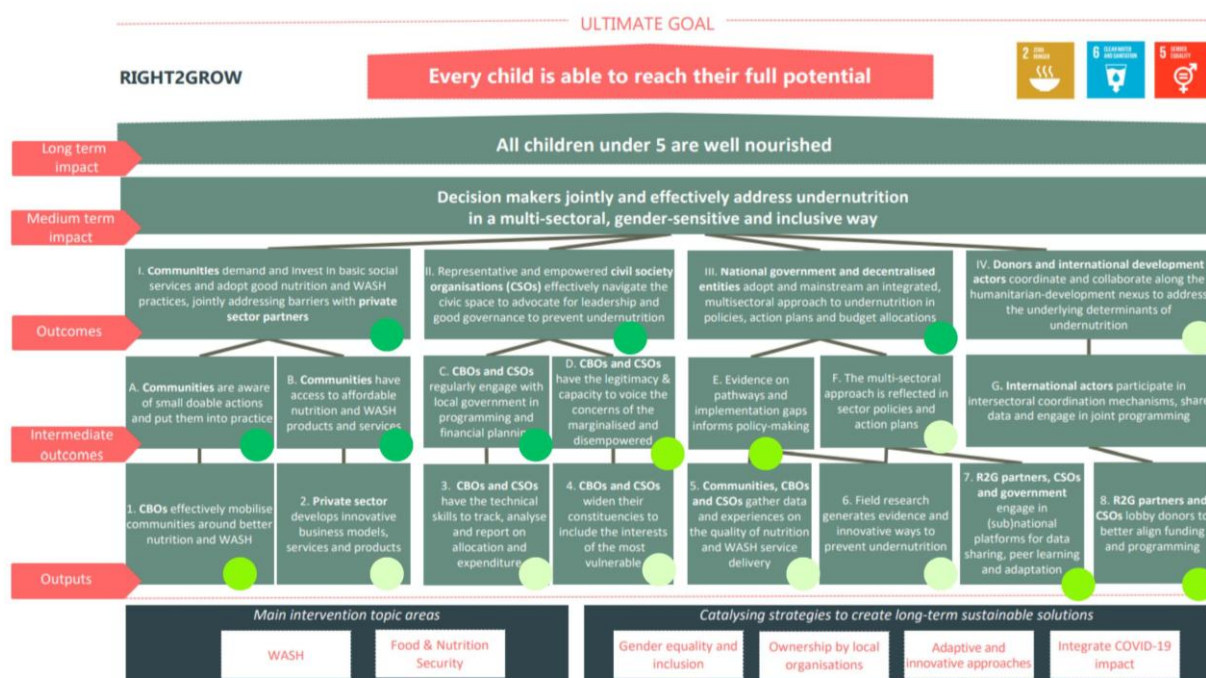
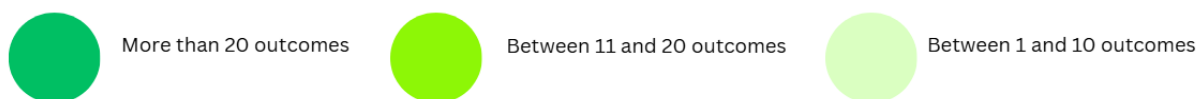


Figure 1: Evidence Gap Map

Legend:



Partnership Survey

A survey with staff of partner organisations and consortium members was designed to collect perceptions on collaboration within the partnership, implementation of programme principles and organisational capacity development. The survey was available in English and French. A total of 92 responses were collected. The target was to include 3 to 5 staff members per partner organisation. The criteria for inclusion were staff who have worked on the programme in the last three years and have collaborated with one or more consortium members, and/or at

³ The Evidence Gap Map (EGM) is based on the number of indicators and outcomes confirming the building blocks of the ToC in several countries. If there is a strong indicator that could confirm the building block as a whole but shows up in the EGM as light green, this has been flagged in the section on effectiveness.

the regional or international level. The sampling strategy deployed was that Impact House made a systematic sample of up to 10 staff members per organisation involved in the country teams (and global coordinator for the global team), which included 50% women and at least 30% youth (under 30). The estimated total sample size was between 93 and 155 respondents, meaning that the minimum target has almost been achieved (1 response under target). The graph below shows the responses per country.

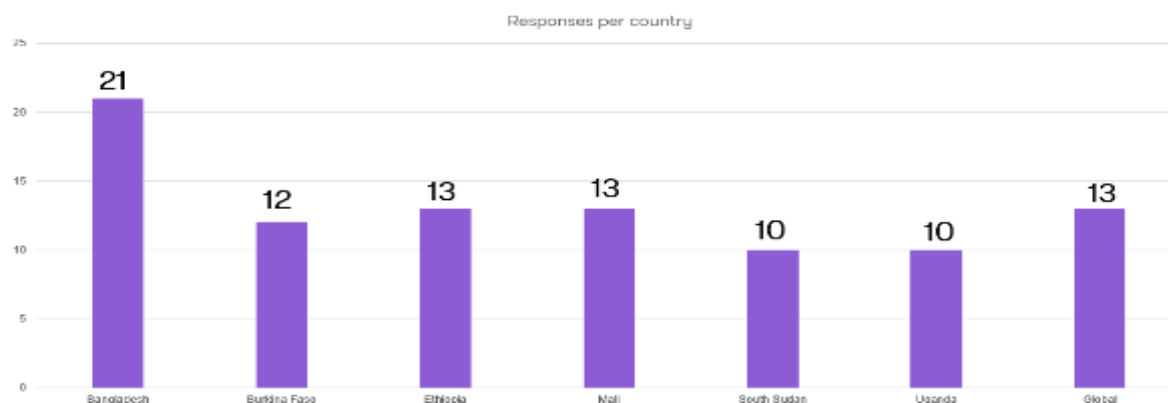


Figure 2: Response per country of the partnership staff survey

The table below shows the division per tier in the partnership and the division per tier in responses that have been received. This shows that the survey is representative of the different partners involved at the Tier 2 level (CSOs contracted by the programme). Except for one Tier 2 level organisation in South Sudan, all participated in the survey. At the Tier 1 level (global lead and global partners), the survey is not fully representative for each country, with one Tier 1 organisation missing in Burkina Faso, Mali, Ethiopia and South Sudan. Across all six countries, the response rates from Tier 3 (non-contracted CSOs) organisations are not representative, as the total number of organisations is large and only a limited number of responses were received. The original plan was to also track the number responses per organisation to ensure representativeness of different voices per organisation, but due to different interpretations of what the tiers meant by respondents and limited clarity about the names of the different local and grassroots organisations, this was not possible.

Table 5: Division per tier in the partnership and the division per tier in responses that have been received

	Number of organisations per tier in the consortium	Number of organisations per tier in consortium that responded
Global	Tier 1 : 6 organisations	Tier 1 : 6 organisations
Bangladesh	Tier 1 : 6 organisations Tier 2 : 1 organisation Tier 3 : 774 organisations	Tier 1 : 6 organisations Tier 2 : 1 organisation Tier 3 : 0 organisation
Burkina Faso	Tier 1 : 4 organisations Tier 2 : 2 organisations Tier 3 : 86 organisations	Tier 1 : 3 organisations Tier 2 : 2 organisations Tier 3 : 1 organisation
Ethiopia	Tier 1 : 5 organisations Tier 2 : 3 organisations Tier 3 : 156 organisations	Tier 1 : 4 organisations Tier 2 : 3 organisations Tier 3 : 0 organisations
Mali	Tier 1 : 3 organisations Tier 2 : 5 organisations Tier 3 : 24 organisations	Tier 1 : 2 organisations Tier 2 : 5 organisations Tier 3 : 0 organisations
South Sudan	Tier 1 : 5 organisations Tier 2 : 3 organisations Tier 3 : 5 organisations	Tier 1 : 3 organisations Tier 2 : 2 organisations Tier 3 : 1 organisation
Uganda	Tier 1 : 4 organisations Tier 2 : 5 organisations Tier 3 : 20 organisations	Tier 1 : 4 organisations Tier 2 : 5 organisations Tier 3 : 0 organisations

The targets of 50% women and 30% youth have not been achieved. 28% of respondents identify as female, and only 9% of survey respondents are under 30 years of age. This means that either country leads have not selected 10 respondents while keeping these criteria in mind, or/and that the youth involved from the start are now in the age range of 25+, or the male and older respondents among those random samples have more frequently replied to the invitation to the survey. During the interpretation sessions, participants reflected that they felt the gender categorisation of respondents was in line with the staff make-up across the consortium; however, they would have expected a higher number of young people to participate.

While efforts were made to reach a broad and diverse group of respondents, the survey results cannot be considered statistically representative in the strict sense. This is due to several methodological constraints, including the involvement of programme staff in the purposive identification of the sampling frame from which respondents were systematically selected, non-response and the fact that response tracking was conducted at the organisational, rather than the individual level (to protect anonymity in follow-up). The survey was, therefore, not intended to support causal attribution or statistically generalisable claims. Instead, the quantitative data coming from the survey were used as one source of evidence within a broader triangulation strategy, aimed at validating and contextualising qualitative findings emerging from interviews, focus group discussions and reflection sessions. The findings derived from the survey have been interpreted accordingly and are presented as indicative rather than representative.

Information coming from Mutual Capacity Development surveys and Linking & Learning survey

For evaluative purposes, the partnership conducted two surveys internally, one on mutual capacity development and one on linking & learning. These two surveys were not conducted by the external evaluation team. This means that the evaluation team cannot make definite claims on their representativeness. The results of these surveys do inform the results of the evaluation and have been occasionally referenced in the evaluation report.

Reflection sessions

Reflection sessions were conducted by national evaluation consultants with programme staff in each country. These sessions aimed to stimulate group-based learning and generate collective insights about the contribution of the programme to change.

The recommended maximum size of a reflection session was 12 participants. National evaluation consultants collaborated with country leads and MEAL focal persons to determine who should attend the meeting, employing a purposive sampling strategy. At least one representative from each partner organisation implementing Right2Grow in that country was required to be present at the meeting. Other criteria for participation included that participants are knowledgeable about the different aspects of the programme and its implementation. Country teams were requested to ensure equal representation in terms of gender, age, and, depending on the setting, ethnic background of the participants.

The total number of participants in the reflection sessions was 120. This means that the target of a maximum of 84 participants was met. In the case of Uganda, multiple reflection sessions were organised, resulting in more than 12 participants in total. In Burkina Faso, Mali and Bangladesh more than 12 participants joined the session.

Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions were conducted with community members in each country to collect experiences on how programme participants experienced change and to validate the contribution story created with staff during the reflection sessions.

The target was to conduct 3 to 6 focus groups in each country, each focus group consisting of 5 to 8 participants. This led to a total target of 60 to 192 participants in the focus group discussions. The sampling strategy deployed was a random selection. Participants were randomly selected from a list of programme participants. This random selection is to ensure diversity in age, ethnic group, socio-economic status and type of involvement in the programme. The total number of participants had to include at least 50% women. To fit the context of the different programme countries, national evaluation consultants worked with country leads to determine further sampling criteria to ensure the inclusion of marginalised people.

A total of 45 focus groups were conducted with 304 people, with five to twelve focus groups conducted in each of the programme countries. This means that the target for participants was widely surpassed, and many more programme participants have been able to share their perspectives for this evaluation.

The table at the top of this section shows that 172 of the participants were women (and 132 were men), meaning 50% of the participants were women, meeting the target. The ratio differs for some countries. In South Sudan (80%),

Bangladesh (69%), Uganda (63%) and Mali (57%), more than half of the participants were women. Whereas in Ethiopia (42%) and Burkina Faso (27%), this target has not been met. This means that for the countries that deviate far from even gender distributions (Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and South Sudan) conclusions should be drawn with a particular attention to a gender lens.

Observation

National evaluation consultants have conducted site visits to carry out structured observations of conditions (hygiene and facilities) and use of WASH infrastructure and provisions at locations covered by the programme. Structured observations have been conducted using an observation checklist and complemented with photos/videos and geotags of locations where they have been made. The observation checklist was designed to capture key aspects of household and child hygiene practices. It covered elements such as the main source of drinking water, the location where children under five are bathed, the availability of a handwashing station (with/without soap), and the type of toilet used by children. These observations provide insight into the WASH conditions that influence child health and well-being. The observations showed the quality and maintenance of facilities. In South Sudan, site visit observations were not possible due to (in)security restrictions.

Additionally, focus group discussions served both as data collection moments and as opportunities for direct observation. Observations related to group dynamics, levels of agreement or contestation, and how participants responded to and built on each other's inputs were taken into account during analysis. These observational insights were not treated as standalone evidence but were used to contextualise and triangulate verbal data from other focus groups, interviews and survey responses.

Observational findings were incorporated into the analysis through the evaluation matrix at country level, where they informed the interpretation of qualitative evidence and supported validation of emerging findings. They were also discussed during validation sessions, allowing observed dynamics and interpretations to be reflected upon and, where necessary, challenged by participants.

Key informant interviews

Interviews have been conducted with key stakeholders in each country and on the global level. These interviews included government representatives, international development actors (including donors), thematic experts, embassy staff, private sector partners, community leaders and programme staff. These interviews were held to validate the contribution stories, assess external coherence and explore perspectives on sustainability and policy influence.

The target was to conduct 12 to 13 interviews per country and 10 to 15 interviews at the global level, which meant a minimum of 94 interviews. To ensure the inclusion of sufficient external perspectives in the evaluation, and to ensure a critical review of the hotspots and contribution stories, at least 60% of the interviews had to be conducted with external stakeholders. At least 40% of the included stakeholders needed to be women. The criteria for external stakeholders were that they are knowledgeable about the programme but not directly benefiting financially from the programme or have a (direct) stake in the evaluation.

149 people were interviewed. In each country and on the global level, at least 12 interviews were conducted. The target of a minimum of 94 participants has been widely surpassed, resulting in a diverse range of perspectives being included in the end-term evaluation.

75 of these interviews were with external stakeholders. This means that the target of 60% of key informant interviews coming from external stakeholders has been met (exactly 60%). This means that it is possible to state that external perspectives have been included. Looking at the country level, in Burkina Faso (69%), South Sudan (68%), and Uganda (100%), the target has been widely met. In Ethiopia (54%), Mali (54%), Bangladesh (30%) and on the global level (30%), the target for the ratio of external to internal stakeholders was not fully achieved, meaning that this should be considered when making generalising statements, as the external perspective may not be fully represented due to the limited number of external interviews. At the global level, this can be explained by the fact that each consortium partner was interviewed separately, resulting in a high number of internal interviews.

3.3. Limitations, biases and management strategies

- **Balancing contextual depth and cross-country comparability** - Given the multi-country scope of the evaluation, a key limitation was the challenge of balancing contextual depth with the need for cross-country comparability. Following a strong desire by country coalitions to all be included in the evaluation in order to have evidence of the impact of their work, the evaluation was conducted across six countries, each with its own socio-political context, implementation dynamics, and data availability. To ensure meaningful analysis at the global level, it was necessary to apply a set of core methodologies across all countries. Despite these limitations, the evaluation was able to draw meaningful insights from all countries. This trade-off between contextual richness and methodological uniformity was a necessary compromise to ensure both local relevance and global coherence in the evaluation findings.
- **No control group was used** - The use of a control group was not part of the agreed evaluation design and methodology, given the scope, learning-oriented purpose and contribution-based approach of the evaluation. Instead, the evaluation relied on systematic triangulation across multiple data sources and methods. Quantitative survey data were collected from a large sample of respondents and were used to identify pre- and post-outcome differences. While these data do not allow for causal attribution, they provided an important empirical basis for validating and contextualising qualitative findings.
- **Dependence on the quality of the quantitative data available** - For the review of relevant documentation and monitoring data, the evaluation team was dependent on the quality of the available data. The programme did not have a comprehensive overview of global indicators or aggregate insights of indicators on an overarching level. Such aggregation only existed for the basket indicators that the programme had to report on to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Although multiple lists of global indicators were available, they were not consistently shared, which caused delays in identifying accurate versions. More importantly, data for these indicators was not collated at a global level. This limited overall insight into the progress of the programme and made it more difficult for the evaluation team to learn about the effectiveness of the programme. Furthermore, indicators were not systematically linked to the programmatic Theory of Change which complicated tracking progress against it. As a result, the Evidence Gap Maps had to be limited to the collected outcomes, rather than a full overview of monitoring data. On the country level, indicators were much clearer and did link to the various elements of the Theory of Change. This ensured local application and context-specific indicators. Nonetheless, it limited the possibility of cross-country learning and steering based on aggregated indicators, as the variety between country indicators is such that aggregation often did not make sense.
- **Tension between triangulation and openness to emerging insights** - This evaluation has incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methods to achieve data triangulation. To avoid tension between maintaining methodological rigour and staying receptive to new or unexpected challenges, an adaptive approach was used, allowing flexibility to integrate emerging themes while ensuring consistency in core methodological principles.
- **Limitations due to insecurity** - The ongoing conflict in South Sudan posed significant challenges to the data collection process, requiring close monitoring of the unstable security situation. Similarly, in Burkina Faso, the security context-imposed limitations, as certain locations could not be visited, affecting the representativeness of the advocacy group consultations. To mitigate these constraints and potential biases, several strategies were implemented. Small group discussions were organised to create a safe space for women and young people to voice their perspectives, and meetings were held in relatively secure centres to ensure participation while prioritising safety.
- **Limitations related to survey representativeness** - The survey results presented in this evaluation should be interpreted with caution. Although the survey reached a relatively large number of respondents across different countries and stakeholder groups, the data cannot be considered statistically representative. The sampling frame was partly constructed through purposive selection with support from programme staff, which may have introduced selection bias. In addition, non-response could not be fully assessed, as response tracking took place at organisational rather than individual level. As a result, the survey findings are used as indicative evidence to support triangulation and validation of qualitative findings, rather than as a basis for generalized or causal claims.
- **Selection bias** - Selection bias was recognised as a potential risk at multiple stages of the evaluation process, including: (i) differences between organisations and individuals that chose to participate in the programme and those that did not; (ii) the role of programme staff in supporting respondent identification and access; (iii) survey non-response; and (iv) self-selection of participants in reflection sessions, focus group discussions and interviews by choosing to accept the invitation and attend. These risks were mitigated through several

measures. Purposive sampling strategies were deployed for the reflection sessions and key informant interviews, meaning that the participants were selected because of their role, based on previously set criteria to be applied in all of the countries. While purposive sampling introduces potential bias, it ensures that respondents are well positioned to answer the evaluation questions accurately. It is also important to note that staff in the more junior or administrative roles were less frequently reached through interviews and surveys, which may result in these groups' experiences being less visible in perspectives on partnership processes and decision-making. Their responses are further validated through triangulation with other data sources. For the focus group discussions and partnership survey, random or systematic sampling strategies were deployed. While these measures do not eliminate selection bias, they strengthen the plausibility assessment of contribution claims and support a balanced interpretation of findings within the limits of the chosen methodology. The evaluation therefore does not claim representativeness or attribution, but offers a comparative, triangulated and transparently bounded analysis of programme contribution.

- **Source bias** - To ensure a balanced and objective evaluation, data was triangulated from multiple independent sources, including programme participants, external informants, and secondary research. A diverse and proportionate selection of respondents across different regions and stakeholder groups prevents overrepresentation of specific perspectives, while transparent documentation of sources and their personal characteristics should enhance credibility.
- **Anchoring bias** - To avoid influencing respondents' judgements through pre-established reference points, suggestive framing was minimised. In addition to, open-ended questions were also included that allow participants to share their experiences freely. Additionally, findings have been validated through triangulation, ensuring that no single data source disproportionately shapes conclusions.
- **Respondent bias** - Anonymity and confidentiality have been ensured to encourage honest feedback, while culturally sensitive interview techniques prevented leading responses. The consultants were selected based on their experience with similar research projects and then trained to elicit responses from participants with varying views on the programme, including potentially critical voices. Emphasising the evaluation's learning purpose rather than performance assessment minimised courtesy bias, and a concise survey design reduced response fatigue, ensuring more accurate and diverse input.
- **Unifying data** - When doing an evaluation of a multi-country programme, it is always a balance between adjusting the tools to fit specific contexts and ensuring a certain level of uniformity to enable comparisons. This uniformity is also a challenge when working with multiple national evaluation consultants in one research team. To ensure as much uniformity as possible, clear data collection, data analysis tools and a reporting format were developed, and instructions were provided through a joint session before and backstop support from the global team during the data collection period. Where needed, the data collection tools could be adjusted to fit the local context. Taking sufficient time to plan and explain what it would be used for was essential in these steps.
- **Working with sensitive information** - Throughout the whole evaluation process, we had safeguarding, and data protection processes were in place. In the context of restrictive civic space, interviews on key topics can be considered sensitive. Therefore, all national evaluation consultants adhered to ethical research conduct, particularly in the case of engaging children and youth. For KIIs, consent was asked at the start of the interviews, and for FGDs, attendance sheets were used. To protect privacy, discussions were conducted in closed spaces with minimal interruptions, and the reports were anonymized instead of using real names. No documents containing personal information were kept beyond facilitation forms, which were stored securely.

In addition, the evaluation team took specific measures to ensure the anonymity of survey responses. The Sprockler surveys included open text boxes in which respondents could provide detailed answers. In some cases, participants voluntarily included personal details such as their name, role, or organisation in these responses. As the online reports generated from the surveys were intended for sharing with national teams and consultants, there was a risk of participant identities being unintentionally revealed. To address this issue, the evaluation team carefully reviewed the responses and deleted any that could directly identify individuals. While the content of these responses was analysed internally to inform the findings, they could not be shared more widely to preserve confidentiality. Upholding ethical standards required striking a balance between qualitative input and anonymity safeguards, even though this limited the extent to which some raw data could be disseminated to national partners.

To further safeguard data integrity, all survey datasets were subject to internal consistency checks, including verification of unique response identifiers and screening for duplicated or mismatched entries, ensuring the traceability and reliability of combined survey data.

- **Impact of limited aggregated data on evaluation** - The aggregated actuals were only available up to 2024, which represents a significant limitation for this evaluation. This gap restricts the ability to assess progress beyond that point and should be considered when interpreting findings.

Overall, the synthesis' findings regarding effectiveness therefore rely primarily on qualitative evidence, with quantitative data used for triangulation. The evaluation is observational and does not employ a counterfactual; therefore, it assesses plausible contribution rather than causal attribution.

These limitations and biases mean that findings provide valuable insights but should not be interpreted as a fully comprehensive picture of programme performance. The findings should be interpreted as indicative rather than representative, and as assessments of plausible contribution rather than causal attribution. These limitations are inherent to the chosen evaluation design and are considered acceptable given the evaluation's theory-based, learning-oriented objectives. The findings reflect the best possible evidence within the given data and contextual limitations and should be considered with caution when informing decisions.

3.4. Ethical considerations

The evaluation was carried out with a commitment to ethical standards, participant protection, and inclusivity across all programme countries. All participants were informed about the purpose of the evaluation, how their data would be used, and their right to withdraw at any time. Participation was voluntary, and consent procedures were in place, and aligned with local practices and regulations in each country.

In Uganda, participants provided written consent before focus group discussions, interviews, and participatory sessions. Audio recordings were made with permission, and transcripts were anonymised and securely stored along with physical consent forms. Gender-sensitive approaches were employed, with female facilitators engaging female participants to ensure culturally appropriate discussions. Special arrangements were also made to include marginalised groups. In Mali, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Bangladesh, consent was obtained verbally after explaining confidentiality, whereas in South Sudan, participants provided witnessed verbal consent, documented via tick-boxes on facilitation tools, reflecting local preferences against signing documents. Participants could also choose whether quotes or photographs could be used in evaluation outputs, ensuring control over their contributions.

All data were treated confidentially. Personal identifiers were removed or anonymised, and digital and physical records were securely stored with limited access. Participatory validation meetings and culturally sensitive facilitation were used to ensure findings reflected community perspectives accurately.

4. Relevance

This chapter looks at the relevance and validity of the Theory of Change. Answering if the programme was “doing the right things”. As well as the extent to which the intervention’s objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country and partner/institution needs, policies and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change. The programme has developed a programmatic Theory of Change, which has been translated into context-specific Theories of Change in each implementation country. This chapter first assesses the context relevance and quality of these Theories of Change and then looks at their alignment with key national and global issues and their responsiveness to the needs of local communities and to strengthening policies and budgets at the country level. Lastly, it reflects on the Theories of Change adaptiveness to changing contexts and global priorities. The relevance of the ToC stems from a participatory design process, and its outcomes were validated during focus group discussions with communities, ensuring that local perspectives informed the evaluation.

4.1. Contextual relevance and quality of the Theories of Change

The countries and global Theories of Change (ToC) have proven to be practical, adaptive, and aligned with both national and global development priorities. Across diverse country contexts, they have evolved in response to shifting realities, emerging global priorities, and implementation insights, particularly in fragile settings where initial assumptions required rethinking. Rather than static frameworks, the ToCs have functioned as living documents, guiding programmes through uncertainty and enabling locally grounded, cross-sectoral action. While improvements are still needed in areas such as risk analysis and gender inclusion, the ToCs offer a solid foundation for navigating complex environments and driving meaningful change.

Over time, the ToCs have been adapted to remain relevant within dynamic political, economic, and environmental conditions. In fragile settings, this adaptability was crucial. Early assumptions that the private sector could drive change proved unrealistic in some settings, for example in *South Sudan* and *Bangladesh*. Also, because of instability in the respective countries. Programmes shifted towards community-based approaches such as Village Savings and Loan Associations and small start-up funds, which were better suited to local economies. Local leaders, nurses and ‘lead mothers’ were mobilised to share health information in local languages, maintaining trust and reach at the community level. These changes made the ToC more practical

In countries with political stable governance structures, the ToC helped to strengthen the link between community needs and institutional change. In *Ethiopia*, the focus on demand for WASH and nutrition services matched well with long-standing gaps in planning, accountability and coordination. Stakeholders agreed that undernutrition is rooted not only in service shortages but also in inefficient governance, a point that the ToC rightly recognised.

Flexibility was also evident in *Uganda*, where political events repeatedly disrupted planned advocacy. When the Non-Aligned Movement Summit halted parliamentary sessions, partners kept up engagement through written submissions and online meetings with policymakers. Later, when national and district planning processes overlapped, they divided roles to maintain representation. These practical adjustments were not anticipated in the original design, but they showed that the ToC could still guide collective action under changing conditions.

In *Burkina Faso*, the ToC had to adapt to a deteriorating security situation and large-scale displacement. Initial plans to support new multisectoral policy frameworks shifted toward implementing and coordinating existing ones. This was a pragmatic change that kept the programme relevant in a challenging environment. However, its underlying assumptions are less explicit about contextual risks such as insecurity and dependence on external funding. This limits the robustness of the causal logic, even when pathways remain relevant and credible.

The Theory of Change does not clearly specify under pathway 3, where for several elements (6., E and F) actors are not defined specifically. They are formulated as passive statements of change, rather than the expected active expressions of concluded change (for example, “evidence on pathways ... informs policymaking”). This means that more interpretations of these aspects exist, and it is more difficult to track progress.

Taken together, the country examples show that the ToCs remained relevant throughout implementation and was adapted to the context where needed. The main assumptions, linking community empowerment, institutional responsiveness and policy engagement, still hold. Overall, the ToCs can be considered contextually appropriate and of reasonable quality, providing a sound basis for guiding the programme in complex and changing environments.

4.2. Alignment of Theory of Change with national and global policies and budgets

The country Theories of Change aligned with national policies, aimed to foster collaboration across government sectors, civil society and communities and advocated for budget transparency and resource mobilization where relevant. The Theories of Change effectively connect global goals with local realities. They demonstrate an understanding of the interconnected drivers of undernutrition, WASH, and community voice, and have proven adaptable across diverse contexts. Their strength lies in linking community empowerment with governance reform and multi-sectoral coordination. However, underlying assumptions around risk, sustainability, and inclusion require further refinement to ensure that these strong conceptual foundations lead to lasting and equitable impact.

Across countries, the ToCs demonstrate an understanding of the interconnected drivers of undernutrition, poor WASH conditions, and limited community voice. In practice, this alignment is most evident where country teams have successfully integrated community empowerment, governance reform, and multi-sectoral coordination. *Bangladesh* offers an example: the country's ToC integrates nutrition, WASH, and maternal health interventions into a single, coherent approach that resonates with national development strategies, such as the National Nutrition Policy.

In other contexts, such as *Burkina Faso* and *Mali*, alignment with national priorities on malnutrition and participatory governance is equally evident. The ToCs mirror national multisectoral nutrition strategies and reinforce policy coherence by embedding WASH and nutrition priorities in local and municipal planning frameworks.

In *Ethiopia*, the ToC exemplifies how the global Right2Grow logic can be adapted to national priorities such as the *Seqota Declaration*, while community voices gathered through the Community Voice and Action (CVA) process have been incorporated into district development plans to inform resource allocation. However, equity, risk management, and climate resilience remain less developed, suggesting areas where the framework could evolve to maintain relevance in a rapidly changing context. This also reflects a broader observation that some cross-cutting issues and assumptions in the global ToC were not sufficiently defined during the initial programme design, highlighting opportunities for strengthening these dimensions in future iterations.

In *Uganda*, the ToC aligns closely with government priorities under the Uganda Nutrition Action Plan II, supporting multi-sectoral nutrition governance and inclusion. Even in the fragile context of *South Sudan*, the ToC remains relevant by aligning with national nutrition policy commitments and emerging governance structures.

This alignment between programme ToCs and national and global agendas has helped position Right2Grow as a catalyst for coordinated and accountable action on undernutrition and WASH. By fostering collaboration between government, civil society, and communities, the programme has strengthened the institutional foundations for multi-sectoral governance and created coherence between global frameworks and country-level implementation. Overall, the evaluation concludes that the programme's ToCs are valid and strategically aligned instruments for guiding systemic change. They successfully connect global frameworks with local realities and have proven adaptable across diverse political and institutional settings. Future refinement should focus on strengthening the underlying assumptions around risk, sustainability, and inclusion, ensuring that these strong conceptual foundations translate into a durable and equitable impact.

4.3. Responsiveness to local community and target group needs

Across six diverse country contexts, the programme translated its rights-based and inclusive vision into practice by ensuring that communities were not mere beneficiaries but active co-creators of solutions to nutrition and WASH challenges. Its approach effectively bridged the local and national levels, although country experiences differ, combining participatory governance, gender equity, and adaptive learning to strengthen both ownership and accountability. This responsiveness not only improved service delivery but also contributed to lasting institutional and behavioural change, especially in fragile and climate change-affected settings.

The programme effectively bridged community priorities and national political systems, providing an adaptable framework that connects local realities with global commitments. The programme allowed it to:

- Address the needs of marginalised population groups
- Strengthen the local governance and national accountability systems

- Promote policy coherence and sustainable budgeting for WASH and nutrition
- Remain responsive to climate, conflict, and socioeconomic changes.

This responsiveness is evident in participatory planning and accountability, inclusivity and gender responsiveness and behaviour and social change as well as integration of traditional structures and CSOs, and capacity strengthening for local empowerment.

Participatory planning and accountability

In all six countries, Right2Grow operationalised the principle of “communities as rights-holders” by introducing citizen scorecards, community dialogues, and social accountability mechanisms that directly connected communities with service providers and local governments. This approach gave marginalised groups, such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities, a voice in identifying service gaps and influencing resource allocation. This participatory model increased local ownership, improved trust in public institutions, and laid the foundation for longer-term social accountability practices.

Inclusivity and gender responsiveness

The programme consistently recognised gender inequality as a key factor for malnutrition. Women’s leadership was promoted in CSOs, community committees, and WASH committees, while men’s engagement initiatives helped reduce gender barriers to participation. Youth inclusion in advocacy, entrepreneurship, and hygiene campaigns addressed both social empowerment and livelihood concerns.

“...In the beginning there was a big difference... men were talking as men; women as women... and that would not bring us results in the same direction. We told them there is no big difference between a man and a woman in leading a family or demanding services. At the end, all were in leadership mode... everyone would say ‘we need this’ - and you could see we really needed it...” - District Health Officer in Uganda

This quote illustrates how the programme’s gender approach was associated with a shift from traditional gendered roles towards shared leadership and collective action in Uganda.

Behavioural and social change

The use of social and behaviour change communication (SBCC), peer learning, and Mother-to-Mother Support Groups effectively addressed harmful practices related to nutrition, sanitation and hygiene, and childcare. These efforts were particularly relevant in settings where social norms constrained women’s decision-making and health-seeking behaviours.

Integration of traditional structures and CSOs

Traditional institutions, such as village chiefs, elders, religious leaders, and customary councils, have retained significant influence in defining community priorities and behaviours. Right2Grow has strategically leveraged these traditional structures to strengthen the social legitimacy, local accountability, and sustainability of interventions. Right2Grow placed CSOs at the heart of its design, recognising their ability to bridge communities and governments, amplify citizens’ voices, and ensure accountability. CSOs served as both implementing partners and advocacy actors, enabling a multidimensional approach to empowerment.

Capacity strengthening for local empowerment

The programme implemented continuous, multi-level capacity development to strengthen communities, CSOs and local governments. Community groups have been trained in WASH management, planning, and accountability, strengthening their ownership and technical autonomy. Local governments have improved their skills in nutrition-sensitive budget monitoring and expenditure tracking, gender-responsive planning, and participatory governance. CSOs strengthened their capacity for advocacy, coordination and evidence-based policy engagement. Through adaptive learning and reflection, Right2Grow fostered collaboration, innovation and responsiveness, ensuring sustainable governance and service delivery in diverse political, climatic and economic contexts.

Budget Monitoring and Expenditure Tracking (BMET)

The Budget Monitoring and Expenditure Tracking (BMET) approach under Right2Grow strengthened citizen-driven accountability and evidence-based advocacy for nutrition and WASH financing across programme countries. BMET empowered civil society organisations (CSOs), community networks, and coalitions to analyse public budgets, track expenditure execution, and generate actionable evidence for policy influence. Through structured capacity-building, partners developed skills in budget analysis, public financial management, expenditure tracking, and data dissemination. This enabled CSOs and citizen groups to transition from awareness-raising to influencing concrete fiscal decisions at national and sub-national levels.

Localised and context-specific interventions

Each country adapted Right2Grow's core framework to its own development context:

- In *Bangladesh*, the Right2Grow programme has demonstrated great responsiveness by adapting its interventions to the realities of coastal, flood-prone and salinity-affected districts such as Barguna and Patuakhali. The programme mobilised communities through Union Parishad (UP) structures, local civil society organisations (CSOs), and community committees, which enabled citizens to identify and prioritise their needs in terms of nutrition, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH).

Women's and youth groups played a central role in participatory planning, ensuring that marginalised voices were heard. Accountability tools such as the citizen assessment sheet and local advocacy platforms enabled communities to hold local service providers accountable for health, sanitation and nutrition.

Recognising that water scarcity and contamination are significant challenges in coastal areas, Right2Grow supported the rehabilitation of water points, the promotion of safe water storage, and the integration of climate-resilient WASH solutions into community development plans. Nutrition awareness campaigns, including home visits and courtyard sessions, addressed local gaps in dietary diversity and maternal and child health practices.

This localised and gender-sensitive approach strengthened community ownership. However, the programme also identified that increased participation by women sometimes was associated with additional unpaid workloads, highlighting the need for greater engagement by men and an equitable distribution of domestic responsibilities in future phases.

- In *Burkina Faso*, the adaptability and responsiveness of the Right2Grow programme was put to the test by the combined effects of security crises, political instability, internal displacement and resource constraints. The programme was adapted by prioritising local governance and citizen accountability mechanisms that could function even in fragile contexts.

Communities were empowered to monitor and influence public services through community scorecards, citizen forums, and dialogue platforms at the municipal level. These participatory mechanisms enabled residents, particularly women and young people, to express their priorities for WASH infrastructure, hygiene education, and nutritional services.

Right2Grow also collaborated with municipal councils to integrate locally identified WASH and nutrition needs into local development plans (PDLs), ensuring that community demands were institutionalised in governance processes. The integration of savings and solidarity groups at the village level enabled women to contribute financially to the maintenance of water points and the purchase of hygiene materials, strengthening resilience and local ownership.

Despite ongoing insecurity in the northern and eastern regions, the programme remained relevant by adapting its implementation through local CSOs and informal community networks. This flexibility enabled Right2Grow to continue reaching vulnerable populations while maintaining the trust of local stakeholders.

- In *Ethiopia*, the programme contributed to a good level of responsiveness by integrating citizen participation and inclusiveness into local governance systems. Through the Community Voice and Action (CVA) model, communities collaborated directly with Woreda and Kebele authorities to assess service quality, identify gaps, and jointly develop plans for improving WASH and nutrition facilities.

This participatory approach strengthened trust and collaboration between citizens and public service providers. The Right2Grow programme also recognised women, youth and persons with disabilities (PWD) as distinct target groups requiring equitable inclusion. Special efforts were made to ensure 50% female participation in meetings, and accessible WASH facilities were built in schools and health clinics.

In drought-prone areas, communities received support to establish climate-resilient WASH systems, including shallow wells and water harvesting structures, as well as training in nutrition-sensitive agriculture, such as vegetable gardens. These interventions directly addressed local concerns about water scarcity, declining agricultural yields and child malnutrition.

The case of *Ethiopia* shows how Right2Grow's responsiveness has evolved from community feedback loops to an institutionalised governance practice, with local governments allocating resources based on data provided by citizens. In Amhara and Oromia regions, Right2Grow supported communities to use Community Voice and Action (CVA) scorecards to assess WASH and nutrition services in health posts, schools, and water schemes.

Local officials started to routinely incorporate these citizen-generated priorities into woreda plans, allocating funds to rehabilitate water points and strengthen community health outreach.

- In *Mali*, Right2Grow responsiveness has been shaped by high levels of poverty, food insecurity, and governance fragility. The programme aligned its activities with local governance systems to ensure community-driven solutions. Through close collaboration with communal authorities and civil society platforms, communities identified gaps in access to water, sanitation and nutrition that guided Right2Grow interventions.

The programme addressed local needs by focusing on both empowerment and resilience. It supported the creation of women's savings and credit groups to finance hygiene products and small-scale food production, improving household nutrition. At the same time, young people were mobilised for sanitation campaigns and data collection on the functioning of WASH services.

Right2Grow also collaborated with local governments to implement national policies such as the National Nutrition Policy (PNN) and the National Water and Sanitation Policy (PNEA) at the municipal level. This ensured that community-identified priorities, such as borehole rehabilitation, improved hygiene education and dietary diversification, were integrated into local development and investment plans.

The programme's responsiveness was also reflected in its adaptation to insecurity, through the establishment of community committees to monitor WASH facilities in areas where the presence of official authorities was limited. This community-focused flexibility enabled Right2Grow to maintain service continuity despite changing political, security and climatic conditions.

- The unstable context in *South Sudan* gave unique challenges in terms of responsiveness. Here, the Right2Grow programme design was deeply contextualised to address the dual burden of conflict-induced fragility and chronic food and water insecurity. The programme empowered communities through civil society networks, mother-to-mother support groups (MtMSG) and youth associations, enabling local ownership of nutrition and hygiene promotion activities.

Community members actively participated in hygiene awareness campaigns, monitored WASH facilities, and engaged in advocacy dialogues with county authorities. In flood-prone areas, Right2Grow supported communities in the self-construction of raised latrines, the distribution of water purification tablets, and the promotion of safe storage to protect households from waterborne diseases.

Adaptive programme management enabled the programme to operate effectively despite population displacement and infrastructure losses. Local CSOs acted as intermediaries between government service providers and affected communities, ensuring the continuity of nutritional counselling and WASH facility maintenance.

Through these locally rooted partnerships, Right2Grow did fill some immediate service gaps but also strengthened social capital and accountability in governance, which is a critical achievement in the fragile environment of South Sudan.

The Child Rights Coalition and consortium partners presented BMET evidence to Members of Parliament, resulting in increased budget attention to nutrition and WASH priorities and routine engagement with budget committees, demonstrating growing receptiveness to civil society evidence

- The *Uganda* programme design and implementation integrated community engagement, policy advocacy and gender inclusion into local government structures, particularly in the districts of Kabale, Kakumiro and Arua.

Through community scorecards, school clubs and parish-level dialogue platforms, citizens directly influenced district decisions on investments in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and nutrition. For example, youth advocacy was associated with the recruitment of health personnel and the rehabilitation of water points, while women's groups advanced sanitation regulations and improved domestic hygiene.

Right2Grow has also built inclusivity into its approach by ensuring that WASH infrastructure is gender- and disability-sensitive, featuring accessible latrines and water points. Influenced by community input, district governments have begun to integrate nutrition-sensitive agriculture and climate-resilient WASH systems into their district development plans (DDPs) and district nutrition action plans (DNAPs).

By institutionalising accountability, Uganda has shifted community responsiveness from project-based engagement to a practice of systemic governance, ensuring the continuity of citizen participation beyond the programme's duration.

5. Effectiveness

This chapter examines the effectiveness of the Right2Grow programme. For each of the pathways of the Theory of Change, this chapter reports the conducted interventions, the achieved outputs and the achieved outcomes. The intended outcomes as according to the programme Theory of Change are reported as well as the unintended outcomes, both positive and negative. The information mainly comes from the in-country data collection and is supported with the programme's monitoring evidence, harvested outcomes and results of the Mutual Capacity Development survey and the Linking & Learning survey. The harvested outcomes are visualised as an Evidence Gap Map showcasing where in the Theory of Change the programme has recorded outcomes. Next, for each pathway, the effectiveness of strategies deployed by the programme are assessed, providing a more thorough understanding that builds on the contribution analysis conducted. This section focuses on the hotspots as selected during the inception phase. The chapter then addresses the indications of contribution towards the planned development impact of the programme. Lastly, the chapter reflects on the effectiveness of integrating the cross-cutting themes of gender, youth, and climate.

5.1. Pathway 1 - **Communities** demand and invest in basic social services and adopt good nutrition and WASH practices, jointly addressing barriers with private sector partners

5.1.1. Changes achieved

In pathway 1, the programme reached communities directly, and community-based organisations involved in the programme were particularly able to indirectly reach many people in communities. Companies and local sector actors were engaged to develop innovative business models, services and products. This community mobilisation and private sector engagement were clearly associated with behavioural and social change at the community level. Communities not only became more aware of the importance of nutrition and WASH, but also reported corresponding changes in practice, translating that awareness into action, supported by CBOs and local entrepreneurs. This suggests that when communities are equipped with the proper knowledge, tools, and partnerships, they can effectively demand services, address barriers, and invest in sustainable practices that improve nutrition and WASH outcomes.

Through pathway 1, the Right2Grow partnership supported community mobilisation to claim the right to nutrition and WASH services. The activities focused on raising awareness, encouraging behavioural change, and empowering families and local communities to demand accountability from relevant stakeholders. Participatory approaches, such as community scorecards⁴ and local budget monitoring, were used as tools for communities to identify and address barriers to good nutrition and hygiene. The programme also facilitated collaboration with the local private sector involved in nutrition, water and sanitation services. In addition, it provided direct support and training to entrepreneurs to help them expand supply. In several countries, such as Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Mali and Uganda, these activities were carried out in partnership with local authorities and community-based organisations to strengthen collective action on WASH and nutrition practices and ensure access to basic services and products.

Annex 1 and the table below show the output indicators for this pathway until September 2025 for the countries that use these indicators (Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Mali, South Sudan and Uganda). They show that the programme was able to reach over 800,000 people directly and over 9.5 million people indirectly. Communities formulated 1,311 actions to demand improved WASH and nutrition services, and 675 barriers were reported as addressed through joint efforts of communities, governments and private sector actors. Collaboration with civil society was extensive, with 47 core CSOs and over 1,000 Tier 3 organisations engaged, contributing to local ownership and sustainability. Examples of direct reach include people who have been involved in activities aimed at temporary or partial improvement of their nutritional situation or children admitted to malnutrition treatment programmes in community health centres. Examples of indirect reach include people who participated in training or awareness-raising activities organised by the programme or who were affected by improvements made to (access to) WASH and nutrition services. For example, in Ethiopia over 1.8 million people were indirectly reached through the improvement of public nutrition services. These numbers show that the programme achieved wide reach across communities in the

⁴ A community scorecard is a participatory tool used to monitor and improve the quality of public services by bringing together citizens and service providers

different programme countries, while also supporting communities to claim rights, remove barriers, and co-create solutions with local entrepreneurs and private sector actors.

Table 6: Indicators and achievements under Pathway 1

Indicator	Baseline	Overall target	2025 Actual	Cumulative achievement
R2G.OC.1.1: # of actions in which communities formulate demands for improved (WASH and nutrition) services	0	N/A	325	1,311
R2G.OC.1.2: # of barriers to good nutrition and WASH services successfully addressed by joint community, government and/or private sector initiatives	0	N/A	207	675
R2G.OP. 1.1: # of CSOs involved in Right2Grow	0	47	47 (Tier 1 & 2) 1,013 (Tier 3)	47 (Tier 1 & 2) 1,063 (Tier 3)

Table 7: Indicators for this pathway, per country (Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Mali, South Sudan, and Uganda)

#	IGG Indicators	Aggregated actuals 2024
A.2.2	Number of people directly reached with activities aimed at temporary/partial improvement of their nutritional situation	822.684
A.2.3	Number of people indirectly reached	9.575.610
2.1	Number of companies engaged in inclusive agribusiness	142

Equally, the programme's collaboration with 142 private sector organisations demonstrates that the private sector can enhance impact at the community level. In Bangladesh, more than 150 private sector actors were engaged in distributing affordable products, ranging from nutrient powders to sanitary napkins, to families in villages.

Data collection and programme documentation showed significant examples of how these outputs were translated into outcomes under this pathway.

- In *Bangladesh*, community mobilisation activities were implemented across programme areas, and several concrete achievements were recorded. A total of 235 villages were designated as Healthy Villages, reflecting adherence to nine hygiene and nutrition-related criteria. In addition, an estimated 191,920 households, around 87% of the target demographic, gained access to improved sanitation facilities. The programme also strengthened local capacity by training 201 local entrepreneurs, including 122 women, to produce and distribute essential WASH and nutrition products to the market at affordable prices. Further improvements were made through the establishment of Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) corners in schools and the installation of handwashing stations for ultra-poor households. Alongside these outputs, several positive trends in health and nutrition outcomes were observed during the same period, although these cannot be attributed to the programme alone. Between 2022 and 2024, the prevalence of stunting among children under five in the programme area declined from 36% to 21%, accompanied by reductions in underweight (from 27% to 18%) and wasting (from 14% to 13%).
- In *Burkina Faso*, the efforts of community groups to raise awareness and advocate for change have coincided with concrete higher access to services. The population covered through WASH and nutrition awareness campaigns reached 2.5 million people. Physical WASH infrastructure (boreholes, latrines, waste centres) expanded access for thousands of households (exact number not provided), particularly in insecure zones. An example of this is the installation of a human-powered pump in Boulssa, which has provided safe drinking water to more than 1,000 people. At the same time, nationwide approximately 75% of the households still practice open defecation.
- In *Mali*, awareness and advocacy campaigns mobilised over 133,000 citizens, 60% youth, through digital platforms promoting appropriate and efficient hygiene and nutrition practices. A total of 154 radio messages were broadcasted, and community dialogues were undertaken to increase awareness of nutrition and good

hygiene practices. Further, there was rehabilitation/construction of multiple water points with support of the community and CSO advocacy and the actual coordination, financing, and execution were done by local authorities, latrines, and waste disposal systems across target communes (exact number varies by district, typically 2–4 per commune), several schools and health centres were equipped with functional handwashing stations and gender-separated latrines, and community-managed WASH facilities improved through training of local maintenance committees. More than 20 small enterprises were trained and linked to local markets for the supply of hygiene materials and safe water equipment. Local fairs were also organised, where nutritious products were showcased and women's participation was supported. The efforts to incorporate a gender-mainstreaming perspective have also contributed to the development of more inclusive planning processes at the municipal level.

- In *South Sudan*, there has been a notable expansion of Mother-to-Mother Support Groups, with an increase from five to fifteen groups within a single year for the selected sites assessed. These groups played a crucial role in enhancing children's nutrition through the implementation of kitchen gardens and dietary diversification. Local government further bolstered these initiatives by allocating land to women's groups for vegetable cultivation. Following community awareness activities (for which 45 local actors were trained), communities reported cleaner compounds, more regular hand washing, and a reduction in hygiene-related illnesses. Water Users Committees, of which at least 12 were trained, successfully maintained boreholes, enhancing ownership and sustainability.
- In *Uganda*, community dialogues with district authorities contributed to concrete service delivery improvements. Over 60 WASH facilities (water points, boreholes, and latrines) were constructed or rehabilitated in programme districts. Water-user committees were established and trained in all targeted sub-counties for borehole management. School-based WASH interventions were introduced in at least 20 schools, supporting hygiene and sanitation for pupils. Sub-counties also allocated funds for the procurement of seeds with a view to promoting school and household gardens. Concurrently, the establishment of four district-level SUN Business Networks aimed to strengthen private sector (574 businesses) involvement in nutrition.
- In *Ethiopia*, communities reported increased awareness of their rights and responsibilities in WASH and nutrition, and this was accompanied by instances of collective, locally driven action. Through Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) Task Forces, communities identified local service gaps and implemented practical solutions - such as constructing latrines and handwashing stations, establishing backyard gardens for child nutrition, and rehabilitating water points to improve access to clean water. These actions were associated with signs of stronger community ownership, improved hygiene and sanitation, and may have enhanced local food security. Community-led advocacy was highly active, with over 330 initiatives and nearly 300 completed action items addressing local WASH and nutrition barriers. Collaborative efforts with service providers contributed to tangible improvements - rehabilitated water systems, accessible and gender-sensitive facilities, and expanded WASH services. The formation of 124 CVA groups provided a platform through which citizens could engage in monitoring service delivery, promoting accountability, and sustain positive behavioural changes in hygiene and child feeding practices. Overall, these grassroots initiatives substantially contributed to local capacity development and civic engagement, pointing to a positive shift in community wellbeing. Over 60 WASH facilities (water points, sanitation units, and health post latrines) were rehabilitated. Also, 20 villages were declared Open Defecation Free after community-led sanitation campaigns. The introduction of affordable SATO toilet pans created new sanitation options, reaching 1,500 households. Additionally, 50 private sector actors were supported to provide WASH and nutrition services, and 72 were trained and supported to produce and sell hygiene products (e.g., soap, toilet slabs, poultry inputs).

Furthermore, results from the survey, KIIs and the FGDs, point to communities not only becoming more aware of the importance of nutrition and WASH, but also translating that awareness into action, supported by CBOs and local entrepreneurs. The Evidence Gap Map, created based on harvested outcomes under this pathway up until 2024, also illustrates this view that the programme contributed to achieving outcomes on all levels of this pathway. Community testimonies confirm how output indicators were translated into outcomes. In Bangladesh, households reported that 93% had



Figure 3: Pathway 1

adopted improved WASH and nutrition practices. In South Sudan, women participating in Mother-to-Mother groups have reported how awareness activities have enabled them to save a malnourished child's life. Simultaneously, youth leaders in Bor, South Sudan elaborated how they were now teaching hygiene practices in their own communities. This is an example of how engagement could have built agency and leadership among younger generations.

The outcomes suggest that private sector collaboration has the potential to enhance service provision and access and contribute to local livelihoods. For example, in Ethiopia, awareness campaigns have been implemented to stimulate demand for affordable sanitation and nutrition products, which encouraged the growth of local enterprises producing liquid soap, poultry and fish. Local businesses reported growth and hiring more staff.

When considered as a whole, the numbers and stories confirm that the programme was effective in reaching communities and contributes to driving behavioural and social change. It not only mobilised communities and engaged the private sector (agribusinesses) but also enabled community-based organisations to indirectly reach more people. Communities reported increased awareness of the importance of nutrition and WASH, and translated that awareness into action, supported by CBOs and local entrepreneurs. These achievements point to the idea that when communities are equipped with the right knowledge, tools, and partnerships, they may demand services, address barriers, and invest in sustainable practices that improve nutrition and WASH outcomes.

5.1.2. Unintended effects

While the programme contributed to the effects it aimed to achieve under this pathway, unintended effects also emerged. These included overburdening partners, disrupting informal livelihoods, and affecting traditional leadership dynamics, alongside some positive unintended effects.

Under Pathway 1, the evidence suggests that community mobilisation and awareness-raising efforts were associated with their intended results, and that a range of unintended outcomes also emerged, some positive and some more challenging.

- In *Bangladesh*, for example, increased awareness of nutrition and WASH was accompanied by broader social spillovers. Parents reportedly became more supportive of their children's education, there were accounts of decline in child marriage, and children were found to be more involved in extracurricular activities. In terms of governance, Union Parishads started collaborating with CSOs to identify households for social protection programmes. These outcomes extended beyond the programme's direct objectives, suggesting that stronger community agency may lead to broader improvements in well-being and inclusion.
- In *South Sudan*, the unintended effects observed in relation to this pathway varied. In several locations, small traders and informal market actors felt that their products were being overlooked when programme-supported activities promoted hygiene and nutrition items sourced from external partners or distributed during community campaigns. Although Right2Grow was not a service delivery programme, the visibility of NGO-led mobilisation events and reliance on externally procured demonstration items sometimes created the impression that locally available goods were less relevant. This perception, rather than direct substitution, contributed to feelings of being sidelined, highlighting gaps in the intended private sector engagement under the Theory of Change. Closer collaboration with local traders, which was part of the ToC's private sector output, could have helped mitigate these unintended effects by ensuring that demonstrations and sensitisation campaigns deliberately linked communities to nearby suppliers. For women running small informal businesses, participation in multiple community meetings, training sessions, and awareness campaigns contributed to occasional disruptions in their income-generating activities, which may have resulted in short-term financial losses. Young people reported that they had benefited from enhanced advocacy and leadership skills through programme structures. However, they also expressed frustration that these skills had not translated into concrete livelihood or employment opportunities in the short term, highlighting a gap between increased civic engagement and economic prospects. In some communities, traditional leaders felt that their influence was being challenged as the authority of newly formed project committees increased in coordination and decision-making spaces. While these structures aimed to strengthen community engagement, they occasionally contributed to the creation of tension with established governance arrangements, highlighting the need for clearer role definitions and the more deliberate inclusion of traditional authorities.
- In *Mali*, extra unpaid workload for women was reported as the result of Right2Grow activities. It also contributed to increase administrative pressure on the communities because of planning requirements.
- In *Ethiopia*, however, the ripple effects reported were largely positive in economic terms. Community demand, generated through awareness and behaviour change activities, contributed to the growth of local enterprises

producing liquid soap, poultry, fish and SATO slabs. One entrepreneur in Habro (Oromia) reported the creation of eight new jobs for previously unemployed youth.

- In *Uganda*, an unexpected but positive effect was the integration of community monitors into formal government systems. Initially seen as temporary volunteers, they are now recognised as legitimate actors in local governance, actively participating in planning and budget meetings and influencing resource allocation for nutrition and WASH. This shift was associated with concrete improvements, such as cleaning contaminated water sources and securing protected budget lines for boreholes, and has become embedded in routine government processes, which may support sustainability beyond the programme. Gender dynamics show signs of evolution: early identity-based engagement gave way to shared leadership and joint requests, strengthening inclusive decision-making. At the same time, challenges emerged, including resistance from health facility staff to financial oversight and persistent behavioural barriers among pregnant women reluctant to seek early antenatal care, highlighting the need for formal recognition of monitors and more targeted strategies to address entrenched norms.

Overall, these findings suggest that, while Right2Grow generated notable social and economic benefits, such as reduced child marriage, stronger social protection linkages, and job creation for young people, it was also linked to risks, including overburdening partners, disrupting informal livelihoods, and disturbing traditional leadership dynamics. Recognising and addressing these effects will be crucial to designing more balanced and sustainable community-level interventions in future.

5.1.3. Effectiveness of programme strategies

This section provides a deep dive to further understand the effectiveness of programme strategies through a contribution analysis of the selected hotspots.

In this pathway, community-driven accountability and learning appeared to be the most powerful levers of change for communities across all contexts. Lasting changes were observed where communities moved beyond awareness to genuine participation and shared accountability. When people were empowered to plan, act, and monitor together with local authorities, knowledge appeared to translate into ownership, and signs of sustained improvements in health, nutrition, and local systems were reported.

The following link was selected by the programme to be further examined in depth:

Hotspot: If communities are aware of small doable actions and put them into practice (informed by mobilisation efforts around better nutrition and WASH), then communities demand and invest in basic social services and apply good nutrition and WASH practices.

The table below presents contribution stories from *Ethiopia*, *Mali*, and *South Sudan*, illustrating how the programme contributed to communities becoming aware of small doable actions for nutrition and WASH and translating this awareness into collective demand, investment, and practice. Each contribution story highlights how local actors mobilised to improve hygiene, food security, and nutrition outcomes. The entries summarise the programme's core interventions, the mechanisms linking activities to results, and the contextual enablers or barriers that shaped progress. The full contribution stories can be found in the country reports.

Table 8: Contribution stories from Ethiopia, Mali, and Sudan

Country	Headline Contribution Story	Core Interventions	Mechanisms (M) → Outcomes (O)	Context
Ethiopia	Communities transformed from passive recipients to active monitors and co-investors in WASH and nutrition services.	Citizen Voice & Action (CVA); advocacy training; community dialogues; private sector engagement.	M: CVA task forces, rights awareness, joint monitoring → O: 322 gov't commitments implemented, improved WASH facilities, increased local ownership, accountability and resource mobilisation.	Semi-open civic space, decentralised governance; high community organisation.
Ethiopia	Gender and inclusion norms shifted through participatory nutrition and WASH awareness activities.	Gender-sensitive CVA, nutrition demonstrations, inclusive community forums.	M: Dialogue, equitable role modelling → O: Men's engagement in caregiving, reduction in stigma, stronger women participation.	Culturally conservative, but locally adaptive with faith/traditional leader engagement.
Mali	Strengthened food security and WASH adoption through community-based production and women-led processing initiatives.	Nutrition & hygiene awareness; women's groups; agroforestry and cereal banks; BESEYA platform.	M: Collective action, local resource mobilisation → O: Increased food availability, school canteens, improved hygiene, access to water and sanitation and nutrition practices.	Decentralised governance, resource-limited but socially cohesive rural areas.
Mali	Women's networks and savings groups drove economic and nutritional empowerment.	Women's savings and credit groups; value chain development; train-the-trainer on agrifood-processing	M: Economic empowerment, peer learning → O: Improved household nutrition, women-led microenterprises.	Moderate civic space, strong community structures, weak formal markets without certification processes
South Sudan	Mother-to-Mother Support Groups (M2MSGs) transformed knowledge into lifesaving community action.	M2MSG formation; WASH & nutrition training; peer-to-peer support.	M: Peer learning, solidarity networks → O: Child recovery from malnutrition, improved feeding practices, increased household resilience.	Fragile, humanitarian setting with limited government service delivery.
South Sudan	Community dialogues and awareness campaigns reduced harmful social norms and improved food equity.	Awareness campaigns, engagement with chiefs/church leaders, local CSO facilitation.	M: Norm change through trusted local voices → O: Abandonment of food and gender taboos, improved child and maternal diets.	Conservative cultural norms, low literacy, strong traditional authority.
South Sudan	School-level interventions catalysed hygiene improvements and student-led advocacy.	School WASH committees, awareness campaigns schools, nutrition education, budget engagement.	M: Youth empowerment and accountability → O: Institutionalised hygiene routines, improved diets, student advocacy.	Urban/semi-urban schools, limited rural outreach.

Comparative analysis

In all three countries where this evaluation concentrated on this hotspot, observed changes were linked to community empowerment, accountability, and behavioural change mechanisms that contributed to turn knowledge into practice and practice into ownership. The programme moved beyond awareness-raising by embedding agency within communities, with citizens increasingly participating as partners in planning, monitoring, and resourcing services.

- In *Ethiopia*, Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) created a bridge between community awareness and government accountability. Communities monitored services, held dialogues with local authorities, and co-financed improvements, resulting in over 322 government commitments fulfilled, improved health facilities, and stronger WASH systems.
- In *Mali*, awareness was coupled with women's leadership and local resource mobilisation. Women's groups, cereal banks, and savings associations transformed knowledge into tangible contributions - community food donations, school canteens, and local agroforestry initiatives. These actions linked improved nutrition to livelihood gains and social cohesion.
- In *South Sudan*, progress appeared to develop through peer learning and social solidarity. Mother-to-Mother Support Groups (M2MSGs) and community campaigns provided examples of how collective knowledge could directly save lives and shift gender norms. Traditional leaders and youth reinforced these practices, creating local solutions that people could manage themselves, even in fragile conditions.

Which mechanisms drove outcomes

Several mechanisms consistently contributed to influence outcomes across diverse contexts:

- **Informal learning and peer-to-peer diffusion:** Repeated across all three countries, this mechanism linked with both knowledge uptake and behavioural adoption. Peer groups (e.g. Mother-to-Mother in South Sudan, women's groups in Mali) created safe spaces for shared learning about hygiene, diet, and child feeding. People reported results among their peers (improved child nutrition, home gardens, clean water points) and motivated each other, which helped legitimize new practices and triggers replication.
- **Joint planning and interface between citizens and authorities:** This mechanism dominated in Ethiopia and parts of Mali. Through CVA and scorecards, communities and local officials co-created service improvement plans. The process supported mutual accountability and often led to formal government commitments or budget allocations.
- **Local resource mobilisation and self-reliance:** Where formal institutions are weak, communities compensated by pooling resources or reviving traditional support systems, such as cereal banks, school canteens, and joint action plans. Through them, communities not only demanded services but also co-invested in them. This dual role as users and contributors appeared to support ownership and continuity in service delivery.
- **Accountability and interface mechanisms:** Platforms such as CVA and community scorecards in Ethiopia bridged citizens and government, creating direct feedback loops. These mechanisms contributed to transparency, linked to measurable improvements in staffing, infrastructure, and service delivery.
- **Gender and norm change through trusted dialogue:** Awareness campaigns in South Sudan and Ethiopia that involved men in caregiving and nutrition contributed to changes in social norms, expanding who participates in health and hygiene practices and improving outcomes for women and children. They were driven by safe, inclusive dialogue facilitated by respected local actors.

Together, these mechanisms demonstrate that awareness alone is insufficient. It becomes transformative when embedded in social structures that enable a dynamic chain: participation, dialogue, grow in confidence, action and shared accountability.

Which contexts enable or constrain these mechanisms

The enabling or constraining factors varied by governance structure, civic space, and local capacity:

- **Enabling contexts** (Ethiopia, parts of Mali): Strong local governance structures and active CSO - government collaboration linked to an environment where citizen feedback led to real government action. Communities could channel their demands through institutionalized mechanisms.
- **Semi-open or low-resource contexts** (Mali, rural Ethiopia): "Semi-open civic spaces" means places or situations where people can participate in public life and express opinions, but with some limits or restrictions. Even with limited formal structures, social cohesion, women's networks, and traditional leadership contributed

to create pathways for progress. However, scaling remained dependent on local champions and small-scale resource mobilization.

- **Fragile and conservative contexts** (South Sudan): Despite weak institutions, trust-based relationships and community solidarity were linked to the diffusion of small doable actions. However, sustainability remains vulnerable to political instability, resource scarcity, and cultural resistance in some areas.

In essence, mechanisms may thrive when civic actors can organize collectively and when local governance (formal or informal) responds to citizen voice. Where civic space is narrow or systems are weak, mechanisms depend more on social trust and informal leadership.

Which mechanisms work best in which context

The contribution stories show that while similar interventions were used across countries, their effectiveness depended strongly on the surrounding context. The table is a first attempt to create an overview of which mechanisms contributed most effectively in different civic, social and information environments, and the typical outcomes they enabled. This overview can inform future programming choices, while also guiding future research to further test and validate these context–mechanism links.

Table 9: First attempt to create an overview of which mechanisms proved most effective (per civic, social, and information environments) and the typical outcomes they enabled.

Context archetype	Mechanisms (top 2–3)	Typical outcomes you can expect
Restrictive / conservative (low civic space, strong gatekeepers)	Work through trusted intermediaries (religious/community leaders); integrate messages into existing social structures; emphasize non-confrontational, family-centred dialogue.	Gradual awareness and acceptance of new WASH/nutrition practices; small, private behaviour changes; cautious community engagement; reduced resistance.
Semi-open with cooperative/ local government	Partner with teachers, health workers, women-groups and local officials; use participatory school and community sessions; link with existing government campaigns.	Increased knowledge and visible small actions; stronger local ownership; growing public demand for basic services.
Urban / peri-urban, high connectivity	Use digital and peer-to-peer communication; social media and awareness campaigns.	Rapid awareness spread; visible community initiatives; stronger collective voice for improved WASH and nutrition services.
Rural / low-connectivity	Facilitate in-person community dialogues; engage local volunteers and traditional networks; use visual and demonstration-based learning.	Consistent small behaviour changes on food security and hygiene; improved household practices; gradual mobilization for local service improvements.
Frequent backlash / misinformation	Strengthen trust through transparent and targeted communication; trusted community dialogues; pre-test messages; engage local religious/traditional leaders to counter rumours.	Reduced misinformation; maintained community confidence; sustained small-scale action despite resistance; inclusive participation; improved gender equity in nutrition practices.

5.2. Pathway 2 - Representative and empowered **civil society organizations (CSOs)** effectively navigate the civic space to advocate for leadership and good governance to prevent undernutrition

5.2.1. Changes achieved

In pathway 2, through developing or strengthening capacities in budget monitoring, policy analysis, and collective action, civil society organisations (CSOs) across six countries appear to have considerably strengthened their ability to influence decision-making and promote accountability. These efforts contributed to nutrition and WASH priorities increasingly being reflected in government policy agendas and financial processes.

The second pathway focused on strengthening the capacity and influence of civil society organisations (CSOs) to operate effectively within civic space and advocate for inclusive, multi-sectoral and accountable governance. These activities, depending on the country and setting, comprised as minimum training on budget analysis, evidence-based advocacy and engagement with media actors. CSOs were supported to form or participate in coalitions and networks focusing on nutrition and WASH governance. In Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Mali and Ethiopia, country teams worked with community groups, journalist associations and different platforms to facilitate dialogue with government representatives and coordinated advocacy plans at local and national level. Through these initiatives, media actors and different CSOs engaged in structured exchanges with authorities, contributing to policy discussions and public debates on nutrition and WASH.

Annex 1 and the table below show that the programme involved 47 CSOs in the partnership, exceeding the target. Right2Grow strengthened the capacities of all these CSOs, contributing substantially to increased Lobby and Advocacy capacities. The Mutual Capacity Development (MCD) endline survey, completed by 114 programme staff and 83 senior and mid-level managers of these local CSOs, confirms this progress. Respondents reported significant improvements in technical knowledge and skills across all programme outcomes. Notably, CSOs gained confidence in applying tools such as Budget Monitoring and Expenditure Tracking (BMET), Bridge4Voices⁵, and Citizen Voice and Action (CVA). These tools were not only learned but actively applied in real-world advocacy, contributing to the programme's strong performance on key indicators.

Table 10: Overview of involvement of 47 CSOs in the partnership

Indicator	Baseline	Overall target	2025 Actual	Cumulative achievement
SCS031: # of times that CSOs succeed in creating space for CSO demands and positions through agenda setting, influencing the debate and/or creating space to engage at national and international level	0	159	77	340
SCS032: # of times that CSOs succeed in creating space for CSO demands and positions through agenda setting, influencing the debate and/or creating space to engage at sub-national level	0	604	189	745
SCS041: # of advocacy initiatives carried out by CSOs, for, by or with their membership/constituency at national and international level	0	250	49	252
SCS042: # of advocacy initiatives carried out by CSOs, for, by or with their membership/constituency at sub-national level	0	519	109	512
SCS053: # of other CSOs (not youth or women led) with increased L&A capacities	0	47	47 (Tier 1 & 2) 1,013 (Tier 3)	47 (Tier 1 & 2) 1,063 (Tier 3)
SCS6 R2G.OP.1.1 (# of CSOs (not youth or women led) involved in SPs programmes)	0	47	47	47

An analysis of the capacity assessment shows that nearly 50% of respondents now identify as experts in advocacy-related skills, while high training needs dropped to 8.4% compared to baseline levels. Furthermore, 91% of participants reported that MCD activities met or exceeded expectations, and 95% expressed confidence that the

⁵ **Bridge4Voices (B4V)** is an **advocacy and social accountability approach** used in the *Right2Grow (R2G)* programme across multiple countries. It is designed to bridge community voices with decision-makers in a structured, evidence-driven way so that citizen concerns - especially about nutrition, WASH, and child wellbeing - influence government policies, budgets, and services.

skills gained will be sustained beyond the programme. These findings point to capacity strengthening being a critical enabler for CSOs to transition from ad-hoc engagement to structured, evidence-driven advocacy.

Table 10 also shows that, by 2025, CSOs had implemented 252 national-level advocacy initiatives and 512 at the sub-national level, demonstrating that civil society actors not only met but exceeded their targets, with evidence suggesting moving from ad-hoc engagement to sustained, evidence-based advocacy may have shaped policy agendas and supported space for citizen demands at multiple governance levels. These efforts were associated with CSOs creating space for civil society demands and positions 340 times at national and international levels (and 745 times at the sub-national level).

Data collection and programme documentation suggest that, across the programme, civil society organisations (CSOs) have gradually moved from ad-hoc engagement to more structured and sustained dialogues with government actors. This shift has been supported by strengthened evidence use, enhanced budget-tracking capacities, and broader inclusion of vulnerable groups in advocacy initiatives. These developments have contributed to improving CSOs' legitimacy and capacity to represent and advocate for the concerns of marginalised communities.

The link between inclusive engagement and strengthened legitimacy and capacity is apparent in multiple country contexts. By widening their constituencies to include women, youth and grassroots actors, CSOs may have become more representative and credible in the eyes of both communities and decision-makers. This contributed to enhanced legitimacy created openings for more strategic engagement, while the inclusion of diverse perspectives also contributed to capacity strengthening, through peer learning, practical application, and access to new knowledge and networks.

- In *Bangladesh*, 378 CSOs and over 7,000 members (60% women) were trained in budget monitoring and expenditure tracking, lobbying, and the Right2Grow L&A approach 'Bridge4Voices'. By combining expenditure data with service quality evidence, they engaged local authorities through open budget sessions and joint action plan reviews. These efforts are linked to increased district allocations for child nutrition and strengthened national coordination through a CSO platform, created by Right2Grow.
- A similar pattern can be seen in *Burkina Faso*, where advocacy groups gained tools for analysing local budgets and designing annual advocacy plans. By formulating precise requests and maintaining regular follow-up with government representatives, they contributed to communes increasing nutrition allocations and encouraging provincial authorities in Loroum to dedicate resources from their own revenues. This process may have also brought grassroots actors, including women's associations, into formal policy and budget planning spaces, contributing to enhance inclusivity and accountability.
- In *Ethiopia*, collaboration with national platforms such as CCRDA and ECSC-SUN facilitated joint advocacy spaces uniting CSOs, government representatives, and media professionals. These forums contributed to strengthen the collective voice on nutrition and WASH, harmonize regional asks, and enable CSOs to present comparable analyses on budget tracking and service gaps, which policymakers could act upon. Similarly, in *Mali*, journalist networks and parliamentary groups on WASH and nutrition contributed to translating new constitutional and policy frameworks into actionable steps. CSOs leveraged these openings to advocate for sanitation improvements and dedicated budget lines at the commune level.
- In *Mali*, CSOs successfully advocated for the integration of nutrition and WASH into local development plans and municipal budgets. Advocacy led by a Right2Grow-aligned coalition contributed to the constitutional recognition of the right to food and water and helped build strong relationships with parliamentarians and journalists to sustain engagement.
- In *Uganda*, CSOs played an important role in national policy debates, including lobbying for the Food and Nutrition Bill and updating the 2003 Nutrition Policy. CSOs in Uganda led technical advocacy on the Food and Nutrition Bill by developing and presenting position papers to the Parliamentary Committee on Food and Nutrition Security, as well as holding a targeted lobby meeting with the Speaker of Parliament. This contributed to the Bill being tabled, and the mover being granted leave to advance it. CSOs also influenced the review of the 2003 National Nutrition Policy. They did this by organising a joint press briefing, which prompted government-led consultations to update the policy. They also contributed to the revision of the Nutrition Planning Guidelines. Three of the CSOs' proposals, on accountability, multisectoral planning, and routine needs assessments, were formally adopted. At district level, persistent advocacy was associated with the recruitment of nutritionists and health assistants, which supported to embedding accountability mechanisms through regular performance reviews. CSOs also influenced parliamentary budget processes, with 18 out of 26 of their recommendations adopted into the national budget.

- In *South Sudan*, coalitions like the Jonglei Civil Society Network and Voice of Women have built capacities in budget analysis and citizen accountability. Their campaigns contributed to increases in the national WASH budget, while youth-focused initiatives contributed to empower young people to monitor commitments and engage leaders, broadening constituencies and normalizing citizen oversight.

These examples demonstrate that inclusive constituency building was not only a matter of representation, but it also enabled CSOs to build trust, access new knowledge, and engage more effectively with decision-makers, strengthening both their legitimacy and capacity.

The Evidence Gap Map of harvested outcomes until 2024 shows that, on the outcomes level, evidence has been collected by the programme that CBOs and CSOs regularly engage with local governments and that this has contributed to CSOs being able to navigate civic space and creating spaces for advocacy on WASH and nutrition. However, it provides limited evidence on capacity and legitimacy. The Mutual Capacity Development survey results help fill this gap by offering data on both dimensions. The survey results show that CSOs not only improved their technical knowledge but also strengthened their legitimacy through inclusive engagement strategies. By involving women, youth, and grassroots actors, CSOs were seen as more representative and credible in the eyes of both communities and decision-makers. This enhanced legitimacy supported more strategic engagement and contributed to CSOs assuming the four fundamental roles of civil society: representational, communicative, educational, and cooperative. These roles were not only theoretical but actively practiced, as observed by CSOs' ability to convene dialogues, mobilise constituencies, and collaborate across sectors. The organisational development self-assessment further supports these findings highlighting strengthened grassroots embeddedness, participatory governance and downward accountability.



Figure 4: Pathway 2

In addition to technical capacity strengthening, CSOs appear to have developed skills on how to improve documenting, sharing and using tacit/informal knowledge. CSOs led the writing of 40 learning briefs on Right2Grow activities capturing lessons learned to support activity replication or adaptation. The Linking & Learning survey confirms these trends and adds that learning has become an intentional, structured process across the consortium, with 90% of respondents reporting that learning is now embedded in implementation and monitoring. Tools such as the Learning Catalogue and cross-country exchanges have contributed to more institutionalized knowledge sharing and adaptive management, ensuring that lessons from field experience inform programme design and advocacy strategies. Taken together, these examples illustrate how CSOs across contexts may have progressively strengthened their capacity to influence policy and practice. By combining evidence-based advocacy with strategic engagement and inclusive representation, they have contributed to both increased resource allocation and better governance, demonstrating that sustained, coordinated civil society action can have tangible impacts on nutrition and WASH outcomes.

5.2.2. Unintended/unexpected effects

While increased visibility of CSOs has contributed to greater legitimacy, fostering further forms of collaboration and trust with different government actors, it also unintentionally exposed tensions, capacity gaps and coordination challenges within politically unstable and shrinking civic spaces.

While progress was observed across countries, the evaluation also surfaced a range of unintended effects regarding this pathway that offer valuable lessons. In several contexts, increased visibility and strengthened advocacy capacity were associated with enhanced CSO influence, but also introduced new tensions, because of the shrinking civic space in many countries.

In *South Sudan*, the evaluation found that, early in the programme, some government officials perceived budget scrutiny led by CSOs as confrontational, particularly when newly trained organisations began to question allocations more assertively. This created moments of tension initially and signalled the need for continued relationship-building and clarity around roles in accountability processes. However, these concerns diminished over time as trust between civil society and government counterparts deepened. By the end of the programme, the Ministry of Finance was proactively sharing budget documents and expenditure data with the CRC and other CSOs, suggesting that

scrutiny was increasingly viewed as constructive rather than adversarial. This shift points to how an initial challenge evolved into a significant success, with CSOs gaining legitimacy as credible partners in transparency and budget monitoring. Meanwhile, smaller CSOs still struggled at times to meet the rising expectations associated with these new accountability roles, highlighting the need for differentiated capacity support as civic-space engagement expands.

In *Ethiopia*, administrative restructuring and civic space volatility disrupted coordination and constrained advocacy efforts, compounded by high government staff turnover and fragmented strategies among consortium partners. These dynamics weakened institutional continuity and reduced strategic coherence. At the same time, the underutilisation of knowledge platforms and limited access to reliable national data hindered evidence-based advocacy. In conflict-affected regions, a shift toward emergency response diluted long-term development goals.

Yet not all unintended effects were negative. In *Bangladesh*, local authorities began relying on CSOs to identify eligible community members for social protection schemes - an unplanned but positive shift in trust and collaboration.

Similarly, in *Burkina Faso*, trained CSOs emerged as knowledge multipliers, increasingly sought out by local authorities and other development actors for their ability to analyse budgets and explain multisectoral nutrition processes. This recognition went beyond the programme's original scope, contributing to strengthening their legitimacy in local governance spaces. However, the evaluation also found that the rapid increase in CSOs' technical roles had led to misunderstandings among some smaller, less established organisations. These groups sometimes assumed that deeper engagement with municipal planning or participation in consultation frameworks would be accompanied by additional financial or logistical support. When such support did not materialise, this led to unrealistic expectations, particularly among grassroots organisations that continued to struggle with financial management, proposal writing, and staff retention. As one representative noted, *'The training helped us, but we cannot always apply the knowledge because we lack resources and staff.'*

In *Mali* and *Uganda* no unintended or unexpected effects were reported in relation to Pathway 2.

5.2.3. Effectiveness of programme strategies

This section provides a deep dive to further understand the effectiveness of particular programme strategies through a contribution analysis of the selected hotspots.

In pathway 2, across the six countries, effectiveness was highest where CSOs were institutionally embedded in planning and budgeting processes. Using evidence-based advocacy tools and operating through coalitions contributed to trust and expertise. In restrictive or fragile contexts (such as South Sudan and Burkina Faso), adaptive mechanisms such as mentoring, alliance-building and non-confrontational dialogue were associated with efforts to maintain civic space and making sure that marginalised voices are presented in decision-making processes. Where civic space allowed sustained engagement with government systems, CSOs evolved from implementers to recognised partners supporting policy and accountability for nutrition and WASH.

The following link is examined in depth:

Causal hotspot: If CSOs regularly engage in programming and financial planning and have the legitimacy and capacity to voice the concerns of the marginalised and disempowered (supported by capacity building of technical skills and efforts to improve reach and widen constituencies), then CSOs effectively navigate the civic space to advocate for leadership and good governance to prevent undernutrition.

The table presents contribution stories from six countries illustrating how CSOs have strengthened their capacity, legitimacy, and influence to advocate for leadership and good governance in preventing undernutrition. Each entry highlights the specific interventions, mechanisms, and observed outcomes, while considering the enabling or constraining contextual factors. Multiple entries for the same country reflect the diverse ways different CSOs contributed, from grassroots advocacy to national policy influence. The full contribution stories can be found in the country reports.

Table 11: Contribution stories from six countries

Country	Headline Contribution Story	Core Interventions	Mechanisms (M) → Outcomes (O)	Context
Ethiopia	CSOs gain legitimacy and influence in national nutrition and WASH governance	Mutual Capacity Development (MCD), CVA, BMET, advocacy and coordination training, participation in ECSC-SUN and CCRDA platforms; technical and financial support for CSOs	M: CVA task forces, rights awareness, joint monitoring → O: 322 gov't commitments implemented, improved WASH facilities, increased local ownership, accountability and resource mobilisation.	Enabling civic space; supportive CSO Proclamation; strong coordination platforms
Mali	CSOs institutionalize accountability and transparency in local governance	Advocacy training, citizen monitoring committees (CVCs), budget engagement, journalist networks, women & youth platforms	M: Dialogue, equitable role modelling → O: Men's engagement in caregiving, reduction in stigma, stronger women participation.	Decentralized governance; semi-open civic space; limited local resources but strong community networks
South Sudan	CSOs move from local activism to policy influence and budget engagement	Leadership and advocacy training, mentoring, coalition-building, Linking & Learning platforms	M: Collective action, local resource mobilisation → O: Increased food availability, school canteens, improved hygiene, access to water and sanitation and nutrition practices.	Fragile governance, low resources, but high social trust; emerging civic space
South Sudan	Women-led CSOs gain credibility and representation in decision-making	Budget analysis and advocacy training, mentoring, networking events	M: Economic empowerment, peer learning → O: Improved household nutrition, women-led microenterprises.	Gender-conservative norms; fragile institutions
Bangladesh	CSOs emerge as credible actors influencing budgets and services for nutrition & WASH	Bridge4Voices (B4V), BMET, CVA, advocacy and communication training, local–national CSO linkages	M: Peer learning, solidarity networks → O: Child recovery from malnutrition, improved feeding practices, increased household resilience.	Semi-open governance, high civic engagement, strong local CSOs, but low financial sustainability
Bangladesh	CSOs bridge communities and government for inclusive development	CSO–government linkages, multi-sectoral planning, private sector engagement	M: Norm change through trusted local voices → O: Abandonment of food and gender taboos, improved child and maternal diets.	Politically dynamic; cooperative local governments; some social resistance
Burkina Faso	CSOs drive budget transparency and nutrition financing	BMET training, individual coaching, advocacy briefs, multi-sectorality workshops, Linking & Learning with Mali	M: Youth empowerment and accountability → O: Institutionalised hygiene routines, improved diets, student advocacy.	Limited CSO organisation; low initial funding; government openness to evidence-based dialogue
Uganda	CSOs and local governments institutionalize joint planning and budgeting for nutrition	DNCC strengthening, CVA, advocacy training, budget integration workshops		Semi-open local governance, strong decentralization framework
Uganda	CSO–government collaboration enhances community accountability	Civic engagement platforms, quarterly review meetings, radio talk shows		Cooperative local governments; active civic structures; some funding gaps

Comparative analysis

Across all six countries, the programme contributed to strengthening the ability of CSOs to engage meaningfully in governance, policy and budget processes. However, the way this happened varied depending on how open the government was to public participation, how developed the institutions were, and the traditions of civic engagement in each country.

In *Ethiopia*, the Right2Grow programme leveraged a relatively supportive legal and institutional framework (the CSO Proclamation) and coordination platforms such as ECSC-SUN to amplify CSO voices in national and local advocacy. Mechanisms such as Mutual Capacity Development (MCD), Citizen Voice and Action (CVA), and Budget Monitoring and Expenditure Tracking (BMET) helped transform CSOs from service providers into policy actors influencing national nutrition governance.

- In *Mali*, the approach focused on coalition-building and multi-stakeholder engagement, connecting CSOs, CBOs, parliamentarians, and journalists into a cohesive advocacy network. Through citizen cafés, advocacy notes, and citizen monitoring committees, CSOs strengthened their skills and credibility to influence local budget lines and national bills on nutrition. However, progress was constrained by gender disparities, resource limitations, and restricted civic space.
- *South Sudan*'s contribution stories highlight the programme's supporting role in a restrictive environment. Intensive mentoring and training supported even small, women-led CSOs to gain recognition in local planning and budgeting. The emphasis on Linking & Learning and collective advocacy contributed to changing fragmented actors into credible networks, helping to shift CSOs from reactive observers to proactive influencers in state and county-level governance.
- In *Bangladesh*, trusted CSOs provided fertile ground for structured programme interventions. Through Bridge4Voices (B4V), BMET, and CVA, CSOs became institutional partners in Union Parishad planning, securing first-time budget allocations for nutrition, WASH, and SRHR. These mechanisms supported transparency, accountability, and inclusion, while private-sector linkages were linked to the creation of parallel improvements in local economies and service delivery.
- In *Burkina Faso*, the BMET tool and advocacy training played an important role in creating evidence-based influence. CSOs, once marginalised in budgeting processes, came to be recognised as experts in nutrition financing. The increase in local nutrition funding and replication of Right2Grow tools (such as BMET) by government and partners suggests broader policy uptake - an indicator of sustainable change driven by local empowerment.
- *Uganda*'s story suggests progress in integrating civic engagement into formal district structures. Through strengthened multisectoral coordination, CVA, and community-led advocacy, local governments institutionalised nutrition-sensitive planning. Community ownership and gender balance were central outcomes, with both men and women assuming distinct roles in sustaining WASH and nutrition initiatives.

Across contexts, the programme's outcome of Right2Grow was validated: when CSOs are capacitated, legitimised, provided with the right tools and connected to formal planning and budgeting systems, they become effective advocates for accountable and inclusive governance in nutrition.

Which mechanisms drove outcomes

Across all Right2Grow countries, several mechanisms consistently supported meaningful change in how CSOs navigated civic space and influenced governance for nutrition and WASH:

- **Capacity development and training:** One of the most fundamental drivers of progress was the strengthening of CSOs' technical and organisational capacity. Through intensive training on advocacy, budget monitoring and expenditure tracking (BMET), and citizen engagement using the Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) approach, and Right2Grow's L&A approach 'Bridge4Voices', CSOs strengthened their ability to speak the "language of governance". This helped facilitate a transition from implementing partners to active participants in decision-making spaces. In *Ethiopia*, capacity strengthening translated directly into CSOs' inclusion in national coordination platforms such as ECSC-SUN and the CCRDA WASH and Nutrition Forum. In *South Sudan*, where civic space is highly constrained, continuous mentoring and accompaniment supported women-led CSOs gain confidence and influence county health budgets. Capacity strengthening also reinforced legitimacy. As CSOs improved transparency, incorporated community feedback, and communicated results, they were increasingly seen as more credible actors both to local authorities and communities. In *Uganda* and *Bangladesh*, this legitimacy may have created the space for CSOs to be recognised as reliable intermediaries

representing the concerns of marginalised groups, rather than as outsiders or implementers of external agendas.

- **Collective voice and coalition-building:** Another critical mechanism was the development of a collective voice through coalition building and structured learning platforms. Initially, many CSOs worked in isolation or even competed, but through the Grow Platform, thematic WhatsApp groups, online 'Grow Together' sessions, cross-country learning exchanges and the annual Learning Week, they gradually contributed to build stronger connections and shared agendas. These Linking & Learning mechanisms supported organisations to move beyond ad hoc collaboration and engage in sustained, coordinated advocacy. Concrete examples include the Jonglei Civil Society Network in *South Sudan*, which unified previously fragmented organisations, contributing to greater negotiation power and policy influence, and the SUN CSO Network in *Mali*, which brought together diverse stakeholders to engage with the government on nutrition and WASH issues jointly. When multiple countries worked on the same topic, such as the rollout of CVA, key lessons were synthesised into common learning briefs. These briefs were shared across all six countries, supporting programme teams to adapt and strengthen their approaches.
- **Evidence-based advocacy and accountability tools:** Local evidence generation and accountability mechanisms were crucial in turning community experiences into policy influence. Tools such as BMET, CVA scorecards, and policy briefs allowed CSOs to collect, analyse, and present data in formats relevant to government planning and budgeting processes. In *Burkina Faso*, evidence-based advocacy directly contributed to increased national and local nutrition budget allocations. In *Bangladesh*, data gathered through BMET and CVA informed pre-budget consultations, helping CSOs advocate for service delivery improvements grounded in community realities. This reliance on data helped depoliticise advocacy, framing dialogue around facts and shared goals rather than confrontation.
- **Institutionalisation of engagement:** A further mechanism that helped to sustain influence was the institutionalisation of CSO engagement within formal national or sub-national governance structures. By embedding CSO participation in multi-sectoral planning bodies - such as Ward Shavas (*Bangladesh*), District Nutrition Coordination Committees (*Uganda*), and local budget forums - the programme helped ensure that community-led advocacy became part of standard planning processes rather than temporary project activities. In *Uganda*, district platforms now routinely integrate nutrition into planning cycles, alongside a long-term shift in administrative culture, a change supported by Right2Grow's community-led advocacy through CSOs. Similarly, in *Bangladesh* and *Ethiopia*, CSOs now hold permanent seats in national coordination mechanisms, marking a transition from ad hoc engagement to formalised participation. This institutionalisation helps secure sustainability and continuity beyond programme cycles.
- **Social accountability and community empowerment:** Finally, the mechanism of social accountability and community empowerment contributed to transparency and mutual responsiveness. Through citizen monitoring committees, interface meetings, and community radio shows, the programme created feedback loops that supported trust and improved service delivery. In *Uganda*, the CVA model helped enable citizens to evaluate and discuss local service performance directly with duty bearers, contributing to tangible improvements in WASH and nutrition services. In *Mali*, citizen watch committees monitored local nutrition budgets, ensuring that allocated funds were properly utilised. These processes were associated with a shift in communities from passive beneficiaries to active participants in governance, with the aim of assuring that marginalized voices are represented and local priorities are communicated to authorities.

These mechanisms did not operate in isolation. Capacity building and inclusion contributed to legitimacy; legitimacy helped open doors to collective action; and collective action, supported by evidence and formalised structures, was associated with sustained influence. Social accountability mechanisms, in turn, further supported legitimacy and evidence generation, creating a self-reinforcing cycle of engagement. Across all countries, this interaction of mechanisms helped enable CSOs to navigate complex civic environments more effectively and to anchor governance for nutrition and WASH in local ownership and accountability.

Which contexts enable or constrain these mechanisms

The enabling or constraining power of context was crucial in shaping outcomes. Enabling contexts within countries with semi-open civic spaces and institutionalised local governance structures - such as Ethiopia, Bangladesh, and Uganda - provided fertile ground for formal CSO participation. Existing coordination mechanisms (e.g., ECSC-SUN, Union Parishads, DNCCs) accelerated progress. On the other hand, constraining contexts with fragile, restrictive, or resource-poor environments (such as South Sudan and Mali) required more relational and adaptive mechanisms. In these settings, trust-building, coalition advocacy, and mentoring helped mitigate limited formal access. And then

there are hybrid contexts: Burkina Faso showed how even under constrained fiscal and governance systems, structured tools (BMET) support gradually opening civic space by providing credible, non-confrontational evidence. Contextual factors also influenced the sustainability of change. Financial fragility and gender inequality, for instance, limited progress in Mali and South Sudan, while pre-existing legitimacy and government partnerships in Bangladesh and Ethiopia enhanced it.

Which mechanisms work best in which context

The contribution stories show that while similar interventions were used across countries, their effectiveness depended strongly on the surrounding context. The table is a first attempt to create an overview which mechanisms proved most effective in different civic, social and information environments, and the typical outcomes they enabled. This overview can inform future programming choices, while also guiding future research to further test and validate these context–mechanism links.

Table 12: Overview which mechanisms proved most effective in different civic, social and information environments, and the typical outcomes they enabled

Context Archetype	Mechanisms (Top 2–3)	Typical outcomes you can expect
Restrictive / Conservative (Low Civic Space, Strong Gatekeepers)	Evidence-based advocacy framed around shared development priorities rather than rights-based confrontation; Coalition-building and engagement through recognised coordination platforms (e.g. SUN networks, government-CSO technical committees); Strategic partnerships with reform-minded officials and technical allies.	Gradual increase in CSO legitimacy and access to decision-making spaces; Policy inclusion of nutrition/WASH through technical rather than political channels; Improved recognition of CSOs as constructive, non-confrontational partners.
Semi-Open with Cooperative Schools / Local Government	Participatory budgeting and planning; Joint monitoring and review platforms between CSOs, local governments, and media; Capacity strengthening in financial analysis and advocacy for local actors.	Institutionalisation of nutrition budget lines and joint planning processes; Increased transparency and citizen oversight at local level; Strengthened trust and co-ownership between CSOs and authorities.
Urban / Peri-Urban, High Connectivity	Digital accountability tools (e.g. BMET, Bridge4Voices) for budget tracking and citizen feedback; Media engagement and online campaigns to amplify advocacy messages; Data-driven evidence sharing to strengthen CSO credibility.	More responsive service delivery and improved local accountability; First-time budget allocations for nutrition/WASH; CSOs recognised as credible intermediaries between communities and government.
Rural / Low-Connectivity	Community-level awareness and advocacy structures (e.g. citizen monitoring committees, CVA forums); Capacity building for local CSOs in results-based management and data use; Peer-to-peer exchanges with stronger districts or regions.	Gradual adoption of nutrition-sensitive budgeting and improved local service delivery; Greater inclusion of community voices in local plans; Strengthened local CSO presence and self-reliance despite resource limitations.
Frequent Backlash / Misinformation	Strategic communication using trusted messengers (faith leaders, journalists, community influencers); Framing nutrition advocacy as non-political and socially beneficial; Collective advocacy through networks for shared protection and legitimacy.	Reduced resistance to CSO advocacy and improved public trust; Safer operational space for women-led and grassroots organisations; Emergence of coordinated CSO voices that sustain engagement despite instability.

5.3. Pathway 3 - National government and decentralised entities adopt and mainstream an integrated, multisectoral approach to undernutrition in policies, action plans, and budget allocations through participatory processes of CSOs

5.3.1. Changes achieved

In pathway 3, despite financial and institutional constraints limiting full enforcement, the evidence points to a gradual and progressive integration of accountability, inclusivity, participatory and evidence-based decision-making across national and decentralised governance systems. In countries like Ethiopia, Uganda, and Bangladesh, this has contributed to government-led planning and budgeting for nutrition and WASH, while in fragile contexts such as South Sudan, Mali and Burkina Faso, progress focused on building trust, transparency, and citizen engagement. These achievements reflect a shift from project-based interventions to more sustainable, system-level governance, though continued investment in institutional capacity and financing remains critical beyond 2025.

The third pathway of the Right2Grow programme promoted collaboration with national and local governments to integrate nutrition and WASH into policy, planning and budgetary processes. Its main activities focused on coordinating ministries and sectors such as health, agriculture, water and environment education and gender. The programme promoted participatory planning processes to ensure civil society organisations (CSOs) and communities could actively engage in policy, decision-making, and budget processes, and that community needs were taken into account when planning interventions, programmes, and investments. A key component of this pathway was using local evidence to inform decision-making. This included supporting governments and CSOs in collecting, analysing and sharing nutrition and WASH data, conducting budget monitoring and expenditure tracking, and developing data-driven planning tools that link community needs to policy and financial allocations. These efforts helped authorities identify gaps, set priorities and allocate resources more effectively at a local level. Examples of these activities could be found in all six countries, where government institutions and civil society organisations reviewed and adapted local development plans and resource allocations. In Burkina Faso, provincial authorities have committed to allocating additional resources from their own budgets to nutrition. Meanwhile, in Ethiopia, Uganda and South Sudan, local authorities have collaborated with CSOs to implement multi-sectoral action plans informed by locally generated data and budget analyses. Annex 1 and the table below show that the programme met or even exceeded cumulative targets for influencing laws and policies: 17 policies were improved or implemented against a target of 12 and 19 policies adopted against a target of 19.

Budget allocations during the Right2Grow years illustrate this systemic shift. Between 2021 and 2025, Bangladesh allocated €1.44 million (BDT 169 billion) for 40 Upazilas, while Burkina Faso committed €166.7 million (CFA 105.9 billion) nationally. Ethiopia invested €497.4 million (BR 492 billion), and Uganda made the largest allocation with €3.09 billion (UGX 12.6 trillion). In fragile contexts, South Sudan allocated €3.15 billion (SSP 441 billion), whereas Mali invested €39.1 million (CFA 25 billion). In total, allocations for food security, nutrition, and WASH reached €6.95 billion across all countries.

Advocacy efforts were also associated with important changes in budget shares. *Bangladesh* increased nutrition and WASH allocations from 1.45% to 18%, and *Burkina Faso* from 20% to 76%, while Ethiopia recorded a 1.6% rise at woreda (district) level. In contrast, *Mali* and *South Sudan* saw only marginal improvements, underscoring persistent challenges in fragile contexts. These results show that while systemic change is underway, sustained support is needed to consolidate gains and address remaining gaps.

Table 13: Indicators and achievements under Pathway 3

Indicator	Baseline	Overall target	2025 Actual	Cumulative achievement
SCS012: # of government policies for sustainable and inclusive development that are better implemented as a result of CSO engagement	0	12	7	17
SCS022: # of governmental policies for sustainable and inclusive development as a result of CSO engagement	0	19	4	19
	BNG: 1.45%	6%		18%
	BF:	20%		76%

R2G.OC.3.3: % of public budgets allocated and implemented for nutrition and WASH services (increased funding).	ETH:		1-6% rise at the woreda level.
	MAL: WASH: 3.62% in 2020; Nutrition: less than 0.7% of the health budget in 2018	WASH: 3,7% Nutrition: 0,9%	Nutrition: 0,25% WASH: 0,006%
	SSD:		
	UG:	WASH: 110%; FSN: >10%	WASH: >10%; FSN: >10%

Table 14: Summary of food security, nutrition (FSN) and WASH related budget allocations during the Right2Grow years in the countries

Country	Food security, nutrition and WASH related allocations between 2021/22 and 2025/26 - in Euros	Food security, nutrition and WASH related allocations between 2021/22 and 2025/26 - in local currency	Years captured
Bangladesh: 40 UPs only	€ 1 435 294,80	BDT 169 138 662,00	2021/22 - 2025/26
Burkina Faso - national	€ 166 754 132,00	105 890 000 000 CFA	2021/22 - 2024/25
Ethiopia - national	€ 492 431 840,49	BR 492 431 840,49	2021/22 - 2023/24
Mali - national	€ 39 131 790,00	25 062 660 200 CFA	2021/22 - 2024/25
South Sudan - national	€ 3 153 185 879,60	SSP 441 778 432 377	2021/22 - 2024/25
Uganda - national	€ 3 096 450 091,93	UGX 12 652 010 000 000	2021/22 - 2025/26
Total allocations for FSN and WASH that R2G contributed to	€ 6 949 389 028,84		

Source: Right2Grow country briefs and *Budget Monitoring and Expenditure Tracking* (BMET) results presentations, converted to Euros using annual average exchange rates for 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025. Exchange rates sourced from London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG) Financial Markets Infrastructure and Data.

Progress under Pathway 3 is associated with measurable and sustained advances toward the outcome that national governments and decentralised entities adopt and mainstream an integrated, multisectoral and gender sensitive approach to undernutrition within policies, action plans, and budget allocations. Across countries, the programme has contributed to strengthening the capacity of both state and non-state actors to generate and use evidence, coordinate across sectors, and institutionalise accountability mechanisms.

Evidence generation, through community data collection, field research, and joint monitoring, has been an important factor. In most contexts, communities, CBOs and CSOs successfully gathered and used data on the quality of nutrition and WASH service delivery to influence decision-making. This data, combined with policy-oriented research and budget analyses, appears to have been increasingly used in national and local planning processes, even if the formal embedding of these mechanisms in government systems remains uneven.

At the intermediate outcome level, the programme contributed to the inclusion of nutrition and WASH priorities in national and subnational policies, supported coordination between sectors, and contributed to fiscal accountability. Nonetheless, challenges persist in ensuring the sustainability of data systems and in translating locally generated evidence into long-term institutional reform.

- In *South Sudan*, strengthening the capacity of parliamentary and local governance actors has contributed to improvements in oversight and accountability. Legislators appear to scrutinise budgets more closely and advocate allocations to maternal and child health. Regular, data-driven coordination meetings have supported improvements in the timelines and quality of reporting, and local administrators are seen as more responsive to community concerns. The programme introduced evidence-based planning formats and accountability scorecards, allowing local authorities, WASH committees and community monitors to track WASH and nutrition progress for the first time. This helped create a continuous feedback loop between community monitors and local governments, ensuring that data informed district-level coordination meetings. Sustained advocacy and coalition building have also contributed to significant policy achievements: the government has endorsed the country's first National Nutrition Policy, and the president has approved the WASH Compact (May 2024). Budget allocations to WASH rose more than fivefold, while funding for food security and livelihoods also grew

substantially. Despite this progress, the full implementation of policies is still being hindered by several structural factors, including limited fiscal space, high inflation, broader economic shocks, ongoing insecurity and political instability, and the disruption to service delivery are caused by these factors. Additionally, the slow translation of policy commitments into action is hindered by the limited follow-up by government ministries and parliamentary committees on adopted resolutions.

- In *Ethiopia*, the programme contributed to the institutionalisation of a multisectoral approach through the establishment or revitalisation of 25 Nutrition Coordination Bodies and the creation of the national Food and Nutrition Council. Institutionalised joint planning processes were introduced in Woredas such as Habru and Cheha, and specific nutrition budgets were allocated. Simultaneously, public budget hearings in nine districts supported citizens to have a direct say in how resources are used. The implementation of tools such as the Resource Tracking and Partnership Management system and the UNISE database has been associated with improvements in transparency and accountability. Furthermore, the advocacy efforts of civil society organisations have contributed to the adoption of regulations mandating nutrition budget codes. Collectively, these advances point to Ethiopia's commitment to integrating nutrition and WASH into government systems on a long-term basis, extending beyond the scope of individual projects.
- In *Mali*, Right2Grow supported the integration of nutrition, WASH and food security into the economic, social and cultural development plans of all 24 municipalities where it was working. Vigilance Committees mobilised communities and contributed to improvements such as the repair of water pumps and the revitalisation of cereal banks. At national level, the SWA Committee continued to advocate for the adoption of the revised Water Code and other key policies on water and sanitation. Broader constitutional reforms also recognised food, water and health as fundamental rights, strengthening the normative framework for multisectoral action. Although the national target of allocating 0.9% of the budget to nutrition has not yet been met, several communes have incorporated nutrition into their development plans and budgets, and citizen vigilance committees have supported the rehabilitation of water points and improvements to sanitation. This active involvement of local stakeholders suggests growing recognition of nutrition as a governance priority. However, local ownership of budget analysis remains a key gap.
- In *Bangladesh*, progress was particularly notable in relation to policy adoption, resource allocation, and evidence-based planning. By 2024, 18% of public budgets had been allocated to nutrition and WASH, exceeding the initial target of 6%. At the local level, Union Parishads adopted digital budget monitoring tools and developed joint multisectoral action plans, while Upazila Nutrition Coordination Committees were revitalised to support coordination. Forty unions were selected to pilot the integration of nutrition and WASH into their strategic planning processes, generating locally grounded evidence that informed national advocacy. In this context, the Ministry of Local Government formally requested under-five nutrition budget allocations from the Ministry of Finance, suggesting policy influence. A notable innovation supporting these processes was the Child Profile Estimation and Costing Tool, co-developed by Right2Grow and the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC), which is now being scaled up nationwide. The tool offers an evidence-based mechanism for planning and monitoring resources and supports data-informed decision-making. Taken together, these developments suggest that sustained civil society organisation (CSO) engagement, alongside government action and institutional uptake, contributed to stronger accountability, greater policy coherence, and the integration of nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) priorities into Bangladesh's governance systems.
- In *Burkina Faso*, nutrition-sensitive sectors operating at provincial and municipal levels participated in consultation frameworks, which supported coordination and accountability. Parliamentarians received training in nutrition-sensitive budgeting and participated in national forums, while civil society groups used budget analyses in their advocacy on nutrition funding. During this period, government expenditure on nutrition rose to 2% of the national non-debt budget compared with previous years, although it remained below the previous N4G target (2025 data excluded).
- In *Uganda*, progress was observed in linking policy advocacy to service delivery improvements. Subnational authorities enacted by-laws and ordinances related to food security, nutrition and sanitation across multiple districts. At the national level, Parliament fast-tracked the Food and Nutrition Bill, which received support from the Speaker. Increased allocations to the water and production sectors were associated with the construction and rehabilitation of more than 60 WASH facilities, including boreholes, latrines and water points. This was accompanied by improved community access to essential services. Additionally, water-user committees were established and trained in all targeted sub-counties to support local management and sustainability. These

participatory structures were further built on through community dialogues with district authorities. Meanwhile, sub-county funds were earmarked for the procurement of seeds to support school and household gardens.

Across all programme countries, evidence suggests that activities such as training, mentoring and community-led advocacy have led to institutional outcomes, including more regular and inclusive coordination, stronger budget oversight, and greater responsiveness to citizens. The Evidence Gap Map (EGM) also shows that communities, CBOs and CSOs appear to have collected and used data to inform their advocacy work, supporting both national and decentralised governance. However, it also highlights an ongoing issue: although multi-sectoral collaboration has strengthened in practice, the implementation of those policies and action plans have not yet taken place everywhere.

By 2024, engagement with government authorities had increasingly emphasised the institutionalisation of multi-sectoral approaches to undernutrition within existing governance systems. Through sustained efforts in evidence generation, policy dialogue, and budget advocacy, Right2Grow partners contributed to ensuring that nutrition and WASH were no longer treated as isolated issues, but as integrated priorities embedded in laws, plans, policies, and financial frameworks. Overall, these results signal a shift in governance, from project-driven interventions to system-led accountability and suggest an important step towards ensuring that progress on nutrition and WASH will endure beyond the programme's lifetime.



Figure 5: Pathway 3

5.3.2. Unintended/unexpected effects

Pathway 3 enhanced multisectoral coordination and community-led advocacy across countries. In several contexts, it was also associated with additional administrative demands, influencing expectations for funding, having implications for workload distribution, and involving repeated engagement due to governmental turnover.

- In *Bangladesh*, the increased emphasis on participatory planning was associated with positive unintended effects. Union Parishads began collaborating with CSOs to identify community members to include in social protection programmes, extending multi-sectoral coordination beyond the original scope of nutrition and WASH. No negative unintended effects were reported under this pathway.
- In *South Sudan*, the evaluation identified several unintended consequences of the introduction and reinforcement of multisectoral coordination structures. As a relatively young state, South Sudan's governance systems are still evolving. The creation of additional coordination and reporting mechanisms therefore represented a significant shift in how decisions are organised and communicated. This partly explains why the demands of cross-sectoral planning, regular meetings and structured reporting placed unexpected pressure on implementing partners and local authorities; the systems required to absorb and manage these processes are still relatively new and under-resourced. Furthermore, government officials and traditional leaders reflected on changes in local authority dynamics. Newly established programme-supported coordination bodies, intended to enhance joint planning and accountability, sometimes assumed roles that overlapped with existing leadership structures. In a context where institutional mandates are still being defined, this has occasionally created tensions or uncertainty about decision-making responsibilities.
- In *Mali*, integrating nutrition into municipal budgets ranging from 100,000 to 850,000 CFA francs across nine municipalities and including nutrition in the development programmes of 15 municipalities was a major step forward. However, this also may have created new expectations among citizens that municipalities would consistently sustain and expand nutrition funding. Given the limited fiscal space of many local governments, this unintended consequence shed light on the risk of expectations outpacing available resources.
- In *Ethiopia*, the establishment and revitalisation of multi-sectoral Nutrition Coordination Bodies at district, zonal and regional levels, combined with regular budget hearings, contributed to strengthen transparency and cross-sectoral integration. However, these mechanisms emerged alongside pre-existing coordination structures linked to the Seqota Declaration, WASH platforms, and agriculture–nutrition task forces. As several of these

bodies have overlapping mandates, local government staff often have to attend multiple meetings on similar issues, prepare separate reports for different platforms and revisit the same planning or budgeting discussions in different forums. Consequently, rather than streamlining decision-making, the proliferation of coordination spaces may have unintentionally generated an additional administrative workload, at times duplicating discussions and reporting processes and overstressing already limited government capacities.

- In *Uganda*, new governance structures, such as District Nutrition Coordination Committees and sub-county water boards, were associated with raised expectations for funding, yet allocations were minimal, insufficient to support nutrition and WASH interventions, creating frustration among stakeholders and straining CSO-government relations. Gender dynamics revealed that women were more active in meetings and advocacy, increasing their visibility but placing a disproportionate burden on them, while men's limited involvement reinforced existing inequalities. Greater community participation sometimes caused tensions with health facility staff, who viewed accountability demands from CVA groups and CBOs as challenges to their authority, suggesting limited formal recognition of community monitors.
- In *Burkina Faso*, national and decentralized entities adopted the Budget Monitoring and Multisectoral Analysis (BMMA) tools mark an important step in strengthening multisectoral coordination. While this uptake is in line with Right2Grow's capacity-strengthening efforts, the speed and scale of institutional adoption has surpassed initial expectations, creating new avenues for dialogue on nutrition financing. Furthermore, interest from external partners, such as GIZ, has increased the visibility and perceived value of these tools. GIZ's engagement offers opportunities to deepen collaboration on multisectoral planning and potentially scale up budget monitoring practices beyond the current intervention zones. However, frequent institutional turnover has disrupted advocacy continuity, necessitating the re-engagement and onboarding of new interlocutors by teams to maintain momentum.

5.3.3. Effectiveness of programme strategies

This section provides a deep dive to further understand the effectiveness of particular programme strategies through a contribution analysis of the selected hotspots.

In pathway 3, the Right2Grow programme contributed to a shift towards evidence-based, institutionalised, multi-sectoral governance for nutrition and WASH across Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, and Uganda. By embedding data generation, participatory budgeting and coordinated advocacy within government systems, national and decentralised entities increasingly use local evidence to inform policies, laws, plans and budgets. Where data systems, local capacity, and civic partnerships were institutionalised, nutrition moved from isolated interventions to an integrated, government-owned priority.

The following link was selected by the programme to be further examined in depth:

Causal hotspot 3: If national governments and decentralised entities have evidence on local needs and realities and policy/budget gaps (supported by evidence to prevent undernutrition, and collected data and experiences on the quality of nutrition and WASH service delivery), then national governments and decentralised entities, in collaboration with NGOs and CSOs, adopt and mainstream and integrated multi-sectoral approach to undernutrition in policies, action plans and budget allocations.

The table below presents contribution stories from Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and Uganda, illustrating how national governments and decentralised entities have evidence on local needs and realities and policy/budget gaps, then national governments and decentralized entities in collaboration with NGOs and CSOs adopt and mainstream and integrated multi-sectoral approach to undernutrition in policies, actions plans and budget allocations. The entries summarize the programme's core interventions, the mechanisms linking activities to results, and the contextual enablers or barriers that shaped progress.

Table 15: Contribution stories from Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, and Uganda

Country	Headline Contribution Story	Core Interventions	Mechanisms (M) → Outcomes (O)	Context
Bangladesh	Evidence-based planning tools institutionalised for multi-sectoral nutrition budgeting.	Development and rollout of Child Profile Estimation & Costing Tool with BNNC; integration into UP and Upazila plans.	M: Data generation and costing enable informed budget allocation → O: Nutrition and WASH integrated in local and national plans (NPAN-3).	Supportive national framework (BNNC, SUN); limited local continuity due to leadership turnover.
Bangladesh	Strengthened local governance ensures transparent and coordinated nutrition financing.	Digital budgeting tools, open budget meetings, and joint action plans through UDCCs and CSOs.	M: Participatory planning and tech-driven transparency → O: Increased accountability and inclusion of nutrition in UP budgets.	Political turnover and weak inter-ministerial coordination occasionally slowed uptake.
Bangladesh	Multi-sectoral collaboration and advocacy link community data to policy reform.	CSO–government platforms; policy briefs; engagement with BNNC and SUN.	M: Evidence-based advocacy and coalition building → O: Integration of nutrition/WASH priorities in NPAN-3 and review of National Nutrition Policy.	National policy reform momentum; limited CSO resources for sustained advocacy.
Burkina Faso	Local capacity building operationalises multisectoral nutrition planning.	Training of local authorities and technical staff on RBM, multi-sectorality, and nutrition-sensitive budgeting.	M: Strengthened local knowledge and ownership → O: Nutrition integrated into local planning tools PCD/PRD/PAI and local budgets increased.	Weak initial understanding of multi-sectorality; growing government openness.
Burkina Faso	Advocacy alliances drive policy and budget inclusion of nutrition.	CSO advocacy groups, REPASEN collaboration, journalist networks.	M: Coordinated advocacy and media engagement → O: Policy circular requiring ministries to integrate nutrition into annual plans.	Limited initial coordination between ministries; improved with Right2Grow facilitation.
Burkina Faso	Data-driven dialogue frameworks strengthen local–national coordination.	Nutrition profiles, PNIM data inputs, and participation in regional/national forums.	M: Evidence informs decisions and resource allocation → O: Enhanced policy coherence and recognition of advocacy groups.	Decentralisation challenges; limited resources for sustained monitoring.
Uganda	District Nutrition Action Plans institutionalise multi-sectoral budgeting.	Facilitation of DNAP drafting, validation, and publication.	M: Integrated planning and financial inclusion → O: Nutrition and WASH mainstreamed across all district departments.	Decentralised planning environment with strong local leadership.
Uganda	Policy resolutions link agriculture and nutrition through household-level actions.	District-level policy mandating kitchen gardens for each household/institution.	M: Local bylaw-driven behaviour change → O: Improved dietary diversity and household food security.	Supportive local governance and community mobilisation.
Uganda	Joint planning and evidence use drive budget reform.	Multi-department planning sessions, budget dialogues, data-driven prioritisation.	M: Cross-sector collaboration and data use → O: 2% of DDEG allocated to nutrition; improved WASH–nutrition integration.	Variable district fiscal space; supportive Ministry of Finance engagement.

Comparative analysis

Across the three countries, Right2Grow has contributed to promoting multi-sectoral nutrition governance by embedding evidence and advocacy into planning and budgeting systems. However, the routes through which this occurred reflect differences in administrative culture, decentralisation, and the maturity of civic–government relations.

- In *Bangladesh*, the most notable outcome was the institutionalisation of evidence-based planning through digital tools such as the Child Profile Estimation and Costing Model. This tool supported local government institutions to allocate budgets based on local nutrition data, helping link community realities to national frameworks, such as NPAN-3. The participatory budgeting process and CSO-government coordination platforms also contributed to improved accountability, although high staff turnover and weak inter-ministerial coordination occasionally disrupted continuity. Here, the mechanism of institutionalising data-driven decision-making played an important role in sustaining integration within formal governance systems.
- In *Burkina Faso*, the programme's comparative strength lay in building local administrative capacity and advocacy alliances that translated multisectoral thinking into concrete budget lines. By training local officials and creating platforms such as REPASEN (Advocacy Network for Nutritional Security in Burkina Faso) and journalist networks, Right2Grow helped bridge the gap between technical understanding and policy application. This bottom-up capacity development supported the inclusion of nutrition in local plans (PCD/PRD/PAI) and national policy circulars mandating sectoral integration. Burkina Faso's case suggests that capacity and coalition mechanisms can convert decentralisation challenges into opportunities for local leadership and accountability.
- In *Uganda*, internal coherence between evidence generation, joint planning, and budgeting reforms was strongest. District Nutrition Action Plans (DNAPs) institutionalised multi-sectoral budgeting across departments, supported by bylaws linking nutrition to household agriculture. The local governance system, already decentralised and inclusive, allowed for the rapid uptake of participatory and evidence-based mechanisms. This contributed to tangible outcomes, including dedicated nutrition budget allocations (2% of DDEG) and improved integration of WASH–nutrition programming. Uganda's success reflects how a well-functioning decentralised structure amplifies programme coherence, allowing data, participation, and advocacy to reinforce each other in practice.

Comparatively, while most progress in digital and national-level integration was achieved in Bangladesh, local ownership and policy influence was advanced most in Burkina Faso, and in Uganda strongest systemic alignment between planning, budgeting, and behaviour change was demonstrated. Collectively, these stories suggest that multi-sectoral nutrition governance is achievable when data-driven advocacy, local capacity, and policy dialogue are institutionally linked - and when civic actors have the legitimacy to sustain those links.

Which mechanisms drive outcomes

Across the three countries, several mechanisms consistently drove meaningful change:

1. **Evidence generation and data-driven advocacy:** Local Evidence was a foundational mechanism across all countries. The collection, analysis, and use of nutrition and WASH data made policy gaps visible and actionable. In Bangladesh, the Child Profile Estimation and Costing Tool supported Union Parishads and Upazilas to allocate resources based on real needs. Similarly, in Burkina Faso, the use of nutrition profiles and PNIM data aid the creation of credible evidence for policy advocacy, while in Uganda, joint data reviews contributed to multi-sectoral district planning. Evidence generation not only improved planning quality, it also strengthened legitimacy. When CSOs presented data in national policy spaces, they were perceived as constructive partners, allowing advocacy to shift from persuasion to collaboration.
2. **Capacity strengthening and institutional ownership:** Capacity development was the mechanism that contributed to turning evidence into sustained action. In *Burkina Faso*, local government staff and technical departments received training on Results-Based Management (RBM), multisectoral planning, and nutrition-sensitive budgeting. These efforts were associated with measurable outcomes such as the inclusion of nutrition lines in local budgets. In *Uganda*, district officials gained practical skills to operationalise DNAPs, ensuring that nutrition became an institutional responsibility rather than a project activity. By transferring knowledge and tools to government entities, the programme contributed to foster institutional ownership and reduced dependency on external actors: a key condition for long-term coherence.
3. **Advocacy and coalition-building:** Advocacy networks and multi-actor platforms helped bring fragmented efforts into coordinated influence. *Burkina Faso's* REPASEN coalition and journalist networks exemplify how

collaborative advocacy can generate national policy change, such as the circular mandating integration of nutrition across ministries. In *Bangladesh*, CSOs leveraged national coordination bodies (BNNC, SUN) to help ensure community evidence was reflected in the NPAN-3 and policy reviews. These coalitions supported the creation a critical mass of actors pushing for nutrition-sensitive planning and budgeting, contributing to a greater political attention and accountability at both national and subnational levels.

4. **Participatory and transparent budgeting:** Participatory budgeting appeared to function as a practical mechanism for ensuring accountability and citizen ownership. In *Bangladesh*, digital budgeting tools and open budget sessions supported local citizens and CSOs to monitor allocations, promoting transparency and inclusion. In *Uganda*, a similar principle was applied through DNAP consultations and joint planning sessions, contributing to tangible fiscal commitments to nutrition. This mechanism appeared to work best where governance systems were decentralised and community participation already embedded, transforming accountability from a procedural exercise into a collaborative process of resource allocation and management.
5. **Policy integration and multi-sectoral coordination:** Institutionalisation of multisectoral coordination represented an important outcome of the previous mechanisms in this paragraph working together. In *Uganda*, nutrition and WASH were mainstreamed into district development plans and budgets; in *Burkina Faso*, cross-ministerial policy circulars codified similar principles; and in *Bangladesh*, multi-sectoral coordination was embedded into NPAN-3. This policy integration points to the programme's contribution to systemic change, where nutrition and WASH are treated not as isolated issues but as governance priorities requiring collective responsibility.

Which contexts enable or constrain these mechanisms

Context strongly shaped how mechanisms functioned and at what level change occurred. In enabling contexts such as Uganda's decentralised governance and Bangladesh's structured national policy environment, mechanisms related to institutionalisation and data-driven planning appeared to function more effectively. Local governments in Uganda could rapidly operationalise DNAPs due to existing coordination structures and a political culture supportive of multi-sectoral action. In Bangladesh, the government's openness to digitalisation and data innovation enabled tools like the Child Profile Estimation Tool to scale.

In semi-open or transitional contexts such as Burkina Faso, where multi-sectorality was new and administrative capacity uneven, mechanisms focused on capacity strengthening and coalition advocacy were especially important. Training and partnerships created the foundations for future institutionalisation, even where formal systems were initially weak.

Conversely, constraining contexts (marked by limited resources, leadership turnover, or coordination barriers) hampered sustainability. For example, frequent staff rotations in Bangladesh or resource scarcity in Burkina Faso reduced continuity, requiring continuous re-engagement by CSOs. Nonetheless, local legitimacy and government openness may have compensated for some of these constraints, particularly where long-term relationships had been built.

Overall, mechanisms that relied on structured collaboration, evidence use, and local ownership tended to thrive across contexts, whereas those dependent on political stability and institutional continuity (e.g., national policy integration) appeared to vary more by context.

Which mechanisms work best in which context

The contribution stories suggest that, although similar interventions were employed across countries, their effectiveness depended strongly on the surrounding context. The table is a first attempt to create an overview of the mechanisms that proved most effective in different civic, social and information environments, and the typical outcomes they enabled. This overview can inform future programming choices, while also guiding future research to further test and validate these context–mechanism links.

Table 16: Overview of the mechanisms that proved most effective in different civic, social and information environments

Context archetype	Mechanisms (Top 2–3)	Typical outcomes you can expect
Restrictive/conservative (low civic space, strong gatekeepers)	Evidence-based advocacy through formalised alliances and technical networks; Use of neutral, data-driven communication to depoliticise nutrition debates.	Policy uptake through official channels; Recognition of CSOs as technical contributors rather than critics; Increased visibility of nutrition in national frameworks without major institutional reform.
Semi-open with cooperative schools / local government	Participatory budgeting and planning; Capacity building for local government in multisectoral coordination and results-based management; Joint government–CSO monitoring platforms.	Institutionalisation of integrated nutrition and WASH plans; Clearer budget lines and increased local resource mobilisation for nutrition; Enhanced local ownership and accountability.
Urban/peri-urban, high connectivity	Digital budget tracking tools and open data platforms; Multi-stakeholder policy dialogues using real-time evidence; Advocacy through media and private sector engagement.	Faster policy response and greater transparency in budget allocations; Real-time data use for monitoring and advocacy; Strengthened public accountability and visibility of nutrition issues.
Rural / low-connectivity	Local training on multisectoral planning and financial management; Simplified data collection tools and local evidence generation; Peer-to-peer learning among districts or communes.	Strengthened local service delivery; Increased citizen participation in planning; Enhanced local nutrition outcomes; and Integration of nutrition into local development plans.
Frequent backlash/misinformation	Strategic communication and legitimacy building using trusted intermediaries (faith leaders, journalists); Joint evidence-sharing and public dialogues between CSOs and government;	Improved credibility and trust in nutrition data and messaging; Sustained policy dialogue despite political instability; Gradual normalisation of multi-sectoral coordination and accountability culture.

5.4. Pathway 4 - Donors and international development actors coordinate and collaborate along the humanitarian-development nexus to address the underlying determinants of undernutrition

5.4.1. Changes achieved

Under pathway 4, the Right2Grow programme contributed to strengthening coordination, visibility, and advocacy across local, national, and international levels. Strategic Dutch and global advocacy successfully supported the WASH–nutrition nexus and promoted civil society participation, while country-level efforts delivered the most tangible policy and financing results. Despite challenges in Pathway 4 and shifting political priorities, adaptive management and a stronger national focus appear to have enhanced coherence, impact, and ownership of advocacy outcomes.

The fourth pathway was focused on enhancing coordination among donors and international partners to address the underlying determinants of undernutrition coherently and sustainably. The Right2Grow programme fostered dialogue between humanitarian and development actors, promoted joint advocacy within global policy platforms such as the SUN Movement and SDG networks, and strengthened alignment with Dutch embassies and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

Several internal and external partners of Right2Grow worked collectively to share lessons across countries and link local evidence to decision-making processes internationally. Through the Bridge4Voices approach, the programme created direct pathways for local partners to inform global policy spaces such as the African Union (AU) Summit, East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC) meetings, and the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) preparatory processes.

This pathway supported an improved global commitment to nutrition, WASH and civic space, while reinforcing collaboration between Dutch policy actors, local CSOs, and international donors along the humanitarian–development nexus.

Various countries highlight that the Right2Grow programme has contributed to enhancing visibility and coordination with international actors. In *Burkina Faso*, for example, this is illustrated by the regional forum that brought together humanitarian and development actors in the North, as well as the mobilisation of the private sector in the East for the CHR. Additionally, the participation of advocacy group in cluster and OCHA meetings, along with training sessions on the triple nexus for project staff, is also noted as a key contribution in this country. In *Ethiopia*, collaboration with the Dutch embassy led to policy engagement with the African Union, influencing ministerial meetings and regional strategies. In *Uganda*, Right2Grow convened high-level government, donors, and UN actors around a shared nutrition agenda. This collaboration contributed to strengthen representation in the SUN Movement, influenced policy processes such as the Food and Nutrition Bill, and was associated with partner commitments and financing alignment to sustain action against undernutrition.

5.4.2. Key successes from international and Dutch lobby and advocacy efforts

Over the five-year programme period, lobby and advocacy (L&A) efforts - at international, Dutch, and programme country levels - played a central role in amplifying impact, connecting local realities to global policy agendas, and positioning the programme as a credible actor in the WASH-nutrition-health nexus.

International L&A achievements

International L&A efforts began at a time when the programme was still shaping its content and impact stories. The early focus was on ‘breaking the silos’: advocating for integrated approaches across WASH, nutrition, and health, especially for children under five. The programme was strategically embedded in key networks such as the Netherlands Food Partnership (NFP), Netherlands Water Partnership (NWP), and the Food for All Coalition, linking these to global platforms like Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) and SUN Movement.

Right2Grow’s international L&A focused on strengthening civil society engagement, enhancing accountability, and ensuring that global commitments to end malnutrition were translated into national action. Advocacy activities were closely linked to the Humanitarian–Development–Peace (HDP) Nexus, promoting multisectoral approaches and collaboration across development actors.

Key examples include:

- African Union Summit (Ethiopia, February 2024): Right2Grow, together with the Gender Is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC), successfully advocated for the inclusion of a nutrition-focused HDP Nexus in AU policy outcomes. The partnership showcased the *Triple Nexus approach* for addressing malnutrition in conflict-affected areas.
- ECSA-HC Ministerial Conference and Arusha Accountability Workshop (June 2024): Right2Grow’s recommendations on multisectoral nutrition and WASH collaboration were reflected in the conference’s draft resolution. The final statement called for civic space that enables CSOs to contribute actively to combating malnutrition: a major step in integrating civil society voices into regional policy frameworks.
- Regional Workshop in Dakar (22-24 April 2024): Brought together West African CSOs to assess national nutrition commitments and develop a joint *Civil Society Declaration* ahead of N4G. The creation of a Nutrition Accountability Task Force strengthened CSO coordination across the region.
- SUN Anglophone Africa Hub Workshop (Mombasa, December 2024): Right2Grow supported governments and CSOs from 16 countries in reviewing progress and preparing national roadmaps towards N4G 2025, reinforcing regional coordination and donor alignment.
- AidEx Nairobi (June 2024): Community-based organisations from Uganda and South Sudan shared accountability experiences alongside the Dutch MFA’s humanitarian coordinator; an example of donor–civil society collaboration within the HDP Nexus.

Right2Grow also joined the global Nutrition Accountability Task Force (ATF) to advocate for stronger follow-up on nutrition commitments, ensuring representation from six local partners across Uganda, South Sudan, Burkina Faso, and Mali. The partnership was invited to co-organize two side events at the Global Nutrition4Growth (N4G) Summit in 2025, showcasing community-led accountability and locally driven nutrition solutions.

These international achievements reflect how Right2Grow bridged local advocacy with global frameworks, enhancing collaboration among donors, governments, and civil society around shared nutrition and WASH priorities.

Dutch L&A achievements

Parallel to its global engagement, Right2Grow contributed to significant progress in Dutch-level advocacy, contributing to align domestic policy discussions with global commitments and elevating civil society leadership within Dutch foreign policy.

Highlights include:

- Political engagement and policy influence:
 - In the 2025 Dutch national budget, Right2Grow was the only one among 42 strategic partnerships mentioned explicitly as a key example of civil society strengthening and improved access to nutrition and WASH.
 - Through direct engagement with parliamentarians, senators, and the new Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation, Right2Grow contributed to shaping debates around the Netherlands' role in global food and nutrition security.
 - Two roundtable consultations with the Minister were co-organized, one on food and nutrition security, and one on water management, where Right2Grow advocated for a multisectoral WASH–nutrition approach and inclusion of CSOs and communities.
 - A visit to the Dutch Senate contributed to parliamentary questions on future Dutch commitments to water, nutrition, food security, and participation in the 2025 N4G Summit and SUN Global Gathering.
- Strategic collaboration with the MFA and Dutch actors:
 - Right2Grow worked closely with the MFA, embassies, and initiatives like the Power of Voices Linking & Learning events in Nairobi and Cotonou.
 - High-level dialogues with Henk Ovink, the Dutch Special Envoy for International Water Affairs, and participation in UN preparatory sessions in Parliament positioned Right2Grow as a thought leader on integrated WASH–nutrition policies.
- Tools for accountability and policy coherence:
 - The Budget Monitoring and Expenditure Tracking (BMET) tool was adopted by CSOs and governments to improve transparency and guide decision-making on nutrition financing.
 - Dutch L&A successfully influenced MFA strategic documents, including the Dutch Water Strategy, Food Security Strategy, and Africa Strategy, embedding the WASH–nutrition nexus more firmly in policy.

However, the programme was also confronted with political realities, notably the Dutch election in 2023, which disrupted established networks, shifted foreign policy priorities away from civil society engagement and led to major cuts in international development budget. This was experienced as deeply frustrating, especially since the programme had advocated extensively for a stronger role for civil society in development cooperation. For many partners, particularly at country level, this felt like a reversal of progress on localisation: after years of building trust and capacity, the sudden policy shift undermined those efforts. It left local actors disillusioned and questioning the sustainability of commitments in fragile contexts like South Sudan or Burkina Faso, where Dutch private sector involvement is limited or absent.

Despite these setbacks caused by the 2023 Dutch elections, changing policy priorities, and budget cuts, the L&A work under this pathway indicates resilience and adaptability. Partners continued to engage with policymakers, advocate for civic space, and push for sustained Dutch leadership in integrated nutrition and WASH action globally.

The Evidence Gap Map based on harvested outcome until the end of 2024 shows limited evidence for this pathway. Examples show that Right2Grow partners, CSOs and government actors have engaged in platforms for data sharing, peer learning and adaptation and have lobbied donors to better align funding and programming.



Figure 5: Pathway 4

While the ambition to let donors and international development actors coordinate and collaborate along the humanitarian-development nexus to address the underlying determinants of undernutrition was high, progress was limited according to some global partners. The programme invested significant time in convening actors at the global level, but the expected alignment among development partners did not fully materialise.

Several factors contributed to this, according to global and local partners:

- The pathway was not fully optimised; it required more time and a clearer strategic direction.
- No specific indicators were assigned to directly measure donor participation, which causes a weaker and less sustainable advocacy.
- There was ambiguity around the goals of global and Dutch advocacy: was it meant to achieve concrete results, or primarily to support country-level work?
- The Theory of Change set ambitious objectives (e.g., influencing international actors to integrate nutrition and WASH), but lacked a clear methodology or realistic milestones.
- Early efforts were often opportunistic rather than strategic, with participation in global events not always tied to a coherent plan.

After the Mid-Term Review (MTR), these issues were acknowledged, and action was taken accordingly. During the consortium-wide Learning Week, organized after the midterm evaluation in 2023, a new direction was agreed upon, shaping the advocacy strategy in the second half of the programme:

1. Focus on influencing national nutrition commitments.
2. Ensure partners have a clear message and role in policy discussions.
3. Facilitate partner participation in regional and international fora, rather than leading from the global level.

This shift marked a move toward a more focused L&A strategy, with clearer international advocacy demands and more realistic expectations. It also clarified the distinction between Dutch-level and international advocacy, which had previously been unclear because global events hosted in the Netherlands were often perceived by country teams as purely Dutch initiatives.

5.4.3. Unintended/unexpected effects

Pathway 4 also revealed unintended effects and critical challenges related to sustainability, inclusivity, and expectation management. The findings underscore that elevating nutrition and WASH advocacy, and coordination must be balanced with realistic resource mobilisation, equitable participation, and long-term capacity development to ensure enduring and inclusive impact.

Across the six country reports, several unintended and unexpected effects were observed in relation to Pathway 4.

- In *Burkina Faso*, a positive and unexpected contribution was the increased regional and international recognition of certain Burkinabe civil society organisations (CSOs). These organisations were invited to share their experiences beyond national borders, enhancing their credibility and positioning Burkina Faso as a reference point in nutrition advocacy.
- In *South Sudan*, while planning and dialogue among CSOs and sub-national government nutrition/WASH/health coordinators improved, joint implementation often lagged due to organisations adhering to their own funding streams. This led to occasional friction, particularly around visibility and branding within coordination platforms. The amplified voices of CSOs sometimes raised donor expectations beyond what local capacities could deliver. Additionally, several partners expressed concerns about their reliance on programme-supported data systems, which may not be sustainable without continued external support. Broader inclusivity in decision-making, although valuable, sometimes slowed processes, and smaller grassroots CSOs remained underrepresented compared to larger organisations.
- In *Uganda*, donor mobilisation under Pathway 4 significantly elevated the profile of nutrition and WASH. However, it also contributed to unintended negative consequences. High-level donor commitments, such as those made during the National Colloquium on Stunting and consultations on the Food and Nutrition Bill, created expectations among government officials, CSOs, and communities for immediate and substantial funding. When these pledges did not quickly materialise into tangible resources, frustration and mistrust emerged. Furthermore, the strong focus on stunting interventions led to imbalanced resource allocation, with wasting and other nutrition challenges receiving less attention. This skewed approach could risk undermining

Uganda's ability to address malnutrition comprehensively, particularly in vulnerable regions where wasting remains a critical issue.

In *Mali*, *Bangladesh*, and *Ethiopia*, no unintended or unexpected effects were reported in relation to Pathway 4.

5.5. Indications of contribution to planned development impact

The Right2Grow programme has contributed to long-term improvements in child nutrition, health, and governance through integrated, community-driven, and multisectoral approaches. Its support in fostering behavioural change, enhancing local accountability, and strengthening civil society engagement illustrates the power of inclusive and adaptive collaboration. It also encouraged coordination among decision-makers, creating opportunities for joint action against undernutrition and reinforcing multi-sectoral governance. However, the persistence of governance fragility, and sustainability challenges highlights that enduring impact requires continuous capacity development, shared ownership, and resilient systems that safeguard and expand the gains achieved.

Across the diverse contexts of the six countries, the Right2Grow programme has contributed to meaningful improvements in child nutrition, health, and governance, while also highlighting the complexities of sustaining change. Integrated interventions, including household and school gardens, poultry and dairy activities, and WASH initiatives, supported healthier behaviours, improved dietary diversity, and strengthened household hygiene and caregiving practices. Communities reported visible improvements in children's growth, a reduction in waterborne illnesses, and, in some contexts, declines in infant mortality: findings that were also supported by growth monitoring data, for example in Bangladesh. Also, in *South Sudan*, peer learning and practical demonstrations supported exclusive breastfeeding and enriched porridge preparation, while in *Burkina Faso*, mothers reported improvements in child nutrition supported by strengthened recovery centres. In *Mali*, Citizen Monitoring Committees and private sector engagement enabled women's groups to produce and market nutritious foods, which was associated with household food security and local economic development. In *Bangladesh*, these combined efforts were accompanied by measurable reductions in malnutrition: between 2022 and 2024, stunting among children under five declined from 36% to 23%, underweight prevalence fell from 27% to 18%, and wasting decreased from 14% to 13%, pointing to a contribution of integrated nutrition and WASH interventions.

Another contribution was the increase in budget allocations for nutrition and WASH, which signals institutional change and political commitment. In Bangladesh, Union Parishads raised allocations from 1.45% in 2021 to 18.49% in 2024, supported by CSO-led advocacy and participatory planning. Forty Union Parishads now practice inclusive budgeting, while government proposals for nationwide nutrition allocations indicate growing momentum. In *Uganda*, districts such as Kamwenge, Kakumiro, and Buliisa significantly increased production and water budgets linked to nutrition and WASH outcomes. For instance, Buliisa Sub-County allocated UGX 20 million to establish school and kitchen gardens after CVA groups presented evidence of child malnutrition, suggesting that advocacy translated into funded action. In *South Sudan*, national-level oversight of social sector allocations strengthened, with ministries now pressed to account for spending and prioritize nutrition and health, marking a shift from passive endorsement to active scrutiny.

CSOs played a central role across all countries. In *Ethiopia* and *Bangladesh*, the uptake of Citizen Voice and Action tools contributed to the creation of nutrition clubs and vegetable gardens, supporting the integration of nutrition education in daily and institutional practices. Through advocacy, peer-to-peer learning, and strengthened technical and organisational capacity, CSOs appear to have increased their ability to engage with government actors and influence multisectoral policy. In *Uganda* and *Bangladesh*, CSO-led proposals were integrated into national and sub-national budget frameworks, translating community advocacy into concrete investments such as school gardens, water infrastructure, and nutrition programmes. Beyond budgets, CSOs increasingly became partners in policy improvements, contributing to significant milestones such as the constitutional revision in *Mali*, the development of the National Nutrition Policy in *South Sudan*, and the advancement of the Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus in *Ethiopia*. Linking & Learning strategies and Mutual Capacity Development supported reflection, adaptation, and a resilient knowledge ecosystem, contributing to accountability and programme effectiveness across all contexts.

At the same time, the programme highlighted challenges to sustainability. Fragile governance, insecurity, and administrative restructuring limited the durability of institutional changes in some settings. While the programme successfully involved second-tier CSOs in strategic decision-making, it did not achieve meaningful participation of grassroots and third-tier CSOs in these processes, which represents a risk for sustainability. An unintended effect may have also emerged: heavier unpaid care burdens for women, as some programme activities, such as

participation in meetings and advocacy events, required additional time and effort from women already managing household responsibilities. This sometimes increased their workload without corresponding support.

Overall, the Right2Grow programme is consistent with the view that sustained improvements in child nutrition, health, and governance are achievable when community-driven approaches, multisectoral coordination, and continuous capacity strengthening and learning are combined. Long-term impact depends not only on effective technical interventions but also on inclusive and meaningful participation, local ownership, and ongoing capacity development to mitigate unintended consequences and embed lasting behavioural and institutional change.

5.6 Crosscutting themes of gender, youth and climate

Right2Grow has contributed to the integration of gender inclusion, the strengthening of youth participation, and the initiation of climate-responsive practices across countries. To enhance long-term impact and sustainability, the programmes outcomes would have been stronger if it had further integrated climate risk management into its core frameworks, link youth leadership to sustainable livelihoods, and design gender interventions that consider women's time constraints. Strengthening equity-focused data systems and inclusive accountability mechanisms could be crucial to ensuring lasting and balanced progress across all cross-cutting themes.

5.6.1. Gender

Gender is the most consistently integrated theme. In the six Right2Grow countries, the programme has contributed to strengthen women's participation, leadership and influence in the areas of nutrition and WASH management. Women were increasingly present in community structures (including mother-to-mother groups, water user committees and accountability platforms) where they provided evidence, guided decision-makers and influenced local services. Right2Grow supported women's knowledge of nutrition and hygiene, contributed to a greater confidence to advocate for their interests, and supported gender-sensitive behaviour change. In several countries, children and adolescent girls contributed to public decision-making through children's clubs and budget dialogues. Despite these advances, gender norms, unpaid care burdens and male-dominated governance structures continue to hinder deeper transformation, pointing to the need for stronger male engagement, institutional gender mainstreaming and long-term support for women's leadership.

- In *South Sudan*, Right2Grow had one of the strongest gender contributions of all programme countries. Women became more prominent actors in community mobilisation; behaviour change and accountability processes. Through mother-to-mother support groups and water user committees, women reported greater confidence to engage directly with provincial officials, present evidence and advocate for better WASH and nutrition services. The programme contributed to strengthen girls' leadership through school and youth clubs, which became visible channels for public advocacy. However, deeply entrenched gender norms, insecurity and increased unpaid care responsibilities continued to hinder women's ability to participate fully and, in some cases, led to resistance from men when women's roles were expanded too quickly. In *Mali*, gender impacts were closely linked to improvements in governance and advocacy. Women increasingly participated in community dialogues, radio campaigns and local monitoring mechanisms, gaining greater visibility in WASH and nutrition governance. Women contributed to discussions on water point management and influenced decisions affecting their communities. Right2Grow's support for national advocacy contributed to gender-sensitive policy outcomes, including constitutional recognition of the right to food and water, which indirectly strengthens women's rights. Despite this progress, women's representation in formal governance bodies – particularly community councils and technical committees – remained very limited, and social norms continued to restrict their mobility and decision-making power.
- In *Burkina Faso*, the programme's gender contribution was most evident in community mobilisation and food security initiatives. Women's groups played an important role in identifying nutrition problems, managing vegetable gardens and participating in WASH improvements in households. Training and coaching contributed to increase women's confidence to engage with municipal authorities and contribute to local development discussions. However, ongoing insecurity in several municipalities disproportionately affected women and limited their participation in public life. Time constraints remained a significant limitation, as household tasks left women with little scope for deeper social engagement.
- In *Ethiopia*, there were indications of gender mainstreaming was strong in the 21 Right2Grow woredas, although it was uneven across regions. Women were actively involved in community platforms that monitored services, influenced woreda-level planning and participated in budget tracking. Their participation contributed to improvements in WASH practices and infant feeding behaviours. The programme was associated with

greater visibility women's voices within multisectoral coordination structures and promoted more gender-responsive planning. However, in conflict-affected regions such as Tigray, Amhara and Oromia, women had significantly less access to services and public forums. Deep-rooted social norms also continued to limit women's ability to take on leadership roles in some woredas.

- In *Bangladesh*, gender impacts were associated to improvements in WASH-nutrition integration and community participation. Women played an important role behind many of the household-level changes in hygiene and nutrition practices and played an active role in community platforms that generated evidence and monitored services. The programme also supported to encourage adolescent girls to participate in awareness-raising activities and school initiatives, which contributed to greater self-confidence and a stronger voice. Nevertheless, cultural norms and security considerations continued to limit women's mobility and participation in mixed decision-making spaces, and representation in formal governance bodies remained inconsistent across programme areas.
- In *Uganda*, Right2Grow contributed to some of the most structured gender-transformative efforts within the partnership. Women increasingly participated in local councils, sub-county dialogues and water user committees, while mother-to-mother groups were associated with improvements in breastfeeding and household feeding practices. Civil society partners such as FRA and the Movement for Community-Led Development integrated gender equality into their advocacy for food and nutrition rights, contributing to women's ability to articulate their demands more effectively. Despite these advances, women still faced barriers to influencing district budgets and policies, and heavy unpaid care responsibilities continued to limit their ability to participate consistently in governance processes.

5.6.2. Youth participation

In the six countries, young people increasingly emerged as a visible and influential group within the programme structures. Although the degree of involvement varied depending on the context, Right2Grow contributed to creating spaces where young people could contribute to nutrition, WASH, advocacy and governance processes.

- In *South Sudan*, young people played a particularly dynamic role. Children's and youth clubs became important platforms for disseminating information on hygiene and nutrition, engaging peers and maintaining contact with local officials. Young people participated in community scorecard sessions, provided evidence of service delivery problems and supported the monitoring of water points. Right2Grow also strengthened youth leadership through school clubs, which contributed to promote gender equality, nutrition awareness and accountability. In some cases, however, the limited availability of direct economic opportunities led to frustration among young people who had acquired soft skills but did not have access to the labour market.
- In *Mali*, youth participation was embedded in community engagement and accountability mechanisms. Young people were actively involved in community dialogues, advocacy campaigns and awareness-raising activities, particularly through youth-led civil society organisations. Young people contributed to raising awareness about hygiene, sanitation and nutrition, and participated in monitoring local service delivery. Their involvement was associated with increased visibility of young people's voices in local governance processes, although insecurity in certain municipalities sometimes limited their participation.
- In *Burkina Faso*, youth involvement was evident through community awareness efforts, radio programmes and mobilisation campaigns. Young volunteers supported home visits, hygiene promotion and community outreach. They also participated in multi-stakeholder dialogues and contributed to local advocacy platforms. Despite enthusiasm and strong participation at the community level, structural barriers, such as insecurity and limited access to decision-making bodies, sometimes hindered greater youth influence.
- In *Ethiopia*, youth participation was mainly reflected through school clubs, community awareness activities and accountability mechanisms at the woreda level. Young people played a role in promoting hygiene, waste management and peer education on nutritional habits. They provided data for community scorecard processes and supported the dissemination of behaviour change messages. In conflict-affected regions, youth participation was limited in some areas, but, overall, the programme contributed to improve youth involvement in both service monitoring and advocacy dialogues.
- In *Bangladesh*, young people and adolescents, especially girls, played an active role in school and community initiatives. They participated in WASH campaigns, menstrual hygiene awareness sessions and peer-to-peer learning activities. Youth groups contributed to community monitoring, supported the collection of local evidence and participated in public forums. The programme promoted safe spaces for adolescents to discuss nutrition, hygiene and health, contributing to building confidence and leadership skills. However, social-cultural

norms continued to limit the mobility and influence of older adolescent girls, affecting their participation in some community structures.

- In *Uganda*, youth engagement was among the most structured and important. Young people participated in community dialogues, Citizen Voice and Action processes, and advocacy activities at the district level. They collaborated with civil society organisations to identify barriers to service delivery, presented evidence to local leaders, and supported demonstrations on nutrition and WASH in schools. Young people also contributed to governance platforms such as parish development committees and sub-county nutrition coordination committees. Their participation not only was associated with strengthened community accountability but also intergenerational dialogue. Persistent challenges included limited recognition of young volunteers and insufficient investment in long-term youth leadership programmes.

5.6.3. Climate action

Across all six countries, Right2Grow's climate action was not a stand-alone component, but a cross-cutting contribution shaped by the realities of climate vulnerability. By reinforcing community resilience, strengthening governance for climate-sensitive services, and promoting adaptive behaviours and local advocacy, Right2Grow helped ensure that nutrition and WASH gains could be sustained even in the face of increasing climatic stress. As a result, climate action became an implicit and necessary part of programme implementation.

- In *South Sudan*, particularly flooding, had a major impact on WASH and nutrition services. Right2Grow adapted by supporting communities and local officials in identifying flood-damaged water points and advocating for repair and maintenance. Water user committees were trained to anticipate seasonal flooding and manage related hygiene risks, while schools and community structures promoted climate-adaptive food production through nutrition gardens. Programme teams regularly adapted their approach, using small groups and alternative locations when flooding restricted mobility, which helped to maintain continuity in areas severely affected by the climate.
- In *Mali*, drought and water scarcity had a major impact on household nutrition and WASH vulnerability. Right2Grow worked with communities to prioritise access to safe water during periods of climatic stress and strengthened governance structures so that municipalities could plan and maintain water systems more effectively. Radio campaigns and community dialogues supported to raise awareness of hygiene risks during dry seasons, and advocacy helped local authorities integrate nutrition and WASH needs into development plans that increasingly had to take climate fluctuations into account. In this way, Right2Grow contributed to building resilience by helping communities articulate climate-related service gaps and encouraging authorities to respond to them.
- In *Burkina Faso*, climate challenges such as drought and advancing desertification affected both food systems and water availability. Right2Grow supported community groups in introducing small-scale, climate-resilient practices, including vegetable gardens and diversified food production, which helped families to protect themselves against climate-induced food insecurity. Youth and community volunteers promoted water conservation and safe water use, and local advocacy encouraged municipal leaders to incorporate climate-related WASH and nutrition needs into their planning. Radio outreach linked seasonal shocks to hygiene practices, supporting communities to adapt to changing climatic conditions.
- In *Ethiopia*, droughts and floods, worsened by conflict, disrupted health care, nutrition and WASH systems. Right2Grow helped strengthen woredas' capacities to maintain and repair water infrastructure affected by climate shocks and promoted vegetable gardens to improve food availability in drought-affected areas. Multisectoral coordination structures were supported to integrate climate risks into nutrition planning, while community awareness activities promoted appropriate hygiene practices during floods and water contamination. Even in conflict-affected regions, where participation was limited, Right2Grow contributed to a broader understanding of how climate risks are linked to nutrition and WASH management.
- In *Bangladesh*, climate threats such as cyclones, floods and salt intrusion affected both water quality and food systems. Right2Grow helped communities improve WASH monitoring so that damaged latrines and contaminated water points could be identified and addressed more quickly. Behaviour change interventions supported safe water treatment and hygiene practices during the flood season, while nutrition-sensitive home gardens promoted the use of climate-resilient crops. Local governments increased budget allocations for WASH infrastructure in flood-prone areas, a shift that was linked to ongoing advocacy under Right2Grow.
- In *Uganda*, repeated droughts, heavy rainfall and landslides posed significant challenges to WASH access and nutrition outcomes. Right2Grow supported communities to collaborate with district disaster management

and resilience structures to ensure nutrition and WASH issues were included in climate planning. Community gardens and diversified agriculture helped families cope with climate fluctuations, while improved access to safe water in drought-prone areas and refugee hosting areas helped mitigate the impacts of water scarcity. Young people and community monitors played an important role in identifying climate-related service disruptions and supporting local advocacy to address them.

6. Sustainability

In this chapter, the sustainability of the changes achieved through the programme is explored, focusing on the factors that will support the continuation of key interventions beyond its conclusion. Sustainability is also assessed across several dimensions as identified by the programme, including:

- *The ability of communities to maintain access to essential nutrition and WASH services;*
- *The extent to which governments adopt, implement, and uphold relevant WASH and nutrition policies;*
- *The capacity of civil society organisations to sustain or scale up programme outcomes;*
- *And the commitment of local authorities to provide ongoing support.*

Together, these elements provide insight into the long-term viability of the programme's impact and the conditions needed to ensure lasting change.

6.1. Perceived sustainability of achieved changes

Sustainability was built into the programme from the start, with both strong local ownership and national policy adoption contributing to long-term impact.

Sustainability was described by multiple global and local partners as a core principle of the Right2Grow programme from the outset. The programme's design focused on strengthening local capacities and ownership and embedding activities within existing structures, rather than introducing external and parallel systems. Nutrition and WASH priorities are now part of district budgets and planning, with ordinances and by-laws reinforcing local ownership. In addition to these local achievements, several national-level policies and legal frameworks, such as the constitution in Mali, the national nutrition policy in South Sudan, the HDP nexus in Ethiopia, and the Child Profile Estimate and Costing Model in Bangladesh, have been adopted by governments. These are expected to outlast the programme, although their long-term impact will depend on adequate financing and implementation. This multi-level approach has contributed significantly to the durability of the changes achieved. This approach has contributed significantly to the durability of the changes achieved.

"We are empowering the local structures. We are using all local... government policies; everything that is there is what we use. We don't come with things ourselves." – global consortium member

Established structures such as Citizen Voice and Accountability Task Forces, Advocacy Groups in Burkina Faso, Local Entrepreneurs Association in Bangladesh, Citizen Watch Committees in Mali are expected to continue working on WASH and nutrition after the programme ends. Central to these approaches is the strong focus on strengthening the capacity of community-based structures. In different countries, stakeholders have developed their own continuation plans and strategies to secure resources, indicating strong local ownership. For example, in Ethiopia, funding has already been secured to continue the work on HDP nexus beyond Right2Grow.

6.1.1 Factors contributing to sustainability

Right2Grow's sustainability stems from its deep integration into existing local and national systems, the strengthening of partner capacities, and the creation of lasting tools and learning cultures. By fostering local ownership, institutionalising good practices, and adapting to changing contexts, the programme has ensured that its impact on nutrition, WASH, and governance will continue well beyond its duration.

Several factors contribute to the continuation of Right2Grow key interventions, according to involved staff and external stakeholders consulted during the data collection process:

- **Institutional integration** - The various country reports confirm that national and sub-national actors, such as (local) governments, have increasingly integrated nutrition and WASH policies into planning and governance frameworks. Dedicated budget lines for these themes further reflects this institutional commitment. In *South Sudan*, this shift is illustrated through the perspective of a member of the Budget Committee in Juba:

"A parliamentarian from the Budget Committee in Juba remarked: '...we now debate allocations for nutrition and water directly in parliament. This was rarely happening before.' A senior planner at the Ministry of Health in Juba added: '.... nutrition is now recognised as a cross-cutting issue. It is written into our strategic plans, not just left for partners.' At the state level, a nutrition focal person in Bor explained: '...every month we bring stakeholders to review data. This makes nutrition part of our routine system, not just a donor-driven agenda.'" – South Sudan

Locally led approach to advocacy, budget monitoring and BMET digital tools introduced by Right2Grow have been embedded into organizational strategies, donor engagement processes, and even government planning

cycles. In Ethiopia, for instance, Right2Grow tools have been integrated into district annual plans and used to train government officials, promoting systemic change.

- **Building on existing structures** – The Right2Grow programme deliberately avoided creating parallel systems. Instead, it focused on strengthening and empowering existing local structures, which increases the likelihood that activities will continue organically.

An example to illustrate this is the strategic alignment with national development frameworks in *Ethiopia*, including the Seqota Declaration. By embedding programme activities within existing government-led initiatives and policy tools, the Right2Grow programme increased the relevance and uptake of its interventions. According to Ethiopian stakeholders, this alignment has enhanced the chances that programme approaches will continue under national leadership.

- **Strengthening of capacities** - Both global and local partners emphasise that through comprehensive training and behaviour change efforts, stakeholders across the system gained the knowledge and practical skills needed to sustain improved WASH and nutrition practices. In Ethiopia, it is explained how the capacity strengthening took place on different levels:

“The program has also made significant investments in capacity strengthening at the individual, household, and institutional levels. Through targeted training and behavior change initiatives, communities and institutions have developed the practical skills and knowledge required to sustain improved WASH and nutrition practices. These efforts have led to early signs of lasting behavioral change, helping embed new practices beyond the project’s direct support.” – Ethiopia

Right2Grow invested in the institutional development of local CSOs, including formal registration, internal policy development, and management systems. These efforts have enabled partners to access funding, engage in advocacy, and operate independently.

In *South Sudan*, it is illustrated how practices have become embedded through structured routines for country and state officials:

“A county health officer in Bor South reflected: ‘...supervision of facilities is now part of our workplan. It has become expected, not optional.’ A WASH coordinator in Baidit echoed this, stating: ‘...we now use monitoring tools that guide our reports. This practice will stay even when projects end.’ At the state level, an official in the Ministry of Finance highlighted improved budget monitoring: ‘...we track how much is spent on nutrition and WASH. This has improved accountability.’” - South Sudan

In addition, Right2Grow supported the development of advocacy skills, coalition-building, and strategic communication, which partners continue to apply in their work.

“They’ve learned how to influence policy and bring things together to make a strong advocacy pitch.” – global consortium member

- **Lasting tools and resources** - The programme produced a range of practical tools, including civil society monitoring instruments and learning materials. These were not only distributed but also accompanied by training, ensuring that partners can continue using them effectively. Across the six programme countries, partners reported that technical tools and approaches, such as Bridge4Voices, Community Voice and Action (CVA), Budget Monitoring and Expenditure Tracking (BMET), Outcome Harvesting, and storytelling, are now embedded in their regular professional practice, organizational strategies, and will actively be integrated into future programming.

For example, in Bangladesh, the Child Profile Estimate and Costing Model developed under Right2Grow is now used for evidence-based advocacy in unrelated projects. In Uganda, CSOs have adopted community scorecards and budget briefs into district planning cycles, while others launched a “Follow-the-Money” campaign to track service delivery using BMET and digital advocacy tools obtained through Right2Grow.

The introduction and uptake of BMET have been particularly transformative. Partners realised that budget-focused advocacy gave them more credibility and influence with government actors. BMET is now being integrated into partner programming, with some partners proposing regional workshops and new funding proposals to expand its use.

“BMET speaks about the money. The moment you start talking about budgets, governments have your attention.” – global consortium member

- **Learning culture** - The Right2Grow programme fostered a culture of critical reflection, documentation of lessons learned (good practices, challenges and recommendations from activities' implementation), and continuous learning. This included methodologies for critical review and documentation to ensure informal knowledge is captured and shared and the ability to cascade training locally, reducing reliance on external support.

"We really built a strategy with methodologies, tools, and training... to engage people in critical review and reflection to do better in the future." – global consortium member

An example of a tool within this learning culture is the Learning Catalogue, a centralised online resource developed by Action Against Hunger that pulls together key programmatic insights and lessons learned from across all six countries and global level. More than 40 learning briefs were produced by Right2Grow partners at all levels to ensure learnings from the field are captured and it serve as a tool for onboarding new staff and scaling successful approaches, by relying on proven best practices and avoiding common pitfalls.

Sustainability was further reinforced by cascading models of knowledge and skills transfer. Many partners not only strengthened their own technical capacities, but multiplied them by mentoring junior staff, training colleagues, and convening sessions with other organisations, including third-tier CSOs. For example, MEAL officers in *Mali* and *Burkina Faso* mentored other CSOs in Outcome Harvesting and facilitated trainings for diverse stakeholders. In several countries, Training of Trainers (ToT) models helped replicate knowledge and strengthen institutional memory within CSO networks.

- **Exit strategies and local ownership** - In the final phase of the Right2Grow programme, country teams worked closely with stakeholders to develop sustainability plans. In *Bangladesh*, for example, partners convened to discuss how to keep nutrition and child health on the agenda without external support.

In *South Sudan*, community leaders underlined that the presence of local committees and peer groups was central to sustainability. Such ownership was echoed by youth, who noted that their leadership roles gave them a sense of responsibility to sustain good practices. A chief in Bor South affirmed:

"...because the groups are ours, we will continue them even if projects end. People now see the benefits." – South Sudan

In *Burkina Faso*, the importance of local ownership is also underscored. In the North and Centre-North regions, stakeholders involved in the initiatives demonstrate a strong commitment to sustaining a collective dynamic. At the same time, differing views among civil society organisations and local government actors are slowing down the process, illustrating that local ownership remains an essential lever, but one that varies depending on the context.

"In the North and Centre-North regions, Advocacy Groups have demonstrated good organisational capacity: they have formed a network, set up an executive secretariat, and even self-financed the formalisation process." – Burkina Faso

- **Strong conflict sensitivity and adaptive programming** - Sustainability was also linked to the programme's ability to adapt to changing security, political, and economic contexts. Several stakeholders observed that the programme demonstrated flexibility in maintaining operations during periods of instability and insecurity and even conflict. For example, *Ethiopia* mentioned that in regions affected by instability, implementation strategies were adjusted to ensure continuity. Staff were trained to uphold principles of neutrality and impartiality, which not only protected their safety but also preserved community trust during sensitive periods. These adaptations allowed the programme to remain functional and responsive, even in challenging contexts.

"For instance, when access to district-level offices was restricted, activities were shifted to the village level, and remote monitoring tools were introduced." - Ethiopia

In *South Sudan*, the programme staff responded to economic challenges, such as inflation and food insecurity. Communities explained that while they understood nutritional guidance, they could not always afford diverse diets. In response, programme staff promoted the use of locally available, affordable foods. A woman in Pariak recalled:

"...they taught us to use groundnuts and greens instead of expensive foods. This made it possible for us to continue even when prices rose." – South Sudan

6.1.2. Challenges that hinder sustainability of achieved changes

Sustainability of the achieved changes is not guaranteed. Persistent challenges, such as (domestic and international development) funding uncertainty, staff turnover in various (governmental) organizations, late introduction of key tools, and the effects of political instability and insecurity, threaten to undermine progress.

Data collection exposed several challenges that could undermine progress:

- **Funding uncertainty:** Many CSOs are capable but lack resources to continue without external support. Technical and organisational capacities are sustainable, operational capacity might be fragile without financial support. Grassroots CBOs acknowledged capacity gains but expressed concern about resources to act independently. For example, a women's group in Pariak (*South Sudan*) explained:

"...we want to keep training others but printing materials and organising meetings costs money." – *South Sudan*

"I truly believe local partners are able to do it, but the fact of the matter will be: will they be funded for it?" – *Global consortium member*

- **Staff turnover:** High turnover of (government) personnel has disrupted institutional memory and slowed progress, as newly appointed staff require orientation and capacity-building support. This lack of continuity weakens follow-up on commitments and reduces programme momentum.
- **Timing of Bridge for Voices introduction:** While Bridge for Voices has proven to be a powerful approach to locally led advocacy, its co-creation and rollout came relatively late in the programme. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, the intensive in-person workshop needed to develop the approach could not be organised earlier. As a result, the positive effects of Bridge4Voices only became visible from late 2023 onwards, limiting its full alignment with earlier advocacy efforts.
- **Engagement with Dutch Embassies:** It was noted by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs that engagement with embassies is essential but varies across contexts. While some embassies were more proactive and open to collaboration, differences in engagement were also influenced by the availability and capacity of embassy staff, who often manage multiple strategic partnerships simultaneously. Future programmes should ensure embassies are involved early and consistently, while also considering their operational constraints, to strengthen alignment and sustainability. There is a shared concern about whether the programme was sufficiently visible and embedded within embassy strategies, especially now that it is ending.
- **Political instability and government restructuring:** One common challenge to sustainability across several programme countries was the impact of political instability and government restructuring. Political instability, such as conflict, contested elections, or abrupt leadership changes, created uncertainty and disrupted coordination with public institutions. In parallel, government restructuring, often linked to broader policy or administrative reforms, led to shifts in mandates and responsibilities between departments and levels of government. This required partners to re-establish relationships and adapt to new institutional arrangements, which sometimes slowed down implementation and affected continuity.

As one partner in Ethiopia explained: *"Government restructuring at regional and district levels created major coordination challenges. We had to re-engage with new officials and rebuild governance structures to keep the programme moving."* - *Ethiopia*

- **Crises and insecurity:** A recurring challenge to sustainability across multiple countries was the impact of humanitarian crises, conflict and insecurity. In several regions, especially in *Burkina Faso*, *Mali*, *Ethiopia* and *South Sudan*, such conditions shifted the focus from long-term development to immediate emergency response. This made certain areas inaccessible, disrupted service delivery, and limited the space for implementing joint action plans, including monitoring and accountability mechanisms.
- **Weak access to services:** Despite optimism about behaviours, some communities are clear that the sustainability of physical services such as boreholes and sanitation facilities remains fragile. For example, different people interviewed in *South Sudan* illustrated this:

A community leader in Baidit cautioned: *"...we can use the water well, but when the pump breaks, repairs are difficult without money and spare parts"*. Women also pointed out that nutrition practices are constrained by food insecurity, with one mother in Pariak noting: *"...we know what foods are good, but in the dry season we cannot always provide them."*

6.2. Reflections on four identified aspects of sustainability

6.2.1. Aspect 1: Communities to have continued access to nutrition and WASH services

Right2Grow has strengthened communities' long-term access to nutrition and WASH services by embedding accountability, inclusivity, and resilience into local systems. Through empowered citizen engagement, policy integration, and gender- and climate-responsive approaches, the programme has built foundations for equitable service delivery and community-driven sustainability.

In the six countries covered by the programme, communities have made substantial progress in maintaining access to nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services despite various environmental, social and governance challenges. The programme's rights-based, systems-focused approach, which relies on social accountability, inclusive governance and community empowerment, has strengthened the foundations necessary for long-term service delivery and resilience.

For all countries, there were the following three reinforcing strategies:

- **Community empowerment and accountability:** Citizen scorecards, community dialogues, and local advocacy platforms have institutionalised accountability, ensuring that governments and service providers remain responsive.
- **Systems strengthening and policy integration:** The inclusion of nutrition and WASH priorities in local development plans and budgets has improved institutional ownership and long-term resource allocation. At the same time, the programme contributed to raising the profile of nutrition and WASH on national policy agendas, positioning them as public health and political priorities.
- **Gender, youth, and climate responsiveness:** Women and youth have been instrumental in sustaining the delivery of nutrition and WASH services, while climate-adaptive practices (though unevenly implemented) have increased community resilience in high-risk contexts.

In *Bangladesh*, an additional strategy focused on **private sector engagement** as a pathway to sustainability. Local Entrepreneurs (LEs) were integrated into community structures to ensure continued access to affordable nutrition and WASH products. This approach created a link between community demand and private sector supply, reinforcing sustainability beyond the programme's lifespan.

Together, these efforts have laid the foundations for sustainable access to nutrition and WASH services, demonstrating the programme's transformative impact on governance, equity and local resilience.

More specific highlights for each country are:

- In *Bangladesh*, collaboration between civil society organisations (CSOs), local governments, and the Department of Public Health Engineering improved water and sanitation infrastructure, hygiene awareness, and nutrition services, with strong engagement of women- and youth-led groups.
- In *Burkina Faso*, despite insecurity, Right2Grow enhanced local accountability through community monitoring, scorecards, and dialogue platforms. Coordination among health centres, commune councils, and village committees improved borehole maintenance, hygiene promotion, and nutrition continuity.
- In *Ethiopia*, integrated WASH-nutrition-governance efforts using the Community Voice and Action model supported regular water provision and service accountability. Women and youth took leadership roles in maintaining water points and promoting hygiene, sustaining services even during drought.
- In *Mali*, advocacy by CSOs and communities led local authorities to allocate budgets for WASH and nutrition. Women's savings groups financed hygiene materials and food production, while local planning integrated national nutrition policies to ensure sustainability.
- In *South Sudan*, community governance and citizen monitoring sustained service delivery amid floods and displacement. Mother-to-Mother Support Groups and adaptive practices, such as elevated latrines and water purification, strengthened resilience.
- In *Uganda*, nutrition and WASH were institutionalised in district plans. Community scorecards improved accountability, while climate-resilient water systems, sanitation upgrades, and nutrition-sensitive agriculture supported continued service delivery during dry seasons and financial constraints.

6.2.2. Aspect 2: Governments to adopt, maintain and implement WASH/nutrition policies

Right2Grow has significantly supported governments in adopting, improving and implementing WASH and nutrition policies. Through policy integration, strengthened institutional capacity and coordination, and enhanced accountability and local ownership, the programme has helped embed WASH and nutrition priorities within governance systems at national and subnational levels, laying the groundwork for lasting impact beyond the programme's duration.

The programme has significantly influenced policy adoption, improvement and implementation in WASH and nutrition sectors across its six programme countries. By strengthening governance systems, promoting citizen engagement and accountability mechanisms, and fostering multi-sectoral collaboration, Right2Grow has supported governments at both national and subnational levels to institutionalise nutrition and WASH priorities within policy frameworks, plans, and budgets.

The programme's influence is visible in three key areas:

- **Policy integration:** WASH and nutrition are increasingly mainstreamed into local and national development plans such as the first ever National Nutrition Policy in *South Sudan*, budgets, and accountability frameworks. In some cases, this integration has gone further, with legal acts such as the new Constitution in Mali reinforcing the status of nutrition and WASH as public priorities.
- **Institutional capacity and multi-sectoral coordination:** Strengthened collaboration among government departments, such as health, water, agriculture, and social welfare, has improved efficiency and reduced fragmentation.
- **Accountability and local ownership:** Citizen scorecards, budget monitoring and expenditure tracking, and participatory monitoring mechanisms have deepened government responsiveness and transparency.

Despite varying political and fiscal contexts, all countries are on a common path towards institutionalised and community-based governance of WASH and nutrition services, laying the foundations for a lasting impact beyond the programme's duration. Difficulties remain in consolidating WASH and nutrition services in policies and action plans and ensuring that the multi-sectoral approach is reflected in these policies and action plans, and that they are properly budgeted to enable effective implementation.

More specific highlights for each country are:

- In *Bangladesh*, government ownership of integrated WASH–nutrition planning increased as Right2Grow supported the inclusion of these priorities in Union and Upazila plans. Cross-sector coordination among Health, Department of Public Health Engineering, and Agriculture improved, with service providers trained in multi-sectoral approaches despite challenges in financial decentralisation.
- In *Burkina Faso*, the programme strengthened governance amid insecurity by supporting communes to embed WASH and nutrition actions in Local Development Plans. Coordination among ministries enhanced the national multisectoral approach, while local authorities allocated budgets for hygiene and nutrition. Citizen scorecards and accountability platforms reinforced implementation at the community level.
- In *Ethiopia*, collaboration with national and woreda structures aligned local plans with the Seqota Declaration (the Government of Ethiopia's 2015 commitment to end childhood stunting by 2030 through a multi-sectoral, phased approach). The Community Voice and Action model improved accountability, prompting local investment in WASH infrastructure and hygiene education.
- In *Mali*, the programme supported the integration of nutrition and WASH goals into the new Constitution and communal plans and investment frameworks, increasing local funding and aligning national policies. Implementation of Law 052 on women's representation further strengthened accountability.
- In *South Sudan*, Right2Grow enhanced coordination between health and water ministries, promoting local planning, transparency, and community monitoring through scorecards, despite funding constraints. In addition, the programme facilitated the development of the National Nutrition Policy by engaging multiple sectors and stakeholders, contributing to stronger national-level ownership and policy coherence.
- In *Uganda*, policy institutionalisation progressed through district-level ordinances and plans. Budget allocations supported gender-responsive, climate-resilient WASH and nutrition initiatives, solidifying local commitment to national frameworks like UNAP II (Uganda Nutrition Action Plan).

6.2.3. Aspect 3: Civil society organisations have the capacity to sustain or scale up programme outcomes

Right2Grow has strengthened the capacity of civil society and community-based organisations to sustain and scale up initiatives for better WASH and nutrition outcomes. Through improved advocacy skills, evidence-based engagement, and a shift toward learning and strategic influence, these organisations are now better equipped to drive change. However, their continued impact will depend on maintaining financial and institutional support to preserve motivation and operational capacity beyond the programme's end.

The data collected in this evaluation confirmed that CSOs and CBOs have notably enhanced their capacity to sustain and scale up programme outcomes through the Right2Grow programme. This progress is attributed to several key factors:

- **Improved advocacy skills** - CSOs now engage more confidently and effectively across local, regional, national, and international platforms to promote better WASH and nutrition services. CSOs also reflected on their ability to sustain or expand programme outcomes, emphasising strengthened capacities in financial management, advocacy, and coalition building. For example, a representative from a youth-focused CSO in Juba, *South Sudan*, noted:

“...our team can now design advocacy campaigns and engage with leaders. We did not have this skill before the programme.” – partner organisation in South Sudan

- **Enhanced use of evidence in advocacy** - Organisations have developed the capacity to generate credible data and participate in policy dialogues, enabling more persuasive, evidence-based advocacy.
- **Shift in mindset and organisational learning** - The evaluation revealed a transformation in how CSOs perceive the role of advocacy, recognising it as central to improving service delivery. For instance, a representative from the CSO sector in *Ethiopia* highlighted this transformation in an endline evaluation interview:

“...at the beginning, most of us were sceptical that the programme could improve WASH and nutrition services without financial investment in infrastructure, [and] solely through advocacy. But we have now seen and appreciated that the Right2Grow programme has led to substantial service improvements without any direct financial support for infrastructure. Its advocacy approach has been powerful in mobilising community resources and in turning government commitments and promises into concrete action...” – partner organisation in Ethiopia

This shift was reinforced by the emergence of a learning culture across the programme. Findings from both the mid-term and endline surveys show strong alignment regarding the overall perception of learning, confirming that learning has evolved from a standalone activity to a core part of how teams work. As one partner noted:

“It has simplified the process of implementing the programme activities. When faced with challenging tasks, partners are able to share, interact, and learn from each other on the best practices.”

The Linking & Learning framework played a pivotal role in this transformation. Before its introduction, learning from field activities was often shared only when required, otherwise lost. Now, Terms of Reference and activity reports include a learning section to ensure partners document lessons systematically, facilitating integration of learning in almost all activities since late 2024. Teams across countries now view learning as a dynamic process linked to innovation and impact rather than a static, stand-alone activity. As one respondent put it:

“Learning empowers growth, adaptability, and informed decision-making. It transforms experience into insight and equips individuals to navigate complexity with confidence.”

However, at the same time, some countries mentioned that without continued funding and institutional capacity, it is unclear whether CSOs will be able to maintain their motivation and capacity to carry forward these initiatives.

6.2.4. Aspect 4: Local authorities have pledged continued support

Local authorities across all programme countries have shown strong commitment to sustaining WASH and nutrition outcomes beyond the lifespan of Right2Grow. By integrating priorities into policies, local plans and budgets, supporting community structures, adopting advocacy and monitoring tools, and investing in capacity strengthening, they have taken concrete steps toward institutionalising programme achievements. Continued engagement, financial commitment, and coordination with civil society will be essential to maintain momentum and ensure that these gains translate into lasting, locally owned change.

In all countries, local authorities have demonstrated meaningful commitment to sustaining WASH and nutrition outcomes beyond the formal duration of the Right2Grow programme. This support is reflected in several key aspects:

- **Integration into local planning and governance structures:** Authorities have institutionalised WASH and nutrition priorities by embedding them into local development plans, council agendas, and strategic frameworks. For example, In *Uganda*, District Development Plans now include nutrition and hygiene priorities, and sanitation by-laws have been passed to reinforce accountability.
- **Dedicated budget allocations:** The establishment of specific budget lines for WASH and nutrition indicates financial commitment and ownership. In some cases, budget approval processes now require allocations for these sectors. For instance, in *Ethiopia*, district councils in Amhara region require WASH and nutrition allocations for budget approval, ensuring sustained financial support.
- **Support for community structures and citizen engagement:** Local governments have pledged to continue supporting grassroots structures such as water committees, mother groups, and citizen watch committees, which are essential for service delivery and accountability. In the country report of *Mali*, it is said that mayors are committed to supporting citizen watch committees and integrating participatory approaches into local governance.
- **Adoption of advocacy and monitoring tools:** Authorities have endorsed and integrated tools developed during the programme - such as Outcome Harvesting and BMET - into their planning and monitoring routines. For example, in *Burkina Faso*, despite structural challenges, local governments have begun using advocacy tools and monitoring systems in collaboration with CSOs.
- **Capacity strengthening and local ownership:** Efforts to build local capacity through training, mentoring, and the use of local languages have enhanced the ability of local actors to manage and sustain programme components. In *Burkina Faso*, tailored training and decentralised budget management have improved local actors' capacity and accountability.
- **Continuity despite leadership changes:** Across the six countries, the durability of Right2Grow practices appear to depend far less on political leaders and far more on the stability of technical staff and institutional systems. Continuity was largely supported by government and CSO technical officers who remained in their posts even as political leadership changed, carrying forward established routines and programme approaches. In addition, multi-sectoral committees and coordination structures, which tend to outlast electoral and administrative cycles, helped preserve programme momentum.
- **Recognition of long-term engagement needs:** Local authorities acknowledge that sustainable transformation (especially in areas like behaviour change and systems strengthening) requires long-term commitment beyond typical project cycles. In *Bangladesh*, authorities emphasised that five years is often too short for lasting change but pledged to maintain momentum through local planning and CSO collaboration.

7. Coherence and partnership collaboration

This chapter explores how coherence and collaboration within the Right2Grow partnership have evolved throughout the programme. It examines alignment within the programme, particularly looking at the collaboration in the partnership, the added value of working as a partnership, the application of the principles of adaptive management and the efforts to strengthen localisation and leading from the south. The next section in this chapter looks at the changes that have been applied since the mid-term review. Finally, the last section looks at the programme's coherence with key stakeholders of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dutch Embassies in programme countries and other partnerships.

Many of the results presented in this chapter are based on the partnership survey, which was completed by 92 respondents across six countries and at global level. The responses to this survey cannot be seen as fully representative of the partnership, as the respondents are not fully representative of the partnership in terms of gender, age and tier of organisation involvement. The detailed findings from this survey, along with further elaboration of this chapter, are included in the annex.

7.1. Internal coherence

7.1.1. Collaboration and coherence inside the partnership

Internal collaboration and coherence within the Right2Grow partnership was successful, enabling strong collaboration, shared learning, and collective impact across countries and sectors. Despite early challenges around coordination, budgeting, and governance, the partnership demonstrated a strong culture of reflection and adaptation. Over time, structured collaboration, inclusive governance, and localisation efforts helped align diverse actors under a shared vision. Across all six countries, internal collaboration evolved through joint planning and empowered local structures, laying a solid foundation for sustained impact.

Overall, the partnership survey indicates that responding staff members of partner organisations see a high level of coherence. 80% of respondents rated the collaboration between country partners and the consortium partners as "very good". This perception was even stronger among CSOs within the Right2Grow country consortia, where 91% rated it "very good", and within the global consortium, 87% of respondents gave the same rating. These results reflect strong alignment, collaboration, and shared understanding across different levels of the partnership.

Table 17: Rating of collaboration quality by partnership type

Type of collaboration	Not good at all	Neutral	Very good
Country partners and the consortium	3%	17%	80%
CSOs in the Right2Grow country consortia	3%	6%	91%
Global consortium	7%	6%	87%

Additionally, 82% of the respondents from the country consortia indicated that the international and regional Right2Grow partners support the work of their national consortium very much.

Throughout the Right2Grow programme, both global and local partners reflected positively on the overall coherence and collaboration within the consortium. Interviewees consistently highlighted the strong expertise, capacity, and supportive spirit among consortium members. According to different respondents, the different roles of the members strengthened the overall coherence of the programme and contributed to results that would not have been possible individually.

"There is a lot of expertise, a lot of capacity, a lot of positiveness and supportiveness in the consortium. So, I think generally it works well." – global consortium member

"Each partner brought its own specific value: ACF for the East, THP and AMR for the North, Save the Children for consortium management, and RESONUT for national advocacy and the Centre-North and East regions. This complementarity broadened the scope and strengthened the collective impact. As one participant summed it up: 'Today, we no longer talk about Save, THP or ACF. We talk about Right2Grow.'" – Burkina Faso

However, the programme also faced early challenges in coordination, particularly around budget allocation, role clarity, and operational planning. This imbalance contributed to a sense of fragmentation, with partners operating on different plans and expectations. Collaboration was often described as ad hoc, especially in the first years. Importantly, the programme launched in 2021, during the global COVID-19 pandemic, which limited opportunities for joint in-person kick-off meetings and required continuous adaptation to rapidly changing circumstances. These constraints affected the ability to establish shared systems and processes early on.

Cultural and organisational differences also played a role. Larger organisations like ACF, World Vision, and Save the Children had deep country-level presence, while smaller or more activist partners like The Hunger Project and CEGAA operated differently, sometimes with faster access to platforms or more flexible approaches.

“There’s always a different approach or vision. Every organisation works differently, and sometimes you just have to accept that.” – global consortium member

The initial governance model was described as overly idealistic assuming shared vision but also flexibility across organisations and budgets.

Despite these challenges, the consortium demonstrated a strong culture of reflection and learning. Partners were willing to engage in difficult conversations about roles, budgets, and governance and decision-making power, even when it meant acknowledging mistakes or reducing their own influence.

“I really appreciate the openness and willingness of our consortium partners to critically reflect... even if it means reducing your role or budget.” – global consortium member

Across the six countries, internal coherence within the partnership emerges as a defining strength of the programme, characterised by collaboration, complementarity, and continuous learning across partners, sectors, and governance levels. While the degree and maturity of coherence vary by context, all country experiences point to the same core ingredients: shared vision, joint planning, inclusive governance, and adaptive management.

- **Shared vision and multi-sectoral integration:** Internal coherence is widely understood as the effective alignment of diverse partners and sectors under a unified framework. In *Uganda* and *Ethiopia*, this was achieved through explicit multi-sectoral integration - linking nutrition, WASH, food security, and governance interventions in a way that reinforced, rather than duplicated, efforts. Right2Grow partners brought complementary expertise, ensuring that interventions were mutually reinforcing and guided by a clear and shared Theory of Change.

Similarly, in *Bangladesh*, coherence was strengthened through the integration of complementary initiatives - such as *Healthy Village*, *SDG Village*, and *Citizen Voice in Action* - all contributing to child nutrition outcomes. These efforts highlight a shared understanding of nutrition as a multi-dimensional issue requiring collective action across disciplines and administrative levels.

- **Collaborative structures and governance mechanisms:** All countries emphasised that clear governance arrangements and structured coordination were critical to internal coherence. *Ethiopia*’s example stands out with its layered governance system - Steering Committee, Programme Management Unit (PMU), and Technical Working Groups - that link national strategy with technical delivery. This structure enabled regular communication, consistency, and responsiveness to evolving contexts.

Bangladesh and *Burkina Faso* also underscored the importance of country coalitions and joint platforms for learning and coordination. In these settings, shared tools, joint planning sessions, and evidence-sharing workshops fostered a sense of unity and alignment across partners. However, some governance structures - such as *Burkina Faso*’s steering committee - remained underutilised, pointing to the need for more participatory and dynamic decision-making processes.

- **Localisation, empowerment, and multi-level coordination:** A recurring theme across all six countries is the growing link between community structures and institutional actors: a key driver of coordination between grassroots efforts and government decision-making. *Uganda* and *Ethiopia* exemplify how local mechanisms like Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) groups influence district and national planning, creating a feedback loop between grassroots actors and policymakers.

In *South Sudan* and *Mali*, coherence evolved through local empowerment and adaptive decentralisation. Initially fragmented, these programmes shifted toward shared ownership, with national CSOs and community organisations leading implementation and advocacy. This shift toward localisation not only enhanced relevance and accountability but also improved programme resilience during crises such as insecurity and economic shocks.

- **Adaptive management and shared learning:** Internal coherence was also reinforced by the ability to adapt and learn collectively. *Ethiopia* and *South Sudan* institutionalised reflection and adaptation processes - such as quarterly reviews and learning events - enabling partners to realign strategies based on evidence and context. These adaptive practices promoted flexibility, allowing programmes to remain effective amid changing political and economic realities.

Mali's experience highlights the importance of formalised annual planning and integration of community-developed action plans to improve coherence. Across countries, shared learning platforms - whether national workshops or cross-country exchanges appears to have been important for maintaining cohesion, strengthening technical capacity, and fostering trust among partners.

Challenges and areas for strengthening

Despite strong achievements, several challenges persist. Limited communication channels, top-down decision-making, and uneven participation sometimes hindered timely coordination - particularly noted in *Burkina Faso* and *Mali*. In *Bangladesh*, while coherence was strong at strategic and operational levels, gaps remained in research and communication flow.

7.1.2. Localisation and leading from the South

Right2Grow made notable progress in localisation and shifting power to country-level leadership, though structural limitations and missed opportunities remained. The programme strengthened country ownership, inclusive decision-making, and the capacity of local partners, especially after the mid-term review. However, challenges such as limited early resource allocation, donor-driven structures, and uneven inclusion of smaller CSOs highlighted the need for deeper systemic change to fully realise the localisation agenda.

Intentions and progress

The Right2Grow programme was designed with a clear ambition to promote localisation and shift the power within its partnership structure. The programme faced both opportunities and challenges in realising this ambition. From the onset, there was a diverse interpretation of what 'shifting the power' meant. Partners acknowledged that it was the first time this group of organisations had worked together under one programme, and no single definition was agreed upon. Over time, however, a shared understanding emerged: shifting the power meant transferring decision-making and budgetary responsibility to country-level leadership, while ensuring that global teams played a supportive role.

"Currently, decision-making power mainly lies with the Programme Management Unit (PMU), composed of country leads... putting countries in the driver's seat." – global consortium member

Compared to other programmes, Right2Grow was frequently cited by internal interviewees as a good example in terms of localisation and equal partnership. The governance changes made after the mid-term review were seen as a turning point, accelerating progress toward country-led decision-making and more meaningful involvement of local actors.

"Right2Grow has achieved more in localisation and shift the power than many other programmes. The MTR really helped move things forward." – global consortium member

At the global level, Right2Grow also made efforts to elevate the role of its southern partner, CEGAA, by appointing them as co-lead for global facilitation, which was appreciated by CEGAA as a strategic move to build visibility and credibility for future funding opportunities. In addition, the youth-led organisation AJCAD from *Mali* served as a Global MCD co-lead, further reinforcing the programme's commitment to inclusive leadership. Communication efforts were also co-led from the country's level, ensuring that local voices and perspectives were central in shaping the programme's global narrative.

"They [Right2Grow] wanted to put CEGAA in a powerful position. That's why they made CEGAA the co-lead at global level." – global consortium member

In the beginning, CEGAA felt their involvement was more symbolic than strategic, especially as a southern partner who joined after the proposal development phase and initially received a smaller budget than the others. As a technical partner, CEGAA was originally expected to phase out its BMET capacity strengthening work in the final years, assuming local partners would take over. However, following the midterm review, additional budget was reallocated to support continued engagement.

More information about the perceptions of respondents on localisation efforts can be found in Annex 3.

Perceptions on localisation efforts

86% of respondents to the partnership survey at the country level agree that all country consortium partners are equally included and listened to. Staff members from *Bangladesh* (aside from one outlier), *Mali*, *South Sudan*, and *Uganda* show strong alignment with this view, while responses from *Ethiopia* and *Burkina Faso* are more varied.

At the global level, 73% of responding global consortium staff agree that all consortium partners are equally included and listened to. However, responses are somewhat more neutral when it comes to inclusion in decision-making.

Table 18: Overview on perceptions on localisation efforts

Level	The consortium is dominated by a few	Neutral	All consortium partners are equally included and listened to
Country consortia	8%	6%	86%
Global consortia	7%	20%	73%

More detailed results from the partnership survey about perspectives on localisation efforts can be found in Annex 3.

Limitations and missed opportunities

Despite these efforts, interviewees noted several limitations in how power was shifted in practice. One of the gaps was the lack of direct resource allocation to local partners, especially in the early stages of the programme. While small grants were introduced later, this was not embedded in the initial design.

“Local organisations had roles, but not always the resources or decision-making power to act independently.” – global consortium member

Localisation was also sometimes seen as limited to key national partners, with less reach to smaller/local CSOs.

One global consortium member added further nuance, emphasizing that true power shift means allowing countries to set their own agendas, rather than having priorities defined externally:

“Shifting the power means you don’t come in and say: we’re addressing nutrition and WASH for you. You ask: what are your priorities?” – global consortium member

Some partners also reflected critically on the top-down nature of the programme’s initial setup, which was shaped by donor requirements and contractual structures. For example, some partners noted that budget management and resource control were still partly centralized at global level, due to contractual reporting lines and organisational structures. This created inherent power dynamics that were difficult to overcome without broader changes at the donor level.

“A project as big as Right2Grow has an inherent top-down element. If you really want something different, it needs to be designed differently at donor level.” – global consortium member

7.1.3. Added value of working together

Working together in a diverse consortium significantly enhanced the Right2Grow programme’s reach, impact and learning. The added value of collaboration was seen in the complementarity of expertise, cross-organisational learning, and amplified advocacy. Partners shared tools, adapted successful models, and strengthened each other’s capacities. This collective approach enabled broader coverage, deeper influence, experience with working in complex partnerships and a rich exchange of knowledge: benefiting both individual organisations and the programme as a whole.

The Right2Grow programme was built on a consortium model that brought together a diverse group of organisations with complementary strengths. While working in a consortium presented coordination challenges, survey respondents, reflections session participants and interviewees overwhelmingly emphasised the added value of collaboration, shared impact and cross-organisational learning.

In the partnership survey, respondents indicated what they considered to be the added value of collaboration in a partnership. Knowledge exchange (98%), mutual learning (88%), benefitting from each other's experiences (87%) and capacities (83%) were selected most frequently, followed by amplifying the impact of the programme (72%) and speaking with a united voice (71%). Sharing responsibilities and risks (70%) rounds off the top-most selected added values.

More information about the five key added values of collaboration in a partnership and the type of learnings partners gained in the partnership can be found in the Annex 3: Coherence and Partnership Survey.

7.2. Mid-term review as a turning point

The mid-term review marked a turning point in the Right2Grow programme, triggering structural improvements, stronger local leadership, and a shift toward system-level change. It brought clarity to roles and responsibilities and decision-making processes through an adjusted governance structure, empowered country teams, and introduced new coordination mechanisms. Across countries, the mid-term review served as a catalyst in a move from project-based approaches to institutionalisation, improved data systems, and deeper collaboration. It also strengthened adaptive management, inclusion, and accountability, laying the groundwork for more sustainable and locally owned impact.

Further details on the perspectives of the global consortium and country consortia are provided in Annex 3.

7.3. Stakeholder coherence

This section explores how the Right2Grow programme aligned and collaborated with key external stakeholders, including the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague, Dutch embassies in the six countries, and other partnerships and actors.

7.3.1. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Collaboration with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague was generally constructive and built on mutual trust, though the depth and consistency of engagement varied across levels and countries. The partnership benefited from regular contact with MFA through the global consortium lead, together with the Dutch L&A lead, strategic alignment with Dutch policy priorities, and visibility at key events. Country-level collaboration was often supportive, though some local actors experienced limited direct interaction. While the programme was appreciated for its relevance and citizen-focused approach, future efforts could strengthen two-way communication and the inclusion of national stakeholders, especially related to nutrition and WASH.

At the Dutch level, collaboration with MFA was primarily facilitated through the global lead of the consortium and the Dutch L&A lead, who maintained regular contact with the ministry and coordinated updates. In the Netherlands, Right2Grow partners also engaged with MFA through events, meetings, and annual policy dialogues, though some interviewees noted that the relationship remained somewhat indirect.

“The collaboration with MFA is mainly through the consortium lead. They’ve had regular updates and even organised field visits, like the one to Burkina Faso.” – global consortium member

The collaboration between the programme and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs was marked by mutual trust, regular engagement, and strategic alignment, according to the perspective of MFA. Under MFA's new focus on migration, security, and Dutch private sector involvement, the programme was increasingly recognised as a relevant contributor, particularly in relation to security and stability.

From the perspective of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the collaboration with the Right2Grow consortium was viewed positively. MFA staff expressed appreciation for the frequent and constructive contact with the global leads of the programme, which helped build mutual trust and transparency throughout the implementation period. Beyond formal updates, the MFA representative noted that Right2Grow was highly visible across various events and platforms, reinforcing its relevance and credibility within the broader Dutch development landscape.

MFA acknowledged that the programme's close cooperation with local NGOs and its emphasis on citizen engagement and accountability, especially through tools like Budget Monitoring and Expenditure Tracking, contributed to local trust-building and governance. These elements were seen as directly supporting the Ministry's goal of enhancing security through inclusive development. The programme's efforts to strengthen ties between communities and local governments helped foster a sense of ownership, transparency, and safety.

The Ministry also appreciated the programme's strong international and global advocacy engagement, particularly its visibility at international events such as the Nutrition for Growth Summit in Paris, where Right2Grow secured a prominent presence, including a speaker slot and a well-positioned booth. MFA staff were regularly present at national and international events, including World Food Day and Dutch policy working groups on nutrition, where Right2Grow's contributions were visible and valued.

Countries perceived the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a partner who provided financial, political and technical support and who reviewed the programme reports. Also, its role as facilitator of orientation sessions is highlighted by the countries, helping to strengthen coherence and promote knowledge sharing beyond the immediate partnership. The collaboration was most of the times described as constructive by country teams.

Respondents were asked in the partnership survey to rate the partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 75% of all partners rated the collaboration between the partnership and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs as "very good." Respondents from *Bangladesh* and *South Sudan* expressed the most positive views on the cooperation between MFA and the Right2Grow partnership.

7.3.2. Embassies of the Netherlands in Programme Countries

Collaboration with Dutch embassies in programme countries was constructive in several countries, though its consistency and strategic depth varied depending on context and embassy capacity.

At the country level, Right2Grow country leads were responsible for maintaining relationships with Dutch embassies. This structure allowed for localised engagement, with varying degrees of success across countries.

"Each country lead was responsible for linking with the embassy. That's been happening in all countries, with different levels of success." – global consortium member

In countries like *Ethiopia*, according to global partners, the collaboration was described as constructive and consistent, with embassies participating in assessments, advocacy events, and validation processes. Field visits, regular feedback on reports, and participation in joint workshops strengthened accountability, quality assurance, and adaptive learning were mentioned as the engagement of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Ethiopia. This contributed to political legitimacy and created mechanisms for sustained advocacy and programme alignment with national priorities in *Ethiopia*.

However, in other contexts, embassy engagement was more limited, often due to capacity constraints or competing priorities of Embassy staff. For example, in *Burkina Faso*, the Dutch Embassy provided ad hoc support for certain activities, but strategic coordination remained weak and irregular. In this country, there was a greater need for a better alignment of the Embassy's priorities with those of the consortium. This also happened in *South Sudan*, where some stakeholders noted that the Embassy presence was mostly concentrated in Juba, with limited visibility at state and county levels. Local actors expressed a desire for more consistent engagement outside the capital to better reflect sub-national realities. This is also said by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

"It is crucial to actively involve Dutch embassies and pay close attention to their engagement, as openness to programmes like Right2Grow varies significantly from one embassy to another." - MFA

Despite these challenges, several embassies remained actively engaged, attending key events and showing interest in the programme's progress.

Partnership Survey respondents were asked to rate the collaboration with the Dutch Embassies. 70% of partner respondents rated the collaboration between the Right2Grow partnership and Dutch embassies as "very good." *Bangladesh*, *Mali*, and *South Sudan* were particularly positive, while *Burkina Faso* was less favourable. In *Uganda*, opinions on the collaboration were more divided.

One story in the partnership survey about the added value of working together with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its embassies is highlighted:

"Working with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its embassies has brought clear added value by providing consistent political support, visibility and strategic alignment for Right2Grow programme. Their backing has helped elevate our advocacy efforts at both national and global level, more especially in engaging government institutions and pushing for stronger policy commitments in nutrition and WASH. The ministry focusses on localisation, civic space and gender equality aligned well with Right2Grow objectives, reinforcing our approach and give credibility to CSOs- led initiative. The embassies acted as connectors in facilitating dialogue between implementing partners, local authorities and other donors." – Partner organisation from South Sudan

Opportunities for strategic alignment

Interviewees highlighted several opportunities to strengthen external coherence with MFA and embassies, especially in light of evolving Dutch development frameworks such as Joint Development Plans (JDPs).

“New opportunities are emerging as embassies develop Joint Development Plans. Country consortia are starting to engage with these plans to align efforts and access funding.” – global consortium member

This shift is seen as a chance for local partners to continue relevant activities outside the direct programme structure by tapping into embassy frameworks and resources.

“A key recommendation is to develop a consultative network where partners can connect, exchange learning, and influence policy... Sustainability was emphasized, calling for stronger local capacities and resource mobilization, leveraging the Embassy’s existing platforms to enhance collaborative impact.” - Ethiopia

“They could also consider using local embassy funds to support CSOs - helping sustain initiatives beyond the programme period.” – global consortium member

However, interviewees cautioned that embassies rarely initiate engagement themselves. Local partners need to be proactive and strategic in building these relationships.

7.3.3. Other partnerships and actors

Right2Grow built strong external partnerships that enhanced impact, legitimacy, and alignment with broader systems, though strategic coherence varied across contexts. Collaboration with UN agencies, civil society networks, academia, media, and other strategic alliances strengthened the programme’s ability to influence policy, amplify community voices, and embed outcomes within broader systems. Strategic coherence varied across contexts, but the overall external coherence was strong and instrumental in achieving sustained results and avoiding duplication.

Across the six countries and within interviews with the external stakeholders, Right2Grow demonstrated strong external coherence through strategic partnerships with a diverse range of actors, including civil society networks, UN agencies, bilateral donors, academic institutions, media, and allied international programmes. These collaborations were essential for amplifying impact, ensuring alignment with national and global agendas, and promoting collective advocacy for sustainable nutrition and WASH outcomes.

- **Coordination with UN agencies and global platforms:** Right2Grow worked closely with a range of actors, including UNICEF, the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) in *Mali*, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). These coordination spaces, such as WASH platforms and multi-stakeholder networks, enabled the programme to align local evidence with national priorities, accelerate decision-making, and amplify community voices. In *South Sudan* and *Uganda*, UNICEF-led networks provided legitimacy and structure, while SUN and SWA strengthened advocacy and policy dialogue, and UNDP contributed to governance and capacity-building efforts. Together, these collaborations facilitated CSO participation in high-level discussions and supported tangible service improvements, such as borehole drilling and water system installations.
- **Engagement with civil society networks:** Working with national CSO coalitions and advocacy networks helped strengthen local ownership and policy influence. These partnerships enabled joint campaigns, integration into multisectoral frameworks, and access to decision-making spaces. In *Burkina Faso*, collaboration with REPASEN was associated with budget lines for nutrition and CSO inclusion in policy platforms. In *Bangladesh*, partnerships with CSA-SUN and the Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum supported coordinated advocacy and learning exchanges. In *Mali*, there were collaborations with the Sanitation and Water for All network and the SUN Movement
- **Collaboration with strategic alliances and networks in the Netherlands and internationally:** At the international and Dutch level, Right2Grow also engaged actively with strategic partnerships and lobby networks that amplified collective influence and learning. This included collaboration with Partos lobby groups, the Netherlands Food Partnership (NFP), the Food4All coalition, and the Netherlands Water Partnership (NWP), which were instrumental in shaping Dutch lobby and advocacy efforts and strengthening policy dialogue on nutrition and WASH. In addition, Right2Grow cooperated closely with other Power of Voices alliances, such as We Are Able!, to exchange lessons, coordinate advocacy efforts, and promote joint action across shared thematic priorities.

Academic and media partnerships: Academic institutions contributed to evidence generation for policy dialogue, while media partners helped disseminate key messages and raise public awareness. In *Ethiopia*, these collaborations expanded the programme's reach and influence at both community and policy levels. In *Mali*, close collaboration with the media enabled a public policy debate on a national television around nutrition and WASH. Also, the use of locally led research for advocacy, exemplified by the "Trio Fantastico" model in *Bangladesh*, *Mali*, and *Uganda*, effectively linked community knowledge with scientific research and policy engagement.

74% of all partner respondents rated the collaboration between the Right2Grow partnership and other partnerships that worked on strengthening civil society as 'very good'. Again, *Bangladesh*, *South Sudan* and *Mali* as most positive towards the collaboration, and Burkina Faso, Uganda and Ethiopia as more neutral.

In the partnership survey, the different partners elaborate on what the added value of collaborating with the other partnerships that work on strengthening civil society has been for them. A few examples:

"The added value is the power of unity and learning to achieve results together - Respondent from South Sudan"

"Mutual learning and sharing that fostered the acquisition of new knowledge." – Respondent from Mali

"Leveraging the expertise of different partners." – Respondent from Ethiopia

Complementarity and avoidance of duplication

Efforts were made to ensure that partnerships complemented rather than duplicated existing initiatives. Joint planning, shared platforms, and aligned messaging helped streamline interventions and maximise impact. In Burkina Faso, coordination with GIZ and UN agencies helped extend tools like BMET and harmonise WASH efforts. In Uganda, roles were clearly defined: UNICEF and ministries set standards, Right2Grow provided bottom-up evidence, and district officers translated findings into actionable plans.

Overall, these partnerships were viewed positively across countries. They enhanced legitimacy, improved coordination, and facilitated the scaling of successful approaches. However, some limitations were noted, such as uneven strategic alignment and continued reliance on external actors for financial and technical support.

Two external collaborations in the picture

Collaboration with SUN

The collaboration between the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement and Right2Grow focused primarily on accountability for Nutrition for Growth (N4G) commitments in East Africa. Through joint efforts, particularly with Action Against Hunger and the East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC), the partnership enabled:

- Regional workshops to review and influence country-level nutrition commitments.
- Biweekly coordination meetings to track progress and develop position papers.
- Direct engagement with Ministers of Health, resulting in renewed government pledges.
- A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ECSA-HC, enhancing long-term collaboration.

"We achieved much more... we were more visible in terms of accountability and stakeholder engagement."
- SUN Regional Advisor

The partnership added clear value by increasing visibility, strengthening civil society's voice, and aligning efforts around shared goals. While time constraints limited broader engagement, the collaboration laid a strong foundation for sustained monitoring and advocacy beyond the programme's formal end.

Collaboration with the Netherlands Food Partnership (NFP)

The collaboration with the Netherlands Food Partnership (NFP) was primarily shaped through joint activities and knowledge exchange. Right2Grow and NFP worked closely around key moments such as the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit, where Right2Grow partners regularly contributed as speakers during network briefings and events, sharing insights from country-level work and civil society perspectives.

NFP actively supported the dissemination of Right2Grow's approaches within its network, including during events in Paris and Dutch policy dialogues. Right2Grow was frequently consulted to provide speakers and input, and the coordination between both teams was described as professional and constructive.

While working with a consortium added some complexity, NFP appreciated the diversity of voices and the added value of engaging with organisations that represent broader civil society perspectives on food systems. The collaboration helped create space for African partners to engage in Dutch and global policy discussions and was seen as mutually beneficial.

8. Conclusions & Recommendations

This chapter provides the conclusions and recommendations of the end-term evaluation. The conclusions summarise the key points shared throughout this evaluation report and provide synthesised answers to the evaluation questions. The recommendations section includes a set of recommendations that the evaluation team would like to put forward to the Right2Grow programme.

The confidence in the conclusions of this evaluation is caveated by several limitations. The evaluation had to balance contextual depth and context-specific tools with cross-country comparability and thorough triangulation of data sources with openness to emerging insights. The evaluation had to depend on the quality of the quantitative data collected by the programme that was only available until 2024. Next to that, data collection in South Sudan and Burkina Faso experienced limitations due to unstable security situations. Limitations such as the choice to not use a control group and survey results that are not representative for all staff members of partner organisations further underline that the results of this evaluation do not allow for causal attribution but rather look at plausible contribution of the programme to the changes described. As section 3.3 on Limitations, biases and management strategies explains, several measures were implemented to avoid any selection, source, anchoring or respondent bias and to protect anonymity and sensitive information.

8.1. Overall conclusion

The programme appears to demonstrate that approaches combining community empowerment, CSO capacity strengthening, multi-sectoral governance, multi-stakeholder engagement, and locally led rights-based principles can contribute to improvements in nutrition and WASH outcomes. Implemented across six diverse and often fragile or politically unstable contexts, the programme was generally perceived as relevant and adaptable. Its strength lays in connecting community level action with system level change, helping to shift the focus from fragmented interventions to more integrated, locally anchored approaches. However, given the absence of causal inference methods, the findings presented reflect plausible contributions rather than direct attribution of observed changes to the programme alone.

By embedding locally led and rights-based principles within systems-strengthening efforts, the programme aimed to move beyond isolated project-based interventions and support more sustainable, system-oriented change. The evaluation suggests that these approaches were associated with positive developments across community, civil society, and governance levels. At the same time, the extent and durability of these developments varied significantly by context and were shaped by external factors such as political commitment, institutional capacity, civic space, and the availability of long-term financing. These limitations are important to consider when interpreting the programme's effectiveness and potential for scale or replication.

Relevance and alignment of the programme's Theory of Change

The programme's Theory of Change was found to be broadly relevant in both design and implementation to key issues at country and global levels and of high quality. Its emphasis on linking international development objectives with national policy frameworks, while remaining responsive to local realities, was appropriate to the contexts in which the programme operated. This shows responsiveness to policy and budget needs at the country and global level. Alignment with existing government strategies - such as Uganda's Nutrition Action Plan II and Ethiopia's Seqota Declaration - and coordination with donor and development partner initiatives contributed to coherence and perceived legitimacy at multiple levels. However, the extent to which this alignment translated into sustained institutional ownership varied across countries and administrative levels.

The programme's rights-based and participatory approach supported more inclusive engagement, particularly of women, youth, and marginalised groups. Community members were involved in identifying priorities and shaping responses, which contributed to strengthened ownership and accountability mechanisms and shows programme strategies responded to needs of communities. Nonetheless, these

Evaluation questions (Relevance)

1. To what extent did the overall programme ToC and country ToCs match with the key issues at country and global levels?
2. To what extent are the overall programme ToC and the country ToC including assumptions of high quality?
3. To what extent have the programme strategies responded to the needs to strengthen policies and budgets at country and global level?
4. To what extent have the programme strategies responded to the needs of local communities / targeted

participatory processes were not always matched by sufficient authority, resources, or institutional follow-up, limiting their potential to drive more transformative or lasting change.

The programme demonstrated flexibility in adapting to political, environmental, and social changes, particularly in fragile and crisis-affected contexts. This adaptability helped maintain relevance over time. At the same time, the end-line evaluation identified important limitations in the Theory of Change. Assumptions related to risk management, sustainability, and gender inclusion require further refinement and more systematic attention to ensure the continued relevance of similar interventions beyond the Right2Grow programme.

Effectiveness and impact

Evaluation questions (Effectiveness and Impact)

1. What have been the main outcomes achieved at end-line in relation to the programme ToC pathways and the progress towards the achievement of the donor indicators?
2. To what extent were the programme's strategies and activities for the selected hotspots effective in producing the desired results?
3. In what ways did the programme contribute to its planned development impact?
4. What examples of positive or negative unintended effects did the programme encounter?

The programme has contributed to meaningful progress in nutrition, WASH, and governance across the six countries. Its strength lays in connecting community-level action with system-level change, helping to shift the focus from fragmented interventions to more integrated, locally anchored approaches.

Community level

At the community level, the programme contributed to moving beyond awareness-raising towards more active engagement of community members in nutrition and WASH-related issues. In several contexts, communities were supported to identify barriers to services and engage in dialogue with local authorities and service providers, including, in some cases, the private sector. Participatory tools such as citizen report cards and community planning processes contributed to increased voice and accountability at local level.

These processes were associated with improvements in hygiene practices, dietary diversity, and, in some locations, positive trends in nutrition indicators such as stunting and underweight. However, these outcomes cannot be causally attributed to the programme, as multiple concurrent interventions and contextual factors were at play. Moreover, the sustainability of these changes remains uncertain, particularly where community ownership was not matched by adequate institutional support, financial resources, or service delivery capacity at local government level. The potential to expand or replicate these outcomes in neighbouring communities therefore remains limited without stronger systemic backing

Civil society organisations

Civil society organisations played a key intermediary role between communities and duty bearers. The programme's investment in CSO capacity strengthening clearly contributed to improved skills, coordination, and confidence among participating organisations, enabling more effective engagement in policy dialogue, advocacy, and multi-stakeholder platforms - particularly in contexts with relatively open civic space.

In several countries, CSOs were increasingly recognised by government actors as legitimate partners in nutrition and WASH-related processes. This shift, however, was uneven and context dependent. Increased visibility and engagement also exposed CSOs to political sensitivities, coordination challenges, and internal capacity constraints. In fragile and restrictive environments, CSOs' ability to influence decision-making remained limited and often precarious. These dynamics highlight that, while the programme contributed to strengthening civil society engagement, sustained influence depends on broader governance conditions beyond the programme's control.

Governance and institutional level

At the governance level, the programme contributed to greater integration of nutrition and WASH considerations within national and subnational policies, plans, and coordination mechanisms. This reflected progress towards more system-oriented approaches compared to stand-alone project interventions. However, the depth and effectiveness of this integration varied widely across countries and administrative levels.

In several cases, policy commitments were not matched by sufficient financial allocations, implementation capacity, or institutional ownership. Reliance on external funding remained significant, and many local governments lacked the autonomy or resources required to sustain interventions independently. As a result, while the programme contributed to policy dialogue and agenda-setting, the translation of these commitments into consistent and durable service delivery outcomes remains uncertain.

The programme also operated in complex and shifting contexts affected by conflict, climate shocks, and displacement. Community-based models and innovations, such as climate-smart agriculture and disaster-resilient WASH infrastructure, were associated with enhanced local coping capacity. However, the integration of climate risk into institutional planning and financing frameworks was inconsistent, limiting the programme's ability to support more systematic and anticipatory responses to environmental pressures.

Across the different countries, the Right2Grow programme proved effective with different focuses:

- In *Uganda and Ethiopia*, the programme contributed to systemic integration of WASH and nutrition priorities into local government planning and budgeting. Their institutionalisation of multisectoral coordination mechanisms offers a replicable model for sustainability.
- In *Bangladesh*, the programme demonstrated effectiveness by combining community-driven approaches with institutional reforms, using the Child Profile Estimation and Costing Tool to embed evidence-based planning and participatory budgeting, which contributed to integrated nutrition and WASH governance and measurable improvements in child health and hygiene practices.
- In *Burkina Faso*, the programme assisted women's empowerment and local governance despite insecurity; the integration of WASH and nutrition into local budgets is a notable achievement, but fragile due to ongoing instability.
- In *Mali*, the programme encouraged community resilience and policy coherence, but the programme's scope is limited by conflict and the state's limited presence.
- In *South Sudan*, the programme demonstrated how flexible and adaptive programming can strengthen accountability and services even in highly fragile contexts, but sustainability will depend on stronger government commitment and predictable funding.

Unintended negative effects of the programme included overburdening partner organisations (capacity, resources and expectation management), increasing pressure on the relationship between civil society and governments and disrupting informal livelihoods and traditional leadership dynamics in communities. At the same time, the programme positively contributed to increased visibility and legitimacy of partner organisations, supporting collaboration with other actors such as governments. In terms of impact, the Right2Grow programme has contributed to long-term improvements in child nutrition, health, and governance through integrated, community-driven, and multisectoral approaches. Its success in fostering behavioural change, enhancing local accountability, and strengthening civil society engagement illustrates the power of inclusive and adaptive collaboration. It also encouraged coordination among decision-makers, creating opportunities for joint action against undernutrition and reinforcing multi-sectoral governance. However, the persistence of governance fragility, and sustainability challenges highlights that enduring impact requires continuous capacity development, shared ownership, and resilient systems that safeguard and expand the gains achieved.

Sustainability

Right2Grow placed a strong emphasis on sustainability throughout its design and implementation, with programme support associated with changes across social, institutional, and behavioural dimensions. In several contexts, community structures continued to function beyond direct programme support, and behavioural changes - particularly related to hygiene practices and maternal nutrition - appeared to be maintained. In addition, local authorities in some countries continued to uphold budget lines and partnerships, while participating civil society organisations were better positioned to engage in advocacy and policy dialogue.

Evaluation questions (Sustainability)

1. To what extent are the changes achieved by the programme long-lasting?
2. What factors contribute to the continuation after the programme's conclusion? (local capacity and ownership, change in policies, access to nutrition and WASH services, local authority support)?

These developments were supported by local ownership, alignment with existing systems, and an emphasis on learning and adaptive management. However, sustainability cannot be assumed. Ongoing reliance on external facilitation, limited domestic financing, and political instability continue to pose significant risks. In some cases, key tools were introduced late in the programme cycle, and engagement with embassies and other strategic actors remained limited, constraining opportunities for longer-term institutional anchoring.

While emerging institutional arrangements and social legitimacy provide a basis for continuity, financial and policy sustainability remain fragile. The commitment shown by local authorities, including technical staff, is encouraging, but translating intent into consistently resourced, long-term action remains challenging. The programme helped create momentum for change; whether this momentum leads to sustained outcomes will depend on the capacity of local actors to retain ownership, mobilise resources, and navigate ongoing political and institutional uncertainty.

Coherence & Partnership collaboration

Evaluation questions (Coherence)

1. To what extent has the collaboration between the different consortium partners created added value in programme countries or at global level?
2. To what extent have adaptive management principles influenced programming within Right2Grow at country and global level?
3. How successful was the programme in its localization and shift the power efforts at global and country level?
4. To what extent is collaboration with other partners taking place in programme countries and what has been the added value of those collaborations?
5. What has been the added value of MFA and its embassies, to the Partnership? And what is the value added of this Partnership to MFA?

The Right2Grow partnership became more coherent and strategically aligned over time, particularly following the mid-term review. Changes in governance arrangements, communication practices, and shared learning tools were associated with improved collaboration across countries and sectors. While early implementation was marked by coordination challenges and ongoing friction related to differing organisational cultures and funding models, internal coherence gradually improved, supporting more coordinated joint action.

Adaptive management principles were broadly understood and applied, enabling the programme to respond to evolving contexts. The mid-term review played an important role in strengthening coordination, increasing the autonomy of country teams, and sharpening the programme's focus on system-level processes. It also supported stronger integration across thematic areas, contributing to greater overall programme coherence.

Progress was made towards localisation and shifting leadership to country level, with increased country ownership and more inclusive decision-making processes. However, structural constraints - including donor-driven frameworks, uneven participation of smaller CSOs, and limited resource allocation during the early years of implementation - constrained the full realisation of localisation ambitions.

Collaboration within the consortium added value by enhancing reach, shared learning, and advocacy efforts. Partners drew on complementary expertise, exchanged tools, and adapted approaches across contexts. External partnerships with government institutions, UN agencies, civil society networks, and other actors supported alignment with broader systems, although the degree of strategic coherence varied across countries and thematic areas.

Engagement with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dutch embassies in programme countries was generally constructive, though communication and information exchange were inconsistent. While alignment with Dutch policy priorities at global level was strong and the programme's citizen-focused approach was valued, stronger two-way communication and more inclusive engagement at country level could have further enhanced effectiveness.

8.2. Recommendations

Moving forward, scaling up and sustaining the results of Right2Grow and similar initiatives in the future requires continued efforts towards localisation, fiscal decentralisation and climate adaptation. Strengthening partnerships between donors, governments, academia, civil society, local private sector partners and communities can ensure that every child's right to grow up healthy and with dignity becomes not just a principle, but a reality. The recommendations below are formulated in the light of conclusion of external funding for a programme similar to Right2Grow. They therefore focus on consolidating achievements, strengthening local systems, and ensuring that the results and capacities built during the programme can be sustained or even duplicated or scaled up without continued subsidy support.

More specifically, the recommendations are:

For NGOs/CSOs/CBOs

- Formalise localisation targets with clear indicators and annual reporting.
- Integrate contingency funding and flexible budgets for adaptive programming.
- Make Linking & Learning a contractual requirement with KPIs and dedicated budgets.
- Institutionalise gender and youth leadership through quotas and fellowships.
- Standardise BMET, CVA, Outcome Harvesting, and Bridge4Voices across programmes.

- Develop CSO resource mobilisation strategies, including social enterprises and sustainable private sector partnerships.
- Strengthen CSO alliances through formal coordination platforms for joint planning and advocacy.
- Enhance CSO policy literacy and advocacy skills through advanced capacity-building.

Points of attention for Right2Grow NGOs to advocate with National and sub-national governments on

- Embed citizen scorecards, participatory audits, and public budget hearings in governance systems.
- Allocate ring-fenced nutrition and WASH budgets linked to performance indicators.
- Institutionalise planning tools such as the Child Profile Estimation and Costing Tool.
- Mandate climate risk assessments and gender-responsive budgeting in development plans.
- Mainstream tested governance models (e.g., CVA cycles, Union Parishad planning) into national guidelines.
- Continue advocating for dedicated national budget allocations for nutrition and WASH.
- Establish formal inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms for multi-sectoral alignment.

Right2Grow NGOs can include and support private sector through focus to

- Incentivise affordable WASH and nutrition products through co-financing and partnerships.
- Require private sector participation in governance and coordination platforms.
- Invest in climate-smart technologies for WASH and nutrition-sensitive agriculture.
- Strengthen local entrepreneurs' associations (LEA) for advocacy and CSR partnerships.
- Advocate for enabling environments (production spaces, tax incentives, low-interest loans).

For Dutch MFA and international donors

- Fund programmes that combine advocacy with measurable service delivery improvements.
- Require annual joint reviews between MFA and embassies for coherence and localisation.
- Make localisation and civic space protection a funding condition.
- Create flexible financing windows for fragile and climate-vulnerable contexts.
- Promote public–private partnerships and systemic co-ownership models.
- Support bridging initiatives for institutional capacity and replication of proven models.
- Adopt longer programme timeframes to consolidate behavioural and institutional change.

Cross-cutting partnership recommendations for both Right2Grow partners and Dutch MFA

- Establish formal multi-actor coordination platforms for joint planning and accountability.
- Develop shared accountability frameworks with common indicators and reporting systems.
- Fund South–South learning exchanges and replication pilots for successful models.
- Expand Bridge4Voices to connect community evidence with decision-makers globally.
- Promote knowledge partnerships between CSOs, research institutions, and private sector actors.
- Institutionalise gender-transformative programming through toolkits and community dialogues.
- Operationalise adaptive management principles across all partners and align strategically with external stakeholders (including MFA and embassies) to enhance coherence and visibility.

Annexes

Annex 1 – Summary of indicator data

Below a summary of the indicator data is provided for the indicators that can be aggregated on the global level (SCS and IGG indicators). This overview is based on the annual report of 2024. For each indicator, it shows the baseline value, the end of programme target and the cumulative value up until 2024. The colours indicate progress towards the achievement of the targets. Green means that the target has been achieved, yellow indicates more than 50% of the target has been achieved and orange means that less than 50% of the target has been achieved. Grey means that no data is available for this context, mostly because the indicator is not used in that country.

DSO indicators

Table 19: Summary of the DSO indicator data

DSO Indicators					
Donor indicator / Right2Grow indicator	Sub-indicator(s)	Country	Baseline	2025 target	Cumulative value
Number of laws, policies that are better implemented for sustainable and inclusive development (SCS1). (Right2Grow.OC.3.1)	SCS012: # of government policies for sustainable and inclusive development that are better implemented as a result of CSO engagement.	Bangladesh	0	3	0
		Burkina Faso	0	1	1
		Ethiopia	0	4	4
		Mali	0	10	8
		South Sudan			
		Uganda	0	4	6
		Total	0	22	19
Number of laws, policies blocked, adopted, improved for sustainable and inclusive development (SCS2) (Right2Grow.OC.3.2)	SCS022: # of governmental policies for sustainable and inclusive development as a result of CSO engagement	Bangladesh	0	3	3
		Burkina Faso			
		Ethiopia			
		Mali			
		South Sudan	0	2	1
		Uganda	0	4	1
		Total	0	9	5
Number of times that CSOs succeed in creating space for CSO demands and positions through agenda setting, influencing the debate and/or creating space to engage (SCS 3) (Right2Grow.OC.2.1)	SCS031: # of times that CSOs succeed in creating space for CSO demands and positions through agenda setting, influencing the debate and/or creating space to engage at <i>national and international levels</i>	Bangladesh	0	5	10
		Burkina Faso	0	15	8
		Ethiopia	0	14	63
		Mali	0	90	58
		South Sudan	0	5	5
		Uganda	0	30	119
		Total	0	159	263
	SCS032: # of times that CSOs succeed in creating space for CSO demands and positions through agenda setting, influencing the debate and/or creating space to engage at <i>sub-national level</i>	Bangladesh	0	160	128
		Burkina Faso	0	100	55
		Ethiopia	0	231	186
		Mali	0	108	88
		South Sudan	0	15	16
		Uganda	0	90	83
		Total	0	604	556
		Bangladesh	0	10	37

Number of advocacy initiatives carried out by CSOs, for, by or with their membership/ constituency (SCS 4)(Right2Grow.OC.2.2)	SCS041: # of advocacy initiatives carried out by CSOs, for, by or with their membership/constituency <i>at national level</i>	Burkina Faso	0	25	13
		Ethiopia	0	2	9
		Mali	0	90	12
		South Sudan	0	15	19
		Uganda	0	108	113
		Total	0	250	203
	SCS042: # of advocacy initiatives carried out by CSOs, for, by or with their membership/ constituency <i>at sub-national level</i>	Bangladesh	0	40	129
		Burkina Faso	0	120	96
		Ethiopia	0	5	8
		Mali	0	108	43
		South Sudan	0	6	12
		Uganda	0	240	115
Number of CSOs with increased Lobby and Advocacy (L&A) capacities (SCS 5) (Right2Grow.IO.D.1)	SCS053: # of other CSOs (not youth or women led) with increased L&A capacities	Total	0	519	403
		Bangladesh	9	9	9
		Burkina Faso	6	6	6
		Ethiopia	8	8	8
		Mali	8	8	8
		South Sudan	7	7	7
		Uganda	9	9	9
		Total	47	46	47
Number of CSOs involved in Right2Grow (SCS 6) (Right2Grow.OP.1.1)	SCS063: # of CSOs (not youth or women led) involved in SPs programmes	Bangladesh	9	9	9
		Burkina Faso	6	6	6
		Ethiopia	8	8	8
		Mali	8	8	8
		South Sudan	7	7	7
		Uganda	9	9	9
		Total	47	46	47

IGG Indicators

Table 20: Summary of the IGG indicator data

IGG Indicator	Country	Country Indicator	2024 Actual	Cumulative	Notes
A.2.2: Number of people directly reached with activities aimed at temporary/partial improvement of their nutritional situation	Bangladesh	Number of people directly reached	139,672	186057	-
	Ethiopia	Number of people directly reached with activities aimed at temporary/partial improvement of their nutritional situation	404,159	603,535	Among them, 78,371 (38,331 girls) are children under five children, while 201,817 (102,356 girls) are under eighteen children. This includes 333, 670 (169,895 girls) children under five years old (including 38,331 girls

	Mali	Number of children admitted to the malnutrition treatment programme in community health centres	10,505	10,505	
	Uganda	Number of people directly reached with activities aimed at temporary/partial improvement of their nutritional situation	23,768	23,768	
	Total		578,104	822,684	
A.2.3: Number of people indirectly reached	Bangladesh		487573	282,892	
				639254	
	Burkina Faso	Number of people reached by training and awareness-raising activities conducted by Right2Grow and CSOs	572,271	5,095.701	
	Ethiopia	Number of people indirectly reached by the Right2Grow programme	1.867.140	2.913.288	Over 1.8 million people were indirectly reached with public nutrition service improvement
	Mali	Number of people indirectly reached by the Right2Grow programme	1.185.517	1.185.517	
	South Sudan		546,187		
	Uganda		98,212	98,212	
	Total		3.980.857	9.575.610	
2.1: Number of companies engaged in inclusive agribusiness	Bangladesh	Number of private sector organisations engaged by the Right2Grow project	14	19	
	Ethiopia	Number of private sectors able to provide WASH and nutrition products and services based on local knowledge, innovative way adapted feasible technology and inputs.	8	50	
	Mali	Number of private sector organisations supported by the Right2Grow project	73	73	
	Total		95	142	

Annex 2 – Links to country survey reports

This annex provides links to survey data collected through Sprockler for the Partner Organisation staff. Each country has its own dedicated link directing to its respective country report, ensuring that country-specific insights can be accessed directly. Additionally, the first links provide access to a consolidated report, which bring together data from all participating countries.

- All countries:
 - EN: <https://visualizer.sprockler.com/en/open/Right2GrowPartnershipSurveyOpenView>
 - FR: <https://visualizer.sprockler.com/en/open/Right2GrowPartnershipSurveyFROpenView>
- *Bangladesh*: <https://visualizer.sprockler.com/open/Right2GrowPartnerBangladesh>
- *Burkina-Faso*: <https://visualizer.sprockler.com/open/Right2GrowPartnerBurkinaFaso>
- *Ethiopia*: <https://visualizer.sprockler.com/open/Right2GrowPartnerEthiopia>
- *Mali*: <https://visualizer.sprockler.com/open/Right2GrowPartnerMali>
- *South-Sudan*: <https://visualizer.sprockler.com/open/Right2GrowPartnerSouthSudan>
- *Uganda*: <https://visualizer.sprockler.com/open/Right2GrowPartnerUganda>

Annex 3 – Coherence and Partnership Survey

1. Principles of adaptive management

Adaptive management principles were widely known and quite frequently applied across the Right2Grow partnership, with strong influence on how activities were planned and adjusted.

Respondents were asked to reflect on how the programme applied the principles of adaptive management. Principles of adaptive management are:

- *Step 1. Country-level responsibility for planning, revision of planning and decision-making lies with the Country Steering Committee*
- *Step 2. Escalation for global involvement and support – Global Coordination Committee – should be based on full consent at the country level*
- *Step 3. Whatever solution chosen should be accompanied by the pros and cons of the solution suggested (e.g. risk analysis to prevent negative impact for stakeholders / for results, etc., in the future), reflection on the practicality and challenges in implementing these solutions and discussion of other proposed options and their feasibility.*

When asked about their familiarity with the principles of adaptive management, only 4% of respondents indicated that they were not familiar with them at all. A further 9% reported that they were aware of the principles but had not yet applied them in practice. Nearly half of the respondents (47%) said they knew the principles quite well, while 39% stated that they use them regularly in their work. *Bangladesh* and *Mali* stand out for applying all the principles of adaptive management consistently in their work, compared to other countries where responses are more varied.

80% of the respondents felt that the principles of adaptive management have completely influenced how activities were developed and adjusted within the Right2Grow partnership.

This means that the principles of adaptive management were widely known and were applied by the programme, particularly in the planning and adjustment of activities.

How familiar are you with the principles of adaptive management?

I am not familiar with them



I know them but haven't applied them



I know them quite well



I use them all the time in my work



Country

- Bangladesh
- Burkina Faso
- Ethiopia
- Mali
- South Sudan
- Uganda
- Global

Perceptions on localisation efforts

Respondents of the partnership survey were also asked how successful they think the programme has been in its localisation efforts. 61% of respondents think that the localisation efforts were highly successful. 34% think that it was moderately successful and 5% think that it was limitedly successful. When elaborating their answers, four recurring themes emerge:

1. **Shift of power to country level** – A clear movement from global to national levels after the second year of programme implementation in terms of decision-making, strategy and budget responsibilities was experienced. Global teams increasingly took a supportive and enabling role rather than a directive one. Many see this as a core success of the programme and a model of localisation.
2. **Strong country ownership & autonomy** - Country consortia set their own agendas and priorities, designed strategies, country annual plans and budgets and governed their own structures. Local CSOs and communities were directly engaged in planning, implementation and governance. This gave a sense of ownership, accountability and sustainability.
3. **Inclusive, participatory decision-making** - Joint planning, reflection meetings and annual reviews fostered collaboration. Multi-stakeholder and community-driven processes made interventions more contextual, relevant and grounded. Locally led decisions were seen as more effective because they reflected lived realities.

- 4. Capacity strengthening & empowerment of local partners** - Global teams provided technical support (adaptive management, gender, learning, advocacy techniques and tools, MEAL) and supported country teams with annual planning, budgeting and reporting processes, managing the project cycle and donor compliance. Local CSOs enhanced advocacy, governance and budget management skills. Actors at different levels (from grassroots and local levels to national CSO platforms) were empowered to engage with governments and donors.

Table 21: Overview of success of localisation efforts

Success of localisation efforts	Percentage
Not successful at all	0%
Limitedly successful	5%
Moderately successful	34%
Highly successful	61%
I don't know	0%

2. Added value of working together

Working together in a diverse consortium significantly enhanced the Right2Grow programme's reach, impact and learning. The added value of collaboration was seen in the complementarity of expertise, cross-organisational learning and amplified advocacy. Partners shared tools, adapted successful models and strengthened each other's capacities. This collective approach enabled broader coverage, deeper influence, experience with working in complex partnerships and a rich exchange of knowledge: benefiting both individual organisations and the programme as a whole.

The Right2Grow programme was built on a consortium model that brought together a diverse group of organisations with complementary strengths. While working in a consortium presented coordination challenges, survey respondents, reflections session participants and interviewees overwhelmingly emphasised the added value of collaboration, shared impact and cross-organisational learning.

In the partnership survey, respondents indicated what they considered to be the added value of collaboration in a partnership. Knowledge exchange (98%), mutual learning (88%), benefitting from each other's experiences (87%) and capacities (83%) were selected most frequently, followed by amplifying the impact of the programme (72%) and speaking with a united voice (71%). Sharing responsibilities and risks (70%) rounds off the topmost selected added values.

Table 22: Overview of added value of the partnership

Added value of the partnership	Percentage
Sharing knowledge and expertise	98%
Facilitating mutual learning	88%
Benefitting from each other's experience and expertise	87%
Building each other's capacities	83%
Amplifying the impact of the programme	72%
Speaking with a united voice at regional and international advocacy platforms	71%
Sharing responsibilities and risks	70%
Ensuring context-specific solutions	65%
Learning through tackling the same issues in multiple contexts	65%
Avoiding duplication of efforts and increasing efficiency	65%
Gaining access to each other's networks	59%
Increasing legitimacy of the work	57%
Providing insight into cross-cultural collaboration	52%

Providing sparring partners to address issues	43%
I do not see any added value	0%

Five key added values can be distilled from data collection and the survey:

- **Complementarity of diverse approaches and expertise** - One of the most frequently mentioned benefits was the complementarity between partners. Each organisation brought unique models, tools and expertise that enriched the programme and allowed for broader reach and deeper impact. This created exposure to these new models, methods, tools and expertise and enriched the exchange between different partners.

For example, World Vision's Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) model was shared and adapted by other partners, who, for example, integrated it with the The Hunger Project's VCA approach. This approach was shared with all six countries, and proof of adoption as well as scaling was found in *Ethiopia, Mali, and Bangladesh*.

"The CVA model was shared with other partners, and I know THP has now integrated it with their own VCA model. That kind of exchange is really nice to see." – global consortium member

Similarly, CEGAA's BMET (Budget Monitoring and Expenditure Tracking) model brought specialised budget advocacy expertise to the consortium, which was recognised and appreciated by other partners.

A key strength of the consortium was the diversity of approaches and depth of expertise across organisations. Each partner had its own methodology, focus areas and strengths and the programme benefited from the ability to combine these in strategic ways.

"These working groups, comprising technical experts from both prime and local partners, have played a crucial role in ensuring consistent and high-quality technical support across all program components." - Ethiopia

- **Cross-organisational learning and capacity strengthening** - Working together enabled partners to learn from one another, not only at the programmatic level but also in terms of organisational development and strategic thinking. Several consortium partners noted that their technical skills and understanding of global advocacy as well as thematic expertise in nutrition, WASH and governance improved through consortium collaboration. This happened on the organisational level as well as on the personal level of staff members (for example, in decision-making, project management and efficiency).

"Consortium partners consistently demonstrated strong collaboration through cross-learning, resource sharing, and leveraging complementary expertise across project areas. These practices strengthened technical capacity, enhanced best-practice sharing, and improved implementation coherence." - Bangladesh

Partners also reflected on how the consortium encouraged internal reflection and helped shape future programming.

The ability to see and understand each other's work, across organisations, countries and thematic areas, sparked new thinking and innovation.

"You inspire each other. We saw CVA from World Vision and thought, 'That's interesting for our work.' It led to internal conversations and new thinking." – global consortium member

- **Amplifying advocacy impact** - The consortium structure allowed partners to join forces in advocacy, amplifying their collective voice and increasing influence at both national and global levels.

"The majority noted that working in partnership allowed them to 'speak with a united voice' in regional and international advocacy platforms - demonstrating coherence from local to global levels." - Bangladesh

This was particularly evident in global advocacy spaces, where access through partners like Save the Children and World Vision opened doors to high-level policy discussions.

In countries with strong advocacy traditions, collaboration between Right2Grow partners helped deepen engagement and open new pathways for influence. Working together helped to hone techniques and tools for effective lobbying and influencing of decision-makers and was associated with adjusted strategies.

This was especially important in country contexts, where some CSOs had long-standing reputations and strong local networks. Their presence and credibility helped open doors and build trust. A women-led CSO leader in *South Sudan* remarked:

“...the big organisations gave us skills, but we gave them entry to communities and legitimacy, working together meant both sides became stronger.” – partner organisation in South Sudan

This diversity of expertise also allowed the programme to combine technical depth with strategic advocacy, particularly in areas like nutrition, where partners with strong field experience worked alongside those with policy influence.

- **Expanding reach and operational coverage** - The consortium model also allowed for geographic and operational coverage that no single organisation could have achieved alone. In countries where one partner had limited presence, others stepped in to fill gaps and ensure continuity. This flexibility and shared responsibility helped Right2Grow reach more communities and deliver more comprehensive programming.

“Each partner brought its own specific value: ACF for the East, THP and AMR for the North, Save the Children for consortium management and RESONUT for national advocacy and the Centre-North and East regions. This complementarity broadened the scope and strengthened the collective impact. As one participant summed it up: ‘Today, we no longer talk about Save, THP or ACF. We talk about Right2Grow.’”- Burkina Faso

“None of the partners alone has sufficient capacities to achieve what Right2Grow has achieved at this scale.” – global consortium member

- **Learning to work in partnerships** – Lastly, working together in consortia and a multi-country partnership also provided the added value that organisations experienced how to work together effectively in such diverse consortia. This led to organisations trying out new approaches of collaboration, shared decision making on resource allocation, linking and learning, and adaptive management. It exposes organisations to how other organisations work and how they collaborate, which they can integrate in future programmes.

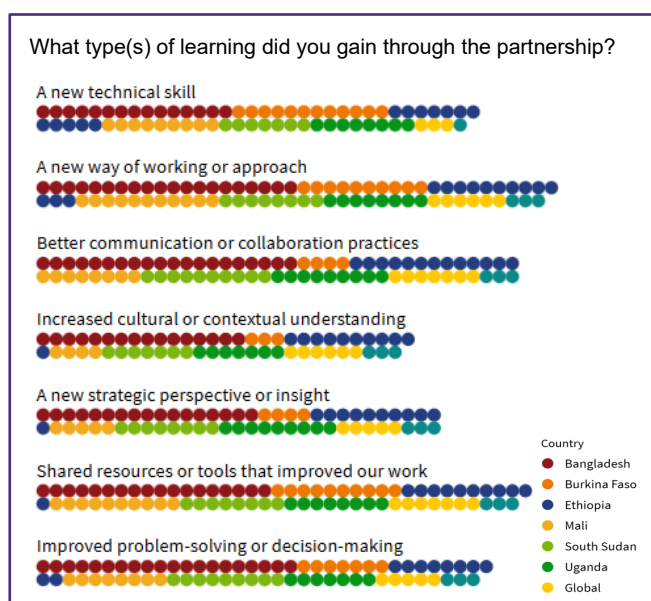
99% of the respondents of the partnership survey shared that they learned something valuable through working in the partnership. These lessons contributed to a wide variety of learning outcomes. All listed categories were mentioned, ranging from acquiring new technical skills and approaches to enhancing problem-solving, communication and collaboration practices. The responses also show that participants gained insights into cultural and contextual dynamics, developed new strategic perspectives and benefited from shared tools and resources. While no single type of learning stands out as dominant, the spread across all categories demonstrates that the partnership fostered a broad and diverse set of capacities, supporting both individual and organisational growth.

According to respondents, the partnership contributed to these lessons particularly through capacity strengthening sessions, joint implementation of activities and regular coordination meetings. Many respondents also highlighted exposure to different organisational practices, participation in workshops and informal exchanges. A smaller group emphasised the value of mentorship and peer support.

Many respondents also highlighted exposure to different organisational practices, participation in workshops and informal exchanges. A smaller group emphasised the value of mentorship and peer support.

99% of respondents reported applying the lessons from the Right2Grow programme in their work. Only one respondent has not yet done so but plans to apply the lessons in the future. A clear majority of respondents (66%) indicated that they would not have learned the lesson without participating in the partnership. Partners have applied (or planned to apply) these lessons learned from the partnership in different ways:

- **Strengthening advocacy & policy influence** - Using evidence-based advocacy tools (BMET, CVA, VCA, outcome harvesting, photo voice). Engaging decision-makers, MPs and government officials on WASH, nutrition and budget allocations. Developing advocacy materials (policy briefs, position papers, campaigns). Supporting multi-level advocacy (local, national, regional).
- **Capacity development & knowledge sharing** - Cascading training and skills to CSOs, local government and communities. Organising workshops, reflection meetings and peer-to-peer learning. Producing and sharing learning documents, fiches, toolkits and case studies. Mentoring colleagues and building technical expertise (budget analysis, governance, nutrition, WASH).



- **Programme design, planning & implementation** - Applying learnings in strategic planning, annual reviews and adaptive management. Integrating new approaches (Healthy Village, Community Led Development, localisation). Using monitoring and evaluation tools to improve programme quality. Strengthening coordination mechanisms, joint decision-making and teamwork.
- **Collaboration & consortium working** - Enhancing collective planning and decision-making processes. Leveraging diverse expertise within consortia for innovation and efficiency. Building stronger partnerships across NGOs, CSOs, government and communities. Promoting localisation and shifting power to local organisations.
- **Organisational & community impact** - Improving internal systems for accountability, decision-making and resource allocation. Scaling approaches beyond Right2Grow into other projects and proposals. Increasing organisational credibility with donors and stakeholders. Empowering communities through engagement platforms, grassroots campaigns and leadership development.

This shows that the programme has been able to provide applicable lessons to participating organisations and their staff, which is further supported by the findings of the Mutual Capacity Development and Linking & Learning surveys.

3. Mid-term review as a turning point

The mid-term review marked a turning point in the Right2Grow programme, triggering structural improvements, stronger local leadership and a shift toward system-level change. It brought clarity to roles and responsibilities and decision-making processes through an adjusted governance structure, empowered country teams and introduced new coordination mechanisms. Across countries, the mid-term review served as a catalyst in a move from project-based approaches to institutionalisation, improved data systems and deeper collaboration. It also strengthened adaptive management, inclusion and accountability, laying the groundwork for more sustainable and locally owned impact.

Global consortium

The mid-term review showed mixed experiences regarding internal coherence and governance. Initially, the global consortium was described as highly inclusive, with a leadership style rooted in radical democracy. While this fostered trust and relationship-building, it eventually was associated with slower decision-making and a lack of clarity.

“In the beginning, the consortium was very inclusive - everyone decides, so no one decides. It brought people together but eventually slowed us down.” – global consortium member

The mid-term review was widely recognised by partners as a critical turning point in the programme. It provided an opportunity for deep reflection, honest dialogue, and structural change. Interviewees consistently described the MTR as the moment when clarity, alignment, and renewed energy entered the consortium. Also, it was the first in person meeting of the consortium at global level, due to COVID restraints.

“After the midterm review, things became clearer. The structure of how we work together - the global leads, country leads... - it all started to make sense.” – global consortium member

The MTR led to the formalisation of coordination mechanisms, such as the project cycle and compliance team, and strengthened the role of country teams in decision-making. This shift aligned with Right2Grow's core principle of 'shifting power' to local actors.

“We changed the governance structure to strengthen the principle of shift of power... moving to a decision-making body with only country leads.” – global consortium member

While the shift was conceptually strong, some global partners felt distanced from day-to-day programme realities and questioned whether country teams had sufficient capacity to lead both nationally and globally.

“For us as global partners, we've become a little bit far away from what's actually happening... I'm not sure the countries have the capacity to lead both nationally and globally.” – global consortium member

Also, the consortium invested in external facilitation to support reflection and restructuring, demonstrating a commitment to learning and improvement.

“We decided to invest money in external facilitators to fund a workshop - to really bring people together to reflect on different aspects of the programme.” – global consortium member

Despite these improvements, CEGAA felt that their role remained underfunded and under-recognised, especially given the centrality of BMET to the programme’s advocacy strategy. The lack of a clear lead for CEGAA’s cross-cutting role compromised budget and coordination. However, following the MTR, this was addressed: all partners agreed to extend CEGAA’s involvement from the initially planned 3 years to 5 years. A budget reallocation was carried out, transferring an additional €250,000 to CEGAA for years 4 and 5: resources that were not originally planned.

“BMET became the flag theme... but it seemed to be the underdog of the programme. Why so little money when it’s the main theme?” – global consortium member

Interviewees suggested that future programmes should ensure clear leadership roles and coordination and decision-making processes, to avoid similar issues.

Country consortia

The mid-term review also served as an important learning moment for the country teams. The MTR focused on reflecting on progress, operational constraints and the continued relevance of the global Theory of Change. While specific country responses varied, several common directions of change emerged that demonstrate the programme’s adaptive capacity, deepened institutional anchoring, and stronger systems orientation.

- **Strengthened data systems and evidence-based decision-making:** A widespread adjustment after the MTR concerned data generation, monitoring and use. The MTR identified weaknesses in M&E frameworks, indicator definitions and the utilisation of evidence for advocacy. In response, countries like *Burkina Faso* and *Bangladesh* introduced new data validation procedures, while others - such as *Ethiopia* and *Uganda* - enhanced evidence loops between communities, civil society and government actors. This evolution marks a collective movement toward evidence-informed planning, where monitoring systems not only track progress but also actively guide resource allocation, policy formulation and accountability.

The end-term evaluation notes that, although indicators have become clearer and their use improved at the country level, aggregated indicators at the global level remain very limited. They primarily cover donor basket indicators, meaning that consolidated insights on output and outcome progress from programme monitoring are still constrained.

“The use of these joint scorecards became the turning point, reducing duplication, promoting accountability, and linking sectoral actions such as kitchen gardens, nutrition education, and safe water initiatives into integrated, nutrition-sensitive WASH programming.” – Ethiopia

- **Adaptive management and learning culture:** Adaptive management was already a core practice during the first 2.5 years, given the volatile contexts in many countries. However, following the MTR, its application became more deliberate and better connected across the consortium. The MTR was followed by the first multi-country workshop (possible after COVID restrictions), which played a pivotal role in strengthening relationships and fostering shared learning. This face-to-face interaction boosted openness to testing new approaches, learning from failure, and revising strategies. Countries reported that adaptive management evolved from being reactive to being more structured and institutionalised, supported by leadership endorsement and stronger monitoring systems. In *Bangladesh*, *Uganda*, *Mali* and *South Sudan*, this translated into reflection workshops, peer learning sessions, and flexibility in reallocating resources based on emerging priorities.

“Adaptive Programme Management is being practised as programme staff feel empowered to challenge the status quo and propose alternative approaches.” - Bangladesh

- **Renewed attention to inclusion and local ownership:** The MTR also spurred reflection on who participates in and benefits from programme activities. In all countries, attention to gender equality and social inclusion increased - whether through women’s leadership initiatives in *Uganda*, mother-to-mother support groups in *South Sudan*, or inclusive coordination mechanisms in *Bangladesh* and *Ethiopia*. Equally, there was a clear trend toward local ownership: empowering district authorities, community organisations, and small enterprises to drive and sustain change. This localisation agenda was both a strategic adaptation and a necessity under conditions of political instability, insecurity, or civic space constraints.

“Communities shifted from dependency to active participation by organising meetings, demanding services, and co-managing local solutions.” – South Sudan

- **Improved governance and accountability mechanisms:** Finally, the MTR prompted countries to review and, in many cases, clarify governance and accountability structures at country level. Country Steering Committees (CSCs) were revitalised in *Bangladesh* and *South Sudan*, while *Ethiopia* and *Uganda* formalised clearer decision-making and coordination frameworks. Although governance reforms were uneven - remaining limited in *Burkina Faso* - they generally strengthened transparency, joint planning, and the continuity of actions between global, national, and subnational levels.

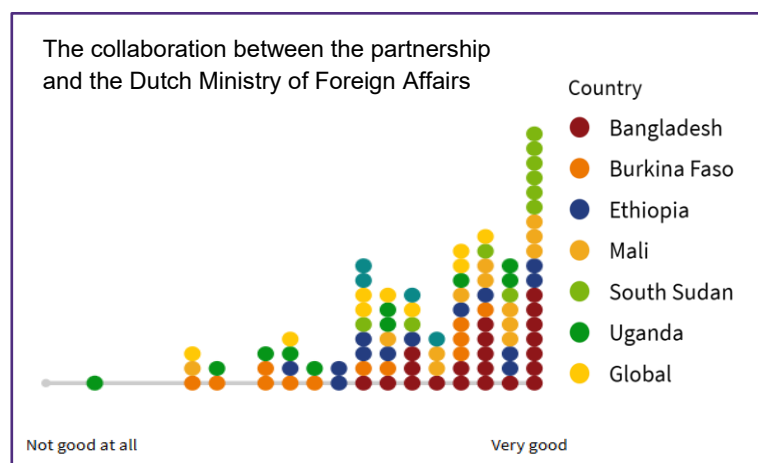
4. External coherence

Dutch Ministry of foreign Affairs

Respondents were asked in the partnership survey to rate the partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 75% of all partners rated the collaboration between the partnership and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs as “very good.” Respondents from *Bangladesh* and *South Sudan* expressed the most positive views on the cooperation between MFA and the Right2Grow partnership.

Table 23: Rating of collaboration - Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

	Not good at all	Neutral	Very good
Collaboration between the partnership and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs	4%	21%	75%

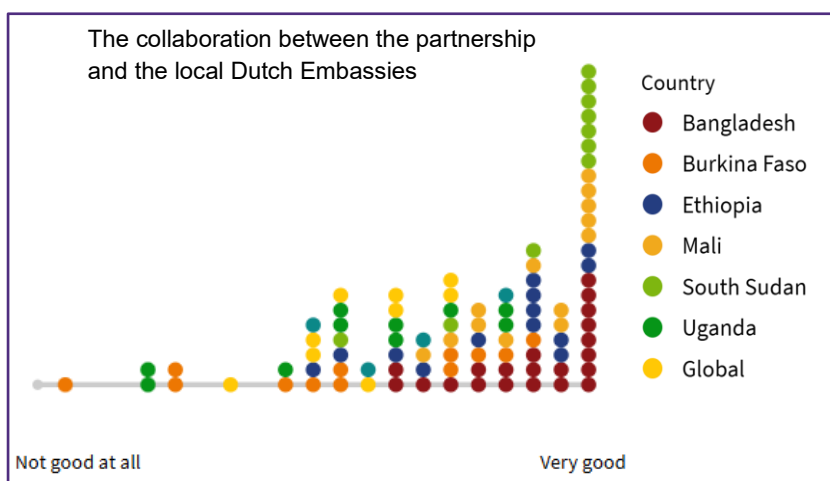


Embassies of the Netherlands in Programme Countries

Despite these challenges, several embassies remained actively engaged, attending key events and showing interest in the programme’s progress. Partnership Survey respondents were asked to rate the collaboration with the Dutch Embassies. 70% of partner respondents rated the collaboration between the Right2Grow partnership and Dutch embassies as “very good”. *Bangladesh*, *Mali*, and *South Sudan* were particularly positive, while *Burkina Faso* was less favourable. In *Uganda*, opinions on the collaboration were more divided.

Table 24: Rating of collaboration - Embassies of the Netherlands in programme countries

	Not good at all	Neutral	Very good
Collaboration between the partnership and the Embassies of the Netherlands in programme countries	5%	25%	70%

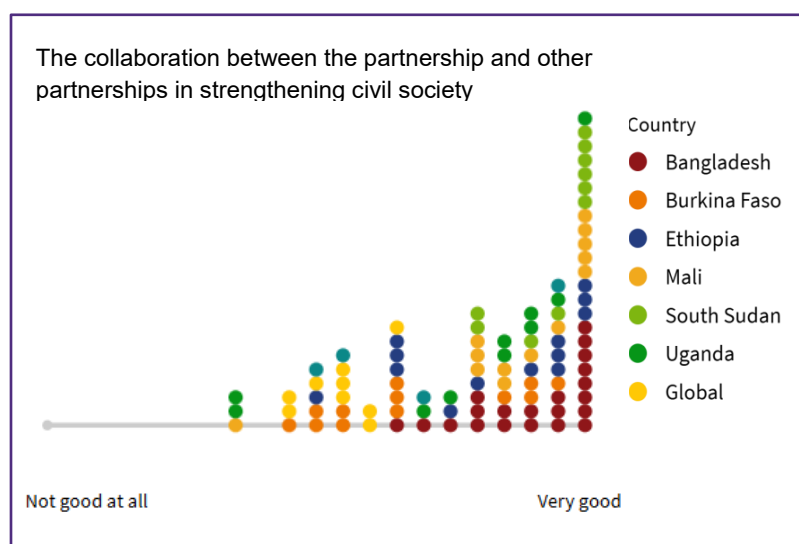


Other partnerships

74% of all partner respondents rated the collaboration between the Right2Grow partnership and other partnerships that worked on strengthening civil society as “very good”. Again, *Bangladesh*, *South Sudan* and *Mali* as most positive towards the collaboration and *Burkina Faso*, *Uganda* and *Ethiopia* as more neutral.

Table 25: Rating of collaboration - Other Partnerships

	Not good at all	Neutral	Very good
Collaboration between the partnership and other partnerships in strengthened civil society	2%	24%	74%



Annex 4 – Country results

Annex 4.1 - Bangladesh

1. Description of contexts

Despite notable progress over the past decade, Bangladesh continues to face persistent challenges in achieving food and nutrition security. Undernutrition among children under five remains a significant public health issue, caused by various factors including inadequate dietary diversity, low rates of exclusive breastfeeding, gender inequality, limited access to services and weak governance structures. According to the 2022 Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS), 24% of children under five are stunted, 11% are wasted, and 22% are underweight, with 6% severely stunted, 2% severely wasted and 4% severely underweight. Furthermore, 51% of women and girls are married before the age of 18, perpetuating early pregnancies, low birth weight (15%), and intergenerational malnutrition. Only 47% of newborns are breastfed within the first hour after birth, 63% of children under six months are exclusively breastfed and just 28% of children older than six months receive an appropriate diet. While almost all households have access to improved drinking water, safely managed sanitation coverage remains low at 44%, safely managed drinking water coverage stands at 59% and basic hygiene coverage at 66%. Only one in ten households treats their drinking water, highlighting ongoing risks to health related to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Gender and social inequalities, particularly affecting women, indigenous populations and the ultra-poor further restrict equitable access to nutrition and hygiene services.

The effects of the pandemic have deepened existing vulnerabilities. Lockdowns and income losses led to an average 76% decline in daily income among low-income households, forcing many low-income families to resort to negative coping mechanisms, such as reducing the frequency of meals or replacing nutritious foods with cheaper alternatives. These disruptions have also reduced the coverage of maternal and child health interventions and negatively affected child dietary diversity, with 70% of surveyed families unable to provide varied diets for children aged 6-23 months. Climate change exacerbates these pressures through recurrent flooding, salinity, saltwater intrusion and water contamination, particularly in coastal and low-lying areas. These overlapping crises highlight the need for locally driven, resilient solutions that integrate health, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) and governance systems.

At the institutional level, Bangladesh has demonstrated a strong commitment to policy through frameworks such as the National Plan of Action for Nutrition (NPAN-3) and the National Nutrition Policy (2015). The establishment of the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC) and the activation of coordination committees at union and district levels provide important entry points for multi-sectoral collaboration. However, the effectiveness of these mechanisms often depends on the capacity and accountability of local government institutions, which vary across regions. Civil society organisations (CSOs) play a vital role in bridging these gaps by mobilising communities, advocating for nutrition-sensitive governance and promoting social accountability. Nevertheless, their work is often hindered by limited resources, technical and financial resources, reliance on external funding, and bureaucratic obstacles that restrict civic space.

Addressing undernutrition in Bangladesh requires collaboration between government institutions, civil society organisations (CSOs), and the private sector. Initiatives that promote women's leadership, local entrepreneurship and evidence-based advocacy have the potential to improve service delivery and encourage community involvement. However, sustaining these results requires continued investment in local governance capacity, cross-ministerial coordination and diversified financing. Overall, Bangladesh has made measurable progress in expanding access to essential services and integrating nutrition and WASH into policy frameworks. However, structural inequalities, urban-rural WASH disparities, environmental vulnerabilities and limited fiscal space continue to hinder the realisation of equitable and sustainable nutrition outcomes for all children.

2. Effectiveness

2.1. Community level

Communities undertook 119 collective actions to demand improved water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and nutrition services, over double the target, and, together with local government and private actors, resolved 80 concrete service barriers from a zero baseline. There was significant and widespread change in household

practices: by June 2025, 93.7% of households reported improved WASH and nutrition practices, up from 47.4% at baseline and 83.3% consistently applied 'small doable actions'. Access to services increased significantly, with 96.3% of community members receiving WASH/nutrition services from public and/or private providers. The programme's approach, which involved sequencing awareness, social mobilisation and practical demonstrations, followed by household monitoring and referrals, proved catalytic, with 778 community-based organisations mobilised and 157 private sector actors engaged from a zero baseline. Mothers described a shift from limited awareness to proactive engagement with community clinics, greater use of antenatal and postnatal care services, regular child growth monitoring, homestead gardening and participation in budget discussions and ward meetings. Visible assets reinforced this change, including handwashing stations, sanitary latrines, hygiene corners and 27 sanitary napkin vending machines in schools. Local entrepreneurs and Health Promotion Advocates (HPAs), who were mostly women, brought essential goods such as Moni Mix, ORS and menstrual products to people's doorsteps, thereby strengthening access and agency. Budget allocation for nutrition, WASH and maternal/child health increased from 1.45% in 2021 to 18.49% in 2024 across targeted Union Parishads, including dedicated funding for sanitary napkins. In parallel, 95% of the 201 local entrepreneurs were women and CSOs tracked local budgets through BMET systems to ensure transparency and accountability. The Evidence Gap Map corroborates the wide range of outcomes under this pathway up to 2024. While the scale of overachievement invites reflection on whether the targets were too conservative, qualitative evidence suggests that there has been genuine mobilisation. However, two risks remain: equity concerns, given that out-of-pocket payments rose to 74.3% of total costs; and the time needed to consolidate behavioural change in settings where norms are deeply entrenched, especially for the poorest households.

2.2. Civil society organisations

The effectiveness of civil society advanced markedly, with CSOs evolving from community mobilisers to structured governance actors capable of shaping local priorities. CSOs successfully advocated for their positions 234 times and led 135 advocacy initiatives, reflecting a stronger strategic use of evidence, alliances and timing. Coalition-building expanded rapidly: There were 45 common platforms on WASH and nutrition, 780 CSOs/CBOs were consulted in multi-annual programming and 760 CSOs designed and rolled out integrated advocacy strategies. Notably, participatory planning and budgeting has become standard practice in 40 Union Parishads, resulting in tangible improvements in inclusion. Access to services among marginalised groups increased from 18% to 65.11%. These changes are underpinned by capacity shifts. Eight Tier 1–2 partners report stronger lobbying and advocacy capacity, and counting frontline actors, this figure rises to 80 organisations, with capacity assessments indicating that 56% of CSOs report strong improvement and 44% moderate improvement in their ability to engage in policy advocacy and influence decision-making. By June 2025, 473 CSOs/CBOs had been trained in basic public health expenditure tracking, 468 in tracking and analysing public budgets, 563 in vulnerability mapping and 575 in addressing issues affecting adolescent girls, women and other vulnerable groups, alongside broader capacity development through tools such as Bridge4Voices, BMET and Community Voice and Action. As well, capacity assessments showed positive movement across all capabilities, including acting, delivering, learning, relating and mobilising resources. In practice, this has resulted in open budget meetings, the introduction of nutrition-specific line items, local resource mobilisation for latrines and water solutions, and a faster response to issues raised through Community Voice and Action. CSO leaders now sit on the Union Development Coordination Committee (UNDDC), Upazila Nutrition Coordination Committee (UNCC) and other standing committees and report greater confidence in engaging with the Department of Social Services (DSS), Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), Ministry of Women and Children Affairs MoWCA and agricultural extension services. However, the financial sustainability of CSOs remains uncertain: while registration processes and formal engagement with local government are progressing, most organisations are still dependent on short project cycles and external funding. The programme's contribution here is clear: skills, tools (BMET, scorecards, child profiling/costing) and structured engagement. However, the durability of the CSO presence will hinge on diversified financing and continued access to policy platforms.

2.3. Government and decentralised levels

The effectiveness of government and decentralised bodies is demonstrated through policy uptake and budgetary reform. Four laws, policies or norms/attitudes were adopted or improved, including practical guidance for Union Parishad representatives on how to implement the Local Government (UP) Act of 2009, focusing on WASH and nutrition. Notably, budgetary reforms have led to increased allocations for nutrition and WASH at the Union Parishad level, rising from 1.45% in 2021 to around 18% of local public budgets by the end of the programme, with funds both allocated and spent on nutrition and WASH services. Additionally, a substantial request of BDT 4.178 billion has been issued to the Ministry of Finance over three fiscal years for under-five child nutrition within local government budgets. The programme helped to revive and regularise coordination mechanisms (UNCC/DNCC),

establish or support 40 local and national monitoring cells, and develop 45 multisectoral joint action plans. Links between evidence and policy were strengthened through eight research documents shared with policymakers, ten learning briefs (including targeted briefs on gender and marginalisation) and the design of an open data platform for decision-making purposes. The Child Profile Estimation and Costing Tool, co-developed with BNNC, has been published by government, integrated into national plans and recommended for piloting in different geographical areas, offering a pathway to more equitable resource allocation. As well, service delivery responsiveness has also improved, with consistent supplies of medicine and supplements provided to 116 clinics following CSO advocacy, BDT 35,200 in local funds allocated to address medicine stock-outs, systems for monitoring service quality rolled out to 265 communities/CSOs, and tangible investments such as five 3,000 litre water tanks procured via UP/DPHE collaboration. These gains reflect an intentional strategy: routine DNCC support across 40 unions, app-based budget monitoring to institutionalise transparency and timed national roundtables to align ministerial leadership with field evidence. The remaining constraints are largely systemic, such as bureaucratic delays, leadership turnover and uneven multisectoral coordination, and would benefit from an extended timeframe to consolidate improvements and scale strategic tools (BMET, open data).

2.4. Donors and international development actors

By contrast, effectiveness with donors and international development actors remains emergent rather than consolidated. Although partners, the government and CSOs maintained a 91% participation rate in (sub)national learning and coordination platforms and four multi-actor meetings were organised to exchange evidence and strengthen the humanitarian-development interface, direct influence on donor commitments and alignment across the humanitarian-development nexus. Only one donor meeting was held to advocate for multi-sectoral nutrition funding, and no country-level outcomes were achieved for Pathway 4 by 2024. However, the programme did invest in visibility and learning, including Power of Learning documentation, quarterly webinars and talk shows with national experts, learning-sharing events with 29 NGOs through nine consortiums and a workshop with the Senior Policy Adviser from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Strategic collaboration through CSA-SUN (where Save the Children serves as a secretariat) led to an integration plan with District Nutrition Coordination Committees and quarterly follow up plans for NPAN-2 implementation involving 22 ministries, representing meaningful building blocks. While these efforts show promise, they have not translated into multi-year funding for integrated WASH-nutrition programming. The reasons for this are partly related to broader donor priorities and competition for funds, and partly due to a late start to high-level donor engagement and insufficient packaging of 'business cases' for scale. The groundwork (evidence, coalitions, and a clear model at community, CSO, and UP levels) is strong. What is needed is a more deliberate investment case and convening strategy that links the child-costing model, budget tracking results, and the Healthy Village approach to multi-donor financing instruments.

3. Relevance

3.1. Quality and evolution of the country ToC

The Bangladesh ToC presents a logical pathway linking community empowerment, civil society strengthening and policy influence, all aimed at ensuring improved nutrition for children under the age of five. The integration of gender, equity and inclusion strengthens its quality by ensuring attention to the needs of marginalized groups.

The ToC has evolved in response to contextual learning. A major adjustment was the merger of WASH and Maternal & Child Health (MCH) under Outcome 1 in Years 1-2. This shift reflected evidence that poor sanitation, water contamination and limited maternal health services were major barriers to nutrition outcomes. By adapting the ToC to these realities, Right2Grow improved operational clarity and targeted key determinants of undernutrition more effectively.

3.2. Alignment of ToC with key national & global issues

The Bangladesh ToC is closely aligned with global and national nutrition and WASH priorities. Outcome 1 focuses on improving community demand for essential services, responding to global hunger trends and Bangladesh's persistent nutrition gaps where 733 million people faced hunger in 2023, 144 million children under five remain stunted, 15% of newborns have low birth weight, exclusive breastfeeding stands at 63% and only 28% of children 6-23 months receive adequate diets. By linking improved nutrition to economic development, the ToC also reflects national priorities around poverty reduction and growth.

Its focus on affordable WASH and health services aligns with global statistics indicating that 2.2 billion people lack safely managed drinking water and 3.5 billion lack safely managed sanitation, mirrored in Bangladesh where only

44% of households have safely managed sanitation. The ToC's emphasis on community mobilization and private-sector engagement offers relevant pathways to address these service gaps.

Outcome 2 strengthens CSOs to advocate, analyse budgets and influence local government decisions, which becomes highly relevant within the global context of shrinking civic spaces and reinforces the idea in which Bangladeshi CSOs require stronger capacities and resources to influence multisectoral planning.

Outcome 3 focuses on evidence-informed, multisectoral policy adoption that aligns with WHO and UNICEF guidance. This is essential in Bangladesh, as challenges such as child marriage and early pregnancy impacts nutrition gains and require integrated action across health, WASH, gender and education.

Outcome 4 on donor coordination reflects global findings that fragmented financing weakens nutrition progress. The ToC's emphasis on working with UNICEF, ADB, EU, FCDO and others matches Bangladesh's need for harmonized financing and scaling of proven interventions.

3.3. Responsiveness of program strategies

Right2Grow's strategies closely matched the needs identified at baseline, which showed major gaps in IYCF knowledge, monotonous diets, limited WASH access, high rates of child malnutrition (stunting 36.2%, underweight 26.5%, wasting 14.2), weak Community Clinic services and exclusion of women, the poorest households and youth from decision making. The programme addressed these through targeted behaviour-change activities (courtyard sessions, mother's groups, school brigades, MHM corners), CVA and community scorecards to improve accountability in health and WASH services and data driven-targeting using Community Situation Analysis.

Strengthening the CSOs, Health Promotion Agents and local entrepreneurs ensured better service access and availability of hygiene and nutrition products in rural areas. At the policy level, training on BMET tools and multisectoral advocacy led Union Parishads to increase Nutrition-Wash-MCH allocations from 1.45% to 18.49%, supported by the development of a nationally aligned Child-Costing Model with BNNC and UN agencies. Together, these strategies ensured that programme interventions were locally relevant, equity focused and responsive to both community needs and national budgeting gaps.

4. Coherence and partnership

4.1. Internal coherence

Partners collaborated on planning, funding allocation, training and communication, ensuring initiatives such as the Max Foundation's Healthy Village, the Hunger Project's SDG Village and World Vision's Citizen Voice in Action were complementary. This integrated approach improved nutrition outcomes for children under five and strengthened the link between grassroots action and national advocacy. The national lead partner played a pivotal role in coordination, facilitating joint planning, the use of evidence, and prompt decision-making. Despite delays related to the pandemic, the consortium's flexibility and effective management enabled the successful completion of key activities by mid-2025, highlighting its resilience and cohesion.

Survey results confirm this coherence: 99% of partners reported learning valuable lessons, with 90% regularly applying them in their work. Respondents emphasised the advantages of cross-organisational learning, shared resources, and joint advocacy, describing the consortium as a 'united voice' at national and international levels. Collaboration with global partners was also viewed positively, with 80% rating international alignment as successful, particularly with regard to advocacy, evidence generation, and technical capacity building. Bangladesh was recognised as one of the strongest performers in terms of applying adaptive management principles, maintaining inclusive participation and demonstrating effective localisation efforts.

Adaptive management was a defining feature of the way Right2Grow functioned internally. In response to political and environmental challenges, the consortium revised its plans, reallocated resources, and strengthened local advocacy. Insights from the midterm evaluation informed adjustments to the strategy, such as prioritising CSO capacity building, reinforcing collaboration with Union Parishads, and maintaining accountability despite funding constraints. During crises such as Cyclone Remal, the consortium successfully adjusted implementation schedules and evidence-generation plans without losing momentum.

Right2Grow's commitment to localisation and shifting power represented a significant structural change in programme governance. Community-generated data informed local budgets and nutrition planning, and CSOs and grassroots leaders gained decision-making authority over programme design, monitoring and advocacy. Women and marginalised groups led participatory dialogues that influenced Union and Upazila budgets. Local CSOs were

supported in obtaining registration and managing advocacy independently, reflecting a shift towards sustainable, south-led development.

4.2. External coherence

Strategic partnerships with the CSA-SUN platform and the Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum, a coalition of over 300 child rights NGOs, enabled coordinated advocacy, knowledge exchange and learning across stakeholders. These alliances, jointly facilitated by Max Foundation and other consortium partners, promoted shared objectives on child nutrition, WASH and health, and exposed partners to innovative advocacy tools and evidence-based approaches. Although the level of strategic alignment varied among partners, these collaborations significantly amplified the collective impact and national visibility.

The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN) played a key role in ensuring coherence between programme implementation and broader Dutch development priorities. Through field visits, report reviews, and workshop participation, the EKN strengthened accountability, learning, and adaptive management. Its engagement provided political legitimacy, facilitated policy dialogue and increased the programme's influence at a national level. However, the intensity of its involvement fluctuated over time.

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) reinforced external coherence further by combining financial support with active policy engagement. The Ministry's review processes and virtual learning sessions for all MoFA-funded partners promoted alignment, cross-country knowledge sharing and policy harmonisation across initiatives.

Collaboration with UN agencies and bilateral partners, particularly UNICEF, which coordinates government–donor WASH platforms, expanded Right2Grow's policy reach and integration within national systems. These engagements fostered collective advocacy and improved alignment with government priorities in nutrition and WASH.

5. Impact

The Right2Grow programme in Bangladesh has had a broad impact at all levels: from household to national institutions. At the community level, the programme has stimulated visible shifts in behaviour, awareness and collective action. Households have made significant progress in adopting improved nutrition and WASH practices, with 93.7% now adhering to the recommended behaviours, up from 47.4% at baseline. Initiatives promoting exclusive breastfeeding, home gardens and diversified diets have reduced child illness and strengthened food security. The designation of 235 'Healthy Villages' is a concrete symbol of community-driven transformation, underpinned by participatory planning, local accountability, and citizen engagement. The transformation has also been market-driven increased investment by community members in private-sector WASH and nutrition products reflects awareness and self-reliance, and the fact that mothers continue key health practices without facilitation indicates a genuine shift in social norms.

Women and young people have emerged as powerful agents of change. By actively participating in ward meetings, budget sessions and advocacy efforts, they have gained a voice and influence in local governance. Over 40% of civil society organisation (CSO) leadership positions are now held by women, and more than 90% of local entrepreneurs supported by the programme are women running small-scale enterprises related to nutrition and hygiene. These businesses have increased women's income and financial autonomy, as evidenced by them opening personal bank accounts and reinvesting in community health, while also ensuring greater access to affordable products. The project's requirement that all CSO committees be chaired by women has normalised women's leadership in spaces previously dominated by men, embedding gender equality in local decision-making. Initiatives focusing on menstrual hygiene management, maternal health promotion and raising awareness have broken down taboos, boosted self-esteem and raised the profile of women as health and empowerment advocates.

Inter-ministerial collaboration strengthened the coordination of multiple sectors across the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), the Ministry of Land, Rural Development and Cooperation (MoLGRD&C), the Directorate of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) and the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC), aligning 45 Union Parishads and sub-districts around joint action plans. Strategic partnerships, particularly the formal collaboration between the Right2Grow Consortium and CSA-SUN, have expanded national advocacy platforms by linking community evidence with policy dialogue. Integrating community-generated data into planning processes is a significant step towards localisation, ensuring citizen priorities influence governance decisions.

6. Sustainability

The programme has established a solid basis for long-term behavioural change, institutional integration, and community ownership. At community level, improved awareness of, and adherence to, nutrition and WASH practices is expected to persist beyond the project's lifespan. Families and caregivers now recognise their primary role in ensuring children's health and nutrition, and they understand that food security, water, sanitation and hygiene are all interconnected. This shift in mindset has resulted in lasting behavioural change: caregivers continue to practise safe feeding, hygiene, and health-seeking behaviours independently. Community volunteers, Health Promotion Advocates (HPAs) and Local Entrepreneurs (LEs) continue to play an active role, providing access to affordable WASH and nutrition products. Meanwhile, women's participation in CSOs and local committees ensures continued advocacy for child nutrition. The government's inclusion of dedicated budget lines for nutrition within Union Parishad structures further reinforces local accountability and financial viability.

Civil society organisations formed under the Right2Grow initiative are becoming increasingly autonomous and integrated into governance structures. At union level, CSOs now serve as permanent advocates, linking communities with local government. Capacity assessments reveal high levels of confidence in technical (89%) and partnership (89%) capacities, with 67% expressing confidence in financial sustainability. Through the consistent application of tools such as BMET and the Community Voice and Action (CVA) approach, CSOs have institutionalised open budget meetings and citizen-led monitoring mechanisms that are likely to endure. Many are in the process of formal government registration, which will enable them to access local allocations and tenders. Internally, financial systems and LE savings platforms provide revolving funds for small business activities, linking income generation with sustained nutritional outcomes. Nevertheless, long-term sustainability still hinges on the ability of CSOs to secure diversified funding and maintain institutional support once external facilitation concludes.

At a governmental level, Right2Grow's legacy lies in embedding nutrition and WASH into formal planning, budgeting and coordination systems. Union Parishads now allocate dedicated funds for nutrition and use evidence-based tools, such as the Child Profile Estimation and Costing Model and the Digital BMET App, for planning purposes. Multi-sectoral nutrition plans have been developed in all targeted UPs, and Upazila Nutrition Coordination Committees (UNCCs) have become functional platforms for integrated governance. The government has agreed to roll out these digital tools nationwide, ensuring the systematic adoption of nutrition planning across all 4,578 Union Parishads. There has been a notable shift in mindset: local representatives, who were previously mainly focused on infrastructure, now view child nutrition, health and WASH as central to community development. Although political continuity and resource mobilisation are crucial for long-term institutionalisation, the collaboration between empowered citizens, capable CSOs, and responsive local governance offers a solid foundation for sustaining and expanding Right2Grow's achievements.

7. Cross-cutting themes (youth, gender, climate)

7.1. Youth

Similarly, young people have emerged as key agents of change, leading awareness campaigns on hygiene, nutrition and gender equality, organising school-based hygiene education, participating in standing committees and contributing to the formal recognition of grassroots CSOs. Trained youth volunteers have supported community awareness initiatives, the prevention of gender-based violence, and emergency responses to disasters such as Cyclone Remal. Youth forums have influenced the inclusion of CSO strategic plans in local and national frameworks. Small grants and inter-union forums have helped to expand youth- and women-led advocacy, while participatory programme design has enabled young people to engage in planning, monitoring and lobbying processes. Key enablers include structural mandates (female CSO chairs), small grants for youth and women and peer-learning mechanisms. Together, these factors have fostered inclusive leadership, although barriers remain. Entrenched social norms continue to limit women's voice in public spaces, and young people often lack formal decision-making power and recognition, particularly within marginalised groups who have limited access to government safety nets.

7.2. Gender

Women and young people played active roles in community mobilisation, planning and decision-making, acting as leaders of CSOs, local entrepreneurs, volunteers, teachers and caregivers. Women represent over 40% of leadership positions within CSOs and community platforms, while youth represent around 35%. Notably, women chair every CSO committee, ensuring gender leadership and participation in local governance. Over 90% of the

local entrepreneurs supported by the programme are women who manage small businesses related to nutrition and WASH. These women have gained income, confidence and social recognition, promoted health and dignity while breaking taboos, such as those surrounding menstrual hygiene. Their stories demonstrate how economic empowerment has led to broader social change, financial independence, and local leadership.

7.3. Climate

Right2Grow's engagement on climate issues is still in its early stages but shows promise. Working in areas that are highly vulnerable to climate change (Barguna, Patuakhali, Satkhira and Khulna) the programme has indirectly promoted climate adaptation by advocating for safe water, nutrition-sensitive WASH and climate-resilient agriculture. However, climate considerations have yet to be systematically incorporated into all interventions. CSOs have advocated water safety, but structured climate risk assessments, disaster risk reduction linkages and systematic integration into planning remain limited. Although civil society organisations (CSOs) have advanced dialogue on water safety and sustainable resource management, structured climate risk assessments and linkages with disaster risk reduction mechanisms remain limited. Integrating nutrition advocacy with climate adaptation and livelihood resilience strategies could improve long-term outcomes in these regions prone to disasters.

8. Lessons learnt and good practices

8.1. Lessons learnt

The Right2Grow experience in Bangladesh highlights the need for early and proactive advocacy and donor engagement to secure sustained partnerships and funding. Late-stage outreach limited opportunities for alignment and scaling up. Internal coordination among consortium partners was occasionally delayed by bureaucratic approval processes. Future projects should therefore streamline document clearance and delegate authority to enhance efficiency. Private sector engagement should also begin at project inception, with clear mapping of potential partners and defined collaboration strategies for supply chain integration and co-investment.

National-level advocacy requires continuous, strong engagement with multiple ministries to embed nutrition and WASH priorities in government systems. Initially involving only one department limited policy influence. Future programmes should allocate dedicated budgets and activities to multi-ministerial collaboration. Similarly, greater coordination between donors across the humanitarian–development nexus is essential to address the root causes of undernutrition and ensure long-term impact.

Finally, the multi-level capacity-strengthening approach, training teachers, civil society organisation (CSO) leaders, student brigades and entrepreneurs, proved crucial for promoting collective action and sustainable behaviour change. Evidence from cross-country mutual learning, such as Bangladesh and Uganda outcome harvesting collaboration, also demonstrates the value of structured peer support. This holistic model should be maintained and expanded in future intervention.

8.2. Good practices

Right2Grow demonstrated several good practices that can be scaled up. Community-driven approaches such as community situation analysis, social mapping and citizen voice and action strengthened ownership, accountability and service uptake by grounding interventions in local priorities. Building the capacity of local actors at multiple levels, CSOs, teachers, student brigades and entrepreneurs, ensured sustainability by creating a network of skilled advocates and service providers who continue to promote WASH and nutrition. Inclusive programming promoted equity through targeted initiatives such as menstrual hygiene facilities in schools and parenting sessions for mothers, thereby improving the dignity and health outcomes of vulnerable groups.

Evidence-based advocacy, supported by tools such as the Child-Costing Model and BMET, strengthened national planning and budgeting processes, thereby influencing government priorities for child nutrition. Cross-country mutual capacity development (e.g. the Bangladesh–Uganda collaboration on outcome harvesting) enhanced learning and consistency. Finally, the programme's multi-level engagement, which linked grassroots mobilisation with national policy dialogue, proved highly effective in aligning local action with systemic change, ensuring both immediate impact and long-term sustainability.

9. Conclusions and recommendations

9.1. Conclusions

Bangladesh has achieved measurable progress in expanding access to health and nutrition services and embedding WASH and child nutrition priorities into national policy frameworks. Yet, deep-rooted social and gender inequalities, climate vulnerability, and constrained fiscal space remain persistent structural barriers to equitable and sustainable nutrition security, particularly for children, women, adolescents, indigenous groups, and ultra-poor communities.

The Right2Grow programme has demonstrated strong relevance and high effectiveness across community, CSO, and local government levels as confirmed by reductions in stunting, wasting and underweight, widespread adoption of menstrual hygiene management and improved functioning of community clinics. Sequenced, participatory, and evidence-driven interventions, ranging from household demonstrations and safe water solutions to women- and youth-led civic platforms, have catalysed substantial improvements in nutrition, hygiene practices, service access, and inclusion. The significant rise in Union Parishad allocations for nutrition and WASH confirms successful citizen-driven advocacy and a shift in local governance mindsets toward prioritising child well-being. Women's leadership has been a central driver of this transformation, advancing economic agency, social accountability, and community dignity through entrepreneurship and governance roles. Youth participation has reinforced these gains, expanding awareness, social mobilisation, and crisis responsiveness.

Institutional impact is further reflected in strengthened multisectoral coordination, policy uptake, and the piloting and adoption of digital accountability and child-costing tools, which have helped bridge evidence gaps and reshape decentralised budget planning. However, by contrast, progress toward consolidated donor alignment and multi-year financing remains limited, partly due to late-stage engagement and underdeveloped investment packaging. Sustainability is promising but not guaranteed: equity risks persist due to high out-of-pocket costs for families, and local CSOs remain heavily dependent on short project cycles and external funding. Climate risk integration, while indirectly supported, is not yet systematically institutionalised.

In summary, Right2Grow has delivered a credible, locally anchored model of behavioural, and governance change with clear potential for national scale. To ensure these gains endure and expand, future efforts must prioritise early and coordinated donor engagement, diversified financing for local CSOs, strengthened climate resilience strategies, and long-term institutional support that preserves civic space and consolidates local leadership within government systems.

9.2. Recommendations for Future Programming

- **Recommendation 1: Policy Framework at National Government**
The Healthy Village Model should be institutionalized and scaled nationally through BNNC and relevant ministries, supported by operational manuals, indicators, and case studies. Co-ownership between communities and local governments must remain central to ensure accountability and alignment with the 2027 national plan.
- **Recommendation 2: Broader Policy Implications for MFA and EKN**
Right2Grow demonstrates the value of system-oriented, locally led programming. MFA and EKN should promote public–private partnerships, cross-sectoral co-investment, and adaptive learning frameworks. Leveraging their convening power, they can embed Right2Grow approaches into Dutch-supported food, governance, and gender portfolios, while sustaining continuity through flexible funding, policy dialogue, and knowledge partnerships.
- **Recommendation 3: Strengthening Civil Society Capacities and Sustainable Financing**
Sustained investment in CSO governance, leadership, and advocacy is critical to consolidate Right2Grow gains. CSOs must diversify funding through domestic fundraising, social enterprises, and corporate partnerships while co-financing local initiatives with donors and government. Institutionalized participation in policy platforms such as BNNC and CSA-SUN will enhance influence and long-term resilience.
- **Recommendation 4: Institutionalizing Advocacy and Private Sector Collaboration**
The Local Entrepreneurs' Association should serve as a national advocacy platform, channelling CSR investments and promoting joint lobbying with government and business. This will expand WASH and nutrition markets, improve service delivery, and strengthen local economic resilience.

- Recommendation 5: Mainstreaming Right2Grow Model Elements**
 Consortium partners and CSO alliances should embed Right2Grow tools - Healthy Village, Child-Costing, scorecards - into new initiatives and institutional learning platforms. Coordinated advocacy and collaboration with government and private sectors will sustain visibility, innovation, and policy integration across geographies.
- Recommendation 6: Collaboration and Service Sustainability**
 Formalized public–private partnerships through MoUs between local governments, cooperatives, and private actors can secure reliable WASH and nutrition services. Strengthening entrepreneurship and linking Health Promotion Agents to finance and markets will enhance outreach and viability.
- Recommendation 7: National Learning and Policy Platform**
 A multi-stakeholder platform co-led by BNNC and CSOs should drive policy advocacy, cross-district learning, and progress tracking on Right2Grow scale-up, fostering coherence among ministries, donors, and partners.
- Recommendation 8: Institutionalization and Long-Term Sustainability**
 Right2Grow models should be integrated into BNNC, LGD, and MoHFW systems through child profiling, nutrition budgeting, and community scorecards. Sustained political commitment and continued CSO engagement in Union Parishad planning will ensure ownership. MFA and EKN can facilitate South–South exchange, PPPs, and flexible funding to reinforce scaling and sustainability.
- Recommendation 9: Budget Advocacy and Extended Timeframes**
 Consortium partners should engage the Finance Division to secure permanent national budget lines for nutrition and WASH, especially for children under five. Future initiatives should adopt longer timelines to consolidate behavioural and governance outcomes.
- Recommendation 10: Cross-Ministerial Coordination and Localisation**
 Broader engagement with ministries - Local Government, Women and Children's Affairs, Education, and Agriculture= through joint committees will strengthen policy coherence and resource alignment. Localisation must go beyond rhetoric, embedding measurable power transfer, co-creation, and accountability frameworks that institutionalize local leadership and genuine country ownership.

Annex 4.2 – Burkina Faso

1. Description of contexts

Burkina Faso, a landlocked Sahelian country in West Africa, continues to face significant challenges relating to nutrition, food security and access to water, sanitation and hygiene services. Despite strong political commitment and progress in policy frameworks, the country is characterised by high levels of undernutrition and inequality. According to national surveys (SMART 2019 and MICS 2019), 25% of children under five are stunted, 17.8% are underweight and 8.5% are wasted. These rates are even higher in programme regions such as East (31.4%), Centre-North (28.2%) and North (24.8%). Anaemia affects approximately 62% of women of reproductive age and over 80% of children under five. Access to safely managed water and sanitation remains limited: basic drinking water coverage ranges from roughly 50% in the East to over 70% in the Centre-North and North, while only 12% of rural households access sanitation services and approximately 75% continue to practise open defecation. Only about 1% of villages have achieved “FDAL” (End of Open Defecation) status. These conditions directly contribute to the high prevalence of diarrhoeal diseases, which is recorded at between 4.7% and 8.3% in the main intervention regions.

The country's nutritional vulnerability is exacerbated by recurring food insecurity, displacement related to insecurity, and climate variability. According to the March 2020 Cadre Harmonisé, over 2.2 million people require humanitarian assistance, with more than 1.5 million experiencing a food security crisis (IPC Phase 3 or above). Agricultural production is often disrupted by droughts, floods and limited access to resources, while growing insecurity has displaced populations, disrupting local markets and the delivery of basic services. Despite previous commitments to increase spending, national nutrition financing remains modest at about 2% of the total budget, as security pressures have diverted resources away from social sectors. Poverty remains widespread; the 2021 Household Living Conditions Survey reported that 43.2% of the population lives below the monetary poverty line, equivalent

to 247,806 FCFA per person per year. The pandemic further exacerbated economic fragility, causing income losses, food price inflation and reduced access to health and nutrition services, particularly in remote areas.

Nevertheless, there has been growing recognition of nutrition as a development priority within the political environment. Burkina Faso has joined the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement and established a multisectoral technical secretariat (STAN). The country has also mobilised parliamentary and civil society networks to monitor nutrition commitments. While these structures provide an enabling framework for multisectoral coordination, implementation capacity remains uneven due to challenges associated with decentralisation, staff turnover and insecurity in several regions. Civil society organisations (CSOs) have emerged as key players in bridging the gap between community needs and national policy dialogue. However, they continue to face challenges regarding financial sustainability, coordination and representativeness. While the civic space remains relatively open, it is increasingly constrained by security conditions and limited decentralised coordination mechanisms.

2. Effectiveness

2.1. Community level

Community mobilisation increased rapidly, resulting in measurable changes in behaviour, increased demand for services, and local problem-solving. Against a target of 45, communities initiated 115 actions to demand improved services (255%), and programme sensitisation reached approximately 4.75 million people, exceeding the initial target of 150,000 by over 3,000%. These quantitative leaps were reflected qualitatively: citizens' awareness of social rights, such as nutrition, WASH and food security, increased markedly; infant and young child feeding practices spread; and local initiatives, such as household gardens and collective hygiene drives, became more commonplace. However, the evaluation candidly acknowledges unevenness: activities led by CSOs did not always keep pace with community demand and efforts to empower vulnerable women only reached 34% of the target, indicating persistent barriers to inclusion.

The narratives of change gathered through focus groups and key informant interviews highlight concrete social and institutional shifts. In the Centre-North region, advocacy groups reported greater internal cohesion and credibility with the authorities. Dialogue yielded tangible commitments, including the establishment of a nutritional recovery centre (CREN) in Boulsa and increased communal nutrition budgets. In the north, traditional leaders supported women's access to land, the 'Consommons local' initiative gained ground, open defecation declined and school hygiene clubs helped maintain latrines. In the East, home and soiless gardens diversified diets and bolstered resilience, while dialogue with local authorities embedded nutrition, hygiene and food security in communal plans. The voices of young people grew stronger through the Children's Parliament and school clubs. However, the participation of women, young people, and people with disabilities in decision-making spaces remains incomplete and requires deeper, more systematic integration. Overall, communities have become active participants, able to formulate demands, engage in dialogue and implement solutions alongside others, thus validating the community model at the heart of Right2Grow.

2.2. Civil society organisations

The effectiveness of civil society organisations increased in terms of both scale and quality, with CSOs strengthening their role as a bridge between communities and decision-makers. Donor-level indicators show the creation of advocacy spaces exceeded the near-full delivery of advocacy initiatives and full attainment of the target for consortium participation and enhanced lobbying/advocacy capacities across core partners. Country-level indicators reinforce this trend: on average, 93% of advocacy actions were carried out in collaboration with communities (80% in the Centre-North region, and 100% in the North and East regions), 88% of participants took part in planning and budget review sessions, and 27 multisectoral dialogue platforms were supported with all CSOs participating in these forums. Investment in capacity building paid off: 88 CSOs were strengthened in budget tracking (beyond the target of 86), and all CSOs reported doing budget monitoring. The learning and mutual capacity development components helped organisations transition from ad hoc activism to more structured, evidence-based advocacy and coalition building. Documentation became more intentional (approximately 90% of respondents), cross-regional learning intensified (including Burkina–Mali exchanges) and lessons were applied to adapt strategies and refine tools (BMET, simplified guidance and MoJo).

These gains translated into visible local outcomes, even under difficult conditions. Civil society organisations (CSOs) helped reactivate participatory processes and contributed to the inclusion of nutrition and WASH in local plans and budgets. They were also recognised in formal concertation spaces at communal and provincial levels. Media work and MoJo increased reach (e.g. through an online nutrition/WASH press outlet in Zondoma), while networks such as RESONUT supported the restoration of budget lines for therapeutic foods. However, structural

constraints moderated the effects at system level: only around 62% of CSO proposals were integrated into plans, policies and budgets, and the average share of local budgets dedicated to nutrition, WASH and food security was just 4.45%, far short of the 10% target. These shortfalls were partly due to the temporary suspension of state transfers to communes and fragile decentralised coordination. In short, CSOs have become more capable, visible and legitimate, and their political and budgetary influence is growing, but it still needs to be more firmly embedded, particularly where inter-sector coordination and fiscal flows are weak. The programme's contribution is clear: targeted capacity building in BMET and multisectorality, structured coaching, simplified analytical tools, building alliances with the media and national platforms (AMR and RESONUT) and consistent, community-linked advocacy produced results that most respondents said would have been unlikely without Right2Grow's support.

2.3. Government and decentralised entities

At the national government and decentralised entity levels, effectiveness is evident through the establishment and standardisation of dialogue platforms, the dissemination of budget monitoring methods, and the implementation of significant yet early policy and budgeting shifts. The donor-level policy indicator was achieved, and the country-level performance exceeded the targets for the supported concertation frameworks, the embedded accountability frameworks, the regional accountability sessions and the validation meetings. Communication outputs doubled and initiatives bridging humanitarian and development actions increased by two-thirds. The narrative around multisectorality is also strong: by pairing capacity building with participation in communal, provincial and regional forums, and by forming alliances with REPASEN and journalist clubs, the programme helped to turn the principle of multisectorality into practice. Nutrition now appears more consistently in local planning tools (PCD, PRD and PAI), groupements de plaidoyer are recognised in official spaces and a 2025 budget circular requires ministries and territorial collectivities to integrate nutrition into their annual plans, an institutional step change. At the national level, parliamentarians are showing greater interest in nutrition and infant and young child feeding, and the sector's visibility has clearly increased.

Crucially, there are budgetary implications beyond process change. Nationally, the proportion of public funds allocated to nutrition increased from 1.72% to 2.02% between 2022 and 2023. In the three intervention regions, locally sourced funds for nutrition grew by an average of 76.4% per year between 2021 and 2024. In 2025, the Ministry of Health financed nutrition-sensitive budget lines totalling 832 million FCFA. Municipalities such as Gourcy, Boussouma, Boulsa and Fada introduced or reinforced nutrition budget lines, which were sometimes supported by local taxes dedicated to nutrition or sanitation. These shifts emerged alongside more structured collaboration between health, agriculture, education and social protection services. However, the evaluation also identifies constraints that limit the programme's effectiveness and longevity: decentralised services are not consistently engaged, information flows vertically from national to communal levels inconsistently, and the production and utilisation of evidence lags the desired level (approximately 80% of planned studies were completed, and around 39% of planned data collection sessions were conducted). Furthermore, the evaluation was unable to measure the programme's effect on direct financing for the national multisector plan (PNMN), leaving a key question regarding sustainability unanswered. In summary, while the enabling architecture is stronger, multisectoral practices are more frequent and budgets are moving in the right direction, consolidation will require steadier local-level coordination, fuller evidence pipelines and predictable fiscal transfers.

2.4. Donors and international development actors

Even if formal indicators do not directly capture these relationships, engagement with donors and international development actors gained momentum in terms of visibility, dialogue and recognition. At regional level, the North Forum brought together humanitarian and development actors, while in the East, private-sector mobilisation supported the regional hospital (CHR). The programme financed and organised high-level learning spaces, such as scientific days and a parliamentary forum on nutrition, and facilitated the participation of advocacy groups in sector clusters and OCHA coordination. At the same time, stakeholders were trained on the triple nexus. These efforts increased the legitimacy of partner CSOs with funders and established Right2Grow as a model for operationalising multisectorality. An important, albeit unplanned, consequence was the regional and international recognition of Burkinabè CSOs, some of whom presented their experiences at international conferences (including N4G preparations), thematic roundtables and global working groups. This exposure amplified national advocacy and showcased Burkina Faso as a pioneer in community-led nutrition and WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) advocacy. The programme's website further promoted knowledge sharing and external engagement, enhancing its potential to influence international agendas. Donor testimonies and partner feedback consistently emphasised Right2Grow's value in amplifying the voices of local CSOs and strengthening social accountability. However, the evaluation indicates that these relational gains have yet to systematically translate into scaled, multi-year financing for integrated nutrition/WASH programmes at a national level. The groundwork is in place (coalitions, narratives

and demonstrable tools) but these need to be converted into bankable cases and coordinated donor pathways to ensure long-term success.

3. Relevance

3.1. Quality and evolution of the country ToC

The ToC for Burkina Faso is grounded in a solid and contextually relevant framework that reflects the country's nutrition, food security and WASH priorities. Developed through a participatory process, it clearly identified the structural causes of malnutrition and links them to key levers of change: stronger civil society capacities, greater community mobilisation for accountability and evidence-based influence on multisectoral policies and budgets. National partners validated its relevance, noting that it responds directly to local needs such as improving budget transparency, strengthening coordination among local actors and increasing community engagement in planning and monitoring.

Over time, the ToC evolved to better align with implementation realities. Initially focused on influencing national policies, it shifted operationalisation at local level through deeper engagement with communes and decentralised services. This adjustment reinforced local ownership and enabled more concrete application of the multisectoral approach. The ToC also gradually incorporated the country's deteriorating security context and the triple humanitarian-development-peace nexus, allowing activities to continue in fragile areas and improving coordination between humanitarian and development actors.

However, gaps remained. Security risks and financial sustainability issues were not fully integrated into the original logic and the private sector (belatedly introduced only in late 2024), had limited time to generate meaningful structural change despite promising pilots in food production and regional humanitarian coordination. Additionally, the ToC could have been made stronger through deeper connection between community, local and national advocacy processes, further reinforcing learning and scaling.

3.2. Alignment of ToC with key national & global issues

The ToC is strongly aligned with national policy frameworks and global commitments on nutrition, WASH and inclusive governance. At national level, it directly supports the priorities of the National Multisectoral Nutrition Policy (PNMN) and the National Food and Nutrition Security Plan (PNSAN), addressing chronic and acute malnutrition through community mobilization, CSO strengthening, budget advocacy and multisectoral coordination. Its emphasis on decentralization aligns with government efforts to integrate nutrition into Municipal Development Plans and reinforce local accountability, effectively linking grassroots interventions with institutional mechanisms.

Globally, the ToC reflects Burkina Faso's commitments within the SUN Movement and contributes to key SDGs particularly SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health), SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation). It aligns with approaches promoted by technical and financial partners such as evidence-based advocacy, localisation of aid and the Triple Nexus connecting humanitarian assistance with development and peace. However, alignment gaps remain in relation to financial sustainability of nutrition measures and resilience to economic and security crises, which were not sufficiently reflected in the original ToC.

3.3. Responsiveness of program strategies

Right2Grow in Burkina Faso showed strong adaptability by adjusting its strategies to community needs, institutional priorities, and a rapidly changing security context. Early in implementation, the program shifted from a mainly policy-focused approach to establishing local Advocacy Groups (AGs) that brought together CSOs, community leaders and local media. These AGs gained social and political legitimacy and were able to deliver tangible results, such as constructing a CREN in Boulsa, granting land to women in Boussouma, Kaya and Gourcy and launching a waste-sorting centre in Kongoussi.

Several innovations were introduced in response to emerging needs, including mobilizing the private sector for nutrition financing, setting up vegetable gardens and soilless crops for breastfeeding women during the food crisis, providing boreholes and pumps for host and displaced populations and installing mobile toilets in high-mobility zones. Advocacy strategies also evolved: stronger engagement with parliamentarians contributed to a national nutrition budget increase (1.72% to 2.02%), while municipalities progressively added nutrition budget lines funded from their own resources with own-fund increases of approximately +76.4% between 2021–2024 and concrete

cases such as Boussouma (5 to 11.5 million CFA), Kongoussi (1.3 to 3.2 million CFA) and Gourcy (from 138,828,581 to 168,538,583 CFA francs).

The program also adjusted partner roles and provided targeted capacity strengthening when some CSOs lacked the technical expertise needed for effective advocacy. Cross-cutting themes such as gender, youth, inclusion and climate were operationalized progressively through new partnerships such as Planète Verte and the Children's Parliament.

4. Coherence and partnership

4.1. Internal coherence

The Right2Grow consortium in Burkina Faso demonstrated strong internal coherence and collaboration. However, there were persistent challenges in governance and coordination between the national and global levels. The partnership's added value lay in the complementarity of its members, the clarity of roles, and the joint learning culture it fostered. Each partner contributed different areas of expertise: the local Groups de Plaidoyer (GP) led community advocacy, the international NGOs provided technical guidance, financial management and methodological tools such as Outcome Harvesting, BMET and Bridge4Voices, and the national network RESONUT drove policy engagement. This clear division of roles ensured synergy across interventions, with partners frequently noting that 'we no longer speak of Save or ACF, we speak of Right2Grow'.

The programme's coherence was further reinforced by geographic and thematic complementarity: ACF led in the east, THP and AMR led in the north, Save the Children led in the centre north, and RESONUT led on national advocacy. CSOs collaborated via an exchange platform, joint workshops were held and reports were consolidated collectively, although the steering committee met only once and quarterly reviews were irregular. Despite irregular steering committee meetings and quarterly reviews, collaboration through joint workshops, shared reporting and cross-learning platforms maintained functional collaboration.

The consortium fostered a strong learning dynamic. By participating in regional and global platforms such as SUN, inter-country Right2Grow exchanges and parliamentary nutrition forums, Burkina Faso gained recognition as one of the most active and innovative Right2Grow countries. Partners jointly developed and contributed to the Right2Grow Learning Catalogue, producing eight learning briefs on advocacy, budget monitoring and mobile journalism, thereby enhancing South–South knowledge exchange. Over 80% of respondents to the Learning and Sharing survey reported an increase in cross-country collaboration over the past two years, driven by learning weeks, exchange visits and online 'Grow Together' sessions.

However, coordination between global and national structures was often perceived as complex and fragmented. The use of multiple communication channels, coupled with an unclear delineation of roles between global leads, thematic focal points and coordination committees, resulted in overlaps, delays and limited feedback loops. Activity planning at the global level was not always aligned with national calendars, which affected coherence and the timely implementation of programmes. Partners recommended clearer governance frameworks and more streamlined communication mechanisms for future programmes.

Following the mid-term review, few governance reforms were enacted. The steering committee remained largely inactive, and decision-making continued to rely on the initial charter without any significant adaptations being made. However, adaptive management principles, central to Right2Grow's philosophy, were progressively applied, especially after the mid-term review, when greater operational autonomy was transferred to national teams. Initially, governance was highly centralised at the global level, but mid-term changes enabled national partners to adjust to security constraints, community needs and regional contexts. However, centralised validation processes and limited strategic debate constrained the full implementation of adaptive management.

4.2. External coherence

The Right2Grow programme in Burkina Faso maintained meaningful external coherence by forming partnerships with government institutions, development agencies and civil society networks. These partnerships helped to strengthen complementarity and avoid duplication. Although collaboration with external actors varied in depth, it amplified advocacy reach, enhanced visibility and embedded the programme within broader national and international nutrition frameworks.

The partnership with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands was considered useful, albeit limited. While the Embassy supported specific activities, such as HEAT training and experience-sharing workshops, strategic

coordination was irregular and underdeveloped. Partners noted that clearer role definition and more structured dialogue could have improved alignment between the Embassy's priorities and the consortium's objectives.

In contrast, collaboration with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) was strong and constructive. The Ministry provided consistent political and technical support, backing advocacy and communication training and promoting strategic alignment across the consortium. This engagement enhanced Right2Grow's visibility, consolidated advocacy groups, and reinforced the capacities of local civil society.

Right2Grow formed productive alliances with national networks and agencies beyond Dutch institutions, notably RESONUT and REPASEN. This led to the introduction of nutrition budget lines and the formal integration of CSOs within multisectoral frameworks. Partnerships with GIZ have expanded the use of budget monitoring tools (BMETs) to new regions, while cooperation with UNICEF and other UN agencies within WASH networks has enabled coordinated interventions, joint research and co-financed activities, such as scientific days, reducing overlap and improving impact. The MCD survey indicates that these partnerships increased programme visibility, strengthened local authority commitment and boosted WASH infrastructure development.

At the local level, collaboration with territorial authorities and decentralised technical services strengthened local ownership and multisectoral planning. Local authorities received financial support for implementing activities, took part in training, validated studies and helped promote multisectorality. Private actors and local role models provided materials and logistical support to reinforce community engagement and programme visibility.

Significant progress was observed compared to the programme's early stages: technical services increasingly aligned with advocacy objectives and terminology was adapted from "pressure groups" to "advocacy groups" and the structuring of CSOs strengthened coherence and credibility of their actions.

5. Impact

At the community level, the programme has led to tangible improvements in children's nutrition, health and growth. Triangulation of data, including document review, brainstorming sessions, community focus groups in the North, Centre-North and East and interviews with key informants confirmed these changes. Behavioural change interventions, particularly those led by Groupes de Plaidoyer (GP), have transformed family practices relating to hygiene, feeding, and childcare. In the Centre-North region, for example, mothers reported better hygiene habits, such as regular handwashing, safer water management and abandoning open defecation, which led to a reduction in waterborne illnesses and greater attendance at Nutrition Recovery and Education Centres. In the North, sessions on infant and young child feeding promoted dietary diversification through the use of locally enriched porridges. In the East, meanwhile, household and soilless gardens improved food quality and household self-sufficiency. Testimonies from parents and health authorities confirmed a decline in child malnutrition and a reduction in nutrition-related mortality, supported by strong collaboration between Right2Grow, the Technical Secretariat for Nutrition (ST-NUT) and regional health services. Women's increased economic autonomy, through access to land, microfinance and agricultural entrepreneurship, also indirectly enhanced household food security and child well-being as income from produce sales was reinvested in food and healthcare for children.

At the institutional level, Right2Grow has strengthened nutrition governance and multisectoral collaboration between public, civil and community organisations. Regional and local authorities in the north and centre-north now lead multisectoral coordination platforms uniting health, agriculture, education, water and social protection services for joint planning and budgeting. The ST-NUT has consolidated its role as a national coordination and monitoring body by using citizen budgets and local expenditure tracking tools, which were developed in collaboration with civil society partners, to increase transparency and accountability. In the east, regional nutrition forums and scientific events have encouraged dialogue between policymakers, researchers and communities, creating a new collaborative model involving the government, civil society organisations (CSOs) and technical partners.

Budget monitoring and expenditure tracking (BMET) tools have enhanced transparency in public finance, and civil society organisations (CSOs), once seen as beneficiaries, are now recognised as strategic partners in policy formulation and local implementation. Local advocacy groups have strengthened their dialogue with the authorities, resulting in community priorities being included in municipal development plans and budgets. At the national level, members of REPASEN (*Réseau Parlementaire pour la Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle*) have promoted nutrition-sensitive budgeting and new regulations on breast milk substitutes, demonstrating the programme's impact on national governance.

6. Sustainability

While the sustainability of changes initiated by Right2Grow in Burkina Faso is generally perceived positively, some achievements remain fragile in the face of contextual uncertainty. The programme successfully generated collective momentum among civil society organisations (CSOs), government bodies and communities, which continues beyond the project's duration. Most CSOs say they are confident their collaboration will continue after the programme and plan to keep sharing experiences and joining forces for advocacy. Most national coalition partners have expressed their intention to continue collaborating, sharing experiences and engaging in joint advocacy, recognising that their collective strength has been institutionalised.

At the community level, several results are considered durable. These include household gardens (*jardins de case*), improved hygiene and nutrition practices, and the growing recognition of advocacy groups (GPs) within formal governance frameworks. These practices have become embedded in daily routines and are being passed on from one generation to the next. Household gardens are widely adopted and considered highly sustainable by communities. Although some risk fading due to limited supervision, leadership turnover, and insecurity, GPs, which operated for five years with minimal resources, are viewed as resilient and motivated community structures. However, some fear that not all GPs will survive after programme closure due to lack of supervision and security constraints.

Integrating programme tools such as BMET, CVA and Bridge4Voices into CSO practices demonstrates effective institutionalisation. 93% of respondents confirmed that they will maintain these methodologies after project closure, given their continued relevance to advocacy, accountability and resource mobilisation. Several key programme tools have already been incorporated into organisational practices, including BMET (budget monitoring), CVA (community voice and action) and Bridge4Voices (learning & sharing).

A key sustainability mechanism is the Right2Grow Learning Catalogue, an online knowledge-sharing platform designed for the long term. It compiles over 40 learning briefs and training modules from six programme countries, including eight from Burkina Faso. These learning sheets cover: barriers to WASH and nutrition, radio and theatre programmes on the right to food, use of mobile journalism for advocacy, coordination of CSOs, budget monitoring (BMET) as an advocacy tool, "Shift the Power" approaches, and Grow Together sessions on advocacy in unstable contexts. These documents set out important lessons, challenges and good practices relating to topics such as budget monitoring, community advocacy and 'Shift the Power' approaches, ensuring that practical tools and learning resources remain accessible even after the programme has ended.

The perceived sustainability of results is underpinned by several factors. Local ownership is a key driver. GPs in the North and Centre-North have formalised structures, executive boards and resource mobilisation plans, reflecting their strong collective commitment. Capacity building has also played a decisive role, training in advocacy, resource mobilisation and project management has equipped civil society organisations (CSOs) with the skills to continue influencing policy and governance. The institutional integration of nutrition and WASH into local development plans and dedicated budgets is a significant stride towards sustainability, bolstered by formal commitments from local authorities. Networking among CSOs, technical partners and private actors has also paved the way for strategic alliances that can sustain future efforts.

Nevertheless, sustainability is not without risks. High staff turnover within CSOs and local administrations threatens the retention of expertise. Financial viability remains a key concern, as many organisations continue to rely on external support. Some GPs, particularly in the east, lack formal legal status, limiting their access to funding and institutional recognition. Closing the programme without immediate follow-up funding raises questions about the continuity of advocacy activities. However, the ongoing presence of consortium partners such as Action Against Hunger (ACF), Save the Children, The Hunger Project, AMR and RESONUT in Burkina Faso offers opportunities for the activities to continue partially through technical support and the integration of GPs into future initiatives.

7. Cross-cutting (youth, gender, climate)

7.1. Youth

Young people played a central role in programme implementation as animators of community radio, leaders of social accountability campaigns, and facilitators of school hygiene clubs. Through mobile journalism (MoJo), youth increased the visibility of advocacy messages and accelerated behavioural change. Their digital fluency and proximity to rural communities strengthened communication flows and outreach. In several municipalities, young members of Advocacy Groups led awareness campaigns on social rights and citizen monitoring of public services, particularly in Boulssa and Kaya. Nonetheless, youth representation in decision-making and local governance

structures remains limited, particularly in conflict-affected northern regions, where insecurity compounds existing social barriers. Without clear institutional pathways into planning and oversight bodies, their influence risks remaining operational rather than strategic.

7.2. Gender

An initial study of gender and power dynamics informed the development of strategies and training on gender mainstreaming and inclusion. Over time, women's participation in advocacy and leadership roles has increased across all regions. In the north, traditional leaders granted women land use rights. In the centre north, women-led civil society organisations (CSOs) strengthened their leadership and advocacy capacity. In the east, internally displaced women engaged in income-generating gardening activities that diversified diets and improved resilience. Access to microfinance has enabled vulnerable women to pursue economic initiatives, while awareness campaigns have begun to shift community perceptions of women's roles. However, sociocultural norms still limit women's voice in mixed forums and links with vocational or economic empowerment programmes remain underdeveloped, constraining the sustainability of gender gains.

7.3. Climate

As implementation advanced, partners increasingly recognised the interconnectedness of food security, nutrition, WASH, and climate resilience. Adaptive programming emerged across environmentally fragile regions. In the North, reforestation and agroecological initiatives restored degraded land; in the Centre-North, awareness campaigns promoted sustainable water management; and in the East, home gardens and drought-resistant crops diversified diets while conserving natural resources. Advocacy groups integrated environmental protection into nutrition and WASH messaging, illustrating a growing systems approach. The gender study further underscored women's vulnerability to climate shocks and their key role in resource management, leading to land access initiatives and sustainable farming practices. WASH interventions also produced environmental co-benefits by improving water management and sanitation. Despite these achievements, climate adaptation has not yet been systematically embedded within strategic programme planning.

8. Lessons learnt and good practices

8.1. Lessons learnt

Right2Grow has shown that a multisectoral and integrated approach (nutrition, WASH, food security, gender and youth) produces concrete and sustainable results on the ground. Strengthening advocacy groups, supported by training, small grants and innovative tools, has increased their credibility, autonomy and local influence. Collaboration between international and national partners, combined with flexible management and collective learning, has strengthened accountability, promoted local initiatives and created a solid foundation for institutional sustainability and future interventions.

8.2. Good practices

At programme level, adopting a multisectoral approach combining nutrition, food security, WASH, gender and youth proved highly effective. By addressing the immediate needs of communities and the root causes of malnutrition, the programme achieved tangible results, such as improved hygiene practices in schools and women producing enriched porridge using local ingredients. The programme excelled in its ability to adapt to local circumstances, particularly in regions affected by insecurity and population displacement. Transitioning from policy design to practical implementation enabled quicker progress, including improved access to nutrition services and better household food practices.

A key best practice was the programme's strong focus on building local capacity. Civil society organisations (CSOs) received training in budget monitoring, advocacy, governance and community mobilisation, enhancing their legitimacy and influence. The creation and empowerment of inclusive Groupes de Plaidoyer provided spaces for dialogue for women, young people, and community leaders, thereby strengthening social accountability, gender responsiveness, and local governance. Small grants offered to RESONUT and AMR further reinforced organisational capacity, governance systems, and financial management, embodying a 'Shift the Power' approach that promotes the long-term autonomy of local actors.

The use of data and evidence also emerged as a key strength. Drawing on SMART/MICS/DHS surveys and generating real-time budget data (e.g. BMET) improved the precision of advocacy efforts and fostered transparent decision-making. Innovation contributed to programme visibility and ownership: the introduction of inclusive

advocacy groups and the use of mobile journalism elevated community voices and showcased local successes on a national and international scale.

In terms of collaboration, the consortium model proved highly valuable. International partners (e.g. Save the Children, THP and ACF) contributed technical expertise, and national partners (e.g. RESONUT and AMR) provided contextual understanding. This resulted in balanced geographic and thematic coverage. Regular meetings, joint reflection sessions and shared tools promoted flexible and adaptive management, enabling timely adjustments in response to shifting contexts and MTR recommendations.

A strong culture of collective learning emerged through the Learning & Sharing survey, cross-country exchanges and workshops with CSOs and authorities. These mechanisms helped to validate effective practices, encourage the integration of cross-cutting themes (e.g. gender and youth) and reinforce decentralised engagement. Ultimately, collaboration extended beyond delivery to become a mechanism for institutional strengthening, improving accountability practices and laying the foundations for future multisectoral action.

9. Conclusions and recommendations

9.1. Conclusions

- **Conclusion 1: Relevance and local ownership**

Right2Grow demonstrated strong alignment with national priorities in nutrition, food security, WASH, gender and inclusive governance. Its Theory of Change (ToC), co-constructed with local partners, provided a clear strategic framework, linking community dynamics and public policy. Certain dimensions, such as economic resilience, security and private sector involvement, were only integrated in 2024, thus limiting the systemic scope. Notwithstanding this, the ToC retained its relevance and local relevance.

- **Conclusion 2: Results and operational effectiveness**

The programme achieved most of its results, producing tangible changes at the community, institutional and policy levels. The GP strengthened citizen participation, budget transparency and the influence of CSOs in local decision-making. The integrated Nutrition–WASH–Food Security–Gender–Youth approach promoted sustainable behavioural changes and resulted in a decrease in child malnutrition in the intervention areas. The limitations observed relate to the late involvement of the private sector, security constraints and staff turnover.

- **Conclusion 3: Sustainability and local ownership**

CSOs now have robust tools (BMET, CVA, Bridge4Voices, Learning Catalogue, MoJo) and increased institutional recognition, promoting sustainability. However, financial viability remains fragile without post-project funding. Maintaining gains depends on the ability of actors to mobilise local resources, formalise their structures, and maintain technical and institutional alliances.

- **Conclusion 4: Consortium coherence and collective learning**

Complementarity between partners and inter-country learning dynamics amplified the collective impact. The Learning Catalogue and experience-sharing forums have consolidated a community of practice. However, limitations remain in coordination between the global and national levels, the regularity of steering committee meetings, and the strengthening of synergies with certain external partners, notably the Dutch Embassy and the private sector.

9.2. Recommendations for future programming

- **Recommendation 1: Consolidate the programme's institutional and methodological achievements**

Right2Grow has produced a considerable wealth of knowledge, tools and practices (BMET, CVA, Bridge4Voices, learning sheets, MoJo, etc.) that now constitute a collective heritage. It is essential to transform these achievements into public goods that are accessible and usable in the long term.

- **Recommendation 2: Strengthen the sustainability and autonomy of local actors**

One of the major challenges post-Right2Grow concerns the institutional and financial survival of GP and CSOs, whose motivation remains strong but whose resources are limited.

- **Recommendation 3: Maintain the momentum of advocacy and accountability**

Community and institutional advocacy remains at the heart of Right2Grow's achievements. However, the end of funding risks weakening its impact if no follow-up measures are put in place.

- **Recommendation 4: Integrate economic, security and private dimensions into future interventions**
Economic and security challenges were only fully integrated at the end of the programme, limiting the model's ability to anticipate risks and mobilise new actors at the endogenous level.
- **Recommendation 5: Simplify and improve the governance of the multi-stakeholder partnership**
Global-national coordination and the functioning of the steering committee were weak points in the consortium. In the absence of refinancing, it is crucial to consolidate existing alliances to maintain the coherence of the network.
- **Recommendation 6: Promote learning and disseminate the Right2Grow model**
Right2Grow has demonstrated that community advocacy integrated with nutrition, WASH and local governance can produce lasting structural change. This model deserves to be disseminated and adapted to other contexts.
- **Recommendation 7: Amplify and sustain changes in community behaviour in order to strengthen the fight against child malnutrition in the long term**
This involves capitalising on positive practices observed in nutrition, WASH and food, by consolidating existing community mechanisms and disseminating proven approaches in other municipalities.

Annex 4.3 – Ethiopia

1. Description of contexts

Ethiopia faces a deepening nutrition and basic water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) crisis that continues to affect the wellbeing of millions of Ethiopians, particularly, children under the age of five. Despite policy efforts being pushed and growing institutional frameworks aimed to address undernutrition, the scale and persistence of the crisis remain severe. According to the Ministry of Health and WHO (2023), 39% of Ethiopian children under the age of five are stunted and 11% are wasted, while undernutrition contributes to roughly 45% of all under-five deaths nationwide. Disparities throughout the various regions in Ethiopia are stark, ranging from 4% wasting in Addis Ababa to 26% in Afar, while Amhara, Gambella, and Somali regions all exceed 15%. Although initiatives such as the Seqota Declaration (2015-2030) and the Food and Nutrition Policy of Ethiopia have advanced high-level coordination and community-based interventions, undernutrition still persists due to inequitable access to services, poor dietary diversity (only 11% of children aged 6-23 months meet the minimum standard of meal diversity) and recurrent crises that disrupt food systems and service delivery. However, treatment gaps still persist: UNICEF reported in March 2025 that up to 70,000 severely malnourished children risk losing access to ready to use therapeutic food due to funding shortages, resulting in fewer than half of vulnerable children receiving lifesaving treatment.

Recent data indicates that 34.6% of the population, which is around 41.5 million people, experience significant food insecurity, placing Ethiopia in the “serious” category on the 2024 Global Hunger Index. Funding shortfalls have forced the suspension of malnutrition treatment programmes for as many as 650,000 women and children and reported starvation deaths in Tigray and Amhara highlight the gravity of the situation.

Access to WASH is also critically low, further contributing to Ethiopia’s ongoing public health challenges. Only 49.6% of the population have access to basic drinking water, while just 8.9% benefits from basic sanitation facilities. Around 22 million people still practice open defecation and hygiene facilities remain limited, with only 4.8% of the population having access to both soap and water for handwashing. Poor WASH conditions are a key driver of diarrheal disease, which results in more than 25,000 child deaths each year and accounts for 60-80% of communicable illnesses. These conditions are closely linked to the country’s high prevalence of stunting and wasting, reinforcing the intersection between inadequate sanitation, unsafe water, and poor nutritional outcomes.

The broad context for Ethiopia is further complicated by multiple overlapping crises. Ethiopia is currently experiencing one of its most severe hunger emergencies in decades, with over 10 million Ethiopians facing acute food insecurity and an estimated 15.8 million people suffering from acute hunger. Among them, 4.6 million women and children are affected by malnutrition and regional disparities are particularly acute in Somali, Oromia, Tigray, and Afar. Furthermore, conflict, drought, and inflation have compounded these conditions, with the northern conflict resulting in widespread displacement and loss of livelihoods. Between 2020 and 2024, six consecutive dry seasons triggered the worst drought in over 40 years, while violence in Amhara and Oromia ensued, further weakening

governance and social stability within Ethiopia. Additionally, COVID-19 also exacerbated socioeconomic hardships, triggering significant income losses, school closures and deepening poverty among urban households and children.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) play a critical role in advocating for accountability and supporting communities, however, their operating environment and influence remain constrained. Although a revised CSO Proclamation has restored the legal basis for advocacy and human rights work, government oversight, restrictive administrative procedures, and the threat of new legislation continue to limit civic participation. Despite these challenges, CSOs remain essential partners in strengthening local governance and mobilizing communities to address barriers to nutrition and WASH services.

Addressing undernutrition in Ethiopia requires coordinated efforts between government institutions, CSOs, and the private sector. Strengthening collaboration across these actors is essential to improve access to nutrition and WASH, especially, in order to reach the most vulnerable population. Ethiopia has made some progress in committing to policies and community-based efforts to integrate nutrition and WASH into district planning and service delivery. However, persistent inequalities, limited civic space, recurring drought, and conflict continue to threaten these gains. Continued focus on multi-sectoral collaboration, inclusive governance, and resilient systems is therefore critical to achieving equitable and sustainable nutrition outcomes for all children in Ethiopia.

2. Effectiveness

2.1. Community level

Communities in Right2Grow Ethiopia districts showed strong ownership and participation in improving WASH and nutrition services. By 2025, 331 community-led advocacy actions were implemented, which exceeded the target of 202. Additionally, 322 service delivery barriers were resolved through collaboration between citizens, government, and private sector partners. The establishment of 124 Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) groups, which exceeded the target of 84, fostered participatory planning and accountability. These groups led initiatives such as latrine construction, water point rehabilitation, and household gardening, resulting in over 20 villages being declared open-defecation-free and widespread adoption of improved hygiene and nutrition practices. All eight targeted CSOs remained engaged throughout implementation, supporting community mobilization, social accountability and evidence-based advocacy.

Women groups established backyard gardens for child feeding, while Ethiopian youth repaired local water systems, which in turn, reduced the time women spent going to fetch water. Private sector engagement expanded access to affordable WASH and nutrition products, with 50 enterprises supported, exceeding the target of 42. In total, 79 enterprises received technical and entrepreneurial support, helping them produce and supply locally appropriate goods such as liquid soap, poultry, fish and toilet slabs. Communities also influenced 392 government commitments, of which 322 were implemented, resulting in the deployment of health professionals, rehabilitation of water facilities, and construction of gender and disability inclusive sanitation infrastructure such as the accessible restroom at Dinkula Health Centre.

Behavioural changes were also noted within and across various households. Caregivers were increasingly prioritizing home-produced foods and improving hygiene routines, which contributed to better child health and reduced illness. Community advocacy and accountability mechanisms, especially CVA and Accountability Action Taskforces, transformed local service delivery from government driven to co-owned. While community mobilization and service improvements were substantial, the evaluation highlighted risks related to sustaining behavioural change and institutionalizing accountability mechanisms after program closure. Continued attention is needed to ensure equitable inclusion of vulnerable groups, resilience of emerging private sector actors, and stability amid conflict and climate-related disruptions.

2.2. Civil society organisations

Civil society effectiveness strengthened considerably as Ethiopian CSOs evolved from community mobilisers to credible governance actors influencing WASH and nutrition priorities. CSOs had created space for their demands 198 times and led four national and international advocacy campaigns, which resulting in meeting all targets. Through Budget Monitoring and Expenditure Tracking (BMET), CSOs uncovered unspent WASH funds in Amhara, which were redirected to water system rehabilitation. Local advocacy further secured ETB 500,000 for nutrition coordination in Cheha, Habro, Bedeno, and Aneded, and ETB 2 million for Seqota Declaration implementation in Shashogo. CSOs also participated in and influenced government budgeting processes 45 times, meeting Indicator ET.IO.C.1 targets.

Capacity development was extensive with 168 CSOs and CBOs receiving training in budget advocacy and seven CSOs strengthening their lobbying skills. Mutual Capacity Development and Linking & Learning activities embedded adaptive practices, allowing CSOs to refine their strategies, relocating CVA taskforces closer to communities, and improving collaboration with local governments. Inclusive advocacy was prioritized through 77 initiatives promoting women's and vulnerable groups' participation

Coalition influence also expanded. CSOs engaged through the ECSC-SUN and CCRDA WASH & Nutrition Forums, facilitated CVA meetings that improved service delivery, and helped establish the ECSC-SUN Regional Support Platform in Central Ethiopia. The programme also achieved its objective of implementing four integrated nutrition and WASH advocacy campaigns. Several local governments began institutionalizing CVA in nutrition programs, signalling sustained accountability integration.

However, key risks remain, including civic space volatility, administrative restructuring in Oromia and SNNPR, frequent government staff turnover, limited availability of reliable national level data, shifts towards emergency response in conflict areas and uneven uptake of Linking and Learning tools. Nonetheless, R2G's investments in skills, tools (BMET, CVA, Bridge4Voices), and structured engagement have positioned Ethiopian CSOs as influential, technically competent actors driving accountability and systemic change in WASH and nutrition governance.

2.3. Government and decentralised levels

Government and decentralized bodies demonstrated stronger policy alignment, budgeting, and coordination for WASH and nutrition. Through Right2Grow's support, four laws and policies were implemented for sustainable and inclusive development, and 25 Nutrition Coordination Bodies were established or revitalized at woreda, zonal and regional levels. 25 Nutrition Councils and Agencies were supported for the establishment or strengthening of Nutrition Councils and Agencies and 24 learning and coordination events were organized.

Government coordination improved through 26 multisectoral platforms using evidence to support informed decision making, enabling collaboration between health, agriculture, education and WASH departments. Governments committed to allocating 1% of district budgets to nutrition and WASH coordination, generating an average of ETB500,000 per woreda to support services.

At local levels, authorities worked with Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) groups to address 322 service delivery barriers, including rehabilitating water points, deploying health workers, and improving sanitation facilities. However, effectiveness was constrained by staff turnover, administrative restructuring, and data gaps. In conflict-affected areas, focus shifted to emergency response, however, despite these risks, Right2Grow strengthened governance capacity, institutionalized multi-sectoral coordination, and embedded nutrition and WASH priorities into local systems.

2.4. Donors and international development actors

Effectiveness with donors and international actors remained emergent, with limited direct influence on long-term financing for integrated WASH–nutrition efforts. The Right2Grow programme achieved a degree of integration score of 4 out of the targeted 5. Five meetings were organized or attended to discuss lessons learned and best practices on Humanitarian-Development

Right2Grow strengthened visibility and collaboration, through convening multi-actor learning events and national dialogues through ECSC-SUN and CSA-SUN. In 2023, East Hararge Zone Administration established Ethiopia's first NC-HDP-TN core team, and in June 2024, the NC-HDP approach was included in the 73rd East, Central, and Southern Africa Health Ministers Committee (ECSA-HMC) resolution. These platforms fostered policy alignment and raised Ethiopia's profile in regional fora such as the ECSA-HC Best Practice Forum and the AU GIMAC pre-summit. Right2Grow partners, including ACF and MCMDO, secured first-ever funding for NC-HDP-TN programming from Swedish and Norwegian embassies to support food security for 76,000 households across 12 woredas. While momentum has grown, multi-year donor alignment and financing remain limited, hindered by shifting priorities and late-stage engagement.

3. Relevance

3.1. Quality and evolution of the country Theory of Change (ToC)

The Ethiopian ToC was developed through a participatory process, involving consultations with government agencies, civil society partners, and local stakeholders to ensure contextual accuracy. Over the implementation period, it evolved in response to new realities such as regional restructuring, conflict-related disruptions, and

shifting policy priorities. Mid-term and endline reflections confirmed that the ToC remained both valid and operationally useful, serving as a living framework for learning and adaptation.

Revisions to the ToC incorporated lessons learned from the midline evaluation, including a stronger emphasis on gender equality, social inclusion, and private sector engagement to enhance sustainability and scale. The ToC's integrated, multisectoral approach has also proven valuable. While Ethiopia has strong national frameworks, such as the Seqota Declaration and the National Food and Nutrition Policy, the National Nutrition Program II, these have not always translated into effective implementation at local levels. The Right2Grow programme addresses this gap by supporting the establishment and operationalization of multisectoral Food and Nutrition Councils and Technical Committees across administrative levels.

3.2. Alignment of ToC with key national & global issues

The Ethiopia ToC is closely aligned with national priorities and global development frameworks. At the national level, it reinforces Ethiopia's Seqota Declaration (2015–2030), which commits to ending child undernutrition through multi-sectoral collaboration, as well as the National Food and Nutrition Strategy (2021–2030) and the Health Sector Transformation Plan II. It is closely connected to the Food and Nutrition Policy and Ethiopia's 10th National Development Plan, with emphasis on nutrition awareness, WASH, service delivery, coordination, and gender equality. These policy frameworks prioritize decentralized implementation, community participation, and accountability, which are all central tenets of R2G's design. The ToC also reflects Ethiopia's commitment to global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation).

Assumptions within Pathway 1 that communities equipped with knowledge on small, actionable practices would advocate for improved services and adopt healthier behaviours were validated during stakeholder reflections. Tools such as Citizen Voice and Action, Community Score Cards and Budget Monitoring and Expenditure Tracking strengthened community ownership and accountability. Moreover, Right2Grow complements ongoing efforts led by UNICEF, WHO, and the World Bank to operationalize nutrition-sensitive WASH strategies, positioning Ethiopia as a key example of multi-sectoral alignment in practice.

3.3. Responsiveness of program strategies

Right2Grow strategies demonstrated strong responsiveness to Ethiopia's dynamic political, social, and environmental context. The program adapted effectively to regional administrative restructuring, climate-related shocks, and post-conflict recovery needs, maintaining service continuity and stakeholder engagement. When government attention shifted toward humanitarian response, the program strengthened community ownership and resilience through grassroots mobilization, locally led planning, and flexible coordination with new authorities.

Tools such as Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) and Budget Monitoring and Expenditure Tracking (BMET) were instrumental in ensuring responsiveness. Communities successfully lobbied for increased local nutrition budget allocations, with target districts increasing nutrition budgets from 50,000 ETB in 2022 to an average of 500,000 ETB by 2024/25 and allocating 1%–2% administrative budgets for multisectoral coordination. They allowed communities and civil society to provide real-time feedback on service delivery gaps, influencing local planning and national policy responses. District councils in Central Ethiopia and Amhara formally recognized nutrition as a standing agenda item and integrated nutrition into monitoring and supervision tools.

Gender-sensitive and inclusive programming further enhanced the program's relevance, addressing barriers faced by women, youth, and people with disabilities in accessing nutrition and WASH services. Finally, the program's adaptive learning approach, which was supported by Mutual Capacity Development (MCD), Learning Weeks, and Outcome Harvesting had enabled continuous reflection and course correction. By linking insights from local actors to national advocacy platforms, Right2Grow sustained coherence between on-the-ground realities and strategic policy goals.

4. Coherence

4.1. Internal coherence

Internally, Right2Grow Ethiopia exhibited high levels of coordination, complementarity, and consistency among consortium members. The country coalition worked through a defined governance system that included a Steering Committee composed of CEOs of all prime and local partners, a Program Management Unit (PMU), and multiple Technical Working Groups covering WASH, nutrition, advocacy, Learning & Linking (L&L), and Mutual Capacity Development (MCD). The partners, which consists of Action Against Hunger, World Vision, Save the Children, and

their local affiliates, maintained regular collaboration through joint planning meetings, reflection sessions, and technical working groups.

This internal alignment was strengthened by the use of shared tools such as Citizen Voice and Action (CVA), Budget Monitoring and Expenditure Tracking (BMET), and Outcome Harvesting, which ensured a unified approach across all program pathways. Country representatives also actively participated in global coordination platforms, including the Global Coordination Committee and Global Program Management Unit, through monthly and quarterly calls. Ethiopia-based staff contributed to global technical groups for MEAL, advocacy and communication (Bridge for Voice), finance, and Linking & Learning. Internal coherence also extended to vertical integration, national-level advocacy informed by local evidence and local action supported by national coordination platforms.

4.2. External coherence

Externally, Right2Grow Ethiopia maintained strategic alignment with government, civil society, and donor frameworks. The program worked closely with the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI), ECSC-SUN, and the CCRDA WASH and Nutrition Forums. At the federal and regional levels, partnerships included the Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), and regional sector bureaus for Health, Agriculture, and TVET, with involvement in the National Steering Committee of the Nutrition Coordination Platform. At the local level, Right2Grow supported multi-sectoral coordination platforms in 26 woredas, which enhanced collaboration between the health, agriculture, and education sectors. Academic institutions and media agencies supported evidence generation and public awareness on WASH and nutrition, and private sector actors helped promote sustainable and affordable access to WASH and nutrition supplies. This alignment ensured that interventions complemented ongoing government initiatives such as the Seqota Declaration and the National Food and Nutrition Strategy (2021–2030).

The program's participation in regional and global platforms, including the ECSA-HC Best Practice Forum and African Union GIMAC Pre-Summit, further amplified coherence with global efforts to tackle malnutrition and promote integrated WASH-nutrition governance. Collaboration with development partners, UN agencies, the African Union, and the Embassy of the Netherlands strengthened accountability, strategic alignment, and unified advocacy efforts at national and regional levels. However, coordination with international donors remained limited.

5. Impact

The Right2Grow Ethiopia program has made a clear and positive impact on child nutrition, health, and growth, while also strengthening collaboration and accountability among key decision-makers. Its integrated, community-driven model successfully addressed the root causes of undernutrition by combining improvements in WASH, nutrition, and governance.

At the community level, Right2Grow fostered widespread behavioural change and ownership over health and nutrition practices. Communities constructed household latrines, rehabilitated water points, and improved hygiene awareness, leading to significant reductions in open defecation and better sanitation outcomes. Household and school-based gardening, poultry, and dairy activities enhanced dietary diversity, contributing to measurable improvements in child growth and resilience. The involvement of private sector partners made essential WASH and nutrition products more accessible and affordable, further strengthening self-reliance.

Endline consultations confirmed a transformation in community awareness, parents are now able to identify signs of undernutrition and take preventive measures. Community participants reported they now “advise families” and can “easily spot malnourished children in the community” due to improved knowledge and practices. Health professionals in program districts also reported a steady decline in child undernutrition admissions since the project's implementation, highlighting its contribution to improved health outcomes.

At the institutional level, Right2Grow's support to CSOs proved pivotal. Through capacity building, peer learning, and adaptive management, CSOs evolved into credible advocates influencing government planning, budgeting, and coordination for child nutrition. Over 62% of CSOs benefited from targeted training in advocacy, budget monitoring, and evidence-based decision-making, enabling them to institutionalize tools like Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) and Budget Monitoring and Expenditure Tracking (BMET). These efforts contributed to the establishment of nutrition councils at various levels and co-developed joint action plans with local government partners. Mutual Capacity Development (MCD) assessments confirmed improvements in technical and organizational capacities, with 92% of CSOs confident in applying newly learned tools and skills.

6. Sustainability

The Right2Grow Ethiopia program has laid a solid foundation for the sustainability of nutrition and WASH outcomes by embedding accountability tools, strengthening institutional capacity, and promoting community ownership. Its design prioritized long-term systems change rather than short-term service delivery, ensuring that improvements in governance, behaviour, and service access continue beyond the program's lifecycle.

At the community level, sustainability is supported through deep-rooted behavioural and social change. The integration of Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) mechanisms and Budget Monitoring and Expenditure Tracking (BMET) processes has institutionalized community participation in local planning, budget allocation, and monitoring. Community members reported that they will continue to “raise our voices and demand better services” and apply these approaches beyond WASH and nutrition. Communities now demonstrate strong ownership of WASH and nutrition services, with CVA Task Forces continuing to function independently and maintain regular dialogue with local governments. Many villages have sustained their open-defecation-free status, continued household gardening, and kept improved hygiene practices without external support.

At the institutional level, the program has reinforced the capacity of both CSOs and local government bodies. CSOs report increased confidence and technical capability in facilitating social accountability and advocacy, with 92% confirming their ability to apply Right2Grow tools post-program. These organizations have integrated CVA, BMET, and Bridge4Voices into their standard operational frameworks, making them part of Ethiopia's local development ecosystem. In parallel, local governments have institutionalized multi-sectoral nutrition coordination platforms, ensuring the inclusion of WASH and nutrition in district development plans and budgets.

Sustainability is further enhanced through private sector engagement. By supporting 79 enterprises to deliver affordable WASH and nutrition products, Right2Grow created self-sustaining market mechanisms that reduce dependency on donor funding. This approach has generated income opportunities for women and youth, while also securing local supply chains for essential goods.

However, the evaluation highlights several challenges to long-term sustainability. These include high government staff turnover, limited domestic financing for social accountability, and restricted civic space that may affect CSO operations. Additionally, regional restructuring and conflict have disrupted coordination mechanisms in some areas, requiring renewed engagement with newly formed administrations.

7. Cross-cutting (youth, gender, climate)

7.1. Youth

Youth played a pivotal role as advocates and innovators in nutrition and WASH improvements. Youth groups led initiatives such as rehabilitating community water points in Delanta woreda, improving access to clean water and reducing women's workloads. Through training and enterprise support, many young people entered WASH and nutrition-related businesses, producing items like soap and toilet slabs.

7.2. Gender

Gender inclusion was central to Right2Grow Ethiopia, with program outreach achieving 23% participation of women. Women actively participated in community planning, advocacy, and service monitoring, strengthening accountability and shifting traditional gender norms. The program guaranteed 50% participation of women and girls in community meetings by addressing barriers before meetings and training sessions. The program also encouraged men's involvement in childcare and nutrition, promoting more equitable household decision-making. While gender sensitivity was well integrated in activities, the evaluation noted a need for stronger measurement of gender-transformative outcomes across indicators.

7.3. Climate

The program integrated climate-sensitive approaches to address drought, water scarcity, and food insecurity. It promoted climate-resilient agriculture, sustainable water management, and local food production through household and school gardens. Training for communities and government actors improved local adaptation and planning, linking climate resilience with nutrition and WASH outcomes.

8. Lessons Learnt and Good Practices

8.1. Lessons learnt

A key lesson is that community-led and adaptive approaches, such as Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) and Accountability Action Task Forces (AATF) are central to achieving lasting behavioural and systemic change. These approaches foster ownership, strengthen accountability, and improve service delivery by directly linking citizens, CSOs, and government actors in joint planning and monitoring.

Another major lesson concerns the power of multisectoral coordination. Integrating WASH, nutrition, and governance across institutional levels has proven critical to tackling child undernutrition effectively. The program demonstrated that inclusive coordination platforms, especially when involving the private sector, can drive innovation and ensure service continuity even in fragile settings.

The evaluation also highlighted that intentional learning systems, such as the Linking & Learning (L&L) and Mutual Capacity Development (MCD) frameworks, significantly strengthen program adaptability. When embedded in planning and review cycles, these mechanisms enable rapid responses to emerging challenges, such as regional restructuring or staff turnover, and reinforce a culture of continuous improvement.

However, challenges underscored the need for consistent advocacy, coherence across consortium partners and stronger knowledge management systems. While tools like Bridge4Voices helped unify messaging, uneven adoption reduced strategic alignment. The lesson is that harmonised advocacy frameworks and streamlined data-sharing systems are essential to sustaining influence at scale.

8.2. Good practices

Several good practices emerged as replicable models for future programming. First, the integration of CVA and BMET at both community and government levels proved transformative. These tools enabled communities to track budgets, identify gaps, and hold duty-bearers accountable. The emergence of “demanding communities,” who are local populations who are not only aware of their rights but are also equipped and motivated to hold service providers and decision-makers accountable.

Second, the program’s adaptive knowledge-sharing culture was a standout success. Practices such as learning review sessions, peer-to-peer exchanges, and Learning Week fostered collaboration, cross-country learning, and evidence-driven decision-making. This participatory reflection process allowed partners to refine implementation strategies and promote institutional learning.

Another best practice was the engagement of the private sector to deliver affordable WASH and nutrition products. By building entrepreneurial capacity and creating local market incentives, the program improved service access while contributing to livelihood generation, especially for youth and women.

Finally, Right2Grow Ethiopia’s focus on inclusivity and gender sensitivity, ensuring 48% representation of women and youth in CVA task forces, contributed to equitable progress. This participatory model strengthened community voice, improved local accountability, and ensured that interventions reached vulnerable and marginalized populations.

9. Conclusions and recommendations

9.1. Conclusions

The Right2Grow (Right2Grow) Ethiopia program has made a significant contribution to addressing the complex and interconnected challenges of undernutrition, limited WASH services, and weak governance structures in a context marked by conflict, poverty, and restricted civic space. Over its five-year implementation period, Right2Grow has effectively demonstrated that a community-driven, multi-sectoral, and advocacy-based approach can yield meaningful and sustainable results. By empowering citizens, strengthening civil society, and fostering inclusive governance, the program has helped communities articulate their priorities, hold duty-bearers accountable, and directly influence service improvements in water, sanitation, hygiene, and nutrition. Through tools like CVA and BMET, over 300 advocacy actions have led to concrete service enhancements, while the institutionalization of nutrition councils and increased public budget commitments at the district level reflect systemic progress.

Importantly, the program’s success rests not only on its technical interventions but also on the strength of its partnerships and adaptive management. The Right2Grow program learning and linking and mutual capacity development catalysed a strategic shift from fragmented to intentional, evidence-driven learning, reinforced through

improved documentation, real-time adaptation, and strengthened collaboration. These outcomes have positioned Ethiopian CSOs as more resilient, capable, and effective actors in governance, nutrition, and WASH.

The Right2Grow coalition comprising international NGOs, local CSOs, and government actors has built a coherent, participatory structure that integrates local realities with global strategies. Strategic collaboration with ministries, academia, private sector actors, and development partners has expanded the program's reach and policy influence. By aligning with national initiatives like the Seqota Declaration and pioneering efforts within the Nutrition-centred HDP Nexus, Right2Grow has laid a foundation for long-term impact. Despite the challenges posed by Ethiopia's volatile operating environment, the program has proven to be resilient, context-responsive, and a model for locally led development. As Right2Grow concludes, its legacy is one of empowered communities, strengthened governance, and a scalable framework for tackling undernutrition and WASH service gaps in a sustainable, inclusive manner.

9.2. Recommendations for future programming

- **Recommendation 1: Adapting the Program's Theory of Change to Evolving Development Trends**

The current Theory of Change (ToC) remains relevant and well-aligned with national priorities while also responding to global development agendas. However, to further enhance its effectiveness and further proof its impact, it is recommended that in the future program the ToC be updated to better reflect emerging global and country-specific priorities. There is significant potential to integrate cross-cutting themes such as climate resilience, food systems transformation, and digital innovation, which are increasingly critical to sustainable development outcomes.

This enhancement could involve promoting climate-smart and drought-resistant agriculture to safeguard nutrition in the face of climate variability and strengthening nutrition-sensitive value chains to improve food accessibility, affordability, and rural livelihoods. Additionally, embracing digital tools and platforms can support real-time service monitoring, expand access to nutrition and WASH education, and facilitate broader community engagement.

By embedding these dimensions into the ToC, the program will not only amplify its impact and sustainability but also ensure its continued relevance in an evolving development landscape, positioning it as a forward-looking model that adapts to changing needs and global trends.

- **Recommendation 2: Strengthening WASH and Nutrition Outcomes in Fragile Contexts through Adaptive Programming**

The programme has achieved notable improvements in WASH and nutrition services by promoting community-led action plans and strengthening government accountability through community advocacy via the CVA approach. These efforts have led to the enhancement of key infrastructure and service delivery. However, ongoing humanitarian crises particularly in conflict-affected areas like the Amhara Region have significantly disrupted service delivery and reprioritized both community and government resources away from WASH and nutrition investments. For future programming, it is strongly recommended to integrate contingency funding mechanisms in the program adaptive management strategies, to ensure continuity and resilience of WASH and nutrition services in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

- **Recommendation 3: Strengthen Government Systems for Sustainability**

The program has effectively enhanced the capacity of government actors at various levels, laying a strong foundation for sustainable service delivery. To ensure these gains are preserved despite challenges such as staff turnover and limited institutional memory, it is recommended to establish permanent knowledge-sharing platforms and structured mentorship programs. These mechanisms will help embed the multi-sectoral approach to WASH and Nutrition within government systems and ensure its continuity across leadership transitions.

Additionally, sustained advocacy and capacity-building efforts alongside support for legal frameworks are essential to secure long-term government commitment, particularly in areas like nutrition-sensitive budgeting. By institutionalizing these practices, government ownership and leadership can be further strengthened.

- **Recommendation 4: Foster Sustainable Private Sector Engagement**

The involvement of the private sector has played a valuable role in enhancing access to affordable WASH and Nutrition products and services. To build on this progress, it is essential to advocate for stronger support from local governments to create an enabling environment for private enterprises. This includes providing dedicated production spaces, shaded market areas, offering low-interest loans, extending tax incentives, and promoting

Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models. These measures will help sustain existing businesses and attract new private sector actors to invest in WASH and nutrition-related ventures. This will enhance their ability to deliver quality products and services while ensuring financial viability. Strengthening private sector engagement in this way positions them as long-term, reliable partners in achieving national development goals, particularly in improving community health and well-being.

- **Recommendation 5: Enhance CSO Advocacy and Policy Engagement**

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have taken meaningful steps toward engaging in advocacy and rights-based development. However, there is further opportunity to deepen their understanding and influence, especially in navigating civic space, engaging with national policies, and integrating WASH and Nutrition into broader advocacy agendas.

To advance these gains, future programming should prioritize targeted capacity-building initiatives that strengthen CSOs' strategic planning, policy literacy, and coordination. Supporting stronger networks and platforms will foster collaboration and shared learning, while promoting localization ensures that advocacy remains relevant and impactful at the grassroots level.

- **Recommendation 6: Expand and Deepen Community-Level Reach**

The Right2Grow program has successfully raised awareness and shifted community attitudes toward improved WASH and nutrition practices in selected villages. To scale these impacts and ensure they take root more widely, it is recommended to expand the geographic scope of community-level interventions while also strengthening the capacity of local governments to support these efforts.

A strategic combination of facility-based and community-based interventions will enhance both access to services and community uptake of positive behaviours. This expansion will allow the program to reach underserved populations, ensuring that the benefits of improved WASH and nutrition extend to all children and families in need.

- **Recommendation 7: Deepen and Sustain Behavioural Change**

The Right2Grow program has initiated encouraging behavioural shifts in nutrition practices, growth monitoring, and nutrition-sensitive agriculture. These changes have laid important groundwork, but transformative, lasting behavioural change requires sustained investment.

To move from awareness to action, the program should adopt a targeted behavioural change communication strategy, focusing specifically on women, male caregivers, and families of children under five. Tailored messaging, community-led visioning exercises, and the use of relatable success stories can make these behaviours more meaningful and habitual.

Ongoing community engagement and information-sharing aligned with cultural norms and family dynamics will be key to embedding these practices into daily life and ensuring long-term impact. Empowering community members as change agents will further reinforce sustainability.

- **Recommendation 8: Gender-Transformative Programming Enhances Equity and Inclusion**

The development and implementation of an independent Gender-Transformative Programming Toolkit along with community dialogues focused on gender norms is crucial to further strengthened the program's ability to mainstream gender considerations effectively. This approach not only promotes transformative masculinity but also positions gender equality as a core driver of improved health and nutrition outcomes. This experience reinforces that deliberate and structured gender-transformative programming toolkits and strategies are essential for creating lasting change in both community behaviours and institutional practices.

- **Recommendation 9: Optimizing Partnership Synergy and Inclusivity**

The Right2Grow Ethiopia partnership demonstrates a strong and adaptive collaboration, with high knowledge uptake and practical integration among consortium members. While the program has successfully fostered continuity and deep engagement, particularly through multi-level advocacy, there are areas for strategic improvement. The operationalization of adaptive management principles should be prioritized to ensure consistent application across all partners. The positive localization ratings and strong post-program sustainability prospects suggest that deepening country-level ownership will support long-term impact. Furthermore, aligning more strategically with external stakeholders, such as the Dutch MoFA and embassies, can enhance visibility and coherence, contributing to the overall success of the partnership.

Annex 4.4. – Mali

1. Description of context

Mali's Right2Grow programme operates in a fragile but reform-oriented context marked by political transition, insecurity and high levels of undernutrition and WASH deprivation. Since the 2020 coup and the “rectification” phase launched in May 2021, Mali has undergone major security, political, economic and humanitarian shifts, including the formation of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) and withdrawal from ECOWAS. Political instability has also delayed the validation of key national WASH instruments, including the National Water Policy (PNE), National Sanitation Policy (PNA) and implementation of the revised “Water Code” (2017 and 2023). Insecurity, inter-communal violence and population displacement in areas such as Kolokani, Koulikoro, Koutiala and Sikasso have undermined social protection and food and nutrition security and restricted access for project teams in some communes.

Humanitarian indicators remain worrying: acute global malnutrition affects 11.6% of children (2.2% severe), underweight prevalence stands at 21.1% (5.5% severe), and stunting affects 24.8% of children (7.5% severe), with regions such as Kayes and Koulikoro in an “alert” situation. At the national level, access to drinking water was 71.9% in 2022 and 72.1% in 2023, but only 67.8% in rural areas versus 82.8% in urban areas. Sanitation access has stagnated at around 45% since 2019 and only 17% of Mali citizens have access to handwashing facilities with soap and water.

Despite progress in reducing child malnutrition globally, Mali continues to record some of the highest rates of child malnutrition and food insecurity. An estimated 1.48 million children under five were projected to suffer from acute malnutrition between June 2022 and May 2023, while nutrition spending remains very low (around 0.4% of the public administration budget and less than 0.1% of the health budget). In parallel, WASH access is uneven: around 83% of the population use drinking water from an improved source (72% in rural areas and 96% in urban areas), but about 60% lack safely managed sanitation and only 17% have access to handwashing facilities with soap and water. The WASH sector receives roughly 2.62% of the national budget, below levels recommended by regional commitments and continues to face major financing, governance and coordination challenges.

The combination of terrorism-driven insecurity and COVID-19 has increased public expenditure pressures, risking reduced allocations to key social sectors including nutrition and WASH and may continue until the end of the programme due to fiscal prioritisation toward military and security spending. Evidence cited in the country report indicates that every €1 (or £1 equivalent) invested in undernutrition yields €16–€20 in economic returns.

Against this backdrop, the Malian government and partners have made nutrition and WASH a national priority, evidenced by accession to the SUN Movement (2013), adoption of multiple policy and institutional instruments, and recent constitutional reforms. The 23 July 2023 constitution explicitly incorporates the right to food and water, while a multisectoral nutrition action plan and local development plans (PDESCs) now include nutrition chapters and related budget lines. However, security pressures and COVID-19 have increased fiscal stress and military spending, risking reduced allocations to key social sectors. It is within this constrained but opportunity-rich environment that Right2Grow positions its advocacy and systems-strengthening work.

In Mali, Right2Grow is a strategic partnership between three international organisations (Action Against Hunger–Spain, World Vision International and CEGAA) and national, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Power of Voices, €4.75 million, 2021–2025). The programme collaborates with communities, grassroots community organisations and CSOs, with local organisations playing a central role in designing context-appropriate solutions and ensuring sustainability. It focuses on two main sectors: Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH) and Food and Nutritional Security (FNS). It integrates four cross-cutting themes: gender equality and inclusion; ownership by local organisations; adaptive and innovative approaches; and consideration of COVID-19 impacts. State partners include the National Directorate of Hydraulics, the Nutrition Coordination Unit, sectoral planning/statistics units, the Directorate-General for Local Authorities, and WASH and nutrition journalists' and parliamentary networks.

As an advocacy programme, Right2Grow seeks to ensure that all children under five are well nourished and that no one is denied access to basic WASH services by driving mindset and behaviour change from household to state level. The country Theory of Change (ToC) rests on four pathways: community mobilisation; strengthening CSOs; engaging public authorities; and mobilising international development actors. It aims to bridge the gap between promising national policies and local realities by enabling actors to “speak a common language”, build and share evidence, and act in a coordinated, multisectoral, gender-responsive and inclusive way through people-centred

and community-led approaches. In doing so, it also seeks to open civic space, seen as essential for achieving the SDGs and for every child to reach their full potential.

The mid-term evaluation used a participatory, utilisation-focused approach involving national and local stakeholders through brainstorming sessions, focus groups and key informant interviews. Fieldwork covered rural communes in Nonsombougou and Tienfala (Koulikoro), Hawa Dembaya (Kayes) and the urban communes of Sikasso and Koutiala, alongside a national-level reflection and 13 individual interviews. Findings indicate that the programme is strongly relevant to national policies on WASH and food and nutrition security and to community-identified needs for basic services and improved child nutrition, particularly in a context of limited state and local authority resources.

On effectiveness and impact, the evaluation highlights improved access to WASH and food security through new water and sanitation infrastructure and income-generating activities, as well as notable policy gains such as the constitutional recognition of the rights to food and water, validation of the multisectoral nutrition action plan, integration of nutrition into PDESCs and increased budget allocations for nutrition in administrative accounts. Mutual Capacity Development (MCD) emerges as a catalyst for sustainable change, having strengthened technical skills, advocacy strategies, organisational systems, collaboration and ownership among partners. Progress is differentiated across outcomes, with strong capacity under Outcome 1, solid advances in advocacy (Outcome 2), mixed progress on WASH–nutrition integration and legislative engagement (Outcome 3), and persistent gaps under Outcome 4. Most respondents (84%) judged MCD activities to be well adapted to their needs and local realities.

Sustainability is supported by deliberate strategies: community engagement and ownership, governance-focused capacity building, efforts to mobilise endogenous financial resources, and alliances between CSOs and grassroots organisations that combine local realities with technical advocacy skills. Mali's decentralisation framework and regulatory texts encouraging citizen participation offer an enabling environment for local governance and civil society influence, even as security and fiscal pressures persist. Programme coherence and partnership have been reinforced by early and sustained collaboration between NGOs, local institutions and communities, transparent communication, and adaptability to local needs, factors that have underpinned effectiveness and change.

Lessons from the evaluation stress the importance of targeted training and awareness-raising (including support for CSO performance systems, M&E plans and advocacy strategies), integration of tools such as CVA and BMET, and South–South exchanges and learning platforms. At the same time, limitations are noted in the capacity of Citizen Monitoring Committees (CVCs) to track budgets, the lack of specific organisational-development funding and the need for basic organisational support (office equipment, small grants, staff development) for CSOs. Recommendations emphasise sustaining gains through continued multi-stakeholder commitment; reinforcing advocacy with targeted investment (especially livelihoods); expanding the Right2Grow model to all 815 communes; mobilising endogenous financing for citizen monitoring; strengthening decentralisation literacy and budget-preparation skills among local actors; appointing and training local budget-analysis focal points; and deepening links between local advocacy and national/donor platforms.

2. Effectiveness

2.1. Community Level

The evaluation shows that Right2Grow has driven substantial improvements in nutrition, WASH practices and community awareness across targeted municipalities in Mali. Households reported stronger knowledge of food security, child nutrition, hygiene, water and sanitation, reflecting the programme's success in shifting behaviours and strengthening local capacities. Advocacy efforts further reinforced these changes by promoting policy attention and creating an enabling environment for healthy nutrition and hygiene practices.

Across the 24 municipalities, communities demonstrated tangible progress and growing ownership. More than 10 tonnes of food were mobilised locally for nutritional demonstrations, cereal banks were established to improve access to low-cost food, and two school canteens were launched to promote nutrition education. Sixty women's groups began processing local products, supported by trained agri-food trainers, while agroforestry initiatives introduced over 3,000 nutrition-beneficial plants. Twenty-seven Village Savings and Credit Associations strengthened household resilience and supported small-scale economic activity. A women's network was also created to encourage resource generation, and the BESEYA digital platform expanded nutrition and WASH awareness.

Community-level evidence indicates improved adoption of good nutrition and WASH practices, greater access to essential services and early signs of sustainable behaviour change. Advocacy by community monitoring committees yielded concrete results, such as the installation of a new water point in M'Pessoba.

Municipal governments increasingly reflected nutrition in local planning and budgets, with allocations for nutrition demonstration activities ranging from 100,000 to 850,000 CFA across nine municipalities. Nutrition was added to the PDESCs of fifteen municipalities, and increased mobilisation of local development taxes enabled new investments in nutrition. Additionally, nutrition is now included in the Social, Economic and Cultural Development Programme (PDESC) of 15 municipalities.

However, some barriers persist. The absence of a certification system for locally processed products limits women's groups from accessing broader markets, constraining economic empowerment and sustainability. Despite these gaps, community testimonies, improved budgeting for nutrition, and growing municipal engagement collectively demonstrate that Right2Grow's strategies, specifically, community mobilisation, capacity strengthening, and locally led advocacy have made meaningful and increasingly locally owned contributions to nutrition and WASH outcomes.

2.2. Civil society

Right2Grow has strengthened civil society organisations (CSOs) in Mali, improving their ability to advocate, influence policy, and participate meaningfully in nutrition and WASH governance. At both national and local levels, CSOs such as OMAES (SUN-OSC), CN-CIEPA, AJCAD, GSB and Citizen Monitoring Committees (CMCs/CVCs) demonstrated improved strategic planning, advocacy skills, communication and coalition-building. The programme supported the implementation of organisational action plans, strengthened thematic expertise and enhanced CSO visibility in policy processes. Journalist networks and private agri-food actors also benefited through support for product preservation, marketing and awareness campaigns promoting high-nutritional-value foods.

Strategic alliances between CSOs and community-based organisations increased the relevance and responsiveness of advocacy efforts, allowing community demands to be channelled more effectively through the CVCs. However, significant gaps remain: many CVCs have limited understanding of the budget cycle, reducing their ability to monitor budget execution; local organisations still struggle with financial sustainability, staff capacity, infrastructure limitations and gender disparities in leadership; and performance and learning systems remain underdeveloped.

The Learning & Sharing (L&S) approach has been a major achievement. All surveyed partners reported improvements in documenting lessons, sharing them systematically, and applying them to adapt activities, inform partners, strengthen advocacy, and improve working methods. In Mali, 100% of respondents to the Learning & Sharing evaluation said that documenting activities (including good practices, challenges and recommendations) helped improve their work and avoid repeated mistake and 100% reported that learning sharing had become more intentional and systematic since the start of the programme. Learning sheets, structured exchanges, cross-country workshops, and new tools such as Outcome Harvesting and BMET helped institutionalise a culture of continuous reflection and adaptation. The approach has also fostered stronger teamwork, improved resource allocation and more coherent partnership practices across organisations.

CSO testimonies point to concrete advances in accountability and governance. In Diomaténé, local advocacy secured a dedicated nutrition budget line in the municipal development plan, monitored by the CVC. CSOs engaged in budget orientation sessions, facilitated citizen–government dialogue and supported national advocacy on nutrition budgeting and WASH access (e.g., CN-CIEPA). AJCAD's "citizen cafés" further expanded civic participation and awareness on democracy, rights and social issues.

2.3. Government and decentralized entities

Government ministries and decentralised authorities played an active role in the Right2Grow programme, contributing to strong ownership and policy alignment. Senior officials noted that programme interventions complemented national priorities, including the constitutionalising of the right to food and water (2023), updates to the Water Code, the national water and sanitation policy, adoption of the multisectoral nutrition action plan, and integration of nutrition into PDESCs and municipal budgets. The Nutrition Coordination Unit, Directorate General of Health and other key ministries were directly involved in implementation and described Right2Grow as aligned with national needs to strengthen policies and budgets. However, authorities highlighted the need for strengthened capacity in resource mobilisation and financial autonomy to ensure long-term sustainability.

The programme significantly strengthened government capacity in monitoring, planning, and adaptive management. National focal points in MEAL, M&E, advocacy, and communication improved their skills in documentation, learning, and evidence use, producing nine learning sheets that are now being used to refine activities, avoid repeated mistakes, and guide replication. This has contributed to a more systematic, data-driven culture among technical services. Government stakeholders confirmed that learning processes encouraged continuous improvement and greater accountability.

Operational challenges nonetheless emerged. Duplication of activities between ACF and WV, fragmented parliamentary networks (separate WASH and Nutrition groups), and insufficient strategic alignment underscored the need for more harmonised planning and clearer coordination structures. While regular meetings, shared ToRs and national review sessions improved coherence in 2024, partners agreed that communication could still be more fluid to avoid inefficiencies and overlap.

At decentralised levels, authorities reported tangible improvements linked to programme strategies: rehabilitation of water points, lower water access costs, improved hygiene infrastructure and strengthened waste management. Citizen Monitoring Committees (CVCs) played a central role in follow-up and advocacy, contributing to increased municipal investment in nutrition, including budget lines ranging from 100,000 to 850,000 CFA francs, integration of nutrition chapters in PDESCs, and mobilisation of local revenue (e.g., a 24% increase in Marintoumania). However, limited local capacity in budget analysis remains a key barrier, as most technical analyses were conducted by national actors rather than municipalities or third-level CSOs.

Strategic collaboration with the SUN-OSC network (OMAES), journalist networks (WASH and nutrition), parliamentary networks, technical services, AMM and RJEPA strengthened multisectoral coordination and advocacy reach. These alliances contributed to high-level achievements, including advocating for the right to food and water in the constitution, operationalisation studies in 2024 and revitalisation of multisector governance platforms (CLOCSAD/COAOCSD). At local levels, CSO advocacy led to new water sources, improved municipal planning, strengthened accountability spaces and greater prioritisation of nutrition and WASH issues.

Despite these successes, structural limitations persist, weak local ownership of budget analysis, insufficient municipal capacity, and national fiscal constraints prevented progress towards the target of allocating 0.9% of the national budget to nutrition. While municipalities increasingly recognise nutrition as a priority, current allocations remain far below the recommended 10%.

Taken together, the programme strengthened government ownership, enhanced coordination, and embedded nutrition and WASH priorities in policies and plans. Yet long-term sustainability will depend on deeper local capacity-building in budget analysis, predictable domestic financing and more harmonised collaboration across consortium and government actors.

2.4. Donors and development actors

Donors and international development actors played a significant role in strengthening the coherence, visibility and policy influence of the Right2Grow programme in Mali. The consortium is well-positioned within key coordination mechanisms, participating actively in the WASH Technical and Financial Partners Group, the WASH and Nutrition clusters alongside UNICEF and the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement. These platforms allowed Right2Grow to align advocacy with national and global priorities and ensure consistent engagement with ministries responsible for WASH and nutrition. Consortium partners also supported the operationalisation of the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, contributing to the development of a national roadmap.

Through the SWA initiative, the programme has engaged in global discussions on climate and WASH, helping prepare a national guide for climate-responsive WASH advocacy. Strong engagement by CN-CIEPA contributed to Mali's participation in the 2022 High-Level Meeting of Water and Sanitation Ministers in Indonesia, marking an important moment for Mali's visibility in global sector dialogue. Donors and partners noted that R2G's on-the-ground results were reinforced by updated policy documents and commitment notes, reflecting tangible influence on national frameworks.

Despite this progress, gaps remain in meeting several strategic WASH sector commitments, particularly around operationalising the triple nexus, regularising SWA processes and ensuring long-term coherence in sector governance. These shortcomings weaken the ability to sustain reforms and align external support with national priorities.

Programme strategies contributed meaningfully to durable policy shifts. The integration of nutrition and WASH into the new constitution, the multisectoral nutrition action plan, PDESCs and municipal budgets demonstrate institutional uptake of the programme's advocacy. Donors emphasised that these changes, coupled with increased state financing, signal growing national ownership. At local level, decentralisation frameworks and regulatory texts created an enabling environment for civil society, allowing CSOs trained by Right2Grow to engage more effectively in policy dialogue, budget monitoring, and community-driven accountability.

3. Relevance

3.1. Quality and evolution of the country ToC

The Right2Grow ToC in Mali is strongly grounded in the country's governance structures and social realities, focusing on mobilising citizens, strengthening civil society and influencing municipal and national decision-making on nutrition and WASH. The approach positions women, youth, people with disabilities and community groups as central actors who analyse local evidence, engage in dialogue with authorities and advocate for improved services, budgets and policies. Continuous emphasis on gender runs through the model, with women supported to participate in budgeting, community monitoring and public dialogue.

The ToC's four pathways: community demand and behaviour change, empowered civil society, government adoption of multisectoral approaches, and coordinated action by donors provide a coherent framework for linking village-level evidence with national advocacy. Campaigns raised awareness of the role of the private sector, climate change and COVID-19 in order to foster responsible and engaged citizens and media outlets are strengthened, motivated and involved to influence behaviour and decisions. National NGOs/CSOs use local evidence for national advocacy and discussions with donors, particularly on the need for multisectoral investments, helping to link local priorities with national policy processes.

The ToC is well aligned with Mali's evolving policy environment, including the constitutionalising of the rights to food and water and the multisectoral nutrition action plan. It reflects national commitments on gender, decentralisation, climate and WASH governance. However, several gaps emerged during implementation. The ToC did not sufficiently anticipate conflict dynamics between local actors, nor did it account for the need to secure endogenous financing to sustain progress. Rising insecurity and the withdrawal of some technical and financial partners further underscored the need for stronger risk-management measures and sustainability strategies.

3.2. Alignment of ToC with key national & global issues

The Right2Grow ToC in Mali is strongly aligned with both national priorities and global development agendas. It was designed using evidence from baseline studies that highlighted limited participation of women and young people in local governance, persistent gender inequalities and structural barriers to social, economic and political inclusion. These findings shaped a ToC centred on empowering marginalised groups, strengthening civic participation, and improving accountability in nutrition and WASH systems.

The ToC aligns closely with the 2023 Constitution, which recognises rights to food, water, health, education and social protection. It also directly supports key SDGs: Zero Hunger (SDG 2), Gender Equality (SDG 5), Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6), and Climate Action (SDG 13). The programme's focus on multisectoral collaboration mirrors Mali's extensive policy architecture, including the Mali Agricultural Orientation Law, the Water Code, the General Code for Local Authorities, the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy, the National Nutrition Policy, the National Gender Policy of Mali, the Agricultural Development Policy of Mali, the National Sanitation Policy, the National Water Policy, and the National Social Protection Policy.

Right2Grow is well positioned within Mali's evolving WASH and nutrition ecosystem. Current reforms, including revisions to the National Water and Sanitation Policies and efforts to unify governance under a single programme, reinforce the relevance of Right2Grow's approach. Coordination structures such as CPS-SEEUDE, TrackFin, GLAAS, and SWA provide mechanisms for alignment, though weak monitoring frameworks and fragmented institutional responsibilities across three ministries pose challenges.

In nutrition, the ToC supports national strategies led by the Ministries of Health and Agriculture. Recent advances such as the integration of WASH into the multisectoral nutrition action plan and high-level political commitments from the 2019 National Nutrition Forum, further validate the programme's emphasis on advocacy, budget monitoring and community-driven demand for services.

3.3. Responsiveness of program strategies

Right2Grow's strategies in Mali are well aligned with national priorities, particularly those outlined in the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy and the National Nutrition Policy, both of which emphasise nutrition-sensitive agriculture, support for vulnerable groups and improved food diversity. The programme's focus on women processors and youth directly complements the mandates of the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and Families and the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Citizen Building,

as it strengthens livelihoods, generates income and promotes economic inclusion for groups traditionally left behind.

Programme strategies also responded effectively to national needs around policy strengthening and resource allocation in nutrition and WASH. Advocacy efforts supported the development and implementation of policies, while community-level sanitation activities were fully aligned with national strategies. Communities demonstrated strong ownership of these approaches, organising sanitation days and regularly monitoring their environments, indicating that programme methods were not only relevant but well received.

4. Coherence

4.1. Internal coherence

The evaluation shows that the Mali partnership has grown stronger over time but still faces coordination and planning challenges. Partners recognise that their roles are complementary, yet joint planning remains limited, leading to overlaps, delays and uneven implementation. Partners noted that joint annual planning should be finalised by November, with contracts signed in December, to improve resource management and timelines. While experience-sharing workshops, online exchanges and cross-country learning (especially with Burkina Faso on budget monitoring) have improved collective understanding, partners repeatedly stressed the need for earlier and more coordinated annual planning.

Despite these gaps, collaboration within the consortium has improved. Regular review meetings, shared tools and the Learning & Sharing approach have fostered more systematic documentation, adaptation and peer learning. Partners increasingly use lessons learned to adjust activities, improve working methods and strengthen coordination across organisations. Elected officials also noted strong collegiality, inclusion and effective capacity building, which helped unify actors around shared goals.

However, key challenges persist, insufficient communication between stakeholders, inconsistent use of CVC action plans, limited resources for CVCs, delays linked to security and seasonal constraints and weak local ownership of budget analysis. Coordination issues between consortium members such as duplicated activities and fragmented parliamentary networks highlight the need for tighter alignment. Capacity gaps, especially within Citizen Monitoring Committees, further affect sustainability.

Even so, the programme has laid important foundations. CVCs, women's groups, and local authorities increasingly collaborate around advocacy and service monitoring, and communities report greater cohesion and shared responsibility for sustaining gains. Sustainability is emerging but remains fragile, constrained by limited endogenous financing and voluntary CVC participation. Strengthening resource mobilisation, improving communication and fully integrating CVC priorities into planning will be essential to consolidate the internal coherence achieved so far.

4.2. External coherence

External coherence in Mali has been strengthened through active engagement with the Dutch Embassy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and key sector platforms. The Dutch Embassy played a strategic and supportive role, offering technical guidance, visibility and political backing for the programme. A quarterly newsletter was shared with the Embassy to enhance transparency and update on progress and interactions with local decision-makers. Regular sharing of quarterly newsletters, participation in biannual and annual steering committees and involvement in the mid-term evaluation helped maintain transparency and alignment. The Embassy also participated in televised debates on agroecology and nutrition and supported the Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan. Embassy participation in televised debates and policy discussions also amplified nutrition and WASH issues nationally. This consistent, open communication built trust and enabled timely adjustments to programme strategies.

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs contributed through flexible fund management and policy-level alignment, helping the programme stay grounded in the realities of Mali's fragile context. MFA's support reinforced the value of locally rooted advocacy and strengthened the programme's positioning within broader development and governance agendas.

At operational level, alliances between civil society organisations and grassroots community organisations enhanced responsiveness and coherence. Citizen monitoring committees acted as key intermediaries, helping translate community needs into locally viable solutions. These partnerships supported rapid mobilisation around nutrition and WASH issues and improved the programme's ability to link local evidence to national priorities.

5. Impact

Across Mali, the programme has contributed to measurable improvements in children's nutrition, health and daily wellbeing. Households consistently reported better food security and more diverse diets, supported by the work of Citizen Monitoring Committees, CSOs and NGOs. GSANs played a key role in preventing malnutrition through nutritional demonstrations, and women's processing groups donated enriched porridge to health centres to support children in treatment. Communities also described notable progress in hygiene behaviours and access to sanitation facilities, with strong satisfaction across intervention regions. While these gains are meaningful, communities emphasised the need to maintain momentum to secure long-term improvements in child nutrition and WASH outcomes.

Decision-makers highlighted shifts in how local authorities, technical services and partners collaborate to address malnutrition. Elected officials noted improved governance, more regular coordination and stronger social cohesion, with stakeholders working together more systematically and sharing information more openly. Additionally, due to improved budgetary governance, it enabled the municipality of Bafoulabé to rank 7th among the best recipients of the ANICT Special Fund for Conditional Performance Grants, securing 230,221,220 CFA francs in financial support. These behavioural changes have supported more coherent efforts to integrate nutrition into municipal plans, budgets and policy discussions.

Partnerships with the private sector further expanded the programme's impact. Support to women's processing groups improved production, preservation and marketing of nutrient-rich foods, while regional fairs in Koulikoro, Sikasso and Kayes strengthened market access and stimulated local economies. Collaboration with private actors also contributed to national advocacy efforts, including revisions to the Water Code and the National Water and Sanitation Policy. Sustained training and marketing support enabled several groups to reach new national markets, though progress is limited by the lack of certification and weak packaging, which restrict product shelf life and regional export potential.

6. Sustainability

The sustainability of Right2Grow's results in Mali is strengthened by strong local ownership, integration into formal planning processes and a solid legal framework that now recognises the right to food and water. Decentralisation has enabled local authorities, CVCs, women's groups and CSOs to take on more autonomous roles in planning, monitoring and resource mobilisation, while peer-led awareness activities and women's economic initiatives have reinforced behaviour change and created local incentives to maintain progress.

Community awareness-raising by peers, support for GSAN groups and promotion of local products have empowered women, strengthened female entrepreneurship and helped households understand their role in combating malnutrition. Key achievements such as the inclusion of nutrition in PDESCs, dedicated municipal budget lines, rehabilitated water points and reduced water tariffs provide concrete foundations for continuity.

The programme's Learning and Sharing approach further embeds sustainability by equipping partners to document, share and apply lessons without external support. However, risks remain, CVCs rely heavily on voluntary participation, have limited internal financing and technical capacity, and operate in a context of insecurity and poverty that can weaken long-term engagement. Despite these challenges, growing community ownership, stronger municipal commitment, improved civil society capacity and an enabling policy environment collectively suggest that many gains can be maintained and expanded if continued support to local actors and resource mobilisation is prioritised.

7. Cross-cutting (youth, gender, climate)

7.1. Youth

Youth participation strengthened significantly through initiatives that intentionally targeted young people as key actors in awareness and behaviour change. AJCAD played a central role by developing the Beseya digital platform, which became a major channel for youth engagement on nutrition and hygiene. The platform reached more than 133,000 people, over 60% of whom were young, showing strong interest and active participation in programme themes. Young people were also included in training sessions, agricultural fairs and consultation frameworks, helping position them as contributors rather than observers. Virtual campaigns and tailored content further supported youth-led awareness and advocacy, demonstrating the value of digital tools in mobilising large numbers of young people.

7.2. Gender

Women and girls carry most household labour in Mali, limiting time for income generation, decision-making and childcare. To address these inequalities, Right2Grow conducted a gender analysis in 2022 and supported the application of Law 052 (30% quota for women in decision-making bodies). Women's economic empowerment was strengthened through 24 Village Savings and Credit Associations, 82 women's groups and 1,462 women supported in local product processing. Advocacy by CVCs resulted in land allocation to women for market gardening, and six of eight municipalities in Sikasso incorporated gender-sensitive nutrition into new PDSECs. Inclusion measures were also integrated into data collection tools, attendance lists and logistical planning to better support people with disabilities, older persons and other excluded groups.

7.3. Climate

While the climate component is less explicitly detailed, the programme's inclusion work supported climate-resilient access to nutrition and WASH services, especially for vulnerable groups. Adjustments were made in logistics and activity design to accommodate people with disabilities and older people, ensuring universal access to health, water and sanitation infrastructure, an essential aspect of climate-adaptive service delivery. Awareness-raising with local officials and technical services emphasised the need to consider age, disability and other vulnerabilities in service planning, particularly as climate stresses increase pressure on water, sanitation and food systems. By promoting women's access to land for market gardening, supporting local food processing and strengthening community structures such as AVECs, the programme helped reinforce local resilience to climate-related disruptions in food security and livelihoods.

8. Lessons Learnt and Good Practices

8.1. Lessons learnt

The Mali Right2Grow experience shows that collaboration, coordination and political engagement are essential for lasting change. One key lesson is the importance of stronger synergy across partners, while consortium members were complementary and effective, gaps in coordination with political institutions limited the institutional anchoring of nutrition. Advocacy efforts, particularly by OMAES, were constrained by political dynamics, highlighting the need for deeper, more strategic relationships with decision-makers. The programme also demonstrated that Citizen Monitoring Committees (CVCs) are central to sustainability, but they need closer involvement in budget data collection and stronger follow-up mechanisms to track government commitments. Another lesson is the need to continually adapt advocacy approaches, using multisectoral forums such as CAOCSAD and CLOCSAD to share budget findings and influence local authorities. Finally, while CBOs have strong contextual knowledge, limited advocacy skills can restrict their influence, underscoring the importance of targeted capacity strengthening, especially on WASH, nutrition and intersectoral coordination.

8.2 Good practices

Several practices emerged as particularly effective. The complementarity and autonomy of consortium partners helped ensure high-quality implementation, while CVCs' ability to use evidence and submit formal requests to authorities drove concrete improvements in nutrition and WASH. Strong CSO–CBO collaboration enabled rapid, context-appropriate responses to community needs, supported by data-driven advocacy. Capacity-building practices such as training local authorities, decentralised services and community actors proved effective in strengthening multisectoral coordination. Institutional anchoring was reinforced through sustainability planning for CVCs and support for their gradual formalisation. Community mobilisation efforts, including local resource mobilisation, WASH promotion and community inputs for nutritional demonstrations, successfully fostered ownership and engagement. Finally, support to private-sector actors in producing and marketing nutritious foods contributed to economic empowerment while improving access to quality products in intervention areas.

9. Conclusions and recommendations

9.1 Conclusions

The Right2Grow programme has been implemented in three regions, plus the District of Bamako, six circles and 24 municipalities. It is a contribution from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The programme is fully aligned with Mali's national priorities, particularly with regard to the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy in its strategic axis 3 "Orienting agriculture towards nutrition-sensitive agriculture to improve food diversity, increase specific programmes promoting nutrition for pregnant women, children under five, breastfeeding women, the elderly and people with disabilities, and strengthen nutrition

education and food hygiene among women, children and other nutrition stakeholders" , the National Nutrition Policy "small-scale family food production".

At the end of the programme's implementation, the expected results were broadly achieved, despite the many financial, political, institutional and security challenges that arose. Most of the activities planned under the programme were carried out as desired. Notwithstanding the constraints/difficulties, the main evaluation criteria for the programme are satisfactory. The implementation of the programme has had a significant impact on the beneficiaries, namely children, women and young people. It has largely led to observable positive behavioural changes through the consumption of food from their own production, the practice of dietary diversification, hygiene and sanitation in households, the consumption of drinking water, the use of modern preservation and processing techniques, and the abandonment of open defecation through the construction of latrines.

The participatory strategy adopted for the implementation of activities across different categories of beneficiaries (women and men) and actors (NGOs, technical services) during the implementation phases ensured that the beneficiaries took ownership of the programme, which is a guarantee of sustainability. At various levels (consortium, municipalities, beneficiaries), mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that the programme's effects are maintained and generalised after its completion.

The final evaluation of the Learning & Sharing component in Mali highlights significant progress, both in terms of conceptual understanding and the practical integration of learning practices within partner organisations. All respondents reported having strengthened their mastery of learning processes since the start of the programme, and it was observed that learning is now integrated more intentionally, systematically and spontaneously into activities. The integration of Learning and Sharing as a central component of the Right2Grow programme has been an innovative and effective strategy that has significantly improved the implementation and overall impact of the programme in Mali. Mali has demonstrated a notable shift from a static capitalisation process to a more intentional and dynamic approach to learning. This evolution has fostered deeper critical reflection and enabled timely adaptations, leading to more effective interventions.

"To date, I have become a resource person for learning issues in my organisation. I have advised other projects on setting up their learning systems and led learning activities for others in my organisation. This means that I have acquired advanced learning skills through Right2Grow." Respondent to the Learning and Sharing Survey, Mali.

9.2 Recommendations for future programming

Local advocacy is important for change, but it has its limits without concrete investment. Some issues require immediate responses, so it is necessary to combine advocacy with targeted investment actions, especially in livelihoods.

Following the evaluation, the following recommendations have been made, including:

- **Recommendation 1:** Seek alternative sources of endogenous funding for citizen monitoring activities;
- **Recommendation 2:** Extend the Right2Grow model to all 815 municipalities;
- **Recommendation 3:** Strengthen local actors in the cross-cutting budget preparation process (municipal authorities, CVCs, journalists, etc.);
- **Recommendation 4:** Strengthen budget analysis focal points (secretaries-general and/or administrators) at the local government level using the West African methodology;
- **Recommendation 5:** Extend budget analysis and monitoring to other municipalities;
- **Recommendation 6:** Strengthen advocacy efforts through targeted investment actions, particularly in the area of livelihoods, in order to more effectively influence local dynamics and proactively respond to community needs;
- **Recommendation 7:** Strengthen the communication strategy to ensure the effective involvement of programme implementation actors through a coherent communication strategy validated by all actors;
- **Recommendation 8:** Strengthen awareness-raising and support efforts to promote exclusive breastfeeding in all programme intervention areas;

- **Recommendation 9:** Establish adequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at the CVC level to fully assess the results achieved and make timely adjustments, taking into account the collection of monitoring data from stakeholders (town hall, prefect, etc.) and beneficiaries in the CVC monitoring system;
- **Recommendation 10:** Improve access to drinking water and raise awareness of hygiene practices to improve children's health;
- **Recommendation 11:** Provide additional specific support for initiatives led by women;
- **Recommendation 12:** Integrate gender issues into the media component.
- The final learning and sharing evaluation in Mali also identified good practices and raised points for improvement in order to optimise the potential for establishing learning and sharing in future programming:
- **Recommendation 13:** Integrate learning and sharing from the outset of the programme at all levels (local and national), in particular through training, refresher courses and the sharing and use of the learning toolkit, with an emphasis on face-to-face interaction.
- **Recommendation 14:** Encourage and maintain spaces for sharing and exchanging learning between implementing partners, but also between programme countries.
- **Recommendation 15:** Consolidate tools and technical support in order to strengthen ownership of the learning and sharing component as a whole and promote the learning champions identified in the programme as technical references for the continuation of the programme and for other projects.
- **Recommendation 16:** Allocate specific budgets for organisational development from the outset, for example through the small grants programme.
- **Recommendation 17:** Provide essential organisational support, such as basic office equipment, start-up funding for essential operations, and staff development assistance to strengthen CSOs' internal systems.
- **Recommendation 18:** Support CSOs in developing performance systems, monitoring and evaluation plans, and advocacy strategies.
- **Recommendation 19:** Integrate technical tools such as comparative value analysis (CVA) and BMET methodology into organisational processes.
- **Recommendation 20:** Develop South-South exchanges, study visits, and transnational learning platforms to strengthen solidarity, disseminate innovation, and motivate partners.
- **Recommendation 21:** Foster stronger links between local advocacy and national/donor platforms to amplify local voices and influence decision-making.
- **Recommendation 22:** Facilitate multi-stakeholder platforms for coordination.
- **Recommendation 23:** Encourage coalitions and cross-sector collaboration for greater impact.
- **Recommendation 24:** Strengthen mechanisms for collaboration between local governments and CSOs on accountability and planning.

Annex 4.5 – South Sudan

1. Description of contexts

South Sudan continues to face very low access to basic WASH services alongside fragile population data systems. According to the latest UNICEF/WHO JMP 2020 modelled estimates compiled on UNICEF's country data page, only about 40% of the population use at least basic drinking-water services and 14% use at least basic sanitation services. A large share still relies on limited, unimproved, or surface water sources (38%, 11%, and 12%, respectively). These service gaps intersect with high child undernutrition, with modelled estimates showing that 30% of children under five are stunted. The most recent official population count remains the pre-independence 2008 Population and Housing Census, which the National Bureau of Statistics continues to use as the historical baseline for demographic tabulations.

Recurrent climate shocks, especially large-scale flooding and heat waves, now materially shape WASH and nutrition risks in South Sudan. In 2024, floods affected over 1,000,000 people across 42 counties (plus Abyei) and displaced about 271,000, cutting key supply routes and contaminating water sources. In early 2025, extreme heat led the government to close schools nationwide, with reported classroom temperatures exceeding 42–45°C, underscoring rising exposure to heat stress for children and educators. Climate shocks, including flooding and periodic dry spells, are also cited among the principal drivers of acute food insecurity and malnutrition in recent national outlooks. The Government's First National Adaptation Plan (2021–2025) prioritises resilience across sectors including WASH and health, though implementation remains constrained by overlapping crises.

Humanitarian and macroeconomic indicators further highlight the severity of need. From September to November 2024, an estimated 6.3 million people (49% of the population analysed) were in IPC Phase 3+ (Crisis or worse), with 6.1 million projected for December 2024 to March 2025. In the same cycle, around 2.1 million children were expected to suffer acute malnutrition in 2024/25, including 650,000 severe acute malnutrition (SAM) cases. Post-COVID economic stress is reflected in the 91% inflation rate (2024) and new World Bank poverty analysis showing that 98% of South Sudanese lived below the national poverty line in 2025, with extreme poverty affecting over two-thirds and vulnerability to poverty described as “quasi-universal.” Civic space remains repressed (CIVICUS), and the country is rated “Not Free” (score 1/100) by Freedom House, reflecting constraints on civil society engagement in service delivery and accountability.

The National Health Policy (NHP) places strong emphasis on community participation and ownership as prerequisites for equitable service delivery and sustained behaviour change. It prioritises health promotion, citizen engagement and the use of community platforms to improve preventive practices and demand for essential RMNCH, nutrition and WASH services, including IMNCH and ICCM at community level and in primary care facilities. The policy also underscores addressing social and environmental determinants, including safe water and sanitation, as part of a multi-sector agenda for health improvement.

The NHP recognises civil society and community-based organisations as key partners in service delivery, health promotion, and accountability and calls for mechanisms to build their capacity and integrate them into coordinated district-level planning and implementation. It encourages public–private partnerships and collaborative action across sectors.

2. Effectiveness

2.1. Community level

Community participants across Bor County consistently recognised the programme's contribution to improved nutrition, WASH practices and access to services. Women's groups noted better maternal and child nutrition, reflected in increased exclusive breastfeeding, while men highlighted improvements in safe water access and shared household responsibilities. Mother-to-Mother Support Groups described clear gains in child nutrition and reductions in moderate malnutrition, though youth stressed that knowledge gains were not matched by livelihood opportunities.

Communities also reported earlier care-seeking and greater male involvement in childcare and water collection. Differences across sites reflected variations in intervention focus: Pariak showed stronger gender and hygiene shifts, Bor South emphasised WASH improvements, and Baidit demonstrated notable nutrition recovery linked to active M2MSGs. Overall, programme outputs, M2MSG training, new water points and awareness campaigns, translated into improved breastfeeding, diets, hygiene and more equitable gender roles.

Sustainability challenges persisted, especially food insecurity, which limited consistent application of nutrition practices. While ownership of WASH facilities strengthened, long-term functionality remains uncertain. Unintended effects included unmet expectations of continued material support, household tensions related to women's increased participation and youth frustration over limited livelihood prospects.

Despite these constraints, community narratives demonstrated meaningful gains in wellbeing, stronger community ownership and emerging cultural shifts, including increased male engagement and youth leadership. Evidence from engagement activities, such as kitchen gardens, seed saving, norm-change dialogues and mass awareness campaigns further confirmed improved hygiene, dietary diversity, breastfeeding practices and safer water handling across intervention areas.

2.2. Civil society organisations

Civil society organisations reported major gains in visibility, credibility and influence across nutrition and WASH governance structures. CSOs explained that they had moved from passive observers to active contributors, presenting community evidence in county and state forums and engaging confidently in policy dialogue and budget hearings. Several organisations noted that communities trust them more because they “report back and involve them,” improving legitimacy in local planning processes. Capacity strengthening in financial management, reporting, advocacy and budget analysis improved both organisational systems and external engagement, helping CSOs build trust with communities and government actors.

Programme outputs such as advocacy training, mentoring, reporting tools and Linking & Learning activities strengthened coalition building and encouraged evidence-based engagement. CSOs increasingly acted as brokers, channelling specific water, sanitation and nutrition issues to county offices and following up on commitments. Outcome Mapping confirmed positive behavioural shifts, while the Evidence Gap Map highlighted persistent risks, including limited funding, staff turnover and weaker digital capacity among smaller grassroots actors.

Linking & Learning survey findings reinforced these trends. All respondents reported clearer understanding and more intentional use of learning processes, with strong appreciation for cross-learning, documentation, reflection spaces and the learning toolbox. Training uptake was high, though turnover reduced continuity. Respondents valued practical exchanges and requested more frequent, in-person training and cross-country sharing.

Documented examples show CSOs influencing public debate and decision-making, including journalists trained under Right2Grow publishing nutrition and WASH stories that reached national audiences and child-led groups presenting a formal position paper to 45 Members of Parliament calling for increased budget allocations to WASH and nutrition.

Capacity development outcomes varied: larger CSOs reported stronger gains, while smaller CBOs continued to struggle with financial systems, proposal writing and operational resources. Nonetheless, civil society increasingly sees itself as a credible knowledge broker linking community voices to national platforms, with documented examples of engagement influencing county planning, parliamentary debate and media coverage.

2.3. Government and decentralized levels

Government stakeholders at national, state and county levels consistently reported that the programme strengthened their capacity to plan, coordinate and oversee nutrition and WASH. A Key Informant Interview with the Chairperson of the Budget Committee highlighted that parliamentary trainings translated into stronger debates, with legislators now scrutinising budgets and questioning ministries on maternal and child health allocations instead of “accept[ing] what was presented without question.” Parliamentary actors described more rigorous budget scrutiny and stronger advocacy for maternal and child health, while state officials highlighted the shift to structured, data-driven coordination meetings. County teams noted improved reporting, supervision and use of tools such as checklists to track water points and address issues more proactively. Local administrators also described greater responsiveness to community reports, reflecting a wider cultural shift towards evidence use and accountability. Change stories from Bor State and Bor South showed that monthly coordination meetings and hands-on mentoring helped institutionalise routine facility visits and faster follow-up on community complaints, reducing duplication and delays.

However, persistent structural constraints limit consistent service delivery. State and county officials pointed to financing, transport and staffing shortages, while parliamentarians cited weak enforcement of resolutions. Officials noted that “we plan together, but without resources activities are delayed or not completed,” and that ministries do not always act on parliamentary recommendations. These challenges mirror Evidence Gap Map findings that behavioural improvements have outpaced execution capacity. Some unintended effects also emerged, including officials feeling scrutinised by stronger CSO engagement and increased workloads linked to improved reporting.

2.4. Donors and international development actors

Project staff reported that the programme strengthened coordination among donors, INGOs, government and CSOs, leading to more regular, evidence-based decision-making. Joint planning became standard practice, policy briefs and monitoring data were routinely shared with ministries and Parliament and more harmonised sub-national data improved targeting and funding decisions. CSO capacity strengthening enabled more inclusive dialogue, with CSOs speaking confidently in coordination forums and influencing some donor plans. Staff noted that several donors adjusted programme plans in response to CSO evidence presented during coordination meetings. Learning events and evidence products also boosted advocacy for nutrition and WASH, including maternal nutrition.

However, gaps remained. Joint implementation lagged due to separate funding streams, competition for visibility created tensions and stronger CSO voices sometimes raised donor expectations that exceeded local capacity. Partners also reported that broader inclusivity occasionally slowed decision-making within platforms and smaller grassroots CSOs remained under-represented compared with larger organisations. Reliance on programme-facilitated data systems also raised sustainability concerns and smaller grassroots CSOs continued to be under-represented. Staff concluded that sustaining progress will require stronger national ownership, improved accountability mechanisms and equitable support to ensure smaller CSOs are not overshadowed by larger actors.

3. Relevance

3.1. Quality and evolution of the country ToC

The country Theory of Change (ToC) was well aligned with community priorities, especially around WASH, nutrition, accountability and community empowerment. Its focus on transparency, participation and evidence-based advocacy reflected local concerns about service quality and government responsiveness, while its gender-sensitive, community-led approach supported inclusive structures such as women's groups, child clubs and community empowerment mechanisms identified through "rich picture" exercises during inception.

Post-mid-term refinements strengthened the ToC by clarifying contribution pathways, sharpening priorities, and improving sequencing and MEL feedback, though uptake varied across partners and occurred late in implementation. Several contextual gaps limited the original ToC, including overestimation of private-sector capacity, unaddressed funding and climate shocks, shrinking civic space, and weak links between local and national levels.

The ToC was progressively adapted to fit realities on the ground, shifting from private-sector engagement to community-based approaches such as VSLAs and small start-up support. CSOs used newly acquired budget analysis and advocacy skills to influence parliamentary debates, while communities successfully demanded services such as new water points. Overall, these adaptations improved the ToC's relevance and functionality in South Sudan's fluid, resource-constrained context.

3.2. Alignment of ToC with key national & global issues

Right2Grow's Theory of Change (ToC) is strongly aligned with national and global priorities, contributing directly to SDGs on hunger, health, gender equality and clean water, while responding to post-COVID setbacks in food and health systems. It closely matches the Transitional Constitution's obligations on public health, WASH, civic participation, decentralisation and budget transparency. Its community-driven approach reflects constitutional commitments to empowered local governance, while its budget-advocacy pathway supports principles on equitable resource allocation and public accountability.

The ToC also aligns with the National Health Policy (2016–2026), which calls for multi-sector collaboration, stronger partnerships, increased health budgeting and community participation, which were all central to the programme's pathways. Engagement with regional networks such as the SUN CSO movement further connected country-level action to wider global advocacy.

Evidence from communities validates the ToC's core pathways. Water User Committees and Mother-to-Mother Support Groups strengthened WASH practices, improved diets through kitchen gardens and demonstrated strong community ownership. CSOs trained in budget analysis produced policy briefs, influenced parliamentary debates and participated in national budget hearings, confirming the effectiveness of the advocacy and capacity-building pathways.

Most ToC assumptions held: government actors remained open to dialogue, CSO credibility increased and communities actively participated. However, expectations around private-sector engagement and stable funding proved weak, prompting a shift towards community-based enterprises and savings groups. Overall, the ToC remains well aligned with constitutional commitments, national policies, global agendas, and community-identified priorities.

3.3. Responsiveness of program strategies

Programme strategies were broadly responsive to community priorities in Bor South, Pariak and Baidit. Women highlighted that Mother-to-Mother Support Groups, cooking demonstrations and kitchen gardens helped them improve child feeding and tackle malnutrition; men stressed closer water points, better sanitation and more shared responsibilities which reflect a shift in gender norms. Some women reported tangible nutrition recovery, including a case where a malnourished child improved after caregivers applied MtMSG advice on preparing porridge with

greens and groundnuts. Youth felt recognised as hygiene promoters but remained frustrated by limited livelihood opportunities.

Staff reflections confirmed that the programme targeted the most urgent needs: safe water, basic hygiene, caregiver practices and food access for young children, whilst using trusted local figures, local languages and Water User Committees to maintain services, especially in insecure areas. Strategies also evolved from ad hoc asks to structured, evidence-based advocacy: CSOs used budget analysis and policy briefs to influence public budget hearings, contribute to a WASH caucus, inform green school guidelines and support a 10% increase in agriculture and food-security allocations.

At institutional level, training and mentoring strengthened planning, budgeting and accountability across state and county governments, while joint platforms improved alignment between government, CSOs, and donors. However, persistent financing constraints, youth unemployment, household tensions linked to women's participation and continued dependence on external funding cycles limited the full responsiveness and long-term impact of these approaches.

4. Coherence

4.1. Internal

Survey and reflection feedback show that collaboration, once previously deemed only moderate, is now widely viewed as strong. The coalition provides a predictable platform for aligning messaging, triangulating community and government data, reducing duplication and solving bottlenecks more quickly. Remaining tensions stem mainly from structural issues such as donor calendars, staff turnover and occasional top-down decisions, but the overall trajectory is toward greater alignment supported by global working groups and communities of practice. Smaller CSOs that previously felt overshadowed now take facilitation roles through deliberate mentoring arrangements.

Partners highlighted the consortium's added value in combining complementary strengths: INGOs offer technical depth and external linkages, while national CSOs bring contextual knowledge and community trust. A women-led CSO leader explained, "the big organisations gave us skills, but we gave them entry to communities and legitimacy." Since the Mid-Term Review, the partnership has become more inclusive, with smaller CSOs gaining confidence to present evidence and facilitate sessions. Predictable coordination mechanisms such as regular reviews, action trackers and co-chaired meetings, have helped create a sense of a genuine partnership rather than parallel projects.

Adaptive management is now embedded. Activities were decentralised during insecurity, nutrition guidance was adapted to rising food prices and rapid inductions helped manage political turnover. Quarterly reflection spaces enabled joint problem-solving and effective practices, such as engaging chiefs to mobilise men for WASH, were replicated across locations.

Progress on localisation and shifting power has been notable: local CSOs increasingly lead advocacy and present data directly to authorities, while INGOs have shifted into more supportive, technical roles. Local organisations emphasised, "before, we waited for INGOs to speak for us. Now we speak for ourselves and government listens." However, financial power remains concentrated with international partners, and donors acknowledged the need for more direct funding to local actors.

4.2. External

Partners consistently described the Dutch Embassy in Juba as a key ally whose presence added political visibility and legitimacy, helping strengthen dialogue with national institutions. One CSO leader noted, "when we went with evidence to the ministry, the presence of the Embassy gave weight to our voice." Field visits and direct engagement with women's groups built trust and supported localisation, though partners noted a gap between national-level diplomacy and weak donor presence at county level.

Engagement with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) provided strategic direction aligned with nutrition, WASH, and localisation priorities. Partners valued seeing local work reflected in global commitments and appreciated MFA advocacy amplifying South Sudanese voices internationally. Staff highlighted instances where MFA "raised the importance of women's voices in New York, we felt our stories had travelled far beyond Bor and Juba" signalling global amplification of local experiences. However, limited direct interaction with national CSOs was seen as a gap, with calls for more in-country engagement.

UN-led coordination, particularly UNICEF's role in government-donor WASH platforms, strengthened coherence by linking community evidence to national frameworks. CSOs valued being at the same table as ministries and

INGOs, though agenda-setting remained centralised in Juba, limiting county-level influence. State actors commented that “under UNICEF coordination, we see how our local reports fit into the national picture.”

A wider ecosystem of actors also reinforced coherence. Traditional leaders legitimised new practices, faith-based organisations spread key messages, private actors supported water infrastructure and youth networks connected community perspectives to official forums. However, many described these relationships as “episodic,” with community actors often invited for trainings but not planning. These contributions were important but often inconsistent, pointing to the need for more systematic inclusion.

5. Impact

The programme generated clear improvements in child nutrition, health and caregiving across all intervention areas. Mothers in Baidit reported children recovering from malnutrition after applying enriched porridge recipes learned through peer groups, with one caregiver noting that her child “gained weight after we applied what we learned.” Women in Pariak described greater uptake of exclusive breastfeeding and earlier care-seeking. In Bor South, men became more involved in childcare, such as through fetching water, taking children to clinics, which helped reduce women’s workloads and improving timely access to services. These changes show how peer learning, demonstrations and mutual support shifted feeding, caregiving and health-seeking behaviours, contributing to healthier and more resilient households.

The programme also strengthened coordination among government, parliament and civil society. State-level nutrition planning became more routine and evidence-driven and national budget oversight grew stronger, with ministries increasingly pressed to justify spending. Civil society gained visibility through credible data and joint statements, enabling CSOs to participate more actively in planning and policy dialogue.

Capacity strengthening further boosted civil society roles. Trainings in BMET, Bridge4Voices and Outcome Harvesting equipped CSOs with practical tools for advocacy, budget analysis and community mobilisation, increasing their confidence and ability to represent community concerns. Reflection sessions confirmed improved collaboration, reduced duplication and more efficient use of resources.

6. Sustainability

Stakeholders across communities, civil society, government and development partners generally agreed that many programme gains, particularly improved nutrition and hygiene practices. Furthermore, through peer learning, community structures and strengthened institutional routines, nutrition and hygiene practices are likely to endure. Women in Mother-to-Mother Support Groups described exclusive breastfeeding and improved child feeding as habits they will keep, some mothers stating “we now know the right foods for our children. Even if the project ends, we will keep teaching each other”. Mothers, youth and men described exclusive breastfeeding, diversified feeding, handwashing and safe water use as habits now embedded in daily life and reinforced through community groups such as Mother-to-Mother Support Groups, youth groups and water committees.

CSOs similarly expressed confidence that strengthened financial management, reporting, BMET skills, advocacy tools and coalition working will continue beyond the programme, though smaller organisations warned that activity levels will depend on available resources. Government actors at national, state and county levels noted that regular coordination meetings, supervision visits, reporting formats and budget scrutiny have become institutionalised, yet emphasised that weak logistics, limited staffing and inconsistent executive follow-through constrain implementation. Donors and partners highlighted more inclusive and aligned platforms but recognised ongoing dependence on external facilitation and financing. Reflection session feedback indicated that the main concern was reliance on external facilitation, noting that “the systems work well now, but if funding ends, it is uncertain whether government can keep the same momentum.”

Across all stakeholders, behavioural and knowledge-based changes are viewed as the most sustainable because they have become part of community norms and organisational practice. Sustainability is more fragile where continuity relies on material resources like food access, spare parts, transport, staffing and domestic finance. Overall, the programme has laid strong foundations for lasting change, but long-term continuity will require strengthening local ownership while addressing financial and logistical gaps that limit service maintenance, government oversight, and CSO engagement.

7. Cross-cutting (gender, youth, climate)

7.1. Gender

Gender transformation was one of the strongest areas of programme impact. Community members reported clear shifts in household roles, with men increasingly fetching water, accompanying children to clinics and supporting nutrition practices. Women noted that these changes resulted directly from awareness campaigns and Mother-to-Mother Support Groups, which helped normalise shared caregiving. One woman in the Pariak FGD stated “before, men never cared about childcare. Now some fathers even take children to the clinic and fetch water”. At the governance level, women-led CSOs gained visibility and influence in planning and policy spaces, showing the move from observers to recognised contributors.

Yet these advances also brought unintended tensions. Some men felt that women’s increased participation in meetings conflicted with domestic expectations, leading to household disputes. This highlights the importance of sustained engagement with men to mitigate backlash and reinforce support for women’s evolving roles. Additionally, disability inclusion was inconsistently captured in programme monitoring, limiting the assessment of gender and equity outcomes for persons with disabilities. Future strategies must strengthen accessibility, representation and disaggregated monitoring to ensure more inclusive gender mainstreaming.

7.2. Youth

Youth emerged as active contributors to community mobilisation, hygiene promotion and accountability. Many young people reported gaining respect and visibility through their leadership roles, for example, training households to build tippy taps or sharing community evidence in advocacy platforms. CSOs confirmed that youth engagement energised campaigns and made advocacy more grounded in community realities. Outcome Mapping shows that youth became more proactive in governance spaces, with some engagement extending into displacement settings.

However, youths’ new skills were not matched with economic opportunities, creating frustration, especially among unemployed youth. Many expressed that while they felt empowered to speak and lead, the absence of capital, jobs or livelihood pathways limited the practical impact of their learning. This puts sustained engagement at risk, particularly for marginalised youth, including those with disabilities, an area where evidence is currently too limited to assess equity. Going forward, youth empowerment needs stronger linkage to livelihoods and inclusion strategies to prevent disengagement.

7.3. Climate

Climate shocks, particularly flooding and drought, were widely described as major threats to nutrition and WASH outcomes. Communities reported that floods destroyed water points, increased disease risks and disrupted access to safe water. CSOs noted that they lacked adequate resources and tools to integrate climate resilience into their work and climate-related interruptions frequently stalled nutrition and WASH activities. Programme interventions on Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) provided useful entry points (e.g., flood-tolerant crops, improved home gardens, water harvesting), but systemic climate preparedness remained limited.

Despite these structural challenges, community-level behavioural changes contributed to household resilience. Caregivers explained that knowledge on low-cost, locally available foods enabled them to maintain child nutrition even during seasonal shocks and hygiene practices remained robust despite disruptions. However, vulnerabilities remain severe, especially for households in remote or flood-prone areas and for persons with disabilities, who face greater barriers during climate events. Strengthening climate adaptation, equitable access to WASH services and disability-inclusive resilience planning will be critical for future programming.

8. Lessons Learnt and Good Practices

8.1. Lessons learnt

A key lesson from the South Sudan experience is that behavioural change is most sustainable when embedded in community-owned structures rather than driven solely by projects. Platforms such as Mother-to-Mother Support Groups, youth groups and water committees helped turn practices like exclusive breastfeeding and improved child feeding into social norms, reducing reliance on external facilitation. Integrating gender and youth perspectives also proved essential: engaging men in WASH and nutrition shifted household responsibilities, while youth emerged as leaders in hygiene promotion. However, these gains revealed tensions, some men perceived women’s participation as neglecting domestic roles and youth expressed frustration at the lack of livelihood pathways, showing the need to balance empowerment with household dialogue and economic opportunities.

The programme further demonstrated the necessity of adaptive management in fragile contexts. Inflation and rising food prices required shifting nutrition guidance towards low-cost, locally available foods, while insecurity prompted decentralised activities at payam and boma levels to maintain continuity. Another lesson is the fragility of outcomes that depend on sustained financing and infrastructure: water systems and sanitation facilities remain vulnerable without technical support and spare parts and food insecurity limits consistent application of nutrition knowledge. Overall, the experience showed that social and behavioural change can be sustained, but long-term outcomes require complementary strategies for livelihood strengthening, resource mobilisation and reliable service maintenance.

8.2. Good practices

The programme successfully rooted behaviour change in trusted, community-led structures, enabling peer learning to flourish and strengthening local ownership. Engaging men, women, and youth in complementary roles proved effective for shifting norms and expanding participation, while youth visibly contributed to hygiene promotion and community leadership. Flexibility was another strong practice: partners adapted nutrition messaging to local economic realities and continued activities through decentralised structures when insecurity limited movement.

At institutional level, the introduction of structured reporting tools, monitoring checklists and regular coordination meetings strengthened accountability within counties and improved evidence use in government and CSO decision-making. CSOs were able to present credible data in policy forums and government officials noted greater accountability and more systematic service tracking. These practices helped institutionalise routines that can endure beyond programme cycles.

Together, these good practices show that local ownership, inclusive engagement, flexible delivery and evidence-based planning form a strong foundation for sustainable impact in fragile settings.

9. Conclusions and recommendations

9.1. Conclusions

The country Theory of Change (ToC) remained valid and context-appropriate and was used as a practical guide throughout implementation. Stakeholders considered it broadly aligned with the global ToC, and implementation generally followed its roadmap. Over time, the ToC was adaptively refined in response to emerging evidence and contextual changes. Where core assumptions held, such as government openness, CSO credibility and citizen willingness to engage the envisaged pathways delivered visible results. Where assumptions were weaker for example around private-sector capacity and stable financing these areas were identified as constraints and progressively addressed in programming and advocacy strategies. This ongoing testing and adjustment of the ToC is consistent with the relevance analysis and was viewed by stakeholders as a strength of the programme design.

Overall, the evidence indicates that Right2Grow largely achieved its core outcome of strengthening civil society's role in nutrition and WASH governance and contributed to tangible policy and practice changes at local and national levels. Capacity strengthening under Right2Grow equipped CSOs with the skills, tools and confidence to advocate more effectively, build coalitions and participate in budget and policy processes that were previously inaccessible to them. Partners particularly valued trainings and tools such as Bridge4Voices, BMET and Outcome Harvesting, which they credited with enabling more strategic, evidence-based advocacy. Drawing on these capacities, CSOs trained in budget analysis and brief writing submitted evidence-informed products to Parliament and line ministries, helping to strengthen policy debate and budget transparency. According to parliamentary informants, this contributed to the organisation of national public budget hearings in 2023/24, the creation of a WASH caucus in Parliament and a reported increase in the 2024 agriculture/food-security allocation, while also highlighting a persistent gap between budget approval and service delivery.

Community-level strategies were highly responsive and inclusive. Water points, hygiene promotion, and Mother-to-Mother Support Groups (among others) improved everyday access to safe water and nutrition information and fostered bottom-up accountability. Behaviour change was reported after caregiver trainings (e.g. handwashing, safe water handling, improved feeding practices), and these changes were consistently linked by respondents to improvements in children's health and nutrition status. Youth also reported increased agency and participation in community initiatives, although structural constraints on livelihoods opportunities remained.

Partnership functioning matured but still faced equity gaps. Collaboration shifted from fragmented to more inclusive and locally led, with clearer roles and routine reflection/learning. Complementarities between INGOs and CSOs increased quality and legitimacy of advocacy. However, smaller CSOs still faced resource disparities that limit full participation. Systemic constraints limit the translation of policy and budget gains into sustained services. Shrinking

fiscal space, weak execution of parliamentary resolutions and limited private-sector engagement continue to slow implementation of these wins at sub-national level. Taken together, these factors constitute significant risks for the sustainability of Right2Grow achievements, despite strong local ownership and a clear willingness among communities, CSOs and local authorities to build on the progress made.

9.2 Recommendations for future programming

Short-term priorities (0–9 months)

- **Recommendation 1:** The Right2Grow consortium, INGO partners and donors should continue mentoring and joint planning that shift INGOs from gatekeepers to enablers, and earmark small, flexible grants plus digital/reporting support so under-resourced CSOs can participate fully in coordination, advocacy and monitoring. They should also maintain quarterly learning reviews to drive adaptive management.
- **Recommendation 2:** Local CSOs and community structures (Mother-to-Mother Support Groups, Water User Committees, child and youth clubs), working with county and payam authorities and supported by the consortium, should protect and expand platforms that are working well, while attaching pilot livelihood linkages in priority sites, for example combining VSLAs or enterprise coaching with kitchen gardens.
- **Recommendation 3:** Consortium economic and livelihoods teams, local private-sector actors and relevant line ministries should jointly conduct basic market mapping, engage local suppliers for WASH maintenance, initiate light-touch business development services and support community-based enterprises and savings or producer groups to test viable models.
- **Recommendation 4:** Consortium management and donors, together with community structures and local authorities, should develop contingency plans for funding volatility and establish simple, community-managed maintenance funds for water points with clear rules and oversight.
- **Recommendation 5:** National CSO coalitions and R2G advocacy partners, in dialogue with Parliament, line ministries and development partners, should resource a CSO “policy helpdesk” or rotating unit to support ongoing budget tracking, expenditure analysis and brief production, and maintain engagement with the WASH caucus while exploring possible extensions to other sectors.
- **Recommendation 6:** Local CSOs, implementing partners and local authorities should adjust meeting times and locations, provide childcare or rotation arrangements and use hybrid or clustered formats so that women, caregivers and marginalised groups can participate without undue domestic strain.
- **Recommendation 7:** Adapt training content and tools to local users. R2G technical teams and training providers, working closely with local actors, should co-create training materials and translate or simplify tools so that third-tier CSOs and grassroots leaders with different literacy levels can use them effectively.
- **Recommendation 8:** Strengthen practical advocacy and accountability skills. National CSO networks and advocacy/MEAL teams, with support from interested parliamentary and county actors where feasible, should run advocacy simulations, budget-hearing drills, storytelling campaigns and mock policy dialogues, and set up mentorship, coaching and peer exchanges to embed these skills.
- **Recommendation 9:** Track how capacities are used in practice. CSO MEAL teams together with consortium MEAL and Linking & Learning teams should introduce simple scorecards, self-assessments and feedback loops to capture how new skills and tools are applied in day-to-day work and to inform ongoing, adaptive support.

Medium-term priorities (9–24 months)

- **Recommendation 10:** The Right2Grow consortium, national CSO networks and sub-national governments (county and state planning units) should work together to ensure that CSO-generated data inform routine planning and review processes. They should co-create simple accountability compacts that link citizen priorities to county workplans and budget lines, with clear, time-bound follow-up and public feedback.
- **Recommendation 11:** Local CSOs and community structures, in collaboration with county authorities and supported by the consortium, should expand livelihood linkages such as VSLAs and enterprise coaching linked to kitchen gardens from pilot sites to additional payams and counties, using learning from the first phase to guide targeting and design.
- **Recommendation 12:** Consortium economic and livelihoods teams, local private-sector actors and relevant line ministries should formalise supplier arrangements for WASH spare parts and services closer to

communities and provide targeted business development support to community enterprises and producer or savings groups so they can operate as reliable service and supply partners.

- **Recommendation 13:** The Parliament, line ministries, CSOs, community representatives and the consortium should hold biannual Theory of Change reviews to reflect on what is working such as evidence-based caucus engagement and public hearings and what requires redesign, for example the private-sector role. These actors should jointly update the country ToC so it remains grounded in practice and shared understanding.
- **Recommendation 14:** National CSO coalitions and advocacy partners, in dialogue with Parliament and key ministries, should produce regular cross-sector budget and expenditure briefs and extend the caucus model from WASH to nutrition and food security, so that CSO evidence is consistently taken up across relevant policy arenas.
- **Recommendation 15:** Local CSOs and community facilitators, supported by gender and SBC specialists, should invest in male champions and couples' sessions that offer positive reference points and practical scripts for negotiating time and task sharing in the home, reinforcing outcomes on unpaid care and participation.
- **Recommendation 16:** Consortium technical teams and national CSO networks should provide post-training support, refresher sessions and regular practice opportunities, and establish communities of practice or peer learning groups where staff can exchange experience, troubleshoot challenges and refine approaches.
- **Recommendation 17:** Donors, the consortium and CSO leaders should pair technical training with small seed funds or basic materials to overcome barriers to applying new skills, and add focused modules on donor mapping, proposal writing, fundraising, resource mobilisation, negotiation and SDG monitoring.
- **Recommendation 18:** National CSO networks and consortium leads, with support from interested development partners, should start structured donor outreach and learning visits, and support partners to develop donor pipelines and engagement calendars so that advocacy and programme gains are backed by more predictable, diversified funding.

Long-term priorities (24+ months)

- **Recommendation 19:** Parliament, line ministries, the Ministry of Finance and other oversight bodies, working with national CSO coalitions, should embed annual public budget hearings in law and practice, require timely in-year execution reports, and strengthen follow-up mechanisms so that parliamentary resolutions translate into actual services at county level. CSOs should continue to accompany parliamentary committees and provide evidence and analysis that support ongoing scrutiny of budget execution and service delivery.
- **Recommendation 20:** Relevant government ministries and training institutes, in consultation with CSOs and development partners, should integrate successful Right2Grow practices into official guidelines, sector strategies and pre-/in-service training curricula, and gradually roll out cost-sharing models and mature local maintenance funds at national scale so that community-level mechanisms become part of the regular system rather than project add-ons.
- **Recommendation 21:** Line ministries responsible for water, health, agriculture and local economic development, together with business associations and CSOs, should consolidate resilient local supply chains for WASH maintenance and support community enterprises that have demonstrated viability to operate without external facilitation, including through appropriate regulation, access to finance and market-linkage support.
- **Recommendation 22:** CSO leadership and boards, supported by national networks and key development partners, should embed resource-mobilisation practices and donor-engagement routines into organisational systems, including diversified funding strategies, regular donor outreach, multi-year partnership agreements where possible and internal mechanisms for monitoring financial sustainability.
- **Recommendation 23:** CSO leaders and consortium members should establish and implement succession plans, document core processes and tools, and formalise knowledge-transfer mechanisms such as structured handovers, mentoring schemes and internal learning repositories, so that gains are not lost when staff move on.
- **Recommendation 24:** National CSO coalitions and leading advocacy organisations, with support from international partners, should invest in advanced advocacy skills (for example regional diplomacy, treaty monitoring and high-level lobbying) and systematically link South Sudanese CSOs to regional and global platforms, networks and campaigns to sustain influence beyond the life of Right2Grow.

- **Recommendation 25:** Local CSOs, community leaders and faith/traditional authorities, supported by gender and SBC specialists, should expand dialogues, role-modelling initiatives and community campaigns that engage men and boys as allies in shifting social norms, building active support for women's public roles and leadership and reducing the risk of backlash as women's visibility and influence increase.

Annex 4.6 – Uganda

1. Description of contexts

Uganda continues to face persistent challenges in achieving equitable nutrition and WASH outcomes, despite steady progress in access, policy alignment, and institutional coordination. The country's human development trajectory is shaped by rapid population growth, recurrent climate shocks, constrained civic space, and regional inequalities that continue to undermine progress toward national and global targets for child health and wellbeing.

Access to basic WASH services remains limited and unequal. While coverage has improved over the last decade, significant disparities persist between urban and rural areas, and between host and refugee populations. According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, only 43% of households have a handwashing facility with both soap and water available, and access remains lowest among poorer and rural households. Basic sanitation and hygiene services lag global targets, with institutional WASH infrastructure in schools and healthcare facilities also underdeveloped. In refugee-hosting areas, water trucking, rationing, and latrine overuse remain common during funding shortfalls and new influxes, particularly in northern districts.

Child nutrition and health outcomes also remain a major concern. The 2022 Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (UDHS) reported that 24.4% of children under five are stunted, 3.2% wasted, and 9.7% underweight. UNICEF's 2025 malnutrition profile reports slightly higher model-based estimates, at 25.4% stunted and 3.6% wasted. Although stunting has declined from nearly 38% in 2006, chronic malnutrition continues to affect roughly one in four children. Food insecurity remains widespread, by mid-2025, an estimated 797,000 people in refugee-hosting districts faced Crisis-level food insecurity. Between June 2024 and January 2025, several districts, including Karamoja and refugee settlements, were classified as IPC Phase 3 (Crisis), with an estimated 797,000 people in refugee-hosting districts experiencing Crisis-level food insecurity. High dependency ratios, reduced household purchasing power, and reduced humanitarian assistance have deepened vulnerability, especially in Karamoja and northern Uganda. These conditions are compounded by inadequate sanitation and recurrent diarrheal disease, which contribute to growth faltering and micronutrient deficiencies. These nutrition risks are closely linked to sanitation and hygiene gaps, including exposure to diarrhoeal disease and environmental enteric dysfunction (EED).

Uganda's economic and demographic dynamics amplify these risks. Inflation peaked at 10.7% in 2022 before easing, but many households remain financially fragile. Poverty stands at 16.1% nationally, yet regional disparities persist, with higher rates in the north and east. Rapid population growth, now 2.9% annually, reaching nearly 46 million people, continues to strain social and WASH services, particularly in densely populated and refugee-hosting areas. Uganda remains home to nearly 1.9 million refugees, heightening the need for integrated WASH and nutrition delivery models that address both host and displaced communities.

At the same time, civic space and governance constraints limit the ability of civil society and communities to engage effectively in accountability and service monitoring. Freedom House rates Uganda "Not Free," and the CIVICUS Monitor classifies its civic space as "Repressed," citing restrictions on assembly and advocacy.

Addressing undernutrition in Uganda requires coordinated, multi-level collaboration among government, civil society, and development partners. Uganda's policy frameworks, such as UNAP II and NDP III, provide an enabling foundation. However, persistent inequality, fragile livelihoods, restricted civic space, and climate shocks continue to hinder progress.

2. Effectiveness

2.1. Community level

Right2Grow's community mobilization efforts proved highly effective in enabling citizens to demand and influence improvements in nutrition and WASH services. Out of a target of 140 actions, 145 community-led demands were achieved, and 100 of 103 barriers to WASH and nutrition were resolved through joint initiatives between

communities, local governments, and the private sector. Platforms such as community dialogues, CVA forums, and Photovoice gallery walks gave citizens the tools and confidence to identify gaps, present evidence, and track responses from duty bearers. Radio talk shows in local languages also helped extend awareness to wider audiences.

These interventions translated into visible results. In Buliisa, Purongo, and Biiso, eight boreholes were drilled; 15 drinking water sources were repaired in Buliisa and Biiso; 12 unsafe school latrines were emptied in Nwoya; and a contaminated source in Lebngec Upper (Nwoya) was made safe after community sensitization. Local governments responded by funding low-cost, sustainable actions such as demonstration gardens, milk coolers, and school food stores. Buliisa Sub-County allocated UGX 20 million for seeds and many schools established nutrition gardens, growing vegetables such as eggplants and Sukuma wiki and in some cases planting up to 50 banana trees.

The programme also strengthened systems and staffing. Kakumiro recruited a Health Assistant to coordinate WASH; Kasambya Health Centre III procured anthropometric tools; Adjumani Hospital installed a 20,000-litre water tank; and Buliisa District secured ministry approval for a new water system design. Community voices increasingly shaped decisions, with local councils adopting community proposals and establishing Parish Nutrition Committees to sustain advocacy.

Private-sector engagement through SUN Business Networks in Nwoya, Bugweri, Maracha, and Kabale improved access to affordable, nutritious food and hygiene products, linking SMEs to district planning for the first time. Inclusivity also improved, with more women, youth, and marginalized groups participating in dialogues and influencing priorities such as safe water and school hygiene.

Unintended but positive outcomes included the formal recognition of community monitors, many of whom now participate in DNCC and SNCC meetings. However, some health facilities resisted community oversight, highlighting the need to institutionalise accountability roles within government systems.

2.2. Civil society organisations

Right2Grow strengthened CSOs to influence nutrition and WASH policies, budgets, and accountability mechanisms at national and local levels. Through Budget Monitoring and Expenditure Tracking (BMET) and targeted trainings, CSOs improved their capacity to analyse budgets, draft position papers, and advocate effectively. Progress was strong, with CSOs creating 184 advocacy spaces nationally and 181 locally, the CSOs also carried out 202 national and 223 sub-national advocacy initiatives. They influenced major policy processes including the Food and Nutrition Bill, Nutrition Policy review, and NDP IV, ensuring nutrition and WASH were recognized as economic and governance priorities.

CSO advocacy led to tangible results, with Parliament adopting 18 of 26 CSO budget recommendations, reinstating UGX 65 billion, and increasing the Agro-industrialisation budget to UGX 1.878 trillion. Throughout 2025, Parliament also accepted 7 of 14 proposals in Agro-industrialisation, 2 of 4 in Nutrition, and 4 of 16 in Water. Locally, six sub-counties allocated the mandatory 2% DDEG to nutrition, with Busiriba and Kasambya creating their first-ever nutrition budget lines. Civil-society platforms expanded, with CSO Nutrition Platforms in Kamwenge, Kakumiro, and Buliisa and over 5,055 residents reached through CVA training. These efforts normalized CSO participation in budget and policy discussions. Advocacy translated into visible improvements: new boreholes in Biiso and Buliisa, UGX 81.7 million allocated to the Kigoya water scheme, and local by-laws promoting sanitation, hygiene, and food security.

2.3. Government and decentralized entities

Government and decentralized bodies in Uganda demonstrated stronger policy alignment, budgeting, and coordination for nutrition and WASH under the Right2Grow program. Through sustained advocacy and technical engagement, Right2Grow supported the review of the 2003 National Nutrition Policy, the tabling of the Food and Nutrition Bill, and the integration of key CSO-proposed indicators into the Fourth National Development Plan, and contributed to nutrition and WASH being embedded within Uganda's long-term development framework. At the local level, coordination structures such as District and Sub-County Nutrition Coordination Committees (DNCCs and SNCCs) and Water Boards were revitalized to lead joint planning and budget tracking across sectors. Districts like Kamwenge, Kakumiro, and Buliisa institutionalized nutrition within their annual plans and adopted the mandatory 2% allocation of the District Development Equalisation Grant (DDEG) for nutrition activities. Budgetary performance improved markedly, with WASH and food security funding reaching 67% and 54% respectively, far exceeding initial targets (of 10%).

Local governments financed practical projects such as borehole drilling, school sanitation improvements, and demonstration gardens.

Overall nutrition-related investments across health, agriculture, education, social development, water and trade grew from UGX 593 billion in FY2019/20 to UGX 975 billion in FY2023/24, with health taking 57% and agriculture 20% of the total. Coordination between the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, and the National Planning Authority was strengthened through Right2Grow -led dialogues, improving coherence in policy implementation and resource allocation. However, despite these achievements, funding gaps and limited institutional capacity at sub-national levels remain a challenge. While allocations for nutrition have increased, they are often too small to sustain interventions without external support. Furthermore, staff turnover and limited recognition of community monitors within formal government systems continue to hinder the full institutionalization of accountability mechanisms.

2.4. Donors and international development actors

Engagement with donors and international development actors under Right2Grow strengthened coordination and visibility around nutrition and WASH but achieved only partial traction in translating advocacy into long-term financing commitments. The program successfully convened key partners, including WHO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, FAO, and USAID, in national platforms such as the Food and Nutrition Bill consultations, the National Nutrition Forum, and the National Colloquium on Stunting. These forums helped align donor priorities around the humanitarian–development nexus and generated renewed commitments to tackle the root causes of undernutrition. The Local Development Partners Group (LDPG) pledged continued funding, while Members of Parliament and development partners committed to pursue resource mobilization and scale preventive measures such as the “one egg a day” campaign for children under five.

Right2Grow’s evidence-driven advocacy, particularly through the commissioning of the Status of Financing for Nutrition, Food Security, and WASH in Uganda study, positioned it as a credible convener and knowledge broker, improving donor coordination and transparency on financing flows. The integration of international partners into key policy processes, including the review of the 2003 National Nutrition Policy and the drafting of the Food and Nutrition Bill, strengthened government ownership and encouraged alignment of donor funding with national systems rather than stand-alone projects. Through the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Civil Society Network, which was revitalized under Right2Grow leadership, CSOs also gained greater legitimacy in engaging with the Office of the Prime Minister and global nutrition platforms, ensuring community priorities were represented at higher levels of dialogue.

Despite this progress, challenges persisted. High-level donor commitments raised expectations among CSOs and local actors for increased funding that did not always materialize, causing some frustration and mistrust. Additionally, while stunting received strong attention, other forms of malnutrition, such as wasting, remained underfunded, reflecting an imbalance in donor priorities.

3. Relevance

3.1. Quality and evolution of the country ToC

Uganda’s country Theory of Change (ToC) was found to be comprehensive, contextually relevant, and well-aligned with national priorities such as the NDP IV and the global SUN framework. It effectively linked community-level advocacy mechanisms, like Citizen Voice and Action (CVA), with higher-level policy and financing processes, ensuring that local evidence informed district and national decision-making. The ToC’s embedded accountability loops, thereby, connecting community scorecards, DNCCs, and national dialogues. This helped institutionalize a multi-sectoral and systemic approach to tackling undernutrition. While the ToC proved to be a strong guiding framework for aligning strategies across partners and governance levels, implementation also revealed its adaptability. For example, when external political events such as the Non-Aligned Movement Summit disrupted scheduled Parliamentary engagements, partners shifted to alternative advocacy channels including position papers and virtual meetings. Similarly, when NDP IV and national budget consultations overlapped, consortium members divided roles to ensure continuous representation in key policy spaces. This demonstrated the flexibility of the ToC to accommodate unexpected disruptions while still pursuing its intended pathways of influence and adaptive behaviour which was not initially foreseen in the original ToC, enriched its quality by showing that the theory could accommodate opportunistic engagement while maintaining coherence.

3.2. Alignment of ToC with key national & global issues

Nationally, it reflects the goals of Uganda's National Development Plan, the Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Policy, and the Uganda Nutrition Action Plan II, which emphasize human capital development, improved nutrition, and universal access to WASH services. Its focus on empowering communities, strengthening civil society, and promoting multisectoral coordination directly supports national frameworks that prioritize integrated approaches to reducing undernutrition. The ToC's inclusion of gender equity and social inclusion also aligns with Vision 2040, which underscores gender equality and resilience as key enablers of sustainable development.

Globally, the ToC corresponds to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), and SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and reinforces the multi-stakeholder and accountability principles of SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement. Its recognition of the WASH–nutrition nexus echoes WHO and UNICEF guidance on integrated health and sanitation interventions to reduce child stunting and mortality.

3.3. Responsiveness of program strategies

Right2Grow's program strategies were highly responsive to local needs, national systems, and community priorities. At the community level, interventions directly addressed issues raised by residents, which included, child malnutrition, unsafe water, poor sanitation, and food insecurity. Families received hands-on training in child feeding, hygiene, and kitchen gardening, and learned to create “model homes” with latrines, handwashing stations, and safe cooking and storage spaces. These efforts improved household diets, reduced illness, and increased food availability. Farmers also adopted better agronomic practices and replicated successful approaches seen during peer-learning visits.

Advocacy was demand-driven and locally grounded, with Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) platforms empowering communities to identify service gaps and engage leaders constructively. LC1 chairpersons acted as monitors, enhancing accountability and bridging communication between citizens and government. This approach ensured that WASH and nutrition priorities were community-owned and aligned with local governance systems. The programme also advanced gender responsiveness by encouraging men and women to jointly lead dialogues, shifting from gender-segregated discussions to unified community decision-making.

At the institutional level, Right2Grow strengthened local leadership and policy frameworks by supporting the creation and approval of District Nutrition Action Plans (DNAPs), integrating nutrition and WASH into local development plans and budgets. Districts like Adjumani, Kikuube, and Kamwenge now use DNAPs as reference tools for planning, resource allocation, and coordination.

4. Coherence

4.1. Internal coherence

The program showed strong internal coherence through its integrated, multi-sectoral design linking nutrition, WASH, food security, and governance. Each partner contributed complementary expertise within a unified framework, using harmonized tools and shared accountability systems. This structure ensured that actions in one area reinforced progress in others and reduced duplication at both national and district levels. The Theory of Change provided a clear results pathway, connecting community empowerment and citizen voice with government responsiveness, improved services, and better nutrition outcomes. Evidence from community processes such as Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) directly informed district planning and national advocacy, ensuring alignment across levels.

Vertical linkages between community structures (CVA groups, LC1s) and technical departments strengthened mutual accountability. Community monitoring of boreholes, hygiene facilities, and school sanitation informed district supervision and budgeting. Regular joint reviews, budget dialogues, and monitoring visits brought together government departments, CSOs, and communities, leading to coordinated planning and resource allocation. This coherence translated into tangible results such as borehole drilling and repairs, safe school sanitation, and expanded household gardens. Partnership functioning further enhanced coherence. Partners co-facilitated SUN Business Networks in several districts, linking the private sector to nutrition and food safety goals, while collective advocacy influenced NDP IV indicators and budget allocations for WASH, nutrition, and agro-industrialisation.

4.2. External coherence

The program demonstrated strong external coherence by aligning closely with government systems, donor priorities, and partner initiatives across national, district, and community levels. Collaboration was a defining

feature, Right2Grow worked through existing coordination structures such as DNCCs, SNCCs, and sector working groups, ensuring that interventions complemented rather than duplicated ongoing efforts. Mechanisms such as partner exchange learning visits, financing dialogues, media appearances and sub-granting to community-based organizations (CBOs) strengthened alignment between local priorities and programme objectives. Regular joint planning, monitoring, and advocacy platforms fostered consistency and reinforced linkages between government, civil society, the private sector, and development partners.

At the national level, the program's advocacy around the Food and Nutrition Bill, NDP IV, and Uganda National Agricultural Extension Strategy II strengthened alignment with broader policy reforms. Initiatives like the National Colloquium on Stunting, Good Food Campaigns, and children's parliaments connected community voices to national and global agendas. At the same time, collaboration with UNICEF, UNDP, FAO, and UNHCR bridged humanitarian and development responses.

Alignment with the Dutch Embassy's Inclusive Green Growth (IGG) priorities was clear in Right2Grow's focus on inclusive governance, climate-sensitive WASH, market-based nutrition, and gender equity. The programme reported 23,768 people directly reached and 98,212 indirectly reached through IGG-aligned activities such as community dialogues, facility-based counselling, radio talk shows and local-language campaigns. Coherence with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) was reflected in the program's contributions to policy institutionalization and financing, districts like Buliisa, Kamwenge, and Kakumiro increased allocations for production, water, and sanitation, while national advocacy secured budget reinstatements for agro-industrialisation and WASH programs.

Partnerships with UN agencies and other bilateral actors further strengthened coherence. UNICEF's convening role in WASH coordination helped move district evidence - such as borehole functionality and water quality into national decisions, leading to new or repaired water systems, safe school latrines, and the installation of a 20,000-litre reservoir at Adjumani Hospital. Right2Grow's SUN Business Networks (SBNs) in Nwoya, Bugweri, Maracha, and Kabale integrated private actors into district nutrition planning, aligning market solutions with public health goals.

5. Impact

The Right2Grow Uganda programme made a clear and measurable impact on child nutrition, health, and WASH outcomes, while strengthening governance, coordination, and accountability across districts. Its multi-sectoral approach directly improved service delivery, community empowerment, and institutional performance.

At the community level, Right2Grow's Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) structures and advocacy platforms led to tangible improvements such as the drilling of eight new boreholes, rehabilitation of fifteen water sources, and emptying of unsafe school latrines. Families adopted better hygiene and feeding practices, such as constructing handwashing stations, establishing kitchen gardens, and using safe following sensitization activities, household demonstrations, and radio campaigns facilitated by Right2Grow partners. Caregivers reported visible improvements in children's nutrition and reduced waterborne illnesses, with testimonies noting that "children no longer fall sick as often because we now have clean water and grow vegetables in our backyard."

Institutionally, the program revitalized District and Sub-County Nutrition Coordination Committees (DNCCs/SNCCs), trained local officials in budget monitoring, and helped integrate nutrition and WASH priorities into district plans and budgets. Districts like Buliisa, Kamwenge, and Kakumiro increased allocations for water and production sectors, turning citizen advocacy into funded actions. Nationally, Right2Grow contributed to integrating eight new nutrition indicators into Uganda's draft NDP IV and influenced key budget and policy reforms, including progress on the Food and Nutrition Bill.

Right2Grow also strengthened collaboration between CSOs, local governments, and the private sector, establishing SUN Business Networks that linked local enterprises to nutrition goals. These efforts fostered a culture of joint planning, evidence-based decision-making, and accountability among leaders.

6. Sustainability

The Right2Grow Uganda program has built a strong foundation for the long-term sustainability of nutrition and WASH outcomes by embedding interventions into government systems, strengthening civil society capacity, and fostering community ownership. Rather than functioning as a short-term project, it focused on institutionalizing coordination, financing, and accountability mechanisms that continue beyond its direct support.

At the institutional level, sustainability is reflected in the integration of nutrition and WASH into district and national plans, budgets, and by-laws. Districts such as Buliisa, Kamwenge, and Kakumiro now allocate funds for school gardens, borehole repairs, and hygiene campaigns, while ordinances on food security and sanitation ensure continued local accountability. At the national level, the inclusion of nutrition priorities in Uganda's NDP IV and the advancement of the Food and Nutrition Bill have anchored long-term policy commitments. Health facilities have also integrated nutrition and WASH into routine operations, with dedicated health assistants and equipment procurement now funded through government budgets.

Civil society and community structures emerged as lasting drivers of sustainability. Local CSOs and Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) groups registered as independent entities, allowing them to access grants and participate in district planning processes. Their continued engagement in budget monitoring and advocacy ensures that community voices remain central to governance. Similarly, community-based initiatives such as demonstration gardens, water user committees, and school WASH clubs have maintained low-cost solutions, showing strong local ownership.

Partnerships with the private sector through SUN Business Networks (SBNs) and collaboration with agencies such as the Uganda Wildlife Authority and the Ministry of Water and Environment have further institutionalized sustainable, market-driven solutions. However, challenges remain, particularly limited fiscal space at the district level and dependence of CSOs on donor funding. Despite these constraints, Right2Grow Uganda's systems-based approach has effectively transitioned responsibility to government, civil society, and private actors.

7. Cross-cutting (gender, youth, climate)

7.1. Gender

Gender inclusion was a core focus of Right2Grow Uganda, guiding both program design and implementation. Women's empowerment was identified as the country's key learning theme, leading to more deliberate integration of gender considerations across WASH and nutrition activities. Women played visible roles in local governance and service delivery, chairing water user committees and participating in District Nutrition Coordination Committees. The program also advanced gender-responsive planning by embedding gender targets into District Development Plans and Nutrition Action Plans, and by influencing policies such as the revised National Nutrition Policy. Inclusive infrastructure, such as girls' latrines, ramps for persons with disabilities, and improved maternity water access which addressed structural barriers faced by women and vulnerable groups. Moreover, community dialogues successfully engaged men in caregiving and child nutrition, increasing male participation in antenatal care from 12% to 41% and promoting shared household responsibilities. While gender integration was strong, continued focus on monitoring transformative outcomes will be key to sustaining progress toward equity and inclusion.

7.2. Youth

Youth inclusion was a growing strength of Right2Grow Uganda, positioning young people as active contributors to nutrition and WASH outcomes. Youth groups participated in Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) and community scorecard processes, led school handwashing and sanitation campaigns, and used creative platforms such as photovoice, debates, and theatre to promote hygiene and nutrition practices. Their initiatives increased community awareness and accountability, particularly at local levels.

Youth also played a role in livelihood and climate-smart agriculture initiatives, such as, cultivating orange-fleshed sweet potatoes, managing school and kitchen gardens, and engaging in value addition through milling and food storage. These efforts linked youth employment with improved food security and resilience. In several districts, youth voices were represented in Sub-County Nutrition Coordination Committees and district budget conferences, where they successfully lobbied for investments such as motorized water wells and the recruitment of health assistants.

7.3. Climate

Climate resilience was a key cross-cutting focus of Right2Grow Uganda, linking nutrition, WASH, and food security to adaptation and sustainability. The program promoted climate-smart agriculture through demonstration gardens, training farmers on drought-tolerant crops, mulching, and soil conservation. Districts like Kamwenge reinforced resilience through by-laws requiring households to cultivate land for food security. Right2Grow also ensured WASH infrastructure was climate-resilient: a 20,000-litre water reservoir was installed at Adjumani Hospital to secure supply during dry seasons, while in Buliisa, the Ministry of Water and Environment approved a climate-sensitive water system design. In Nwoya, an electric fence built along Patira Game Park protected crops from wildlife

damage, safeguarding food and livelihoods. Community sensitization through radio, dialogues, and farmer trainings promoted sustainable practices such as efficient water use, waste management, and tree planting. Governance systems also integrated climate action, with DNCCs tracking DDEG allocations for climate-adaptive interventions and passing by-laws on food storage and sales to prevent seasonal hunger.

8. Lessons learnt and good practices

8.1. Lessons learnt

The Right2Grow Uganda programme strengthened the long-term sustainability of nutrition and WASH by embedding priorities into district plans, budgets, and routine government systems. Districts now allocate funds for nutrition outreach, water infrastructure, and hygiene campaigns, while DNCCs/SNCCs meet more regularly and health facilities have integrated nutrition and WASH into daily service delivery. Communities also continue low-cost practices such as kitchen gardens, handwashing stations, and locally managed water sources, showing signs of ownership.

However, sustainability remains uneven. Collaboration between CSOs and government, especially in agriculture, was inconsistent, data systems were weak, and limited district budgets constrained follow-up and maintenance once external funding declined. Climate resilience was also insufficiently integrated. These gaps highlight that lasting change depends on deeper institutionalisation, stronger financing models, and better coordination.

8.2. Good practices

Several innovative and practical approaches contributed to the program's success. Joint, multisectoral coordination led to tangible improvements such as new boreholes, motorized wells, and community access roads. People-centred tools like photovoice, CVA scorecards, and BMET turned community feedback into clear, actionable policy and budget outcomes, which helped secure budget reallocations and local infrastructure repairs. Partnering with the private sector through district-level SUN Business Networks successfully linked traders, millers, and processors to nutrition and food safety goals, embedding market-based change. Local actors, including CBOs, youth groups, and theatre troupes, played vital roles in co-designing campaigns, turning technical WASH and nutrition messages into accessible, relatable formats. Integrating behaviour change communication with service delivery created immediate, visible impact, while outcome harvesting and linking-and-learning systems improved collective reflection and accountability. Embedding nutrition and WASH priorities into district plans and budgets strengthened institutional ownership, ensuring continuity beyond project cycles.

9. Conclusions and recommendations

9.1. Conclusions

- **Multi-sector action drove better, faster results:** The evaluation confirmed that undernutrition is best addressed when health, water, agriculture and planning actors work together and are convened through active coordination platforms such as DNCCs and SNCCs. Where these structures were functional, outcomes were stronger and budgets more responsive. Joint district teams planned and sequenced works, health outreaches, borehole drilling/repair, and climate-smart production support so communities saw practical benefits quickly. Examples included eight new boreholes in Purongo, Biiso and Buliisa; four motorized wells with piped extensions to 14 parishes in Maracha; the Ministry of Water and Environment's approval of Buliisa's water system design; and the installation of a 20,000-litre reservoir tank at Adjumani Hospital. These are concrete results of multi-sector planning rather than isolated projects.
- **Community structures were catalysts of change and empowerment:** Local mechanisms CVA groups, water user committees, community monitors and nutrition champions gave residents a direct line to decision-makers and a practical way to follow up. CVA-led scorecards and dialogues translated community priorities into action: 15 drinking water sources were repaired in Buliisa and Biiso; 12 unsafe school latrines were emptied in Nwoya (with costs covered by local leaders); a contaminated water source in Lungulu, Nwoya, was cleaned up; and a community access road from Aparanga to Gotngur was completed to reach a water point and market. As one participant put it, "We are now able to see advocacy being done from lower levels as well." In districts where CVA teams registered as CSOs, community voice became even more visible and durable.
- **Inclusion strengthened participation, trust and service quality:** Active involvement of women, youth and persons with disabilities improved how services were planned and delivered. Schools constructed girl-friendly latrines; water points added ramps for PWDs; and committees intentionally brought women and PWDs into

leadership roles. Male engagement in maternal and child health grew, while youth groups led school and community campaigns on hygiene and nutrition. The Empower Women in Agriculture (EWA)–Uganda Chapter, launched with Right2Grow support, created a national platform for women to shape food and nutrition policies. These changes built confidence and trust between communities and local government and made services more responsive to real household needs.

- Evidence-based advocacy improved accountability and unlocked financing: When advocacy drew on community-generated data scorecards, joint supervision notes and outcome harvesting, leaders responded. Districts created or expanded budget lines: Buliisa allocated funds to drill new boreholes (UGX 93.8m), design the Uribo Water System (UGX 43m) and construct school latrines (UGX 20m); Kamwenge increased its Production & Marketing budget by 47% and its water budget by 3%; Kakumiro increased Production & Marketing by 55% and water by 13.9%; Buliisa increased Production & Marketing by 33% and water by 28%. Nationally, Parliament reallocated UGX 14.5 billion to rural water, and eight CSO-proposed nutrition indicators were integrated into NDP IV. These shifts demonstrate how community evidence, escalated through CSOs, can influence real budget decisions.
- Policy and legal wins anchored changes in the system: Multiple districts passed or revived by-laws and ordinances on food security and sanitation (e.g., Yumbe, Kakumiro, Busiriba and Buliisa), while nutrition ordinances advanced in Kakumiro, Buliisa and Kikuube. The Food and Nutrition Bill progressed in Parliament after a CSO-led lobby meeting with the Speaker, and three proposals (accountability, multi-sector planning, and needs assessments) were adopted into national planning guidelines. At service level, government recruited a Health Assistant in Kakumiro, procured anthropometric equipment for Kasambya HC III, and approved Buliisa's water system design - signals that institutions are taking ownership of Right2Grow priorities.
- Partnerships with private sector, media and development partners expanded reach and influence: SUN Business Networks were established in Nwoya, Bugweri, Maracha and Kabale, connecting traders and processors to nutrition goals and safer food standards. District and national radio shows, theatre groups and gallery walk kept WASH and nutrition messages in public view; one listener described starting a kitchen garden after a radio program. At national level, the Right2Grow -convened Colloquium on Stunting drew WHO, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNDP, FAO and USAID; partners pledged to prioritise funding and called for practical campaigns such as "an egg a day" for children under five. These alliances widened the coalition for change and improved consistency of technical messages.
- Multi-sector approaches plus strong local structures delivered the greatest empowerment: Districts that combined coordinated government platforms (DNCC/SNCC) with empowered community structures (CVA, water boards, VHTs, youth groups) saw the clearest improvements: faster problem-solving, fewer duplications, and steady follow-through. In Buliisa, joint planning linked water, health and education actions (boreholes, school gardens, latrine construction). In Nwoya, cooperation between wildlife authorities and district leaders secured an electric fence along Patira/Kibale Park edges, protecting crops and household food security - an example of multi-sector problem-solving beyond the usual WASH/health boundaries.
- Sustainability advanced but remains uneven and at risk without stable financing. Many gains were embedded in government systems functioning DNCCs/SNCCs, recruitment of staff, community committees, and CSOs able to monitor budgets. However, continuity weakened when CSO funding dipped, and high-cost interventions (e.g., demonstration farms, large water schemes) still rely on external financing. Staff turnover and competing district priorities also slowed follow-through. The lesson is clear: integration into district plans and budgets must happen early, and local capacity for ongoing operations and maintenance needs continued support so that results last beyond the project cycle.
- Integrating Linking and Learning as a core component of the programme: across the six countries of Right2Grow was an innovative and effective strategy that significantly enhanced the programme's overall implementation and impact. Uganda has demonstrated substantial progress in building a learning culture that is more intentional, reflective, and operationally useful. Learning is no longer seen as a parallel process but as a central pillar that informs and improves programme implementation, strategy, and collaboration. This evolution fostered deeper critical reflection and allowed for timely adaptations, leading to more impactful interventions. To maximize the potential of Linking and Learning in future programming, emphasis should be placed on training teams and providing in person support to regularly use the tools and better integrate learning in programme adaptation. Moreover, establishing clear performance indicators for learning documentation, dissemination, and application from the outset could provide a more detailed understanding of progress made and areas needing adjustment.

9.2. Recommendations for future programming

Table 26. Recommendations for future programming Uganda

No.	Key Finding	Detailed Recommendation (Post-Right2Grow)	Primary Responsible
1	District and national budget allocations for nutrition and WASH remain low and largely dependent on donor financing.	The Government of Uganda should institutionalize dedicated budget lines for nutrition and WASH within the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and all District Development Plans (DDPs). This should include annual performance-based releases to DNCCs and SNCCs, clear tracking of expenditures, and public disclosure of nutrition financing data. Donors should support transition financing mechanisms for two years post-Right2Grow to prevent regression.	MoFPED, NPA, OPM, District Local Governments, Development Partners
2	Coordination mechanisms (DNCCs/SNCCs) improved under Right2Grow but remain weak and unsustainable after project exit.	Institutionalize multisectoral coordination structures by embedding DNCCs and SNCCs into the core district planning and budgeting process. Each committee should receive an annual operational grant and report to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). Line ministries should include coordination functionality indicators in the annual performance assessment.	OPM, MoH, MoWE, MoLG, District Councils
3	CSOs strengthened their advocacy under Right2Grow but face limited funding and shrinking civic space.	Establish a national civil-society resilience fund (led by CSBAG or NGO Forum) to sustain advocacy and policy monitoring on nutrition and WASH. Future programmes should invest in CSO institutional sustainability, strategic communication, and digital advocacy tools for budget tracking, particularly at sub-national levels.	CSBAG, FRA, NGO Forum, Development Partners, MoGLSD
4	Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) and scorecards improved accountability but were not scaled up nationally.	The Ministry of Local Government should mainstream CVA and community-scorecard models into district performance frameworks and integrate them within the Local Government Management Information System (LGMIS). This would allow community monitoring results to feed into sector performance reviews. Civil-society actors should continue to mentor CVA facilitators at community level to maintain gains. Refer to the Right2Grow Learning Catalogue and especially to the learning briefs focusing on the implementation of the CVA and VCA approaches and its key insights for scaling it up.	MoLG, World Vision Uganda, District Local Governments, OPM
5	Gender and youth considerations improved, but women and youth remain underrepresented in decision-making structures.	Apply a gender-transformative and youth-inclusive governance model by introducing leadership quotas in DNCCs, SNCCs, and community committees. Provide mentorship and leadership development opportunities for young women and integrate gender-responsive budgeting in all nutrition and WASH planning cycles. Reinforce Children Parliament functioning – Refer to the corresponding learning brief on 'Children parliament for improved wash and nutrition' in the Right2Grow Learning Catalogue	MoGLSD, CSOs, Youth Councils, Women's Networks, District LGs
6	Private-sector participation through the SUN Business Network (SBN) is still limited and largely donor-driven.	Strengthen public-private partnerships (PPPs) to incentivize local agribusinesses, SMEs, and WASH entrepreneurs to invest in nutrition-sensitive and climate-resilient innovations. Introduce tax breaks or grant matching for fortified foods, milk coolers, solar-powered boreholes, and hygiene product manufacturing. Districts should convene annual investment forums to attract private-sector collaboration.	MoTIC, PSFU, SBN-Uganda, District Investment Offices, Development Partners
7	The MEAL framework successfully applied outcome harvesting but lacked harmonization and consistent data quality across partners.	Develop a national integrated Nutrition and WASH Data and Learning Platform, hosted under OPM and UBOS, to harmonize indicators, store disaggregated data, and link outcome harvesting with government management information systems. Future sector programmes should ensure routine data verification, feedback loops, and real-time dashboards for policy tracking.	OPM, UBOS, NPA, MoH, MoWE, Development Partners
8	There has been substantial progress in building a more intentional and reflective learning culture, but its long-term sustainability is uncertain.	Continue efforts to document and share lessons learned at all levels of implementation. Learning and sharing lessons is everyone's business, so maintain in person training sessions on L&L concepts and tools and experience sharing and exchanging spaces between actors (Ex: Learning week, quarterly meetings...)	All partners at all levels
8	Communities demonstrated ownership and active participation, but sustainability is uncertain after programme closure.	Consolidate community ownership by embedding CVA/VCA models into district community-development structures and training parish development committees to manage them. Districts should integrate these models into their Community Development Departments and provide minimal facilitation to community monitors for continuity.	District Local Governments, MoLG, OPM, CSOs

9	Donor coordination along the humanitarian–development nexus improved but was not fully achieved.	Strengthen Nutrition Development Partner Coordination Platforms (NDPG) to ensure alignment of humanitarian and development actors around government-led plans such as UNAP III. Donors should commit to joint annual reviews, pooled funding, and a unified results framework to avoid fragmentation.	Dutch Embassy, UNICEF, FAO, WFP, WHO, World Bank, OPM
10	Climate variability and environmental degradation increasingly threaten nutrition and WASH outcomes.	Mainstream climate-resilient programming into all future nutrition and WASH interventions by promoting rainwater harvesting, water-source protection, safe storage, drought-tolerant crops, and green energy for WASH facilities. Districts should integrate these in their Environment and Natural Resources Plans to safeguard long-term gains.	MoWE, MAAIF, NEMA, NPA, District Local Governments
11	Unequal coverage and access	Expand coverage with a focus on equity: Target underserved sub-counties, especially in refugee-hosting areas. Ensure resources are fairly distributed between host and refugee populations to promote social cohesion.	
12	In some districts there were some evidences of Limited coordination and fragmented planning	Strengthen and institutionalize multi-sectoral coordination for nutrition and WASH by maintaining the District Nutrition Coordination Committee (DNCC) as a formal structure for joint planning, budgeting, and monitoring. Ensure all key departments - health, water, agriculture, and planning - continue to collaborate under one framework.	

Annex 5 - Full methodology

The end-term evaluation used a mixed-methods approach that built on information from multiple data sources using different methods to enable triangulation of findings. This evaluation was guided by the technical requirements as laid out in the IOB criteria of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

1. Methods used in the evaluation

The evaluation approach built on a few different methods. Some specific methods that were used in this evaluation are briefly explained below. The next section outlines how these methods were used in the evaluation.

Evidence Gap Map

What is it? An Evidence Gap Map is a visual representation of the available evidence of a programme (such as monitoring data, harvested outcomes, MTR data and earlier surveys). It is often plotted onto the Theory of Change or other strategy documents.

How was it used in this evaluation? This evaluation created an Evidence Gap Map to provide an overview of which intended outputs, results and changes were achieved. In total, 8 Evidence Gap Maps were created, one for each country, a global one for global efforts and one that combines all maps.

Contribution Analysis

What is it? Contribution analysis is a theory-based evaluation approach meaning it starts with the theory of how change takes place. Contribution analysis is a method to assess whether a programme contributed to the observed outcomes and how this happened (what else can influence the outcomes). In doing so, it particularly looks at the different factors and actors involved and how they (next to the programme) have influenced the achieved outcomes.

How was it used in this evaluation? In this evaluation, contribution analysis was used to further the understanding of the programme's contribution to the achieved changes. It was particularly used to dive deeper in some of the strategies selected during the inception phase (the hotspots – see section on Scope). The selection of hotspots as key areas of (contested) interest is an approach coming from contribution analysis. Contribution analysis was used for each hotspot to create a so-called contribution narrative or story, which is a short description of how the programme contributed to the changes in this specific hotspot. This contribution story then made use of a CIMO approach, which explained the Context, the Interventions conducted, the Mechanisms of change and the Outcomes produced. The contribution stories were then created by country teams and then validated by external stakeholders through focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

Sprockler

What is it? Sprockler is a methodology and a software that allows for collecting, processing, analysing and visualising data. In Sprockler, respondents are asked to tell a story about an experience (storytelling) and then give meaning to this experience themselves by answering a few questions about the story. These follow-up questions provide the quantitative data with the stories. The stories and data are visualised in an online webpage, making it accessible to all stakeholders in the programme.

How was it used in this evaluation? Sprockler was used to send out the partnership survey that was used in this evaluation. Through using Sprockler, it was possible to combine both stories and data, use the same survey in multiple languages at the same time and enable easy visualisation of results. For the survey for partner organisation staff, the visualisation through Sprockler enabled a shared reflection on the results, thus, providing the opportunity for joint interpretation and sense-making.

2. Data collection

The evaluation used an interactive and participatory approach that included the different stakeholders in the evaluation.

The end-term evaluation triangulates different evidence streams, including documentation and monitoring data, surveys for staff of partner organisations, reflection sessions with staff, and observations, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews with community members and other key stakeholders. The section below describes the approach used for each data stream:

- **Laying the theoretical groundwork:** The first step included reviewing the available monitoring data, context, and relevant documentation. The monitoring data was translated into an updated indicator overview (Annex 1 of this report). All information for this overview was collected by the Right2Grow programme, including (but not limited to) its harvested outcomes, MCD survey and activity tallies. Based on the harvested outcomes, an Evidence Gap Map was created per country as well as one at the global level for global efforts and one combined version. This was conducted by the global evaluation team and shared with the national evaluation consultants. The national evaluation consultants conducted a context review as preparation for data collection and to fully understand the context in which the programme operated. This context review was not an extensive document review but mainly served to further understand the context and the different factors and actors at play.
- **Collection of additional data online through surveys:** Data collection started with sending out the survey to staff of all partner organisations (particularly regarding the coherence and partnership and collaboration questions). The global evaluation team and national evaluation consultants worked together with the country teams to ensure high response rates. At the same time, the programme also sent out the Mutual-Capacity Development assessment and Linking & Learning survey that was conducted by the Right2Grow programme team. Country reports and global reports on Mutual Capacity Development and Linking & Learning were developed by programme teams and fed into the results of the evaluation.
- **Reflection sessions with partner organisations:** In-country data collection started with a reflection session with staff from all partner organisations in the coalition facilitated by the national evaluation consultants. The goal of this session was to collect examples, experiences, and reflections on the programme's relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, and coherence from the staff of the partner organisations in the programme. The reflection sessions also served to create the contribution stories (tracing contribution from activities to outputs and to outcomes) that were validated in the focus group discussions and key informant interviews. This reflection session included different exercises inviting staff to reflect on the programme and its achievements.
- **Further construction of contribution narrative and data collection for other evaluation questions through focus group discussions, observation and key informant interviews:** The next step in data collection consisted of national evaluation consultants conducting focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and observations in communities covered. At the global and Dutch level, key informant interviews were conducted. During the focus group discussions and key informant interviews, examples and experiences were collected, and the contribution story of the relevant hotspot was validated. Focus groups were conducted with community members the programme had worked with. In addition to the focus group discussions, the national evaluation consultants visited locations in the community to observe WASH conditions. Those locations were documented through pictures (or videos) and their GPS coordinates. Observation was used to assess technical/facility and hygienic conditions as well as to visualise WASH conditions in the communities that had been covered. Key informant interviews (at country and global level) were conducted with internal and external actors, such as other CSOs, governmental actors, donors, international development actors, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassies, private sector actors and other external stakeholders of the programme. National evaluation consultants were responsible for leading the country-level data collection efforts, while at the global level, the interviews were conducted by the global evaluation team. The total samples and sampling strategy per data stream can be found in Chapter 3.

3. Data analysis per data source

The data streams presented in the previous section provided primary and secondary data that were used to provide answers to the evaluation questions. This section describes how each data stream was analysed (and the next section will outline how data was combined) The analytical process followed a clear sequence, guided by the research set-up. First, a study of the monitoring data was conducted, and annual reports and other relevant programme documents were analysed to identify patterns, trends and areas requiring further exploration. Second,

staff members of partner organisations were asked to respond to several surveys to collect examples of the impact of the programme on partner organisations and their perspectives on the coherence and sustainability of the programme. Third, consortium reflection sessions were organised to interpret these initial findings, refine the focus on selected causal links and develop preliminary contribution stories. Fourth, qualitative data were collected through focus group discussions, observations and key informant interviews, with a particular emphasis on external stakeholders and programme participants. These qualitative methods to collect additional information were explicitly used to validate, nuance or challenge earlier findings and to explore alternative explanations. Fifth, country-level validation sessions as well as a session at the global level were held to collectively reflect on the emerging findings and assess their consistency and plausibility. Finally, comparative analyses were conducted to compare the findings across contexts and synthesize the findings presented in the country reports into this consolidated report.

Use of documentation, context and monitoring data review

The previous section described how the findings coming from the documentation review have been used in this evaluation. The desk research helped to fully understand the programme and contributed to the development of the methodology and the descriptive chapters in the evaluation reports. The context review provided insight into the key factors and actors at play and supported the development of context-appropriate data collection tools and planning, as well as informed reflections on programmatic relevance, external coherence and contribution to change. The review of monitoring data served to update the indicator overview presented in Annex 1, create the Evidence Gap Maps and reflect on programme progress as discussed in the Effectiveness chapter. The reviews of documentation, contexts and monitoring data were conducted on the level of each country and on the global level. The Evidence Gap Maps per country/global were created on the global level and shared with each national consultant to ensure an aligned approach.

Survey data analysis

The partnership survey has been analysed using the Sprockler software. The full reports can be accessed here:

- English: <https://visualizer.sprockler.com/en/open/R2GPartnershipSurveyOpenView>
- French: <https://visualizer.sprockler.com/en/open/R2GPartnershipSurveyFROpenView>

Annex 2 provides an overview of the links to the country-specific versions of the reports. When opening the online reports, several graphs with dots appear. These graphs represent all the questions asked in the survey. Every dot is an individual respondent. If you click on a dot in a graph, the story of that respondent appears on the left-hand side. For each survey, there are some respondents who do not consent to sharing their stories. Instead, a phrase stating "This person did not consent to sharing their story" will appear on the left-hand side. Their open answers have also not been included in this report. In the reports, some of the graphs have been copied and pasted and can be interpreted the same way: the number of dots represents the number of responses. The colours of the dots represent different categories, such as different regions or ages.

In this report, some bipole questions (sliders) have been translated to percentages for easy understandability for readers. The translation works in the following way: the bipole results are shown as a number from the most negative number 0 (left side of the bipole) to 1, the most positive number (right side of the bipole). The bipole is split into three categories, with <0.333 corresponding to the left side of the bipole (agreeing with that element, for example 'Completely disagree'), >0.666 corresponding to the right side of the bipole (agreeing with that element, for example 'Completely agree') and the middle category (seen as not taking a strong position). The number of responses in each third is automatically counted and converted into percentages of the total number of responses.

Through using the Sprockler software, the evaluation team could visualise the data for the survey, facilitating easy interpretation and comparison of results. This visualisation helps in identifying clusters of responses and outliers and enables comparing different questions to find trends and patterns.

During the analysis phase, the global evaluation team prepared analysis documents detailing the findings for all survey questions and the comparison between the different questions, including different lenses (such as whether there are differences in gender, age, length of involvement, type of actor, etc.). These analysis documents were prepared on a global level and on a country level, where key deviations or commonalities with the global level were elaborated upon. These documents were shared with national evaluation consultants who combined them with the findings from the country-level data collection efforts for triangulation. The findings from the survey are used in the Effectiveness chapter and the Coherence chapter.

Two online interpretation sessions were organised with the consortium partners to jointly reflect on the findings. One session was organised in French and one in English to facilitate easy discussion. The interpretation sessions included a brief elaboration on who had responded to ascertain representativeness and then outlined key findings.

Programme participants were asked to provide potential explanations for the findings, for the differences in findings per country (or alternative lenses such as age) and for the changes in findings compared to the mid-term review. National evaluation consultants were also present at the interpretation sessions, which facilitated triangulation of data. The explanations offered by programme staff for observed results and trends were included in this report.

The results of the Mutual Capacity Development and Linking and Learning Surveys were analysed by the Right2Grow programme team. The results were presented in an online session and documented, and these results were fed into the evaluation.

Analysis of in-country collected data (and global data)

The data collected in the reflection sessions, focus group discussions, observations and key informant interviews were captured in prepared uniform raw data formats in Excel. This happened on the level of each country and on the global level. The raw data formats in Excel followed the structure of the evaluation tools for the focus group discussions, reflection sessions, key informant interviews and observations.

During the reflection sessions, contribution stories were created for the relevant hotspots in each country. These contribution stories were developed by staff of partner organisations, facilitated by national consultants. The contribution stories started from the Interventions that took place and the Context in which they were conducted, followed the Outcomes that subsequently pursued and diving deeper into the Mechanisms at play (CIMO approach). Following this approach enabled the recreation of how change had happened for each hotspot, including the role alternative theories and contextual factors. During the focus group discussions and key informant interviews with relevant stakeholders (the stakeholders knowledgeable about the particular causal link), the contribution stories were validated using a fixed set of guiding questions. Through this process, the contribution stories were tested and enriched with external perspectives.

Qualitative data from interviews, reflection sessions, focus group discussions and observations were analysed thematically, guided by the evaluation questions and the structure of the evaluation matrix. Data analysis was conducted in a sequential and structural manner at country level, before being synthesized in the overarching report. Qualitative data (including the open questions in the survey) was analysed using inductive thematic coding, following themes that emerge from the data. Qualitative data related to the changes achieved by the programme was analysed using deductive thematic coding, using the programmatic or country Theory of Change to identify certain steps of change.

The initial analysis was conducted at the country level by national consultants, with the objective of producing country-specific insights that could be used as input for national validation sessions and reporting. For each country, the evaluation matrix served as the primary analytical framework. Each element of the matrix (evaluation questions and data sources) was systematically addressed using evidence from multiple sources. The next section describes how different data sources were combined to answer each evaluation question. The resulting analyses are documented in the country reports, which are annexed to this report.

For cross-country data, a comparative analysis was conducted to identify patterns, trends and contextual differences related to programme strategies and outcomes. This consolidated report is based on the results presented in the country reports (and the underlying data) and the additional data collected on the global level. Thematic analysis was applied in line with the evaluation questions and the Evaluation Matrix. On the country level, the national consultants coded the qualitative data. On the consolidated level, global consultants compared the data coming from the multiple country reports, referring back to the raw data to check inter-coder reliability. The consolidated level also included the additional comparative analysis of the contribution stories. This comparative analysis followed contribution analysis and realist evaluation and assessed the contribution stories from a CIMO approach (Context, Interventions, Mechanisms of Change, Outcomes). Contribution stories for different countries were structurally compared per hotspot, resulting in an analysis of which mechanisms particularly drove outcomes, which contexts enabled or constrained these mechanisms, and which mechanisms work best in which context. This analysis used a comparative qualitative analysis approach plotting CIMO elements in a table.

Decisions on which data were included in the analysis were based on their relevance to the evaluation questions and their contribution to validating or challenging emerging findings, rather than on the perceived positivity of results. Methodological strengths and limitations were also considered (see the limitations section in Chapter 3). Findings from each method were compared through a systematic process of triangulation described in the next section. No single data source was assigned a predetermined weight across the whole evaluation; instead, conclusions were drawn based on the convergence or divergence of evidence across sources. Converging findings across surveys, reflection sessions, focus group discussions and interviews and documentation reviews were interpreted as

reinforcing evidence. Where methods diverged, the differences were transparently reported, and it was assessed whether they reflected methodological limitations or meaningful variations.

The evaluation aimed to avoid selective representation of findings by using a predefined analytical framework (in the form of the Evaluation Matrix and raw data reporting formats), by reporting and explicitly requesting both confirming and contradictory evidence, using structured reporting templates and involving multiple analysts on the consolidated level.

4. Data analysis and triangulation per evaluation question

For each evaluation question (and chapter in this report), the evaluation team used multiple data sources to triangulate data. This section will elaborate the triangulation process that took place. The Evaluation Matrix in Annex 2 provides a full overview of how the questions in the different evaluation tools fed into answering the evaluation questions. The table below provided a brief overview.

For evaluation questions related to effectiveness and impact, existing monitoring data led to the development of the Evidence Gap Map, and this information was combined with the contribution stories developed during the reflection session and supported by the information from the focus groups, interviews and substantiated outcomes. Contribution analysis was employed to review the causal relationships between programme activities and observed changes for the hotspots selected. For evaluation questions on relevance and sustainability, data from the reflection sessions, focus groups and interviews were synthesised and complemented with reflections from the context review and Evidence Gap Map. For evaluation questions regarding partnership coherence, the survey results were analysed and combined with the information from existing assessments and information coming from reflection sessions and interviews. A separate interpretation session on the topic of coherence and partnership collaboration was conducted with partner organisations to share the results of the survey and jointly interpret their meaning. These reflections were incorporated into the analysis phase.

Table 27: Overview data collection and stakeholders involved

	Data collection	Stakeholder involved
Relevance	• Context review • Document and monitoring data review (leading to Evidence Gap Maps) • Reflection session • Focus group discussions • Key informant Interviews • Observations	• Right2Grow Partners • Communities • Governments • Donors & development actors • External stakeholders
Effectiveness & Impact	• Document and monitoring data review (leading to Evidence Gap Maps) • Reflection session • Focus group discussions • Key Informant interviews • Observations • MCD and L&L surveys	• Right2Grow Partners staff • Communities • Governments • Donors & development actors • External stakeholders
Sustainability	• Reflection session • Focus group discussions • Key informant interviews • MCD and L&L surveys	• Right2Grow Partners staff • Communities • Governments • Donors & development actors • External stakeholders
Coherence & Partnership and collaboration	• Partnership Survey • Reflection session • Focus group discussions • Key Informant interviews	• Right2Grow Partners staff • External stakeholders

Evaluating the relevance of the Theory of Change & needs of local communities / targeted population

To inform the evaluation questions on the relevance of the programme's Theory of Change, the evaluation started with reviewing the monitoring information and relevant documentation. This review provided information on the

quality of the Theories of Change and indicated where activities had taken place and how the context and needs of the communities and political stakeholders had been taken into account in the programme design and strategies. The creation of the Evidence Gap Map, based on outcomes harvested by the programme (mainly used for Effectiveness related questions), also informed the questions related to relevance, as it visually showed which mechanisms were effective in practice, therefore providing information on what had and had not proven to be relevant for the different contexts. The context reviews conducted by national consultants helped to understand the external and internal environments in which the programme operated and how these changed over the course of the programme, including social, economic, political and cultural factors. Based on this foundation, consultants collected information that would confirm or deny the relevance and responsiveness of the programme's Theory of Change and strategies. The reflection session with programme staff (which included an exercise on relevance) provided information that was compared to information coming from focus groups and key informant interviews with government actors, community members and other external stakeholders. Information coming from external sources and internal sources were compared for cross-verification. All data sources were considered equally pertinent to answering the evaluation questions around relevance, but for the sub-questions regarding the programme's strategies' responsiveness to the needs of local communities and national government needs, the perspectives of the local communities and governmental actors respectively were given more weight.

Evaluating the effectiveness & impact of the programme

To assess the effectiveness and impact of the programme, the evaluation aimed to collect evidence for the different levels in the Theory of Change (activities, outputs, outcomes and impact). The evaluation team started with a review of existing monitoring information, including the Result Frameworks, harvested and substantiated outcomes, annual reports, and mid-term review findings. This documentation mainly provided information on the activity and output level, which were then corroborated with information coming from the reflection sessions, focus group discussions and interviews. The monitoring data review also provided insight into some of the outcomes achieved by the programme, which have been harvested by the programme. These harvested outcomes informed the creation of the Evidence Gap Maps that visualise where in the programme Theory of Change changes have been achieved. These maps were specified per country (including one at global level) and an aggregated map was produced to visualise which mechanisms of change contributed to results. These maps gave some insight into where in the Theory of Change the programme had been able to document achieved changes, which formed a good starting point for discussions during the reflection sessions on the effectiveness of the programme compared to its set goals. The Evidence Gap Maps were mainly used to drive conversations on effectiveness and are not full representations of the achieved changes on the outcome level (due to the nature of the Outcome Harvesting method of collecting the known changes and the way it was applied by the programme). For example, the changes related to CSOs were captured using the Mutual Capacity Development self-assessment survey conducted by the programme. The monitoring data and subsequent Evidence Gap Map provided a starting point for assessing the outcomes of the programme. The main insight regarding outcomes and impact of the programme, including negative unintended effects, came from the additional data collection. Information coming from the focus group discussions and external key informant interviews was compared to data collected by the programme or shared by partner organisation staff for cross-verification. This was combined with the information coming from the observations, which aimed to provide an external perspective on shared experiences and perceptions.

To dive deeper into understanding the effectiveness of the programme's strategies (tracing contribution from activities, to outputs, to outcomes), contribution stories were developed around selected hotspots using contribution analysis during the reflection sessions with staff of partner organisations and subsequently validated in the focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

Evaluating sustainability of the partnership's results

Information regarding the sustainability of the programme's outcomes mainly came from the reflection sessions, focus groups and key informant interviews. During the reflection sessions, after developing the contribution narrative, conversations were held on the likelihood of the sustainability of these changes. Similarly, in the interviews and focus group discussions, programme participants and stakeholders were asked about the likelihood of sustainable change. Using the realist approach and focusing on factors that made a certain mechanism successful or not, the evaluation pointed out which factors to pay attention to and assessed the likelihood of their sustained role when collecting data. Input from the Mutual Capacity Development and Linking & Learning survey results was also used to answer the questions under this category. All data sources were awarded the same weight, but careful attention was given to external sources that confirmed internal perspectives on sustainability of the results.

Evaluating coherence & partnership and collaboration

The main source of information for the evaluation questions regarding coherence was the survey sent out to staff of all programme partner organisations. This (anonymous) survey included questions related to collaboration between consortium partners and with other partners, use of adaptive management principles, added value of and to MFA and its embassies, localisation and shift-the-power efforts, and steps to build local ownership. As one of the last questions in the survey, staff members were asked whether they wanted to participate in the interpretation session of the results of the partnership survey. During this interpretation session, the evaluation team jointly made sense of the results of this survey, providing potential explanations and challenging assumptions underlying the results to further foster joint learning on a country-overarching level.

Further information regarding this evaluation question came from a specific coherence exercise in the country team reflection session. Additionally, where relevant, results from the Linking & Learning and Mutual Capacity Development self-assessment conducted by the programme were also reviewed to provide answers to these questions. Evaluation questions regarding internal coherence between the different elements of the programme were mainly assessed using internal information, whereas for evaluation questions regarding the coherence with key programme stakeholders, the perspectives of those stakeholders weighed more heavily in confirming or denying perspectives shared by the programme.

5. Validation, reporting and use

Validation sessions

The key findings on the country level were presented in validation sessions. The validation workshops involved the country leads, MEAL focal points, representatives of all partner organisations in the country consortia as well as representatives of the global consortium partners. These workshops focused on validating findings and learning for future programming. National evaluation consultants and the global evaluation team shared the key findings per country and globally (including overarching findings), facilitated deep understanding of the findings and discussed concrete suggestions for the future. In addition to learning about the findings of the evaluation, validation workshops also offered space for joint reflection on the programme and its lessons learned. The validation sessions explicitly invited critical reflection, identification of inconsistencies and discussion of alternative interpretations. Right2Grow was not able to change the findings of the evaluation in the validation session but contributed to potential explanations and interpretations of why certain findings were the way they were and discussed how they would like to follow up on the shared recommendations. Reflections and discussions of the validation sessions were taken up in the country evaluation reports and in this consolidated report.

Preparation of consolidated report

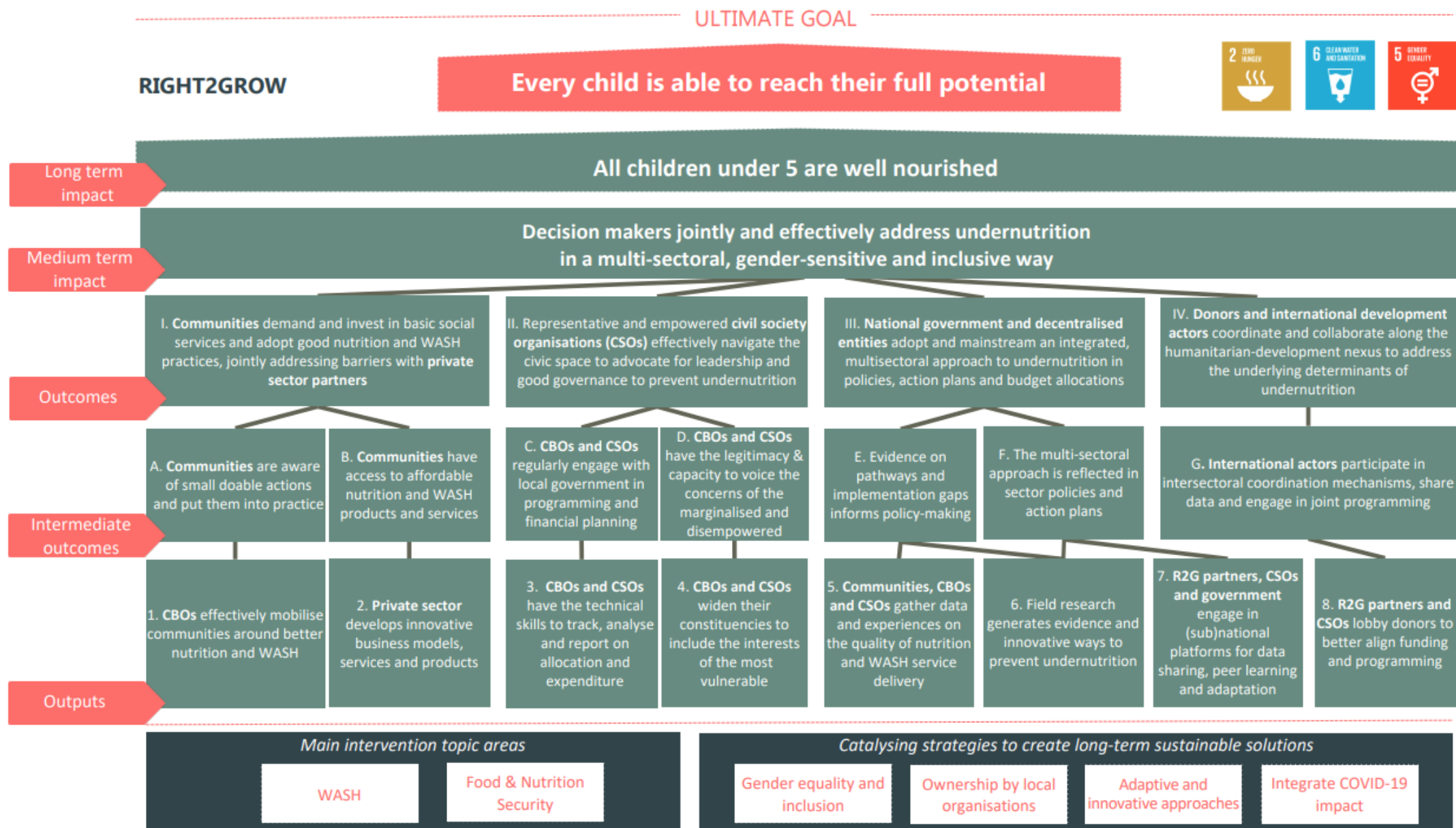
As the next step, this consolidated evaluation report was produced. This report synthesises all the findings and analysis of the previous steps (documentation review, survey analysis and reflections from interpretation sessions, analysis of in-country and global level data collection and relevant reflections from the validation sessions). On the global level, a deeper analysis was conducted to compare the findings from the different countries. For example, a comparative qualitative analysis was conducted per hotspot to compare the different contribution stories and find common or deviating factors in the contribution of the programme. Furthermore, the consolidated report provides a deeper analysis of the coherence of the partnership as a whole. The draft report was presented during a validation session with both country and global team representatives, and they were given the opportunity to review and provide feedback, which was integrated for the final version.

Alongside the validation process, the national evaluation consultants, with back-up support from the global team, prepared six short country reports with findings, primary data, conclusions and recommendations, which were completed with the inclusion of reflections coming from the validation sessions. Based on the short country reports and the overarching analysis as described in the previous phase, a draft global report was produced. The creation of this global report started with an internal sense-making session with the national and global evaluation consultants to jointly identify key lessons learned and recommendations. In line with the proposed realist design of the evaluation, the reports described the different contexts of the programme, the different interventions the programme applied, how different mechanisms were used (filling the relevance chapter) and to which outcomes this led (effectiveness and impact chapter). This was followed by reflections on the sustainability of the programme's outcomes and impact and lessons learned on partnership coherence. The draft reports were submitted to the Right2Grow programme team, the external reference group and other relevant programme stakeholders for review. Following this review, the evaluation team finalised the country and global reports. In addition to the evaluation

report, the evaluation team also provided stand-alone communication products, such as a slide deck and fact sheets, with main findings and recommendations.

Upon completion, these reports provided the Right2Grow partnership and its stakeholders with actionable insights and recommendations, enabling informed decision-making for future programming and advocacy efforts. After that, it was up to the partnership and all their partners and stakeholders to use the lessons learned in their practice.

Annex 6 - Theory of Change Right2Grow programme



Annex 7 – Evaluation Matrix

Table 28: Evaluation Matrix

Category	Evaluation question	Context review	Document review (+ EGM)	MCD & L&L surveys	Partner survey	Reflection session (staff)	Observation FGDs	KIIs
Relevance	1.1 To what extent did the overall programme ToC and country ToCs match with the key issues at country and global levels?	✓	✓			Exercise 1 - Relevance of the Theory of Change 1. Context: Can you create a shared image of the different factors and actors playing a role in the context of the programme? 3. Linking with the Theory of Change: Can you explain your country level Theory of Change? What is different in your country Theory of Change compared to the programmatic Theory of Change? What aspects of the contexts are considered there? 4. Relevance for key issues: Looking at the rich pictures, to what extent did the country Theory of Change match with the key issues at country level? To what extent, did the programmatic Theory of Change match with the key issues at country levels?		2. Relevance to key issues: With country stakeholders: To what extent do you think the programme addresses the key issues around child nutrition at the country level? With global stakeholders: To what extent do you think the programme addresses the key issues around child nutrition at the global level? (external and internal stakeholders)
	1.2 To what extent are the overall programme ToC and the country ToC including assumptions valid and of high quality?		✓					
	1.3 To what extent have the programme strategies responded to the needs of local communities / targeted population?	✓	✓			Exercise 1 - Relevance 5. Responsiveness to local needs: Thinking now at how you have implemented the Theory of Change in programme strategies, to what extent have the programme strategies responded to the needs of the local community? Can you give examples?	Exercise 4 - Relevance & Suggestions 1. Relevance: Do you think the programme responded to your needs? Which needs do you think the programme addressed well? Which needs do you think the programme could have addressed more? Why?	3. Responsiveness to local needs: Thinking now of the implementation of the programme, to what extent do you feel that have the programme strategies responded to the needs of the local community? Can you give examples? (external and internal stakeholders)
	1.4 To what extent have the programme strategies responded to the needs to strengthen policies and	✓	✓			Exercise 1 - Relevance 6. Responsiveness to policy needs: To what extent have the programme strategies responded		4. Responsiveness to policy needs: To what extent have the programme strategies responded to the needs to strengthen policies and budgets? Can

	budgets at country and global level?					to the needs to strengthen policies and budgets? Can you give examples?		you give examples to support your answer? (external and internal stakeholders)
Effectiveness & Impact	2.1 What have been the main (intermediate) outcomes results achieved at end-line in relation to the programme ToC pathways and the progress towards the achievement of the donor indicators (output and outcome level)?	✓	✓			Exercise 2 - Significant Changes 1. Significant changes: For you as a programme team, which changes that you were able to achieve do you consider most significant? 4. Capacity strengthening: Can you share what have been the most significant changes you experienced yourself or in your organisation by being part of this programme? Exercise 3 - Evidence Gap Map 1. Completeness of Evidence Gap Map: Is this Evidence Gap Map complete? What information is missing and where can that be found? 2. Achievement of targets: Based on the Evidence Gap Maps, do you think the programme has achieved its intended targets in this country? 3. Perceptions Evidence Gap Map: What does the Evidence Gap Map suggest about how change happened (or didn't happen) in this context? Which mechanisms of change seemed to work well, and which didn't -and why do you think that is?	✓	Exercise 1 - Effectiveness: Stories of change 2. Examples of change: Looking at where you are now, can you share an example of something significant that changed in your life because you participated in the Right2Grow programme? 5. Significant changes: Looking back on the five years of programme implementation, what are the most significant changes that you have experienced or observed? (external and internal stakeholders)
	2.2 To what extent were strategies and activities effective in selected hotspots?	✓				Exercise 4 - Contribution story 1. Contribution story: Build a contribution story using the following questions: a. what elements of the context are relevant for this hotspot? Who else and what else played a role? b. Which interventions did the programme implement on this hotspot? c. Which outcomes did the programme achieve regarding this hotspot? d. Which mechanisms are/have been at play in this hotspot?		Exercise 3 - Contribution Story 1. Clarity: Is the story clearly explained? Do you understand it? Are there some parts that are not clear? 2. Agreement: Do you agree with the contribution story? Do you think it accurately explains what happened? 3. Completeness: What elements do you think should be added to strengthen the story? For example, are there any 9. Clarity: Is the contribution story clearly explained? Do you understand it? Are there some parts that are not clear? 10. Agreement: Do you agree with the contribution story? Do you think it accurately explains what happened? 11. Completeness: What elements do you think should be added to strengthen the story? For example, are there any actors or factors that should be included? 12. Plausibility: Given the scope and size of this programme, do you think it is plausible that the programme contributed to these changes on a scale of 1 to 4? Why? Do you think these changes would

					2. Examples: What examples can you share from the programme period that show how this works?		actors or factors that should be included? Are there any other examples that you know that could be added? 4. Plausibility: Do you think the changes described would have happened without the programme's involvement? Given the scope and size of this programme, do you think it is plausible that the programme contributed to these changes on a scale of 1 to 4? 5. Sustainability: On a score of 1 to 4, how convinced are you that the different changes you mentioned will stay for a long time? Why?	have happened without the programme's involvement? 13. Sustainability: On a score of 1 to 4, how convinced are you that the different changes mentioned will stay for a long time? Why? What indications do you see for lasting change? (external stakeholders)
	2.3 In what ways did the programme contribute to its planned development impact?		✓	✓	Exercise 2 - Significant Changes 2. Long-term impact objectives: What examples have you experienced or observed where the programme contributed to the achievement of its long-term impact objectives?		Exercise 1 - Effectiveness: Stories of change 3. Impact objectives – children : Have you seen any changes in children because of these activities or programmes? For example, have you noticed any changes in their nutrition, health, or growth? 4. Impact objectives – decision-makers: Have you noticed any changes in how leaders or decision-makers are working together to fight undernutrition? For example, are they meeting more, sharing ideas, or doing things together to help the community?	6. Long-term impact objectives: What examples have you experienced or observed where the programme contributed to the achievement of its long-term impact objectives? (external and internal stakeholders)
	2.4 What examples of positive or negative unintended effects did the programme encounter?		✓		Exercise 2 - Significant Changes 3. Unexpected or negative changes: Are there any changes you observed that you didn't expect or are negative?		Exercise 1 - Effectiveness: Stories of change 5. Unexpected and negative changes: Have you observed or experienced any unexpected or negative changes?	7. Unexpected or negative changes: Are there any changes you observed that you didn't expect or are negative? (external and internal stakeholders)
Sustainability	3.1 To what extent are the changes achieved by the programme long-lasting?				13. Perceived sustainability collaboration: How likely do you think it is that your organisation will be continue to collaborate with the organisations in the	Exercise 2 - Sustainability 1. Perception on sustainability of outcomes: On a score of 1 to 4, how convinced are you that the		8. Sustainability: On a score of 1 to 4, how convinced are you that these different changes you mentioned will stay for a long time? Why? What

					country coalition or consortium after the programme is finished?	different personal examples you mentioned will stay for a long time? Why? 2. Perception on sustainability of impact: On a score of 1 to 4, how convinced are you as a group that the changes on the level of children will stay a long time? And those for decision-makers? Why?		indications do you see for lasting change? (external and internal stakeholders)
	3.2 What factors contribute to the continuation after the programme's conclusion?					Exercise 5 - Sustainability 1. Sustainability factors: What factors influence the sustainability of the programme outcomes achieved? Which of these factors have you actively tried to influence over the last years?	Exercise 2 - Sustainability 3. Commitment of the programme to sustainability: What have you seen the programme do to ensure that these changes will continue to exist? 5. Additional aspects: Are there any other aspects you think the programme should or has been working on to ensure that the changes will last?	15. Sustainability factors: Do you think the efforts conducted by the programme to ensure the sustainability of outcomes are sufficient? What factors do you think they should be focusing on to ensure sustainability of the outcomes and impact achieved? (external and internal stakeholders)
	3.3 What steps have been taken to build local capacity and ownership (including integration into local systems or practices) to sustain and/or scale the programme outcomes over time?			✓		Exercise 5 - Sustainability Can you share examples that you have observed in these different aspects and whether you consider them sufficient to ensure that the changes will last (on a scale of 1 to 4)? c. Civil society organisations have the capacity to sustain or scale up programme outcomes (for example by integrating into local systems or practices)	Exercise 2 - Sustainability 4. Aspects of sustainability: Can you share any examples that you have observed in these different aspects and whether you consider them sufficient to ensure that the changes will last (on a scale of 1 to 4)? c. Civil society organisations have the capacity to sustain or scale up programme outcomes	14. Aspects of sustainability factors: Talking about the sustainability of the changes achieved by the programme, what factors have you seen in how the programme is working on their continuation? Have you seen that the programme worked on strengthening the capacity and ownership of civil society organisations, encouraged changes in WASH/nutrition policies, changes in the access to nutrition and WASH services or obtained support from local authorities? (external and internal stakeholders)
	3.4 How did the programme support sustainable WASH/nutrition policies (national & global)?					Exercise 5 - Sustainability Can you share examples that you have observed in these different aspects and whether you consider them sufficient to ensure that the changes will last (on a scale of 1 to 4)? b. Governments to adopt, maintain and implement WASH/nutrition policies	Exercise 2 - Sustainability 4. Aspects of sustainability: Can you share any examples that you have observed in these different aspects and whether you consider them sufficient to ensure that the changes will last (on a scale of 1 to 4)? b. Governments to adopt, maintain and implement WASH/nutrition policies	14. Aspects of sustainability factors: Talking about the sustainability of the changes achieved by the programme, what factors have you seen in how the programme is working on their continuation? Have you seen that the programme worked on strengthening the capacity and ownership of civil society organisations, encouraged changes in WASH/nutrition policies, changes in the access to nutrition and WASH services or obtained support from local authorities? (external and internal stakeholders)

	3.5 How did the programme support sustainable access to nutrition & WASH services at the national and global level?					Exercise 5 - Sustainability Can you share examples that you have observed in these different aspects and whether you consider them sufficient to ensure that the changes will last (on a scale of 1 to 4)? a. Communities to have continued access to nutrition and WASH services	✓	Exercise 2 - Sustainability 4. Aspects of sustainability: Can you share any examples that you have observed in these different aspects and whether you consider them sufficient to ensure that the changes will last (on a scale of 1 to 4)? a. Communities to have continued access to nutrition and WASH services	14. Aspects of sustainability factors: Talking about the sustainability of the changes achieved by the programme, what factors have you seen in how the programme is working on their continuation? Have you seen that the programme worked on strengthening the capacity and ownership of civil society organisations, encouraged changes in WASH/nutrition policies, changes in the access to nutrition and WASH services or obtained support from local authorities? (external and internal stakeholders)
	3.6 To what extent have local authorities pledged continued support?					Exercise 5 - Sustainability Can you share examples that you have observed in these different aspects and whether you consider them sufficient to ensure that the changes will last (on a scale of 1 to 4)? d. Local authorities have pledged continued support		Exercise 2 - Sustainability 4. Aspects of sustainability: Can you share any examples that you have observed in these different aspects and whether you consider them sufficient to ensure that the changes will last (on a scale of 1 to 4)? d. Local authorities have pledged continued support	14. Aspects of sustainability factors: Talking about the sustainability of the changes achieved by the programme, what factors have you seen in how the programme is working on their continuation? Have you seen that the programme worked on strengthening the capacity and ownership of civil society organisations, encouraged changes in WASH/nutrition policies, changes in the access to nutrition and WASH services or obtained support from local authorities? (external and internal stakeholders)
Coherence, Partnership & Collaboration	4.1 To what extent has the collaboration between the different consortium partners created added value in programme countries or at global level?	✓	✓		3. Type lessons learned: What type(s) of learning did you gain through the partnership? 4. Lesson learned: Can you briefly explain why this learning was valuable to you or your organisation? 5. Contribution partnership: How did the partnership enable this learning? 6. Application of lesson: Have you applied this learning in your work? 7. Application of lesson: In what ways have you applied or plan to apply this learning? 8. Contribution: Do you feel that you would have also learned the lesson you just shared if you had not participated in the partnership? 9. Internal coherence: How would you rate the collaboration	Exercise 7 - Internal coherence & collaboration 1. Collaboration: Can you elaborate on how you have been working together as the country coalition? How have you worked with the consortium members and the international working groups? What has been the level of intensity of the collaboration? 2. Assessment of collaboration: On a scale of 1 to 4, how useful did you find the collaboration with the different parties within the programme to enable young people to enjoy their sexual and reproductive health and rights? According to you, what has been their added value and what are points of attention?			17. Benefits of working together: According to you, what is the benefit of working in a coalition and wider consortium? (external and internal stakeholders)

				between... a. country partners and the consortium/technical partners? b. CSOs within the country coalition? c. internal collaboration between the consortium/technical partners? 10. Added value: What added value of working together with different organisations in a partnership have you experienced in the R2G partnership? 11. Perceived support consortium: To what extent did the international and regional R2G partners support the work of your national coalition? 12. Connection global: Was connecting the advocacy work at the national level to the advocacy work at the regional and the international level successful in strengthening the advocacy efforts?				
	4.2 To what extent is collaboration with other partners - outside the Right2Grow consortium - taking place in programme countries, including with other SCS partnerships, and what has been the added value of those collaborations?		✓	18. External coherence: How would you rate the collaboration between: a. the partnership and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs? b. the partnership and the Dutch Embassies? c. the partnership and other partnerships on strengthening civil society? 19. Added value other partnerships: What has been the added value for you of collaborating with the other partnerships that work on strengthening civil society?	Exercise 6 - External coherence 1. External coherence: With which actors have you collaborated during the implementation of the programme (in order to avoid duplication of efforts and create synergies)? On a score of 1 to 4, to what extent has the collaboration with each actor been useful to enable young people to enjoy their sexual and reproductive health and rights? Why? 2. Changes in external coherence: What is different now in the collaboration with these actors compared to at the beginning of the programme? 3. Added value: What has been the added value to collaborate with the following actors?			16. External coherence: On a score of 1 to 4, to what extent do you think the programme was able to work in synergy and complementarily with other actors, and what has been the added value for you of that partnership? other non-governmental organisations / other Strengthening Civil Society partnerships funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs / Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs / Dutch embassies (external stakeholders)
	4.3 To what extent have adaptive management principles influenced programming within Right2Grow at country and global level?			14. Adaptive Management knowledge: How familiar are you with the principles of adaptive management? 15. Adaptive management application: To what extent do you feel the principles of	Exercise 7 - Internal coherence & collaboration 4. Adaptive management principles: Can you share how you have used the adaptive			

				adaptive management have influenced programming within the Right2Grow partnership?	management principles in your programming?			
4.4 What has been the added value of MFA and its embassies, to the Partnership? And what is the value added of this Partnership to MFA?				18. External coherence: How would you rate the collaboration between: a. the partnership and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs? b. the partnership and the Dutch Embassies? c. the partnership and other partnerships on strengthening civil society? 20. Added value MFA and embassies: What has been the added value for you of working with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its embassies?	Exercise 6 - External coherence 3. Added value: What has been the added value to collaborate with the following actors?			16. External coherence: On a score of 1 to 4, to what extent do you think the programme was able to work in synergy and complementarily with other actors, and what has been the added value for you of that partnership? other non-governmental organisations / other Strengthening Civil Society partnerships funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs / Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs / Dutch embassies For Dutch Ministry & Embassies: On a score of 1 to 4, how coherent and strong was your partnership with the country coalition team? Why? What would you like to do differently next time? (external stakeholders)
4.5 How succesful was the programme in its localization and shift the power efforts at global and country level?				16. Decision-making: In terms of decision-making, in my experience... 17. Localisation: How successful do you think the programme has been in its localisation efforts at the global and country level?	Exercise 7 - Internal coherence & collaboration 3. Locally-led development: To what extent has the programme supported localisation and locally-led development? Can you share examples of where this was successful? What suggestions from improvement would you have?			

